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Christopher Jonathan Gerber

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Containment: A Failed American Foreign Policy and How the Truman Doctrine
Led to the Rise of Islamic Extremism in the Muslim World

by

Christopher J. Gerber

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Political Science
with a concentration in International Relations
Department of Government and International Affairs
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Steven Roach, Ph.D.
Earl Conteh-Morgan, Ph.D.
Darrell Slider, Ph.D.

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Dedication

There are many to whom I owe acknowledgment and thanks for this overdue accomplishment.

First and foremost I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my best friend, Dr. Elizabeth Stuart Angello, Ph.D, who taught me that success is measured in a time not of our choosing but, rather, by the manner in which we choose to pursue it. Her belief in me, coupled with her faith and fidelity, led me to this milestone.

Thanks Lizzie ~

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Abstract

After World War II the United States, faced with the new Soviet threat of Communism, instituted the foreign policy known as “containment” in order to mitigate the threat to Western European states of Soviet expansionism. After the fall of Communism in the USSR in 1991 that policy was deemed, at once, a success and an anachronism. The power vacuum that the subsequent abandonment of that policy created was most notable in the Islamic states that had served as proxies in the Cold War against Communism. Both the backdrop of containment as well as the withdrawal of that policy served to lay the foundation for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Muslim world as a function of American hegemony after 1991.

If we could first know *where* we are, and *whither* we are tending, we could then better judge, *what* to do, and *how* to do it.

- Abraham Lincoln¹

1. Abraham Lincoln, speech delivered at the close of the Republican state convention, which named him the candidate for the United States Senate, Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858.
- *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Wildside Press, 2008, p. 184.

Introduction

The Truman Doctrine sought to contain the spread of Communism so that it could not “infect” the rest of the world with a political policy deemed antithetical to the economic policies of the secular West. Post-WWII liberal democracies in the West feared that Communism might take root and spread across the globe if left unchecked. This counter-productive policy, however, has negatively affected the possibility of a lasting, stable, regional balance of power in the Islamic world. The policy of containment had a counter-productive effect in that it helped to energize and politicize Islam regionally and produce resistance towards US interests in the Muslim world.

This examination analyzes the volatile link between the policy of containment and the rising Islamic influence in the region and three major challenges posed by these links: inclusion, marginalization, and quarantine. One is the capacity of Islamic states to sustain a more vital and active part of Muslim society in a global world in order to encourage inclusion and political mobilization. Second, Muslims may be integrated in theory, but they are financially, politically, and economically marginalized by Western secularism. Worse, no reliable method exists to sustain the financial investments of a global economy in a climate of radical Islam. Third, the Islamic states have been quarantined in much the same way that the Communist threat was contained through the Truman Doctrine, although the religious zeal of Islam presents a social challenge to the policy of containment. The Truman Doctrine sought to contain Soviet regional influence, and was far more pervasive and less transparent than the current political climate and thus complicates the containment of radical Islam in a more politically “correct” world. The

mistaken attempts to further quarantine the emerging threat of Islamic fundamentalism rest on the misguided understanding that containment continues to be a viable strategy in a global economy. Charles A. Kupchan, Zachary Karabell, and Richard K. Hermann's work all support this assertion in that each challenges in one way or another the conflation of Islamic fundamentalism with Communism and the notion that an American policy can effectively mitigate a regional dilemma half a world away by policymakers less competent about the threats posed by Islam than they were about Communism.

Given these challenges, both the spread of Communism and Islamic fundamentalism have posed threats to the national security of the United States. This thesis addresses the following questions in an attempt to allay those threats going forward: One, did the past policy of containment produce a desirable outcome for the US in the Middle East and the Islamic world? Two, if not, what can be done to mitigate the damage to the US prestige abroad as a function of its failure in the Muslim world?

This thesis argues that the policy of containment, though a relative success in addressing the Soviet threat, led to an atmosphere of mistrust and antipathy toward the United States in the Islamic world during the Cold War. This strategy, which the US depended on to counter the threat of Communism, could not be adapted properly to contain the threat of political, and often radicalized, Islam. Not only did it fail to effectively restrict Islamic extremism to the periphery, but it has also funded the violence and hostilities of this movement in the post-Cold War period. This claim holds important implications for US efforts to fight global terror and will have an immense impact on the global economy. Because future foreign policy in the Middle East simply restates the previously well-documented containment strategy, the enemy now has a playbook based on historical US policy decisions. Further, radical Islamic extremists are far less

transparent in their goals, are far less likely to be deterred by half-measures, and are more difficult to track or contain. Finally, the non-governmental status of these groups, their use of asymmetrical warfare, and their strategic mobility all factor into this new global threat.

The USSR, for instance, was a sovereign state actor that could be found on a map and contained by conventional force and with whom diplomacy was possible. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism is recognized, on the other hand, as a non-state player, whose adherents do not always share mutual goals. Additionally, the Islamic insurgency shares a “grass roots” ideology, fueled by civilian populations who support their ideology, both spiritually and financially, as a matter of faith.

The problematic role and limits of containment, then, raise other important questions and issues. For example, exactly how did the policy of containment of Communism serve to alienate the peoples of the Islamic world? If the two superpowers did indeed employ the Middle Eastern states as proxies in their ideological competition against the Soviet Union, then what were the consequences of that proxy war? How did the usurpation of these states’ sovereignty, or the occupation of their lands, breed contempt? Was the continued threat from outside forces seen by the Muslim world as an attack on Islam itself?

This thesis addresses these additional questions by examining the factors of Islamic discontent in the Muslim world and of the employment, by al Qaeda and others, of iconic symbols to mobilize anti-Western feelings. The confluence of these factors, and the failure of Realism, promoted Islamic fundamentalism and global *jihad* against the US. The American foreign policy of containment of the Soviet Union directly, albeit unintentionally, served the needs of Islamic fundamentalism, and it armed groups like al Qaeda with the tools to combat US efforts to spread economic liberalism and democracy in the service of US businesses abroad.

Literature Review

Several prominent scholars have failed to interpret the contradictory and sometimes even counterproductive role of containment in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. According to Bernard Lewis, Islamic tradition and liberal democracy are fundamentally incompatible, and the Muslim world at the beginning of the twenty-first century faces a near-impossible choice between religious reductionism and modernization. “The future of the Middle East will depend on which of them prevails,” he recently told an audience at Princeton University.² Reports on the state of political development in Muslim societies seem to confirm Lewis's grim prognosis for the future. They also underscore Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” argument, but I believe that analysis to be imprecise. We must consider cultural quantification. Karen Elliott House asserts that dialog, rather than confrontation, may be possible on both sides, “if for no other reason than to clarify opposing positions that are essentially irreconcilable.”³ This raises the issue of whether theology formed the only basis of this tectonic divide, and suggests that realism and liberalism can perhaps come together in global harmony. Traditional Muslim society cannot come to terms with the depredations of globalized culture, its adherents claim, and extremism arises from a desperate nostalgia for the golden years of Islam, which fail to recognize the value of Western liberal ideals and individualism. That presupposes,

2. Bernard Lewis, “Lewis tells audience of difficult choices facing the Islamic world,” *Journal of Democracy* 7.2 (1996) 52-63.

3. Quoted in *Freedom in the World 2001 - 2002: The Democracy Gap* (New York: Freedom House, 2001), <https://freedomhouse.org/.../freedom-world-2002/essay-freedom-world-2002 -democracy-gap>

however, that the Islamic world has found any value in democracy, when in fact it has not been the boon to the Muslim world that it represents to the West.

On 18 December 2001, the New York-based Freedom House released a major study titled *The Islamic World's Democracy Deficit*. This report documented an expanding gap between Muslim countries and the rest of the world in terms of levels of freedom and democracy, and it noted that a non-Muslim country was three times more likely than a Muslim state to be democratic. This divide between democracy and freedom exists not only between Islamic countries and the West, but between them and other countries. Adrian Karatnychy, Freedom House president and coordinator of the report, observes that “there is a growing chasm between the Islamic community and the rest of the world. While most Western and non-Western countries are moving towards greater levels of freedom, the Islamic world is lagging behind.”⁴ This is, clearly, a symptom of the theological basis of Islam in general, but it also speaks to the divide between the West and the Muslim world, particularly in the Arab states.

Several months later, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) confirmed the Freedom House findings in a widely circulated study entitled *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*. This report, prepared by a team of Arab scholars, concluded that the Arab world faces a crossroads, and that three key deficits hamper the region. These defining features include: the freedom deficit; the women's empowerment deficit; and the human capabilities/knowledge deficit relative to income. Compared with the rest of the world, the Arab countries had the lowest freedom score in the 1990s, and, when measured by indicators such as political process, civil liberties, political rights and a free media, “the Arab

4. These quotations are taken from the press release of the report, *Freedom in the World 2001 - 2002: The Democracy Gap*, New York: Freedom House, 2001, <https://freedomhouse.org/.../freedom-world-2002/essay-freedom-world-2002 -democracy-gap>

region ... [had] the lowest value of all regions of the world for voice and accountability.”⁵ All of these variables suggest that fundamentalism arose from the discontent of the people and offered an important source of resistance to the Islamic and Arab states that had colluded with the West. However, I argue that the Islamic fundamentalist movements can also be explained by their resistance to the policy of containment.

As early as 1965, scholars and researchers had questioned both the efficacy and the morality of containment. Indeed, D. F. Fleming posed this question in an article published in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, in which he debates the irreconcilable differences of perspective regarding the US’s ebbing prestige and goodwill resulting from the policy of containment of Communism. “It was the proclamation of the universal doctrine of containment, so foreign to our entire national history until 1946, and its prosecution, first against the Soviet Union and then against China,” declares Fleming, “which became the great immorality of the post-war world.”⁶ Within that context, this thesis brings to bear what psychologist John O. Beahrs describes as the paradoxical effects in political systems generated by policies such as the Truman Doctrine. Here these two scholars’ ideas meet as one.

When Beahrs, for instance, states that “paradoxical effects often complicate public policy, contrary to expectation or intent,” he speaks unwittingly to the very heart of my own research. Beahrs argues that we can only cope with the effects of uncertainty, but that in doing so we must mitigate the paradoxes of policy and refocus them in a timely manner. Such was not the

5. United Nations Development Program, “Arab Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations,” New York: 2002, 27.

6. D. F. Fleming, “Is Containment Moral?” *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 362, (1965): 18-27.

case with the Truman Doctrine's mission of containment of Communism, which was steadfastly guarded for decades after its practicality waned.

In a recent interview with Lieutenant William G. "Jerry" Boykin, Joel Rosenberg—who has researched radical Islam—quotes the now-retired commander of the Delta Forces as saying:

When I came into the Army in 1971, we were focused on the Soviet Union. Even though we were fighting in Vietnam, our real threat was the Soviet Union. But [...] the threat that Radical Islam presents to not only America but to the world today is an even more serious threat than when we were in a nuclear standoff during the Cold War. And it's more concerning to me because this is an enemy that is hard to understand. It is an enemy that is easy to ignore, and it is an enemy that is absolutely relentless.

In that light, I offer a series of opinions and research from experts in the field and scholars, both American and Middle Eastern, who will illuminate how the United States policy of containment ushered in a more serious threat than the one that it had originally been tasked with eradicating: Communism. I will show that, because of the short-sightedness of that policy, the path of containment ignored the far-sighted threat of Islamic extremism.

These authors and scholars fail to adequately address the implications of the relationship between the Truman Doctrine and its unintended consequences regarding Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. This thesis combines Beahrs work in public policy and his "paradoxical effects" model with Lewis's incompatibility theory. This intersection of disciplines rests on work done by scholars such as Rosenberg, Huntington, Fukuyama, and others, and considers the possibility that Fleming was correct: containment *was* immoral and insufficient. However, if containment was immoral, and we hold the rest of the variables constant, then the

Truman Doctrine (while it may have effectively brought down Communism) led to the rise of the Islamic extremism.

Three scholarly articles, in particular, explore these questions to one degree or another. Kupchan analyzes the basic misunderstanding of regional developments in the Middle East by US policy makers because of the soviet-centric nature of American foreign policy and the conceptual framework within which those policy-makers work. Karabell further considers the division between policy-makers who view Islamic fundamentalism as either the “new Communism,” or the vanguard of a coming civilization clash between the West and the Muslim world. Finally, Herrmann analyzes the post-Cold War strategies of the US in defense of US interests and the inefficacy of coercion as a force for positive change in the Middle East. All three argue individually that in contributing to the rise of Islam, containment is not only limited but must be radically reformulated to address the new nature of the current threats to which it helped give rise.

These authors’ works overlap in ways that this analysis presents in a more coherent response to the challenges faced by the US in the Muslim world. Containment was a blunt force instrument that has done little to contain the rise of Islamic extremism while reinforcing the notion of the West as a threat to Islam in the Muslim world at large. Reliance on that policy will inevitably lead to greater frustration of the defense of US interests in the region and only further inflame anti-western tensions throughout the Muslim world.

Theoretical Framework

The theories supporting this thesis come from International Relations' models of state interaction, mainly Realism. On the one hand the United States and the Soviet Union were, following World War II, engaged in a realism-based relationship that was centered on the idea that state actors sought power and dominion over their neighbors. In a Hobbesian world of "all against all" it was clear to both nations that the ideologies of democracy and liberal capitalism, versus command economies and bureaucratic socialism, were antithetical to one another. Thus, the concept of containment was not only declared to be a moral one (the West was, after all, defending liberty and natural law) but also a sound response to an external threat via realism. The idea of containing that threat to a distant region of the globe was based on the perception that if Communism were allowed to spread unchecked, then the democratic-based nations of the world would topple like dominoes, one after the other. Adherence to realism was the only viable defense; it was reasoned at the time, for the US and the West against an ideological foe that decried liberty and the basis of capitalism which powered the growth of the US and its allies. Communism would be contained and relegated to the several countries in which it had taken root and the effect of its ideology mitigated through deterrence and military superiority at the expense of some of those Islamic proxies in the Middle East.

When the Soviet Union collapsed on Christmas day in 1991, the US policy-makers celebrated not knowing at what cost the United States had secured the destruction of the "Red Menace." Though the crushing weight of Communism was eased significantly on that day, the full burden of the cost to the US would soon become apparent. The realism-based foreign policy

of the West had used the states in the Middle East as proxies in a Cold War against the USSR while the Western powers plundered those countries' oil wealth in order to feed its own voracious appetite and hegemonic plans. Those whom the colonization of the Middle East by Europe did not alienate, the pillaging of their one truly great resource - oil reserves, did. Combined with the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the creation of Israel, the deep-seated Arab feelings of shame, humiliation, failure, and impotence in the modern world are, at its core, the result of being used as pawns by the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the European colonizers. That this was merely their perception is unimportant because perception is everything if there exist honest grievances.

As a result, the US is moving again toward realism in its approach to dealing with the emerging Muslim powers there and states like Iran are in a full blown realist mode of their own. "Today, the time for the fall of the satanic power of the United States has come," said Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 1999, marking the anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, "and the countdown to the annihilation of the emperor of power and wealth has started."⁷ There is no doubt that the theoretical basis of the conflicts between the United States and the Muslim states of the Middle East have been rooted in realism and an approach that is informed by such factors as the Carter and Bush Doctrines, which advocate protective defense or preemptive strikes on an enemy in order to thwart the ill intentions of a state before they can even become operational. This is leading toward neorealist resurgence. Elements of Communism, capitalism, theology, and liberal economics are factors but those ideologies are built on the foundation of realism that

7. "Ahmadinejad Says Israel Will Soon Disappear," Agence France-Press, June 2, 2008. Quoted in Joel C Rosenberg, *Inside the Revolution: How the Followers of Jihad, Jefferson & Jesus are Battling to Dominate the Middle East and Transform the World*, (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2009), 28.

divides states and their liberal counterpoints that act as the global glue of the future. The foundation of this thesis is that dichotomy between realism and liberal economics and the implications of those theories for the future of US foreign policy. By contrast, a more coherent response is based in constructivist systems that forge global alliances even as we recognize our diversities and respect our differences of culture *and* ideology.

Theological debates must be tempered. Cultural outlooks must be more inclusive. Respect for ethnicity must be reapportioned with respect to the more global nature of what Thomas Friedman calls a flat world: one that is growing closer from end to end by the hour. A more socially constructive policy orientation will address issues of identity, norms, and regional politics in a way that better compensates for the problematic relationship between containment of Communism and Islam. Constructivism transcends the theoretical limits of realism and containment which will give rise to a more efficacious foreign policy in the Middle East with regard to Islamic identity and US interests in the region. However, my research focuses mainly on the critique of Realism and its fundamental inadequacy in a globally connected world.

Globalization stresses a collapse of national borders and a growing transnational interdependence. Since the theoretical origins of my argument are based in Constructivism, they acknowledge culture as a vibrant force in a global world. Realism details the concept of states as “rational” actors in a Hobbesian world of survival of the fittest. On the other hand, the key argument on the theoretical and policy implications of contemporary American hegemony is that the development of US hegemony generally, as well as the distinctive turn in US foreign policy in the wake of 9/11, can best be understood by placing events in a comparative and historical framework. The immediate post-World War II order laid the foundations of a highly-institutionalized multilateral system that provided benefits for a number of countries.

The key argument on the theoretical and policy implications of contemporary American foreign policy is that the development of US hegemony generally, and the distinctive turn in US foreign policy in the wake of 9/11, can best be understood by placing events in a comparative and historical framework. The immediate post-World War II order laid the foundations of highly-institutionalized multilateral systems that provided benefits for a number of countries, while enhancing US power at the expense of the post-World War II theatre. The limits of realism and institutionalism are clear, realism is rooted in the past, and institutionalism is rooted in the future. The international system is no longer anarchic because of the foreign entanglements that George Washington, the first president of these United States, warned against. However, more saliently, a constructivist model that engages culture as legal tender also embraces the concept of liberal democracy and the protection of property, both personal and private, and that is the very foundation of liberty and justice.

Structure

Chapter One of this thesis will consider the political implications of the colonial period between World Wars I and II with regard to the political decisions made concurrently. What were the political decisions that both affected and were influenced by those events? What were the political ramifications of the decisions made by contemporary world leaders? There is a clear cut cause and effect in relations between states that informs this debate with regard to the unintended consequences of political decisions of that period.

Chapter Two discusses the implementation of the Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment of Communism. Here I ask why that policy was not adjusted to respond more quickly to the emerging threat of Islamic fundamentalism. In addressing this question, I shall address the history, political science and the shifting nature of ideologies and analyze how they affected United States foreign policy.

Chapter Three analyzes the rise of radical Islam following the fall of Communism and the implications of the emerging Islamic threat that ensued. This is also the period in which the United States' foreign policy-makers should have reconsidered the blunt force instrument of containment as an effective policy instrument and retooled the American response to the challenges in the Middle East in a more constructive manner.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I examine the period after September 11, 2001 and the ramifications for foreign policy considerations regarding the Middle East and the Muslim world at large. Moreover, I consider the notion that Realism could be reworked to serve as a more positive for state interaction.

Chapter One: The Rise of the Superpower Rivalry

In Chapter One, I examine three important aspects of my thesis. First, I document the emergence of the policy of containment of Communism (the Truman Doctrine). I do so by carefully noting the historical events that occurred after World War I and which influenced the global consideration of the Middle East in such a way as to make necessary the political need for US isolation of the ideologies of socialism and Islam. I then discuss the events after World War II and the beginning of the shift from the containment of Communism, to the support of puppet/proxy states in the Middle East in defense of oil deposits in the region. Containment of Communism is a foreign policy initiative that was never geared toward the emergent Islamic extremist agenda.

This chapter considers the morality of containment, and how the events between World Wars I and II speak to the unintended consequences of a policy that was based on historical considerations that tied the hands of each successive US administration. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the American foreign policy of containment was the driving force in seeking to halt the spread of the socialist agenda throughout the world. However, the Truman Doctrine that advocated containment also served to lay the early groundwork for Middle Eastern antagonisms toward the United States and the West in general as a result of its perceived usurpation of Muslim sovereignty. Islamic fundamentalism was shaped by US foreign policy through containment and the effect of that policy on the states that served American interests in the Middle East (interests such as oil). It encouraged the Islamic world to treat the West as the

“other” or heathen, and eventually ignited a global jihad to resist the occupation of US forces in the Arab lands. In this way, the success of Containment fueled resistance; it helped to further politicize Islam or turn global jihad into a powerful military movement equipped with the very tools necessary to destroy the West including the use of propaganda and state control of the means of information distribution as well as the creation of a social counterintelligence apparatus that divided the polity through sectarian strife.

George Kennan provided the rationale for containment during the early years of the Cold War, when the Korean War was still in play. Containment was needed to hold Soviet belligerency in check. The new US strategy, in this sense, would contain the spread of Soviet influence regionally, rather than confronting and inciting its spread. As Kennan puts it: “Never were American relations with Russia at lower ebb than in the first 16 years after the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917. Americans were deeply shocked by the violence of the revolution, by the fanaticism and cruelty of the new rulers, by their refusal to recognize the debts and claims arising out of the recent war, and above all by the brazen world-revolutionary propaganda they put out and the efforts they mounted to promote Communist seizures of power in other countries.”⁸ Kennan’s intent was to inform not to incite. The same feelings of shock were expressed recently in the United States by the media throughout the recent Arab Spring uprisings. Ideological divides created an atmosphere in which everyone agreed that something must be done in Egypt, Yemen, and Syria recently with no one agreeing on exactly what remedy to employ.

8. George F. Kennan, *After the Cold War*, (New York: New York Times Co., 1989), pages 1 - 5. Reprinted by permission of the New York Times and the Harriet Wasserman Literary Agency, Inc. as agents for the author.

The consensus in political circles was that the best way to defend against Communism was to contain that threat to those places that had already been affected and, if possible, to roll back the tide of a Socialist/Communist agenda where possible. The effect of Kennan's initial exhortations was to influence President Harry Truman's decision to adopt the containment strategy as the official American reaction to the spread of Communism during the Korean War. That decision created a policy monolith that, regardless of the fact that Kennan largely would come to re-examine in his own analysis, would underscore the very basic failure of US foreign policy in the Muslim world for decades. "Kennan's ideas, which became the basis of the Truman administration's foreign policy, first came to public attention in 1947 in the form of an anonymous contribution, the so-called "X-Article," to the journal *Foreign Affairs*." The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union," Kennan wrote, "must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."⁹ Recent calls for "boots on the ground" and "no-fly zones" throughout the Middle East to combat ISIS in the region eerily recall those remarks by Kennan nearly sixty years ago.

At the time, containment seemed to serve the best interests of the US government. While avoiding an overt act of war, containment sought to maintain the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union while simultaneously sustaining a level of military readiness that could serve as long as necessary to deter Soviet aggression. "It is evident, however, that both Truman and his successors elaborated the containment strategy far beyond Kennan's intentions."¹⁰ American foreign policy became Soviet-centric and any other foreign policy issue

9. George F. Kennan, "Milestones: 1945-1952," *US Department of State, Office of the Historian*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan>

10. Ohaegbulam, 30. Based on Kennan's "Containment Then and Now," in *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 4 (Spring 1987), 885-890.

was subordinated to the orientation of containment of the Soviet threat, even in situations that merited less offensive efforts. Although Truman's successors modified this strategy in accordance with specific challenges, it was, with rare consistency, adhered to and adopted as an overarching policy. It was, for lack of a better term, the holy grail of American foreign policy in the twentieth century. The irony of something important, rarely adhered to, is simply a function of the ongoing understanding of political machinations that have been ongoing since Alexander the Great conquered an empire. My Constructivist argument even allows for this dichotomy of perspectives because it acknowledges various historical and cultural perspectives. Realism allows for one perspective: *realpolitik*. Institutionalism is more flexible, but is still constraining in the post-industrial world. Constructivism, I argue, *should* be the new foreign policy platform of the United States because it represents a new venue: the New Frontier. Constructivism, then, underscores the multiplicity of variable data while acknowledging diversity.

The Truman Doctrine of containment, however, only targeted the spread of Soviet influence. In some cases, though, it required aiding Muslim insurgencies against this spread (i.e., Afghanistan), which would, in time, leave US influence as the object of this insurgency, or struggle for national liberation. The inability of US foreign policy-makers to address this issue constituted one of the primary limits of both containment and the Truman Doctrine. In short, containment may have been successful in targeting the Soviets; however, the emerging political and global agenda of Islamic extremism remained far less transparent and difficult to contain regionally. The main reason for that is that Islamic fundamentalism is based on the very stubborn foundation of religious beliefs that define the daily lives of Muslims in the Middle East in the most basic level and "fundamental" way.

Thus, in a shifting political landscape toward globalization, there should also have been a shift in the policy of the United States with regard to containment. Yet containment became the permanent template for states that sought to bandwagon with the US politically through a rigid doctrine of halting the spread of Communism (as an antagonist to liberal economics with no regard to the cultural diversity of the Middle East. The US policy of containment was, therefore, a policy that the US extracted from its allies, at times to the detriment of their own cultural and political determination, which was contrary to what democracy was intended to foster. The consequences of institutionalizing politically measures to contain Communism were most profound in the Middle East from a political as well as a moral standpoint. Specifically, the US has a history of supporting brutal Arab dictators who had no interest in furthering the aspirations of their subjects but rather the avarice for political and economic gain.

Fleming has questioned the morality of containment, and pointed out that the absolutist doctrine of containment failed to win the hearts and minds of nonaligned states. Moreover, it was condemned by our allies for its rigidity.¹¹ The fact is that containment ceased to be a productive policy because the economic principles of the Soviet Union were already undermining its own strength as early as the mid 1960s or before. For example, Nikita Khrushchev expanded the collectivization of agriculture when he promoted the Virgin Lands campaign, saying the Soviet Union could meet and surpass Western agricultural production through the application of modern techniques and the use of new crops. However, initial successes rapidly turned sour. The Virgin Lands program was a fiasco, which involved the forcible removal of nearly half a million "volunteers" to Kazakhstan and resulted in the destruction of arable land. Corruption and the lack

11 . Michael McGwire, "The Paradigm That Lost its Way," *International Affairs*, 2001, 77 no. 4, 777-804.

of political transparency limited the Soviets' ability to challenge the West economically or politically. The policy of containment, frankly, was inculcated in the Middle East to thwart the spread of Communism by containing that ideology economically. However, a willing, whose support was vital with the tacit several administrations, sign the checks and refuse the balances, was the line in the sand that is irrefutable. Each successive American administration built on the containment policy of its predecessor, ignoring the Soviet's economic failures and focusing only on military capability and the perceived inability of the Arab states to govern or protect themselves from a Soviet attack. Another irony is that the policy of containment was, indeed, supposed to limit the spread that ideology but only propagated it in another form. Overseas aid in a post global war can certainly be understood as an imperial overreach after two millennia of intrusion and outside oversight.

The demands of the containment strategy did little for the long-term growth of the American economy or our national security.”¹² The Truman Doctrine was a tacit strategy employed to safeguard US interests that were represented by the guardianship of oil reserves in the Arab world but were done so by honest brokers of American security in an age that is undefined by the limitless scope of the new global dimension. Concurrently, the European grip

12. Ohaegbulam, 34. During the course of the Truman administration and well into the final days of the Eisenhower administration a series of pacts were concluded that allied nations against the Soviets, such as the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and in February 1959 the Central Treaty Organization, also known as the Baghdad Pact. “CENTO was concluded by Iraq, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Iran. Gamel Abdel Nasser of Egypt flatly rejected membership. There was already a serious mistrust in the Arab world regarding Western motives. Later, after CENTO had concluded an executive agreement with Turkey, the Eisenhower administration pledged US support and assistance.” But it was this division of the world into competing camps, an “us and them” mindset that echoed the allied/axis dichotomy of World War II and cast the Soviet Union as what Ronald Reagan, years later, would come to describe as an evil empire.

on the Middle East began to slip. Libya, the Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco became independent in 1956. Mauritania in 1960, Kuwait in 1961, Algeria in 1962, and the Gulf States achieving independence in 1971.¹³ Still, by the time that John F. Kennedy took office in 1960 the only immediate threat seemed to come from the Soviet Union.

In 1989 John Mueller, in an article entitled *Enough Rope*, argued that the United States did not so much *win* the Cold War as much as the Soviet Union *lost* it. While this rhetorical flourish may seem, at first glance, to be rather academic, it is in keeping with my argument, inasmuch as Mueller suggests that lapses in the Soviet Union's bureaucratic and economic systems, as well as the increased cost to the Soviets to maintain their international standing militarily, undermined Communism from within.¹⁴ The same year Paul H. Kreisberg wrote, in *Containment's Last Gasp*, that "a coherent and continuous front against the United States and the non Communist countries of Asia probably never existed."¹⁵ While there was a very real threat to US interests from the Soviet Union in the 1940s "by the mid- 1950s this had lost virtually all its steam."¹⁶ Containment was, therefore, more of a prophylactic than a positive prescription for global harmony and was a reactive rather than a proactive foreign policy.

What Mueller and Kreisberg assert is that as early as the mid-1970s the Soviet Union had only a haphazard approach to bureaucracy, economics and military emphasis that, more often than not, defied any cogent plan to project strength beyond even its own borders. Thus,

13. Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*, (New York, Scribner, 1995), 127.

14 . John Mueller, "Enough Rope," *New Republic* 7, no. 1, (1989), 14.

15. Paul H. Kreisberg, "Containments Last Gasp," *Foreign Policy*, No. 75 (1989), 149.

16. *Ibid.*, 147.

according to Steinbruner's and Mueller's assessment, both a policy shift away from containment and a more coherent response to the outdated threat of containment was inherent in a more constructive foreign policy. The continuation of the of containment between 1970 and 1990 was more injurious to US interests in that it was during that time period that the United States wasted valuable political capital and time on a failed policy. As early as the Carter administration, containment was already sowing the seeds of strong anti-American and anti-Western feelings throughout the Muslim world. Hermann, in his rethinking of US political strategy, asks how the US could not only secure and "protect its influence by force and coercion, as Moscow did for years in Eastern Europe, but . . . build positive relationships with Middle Eastern countries that will survive internal change and growing demands for public empowerment."¹⁷ Kupchan reinforces that sentiment when he questions why "US strategies fell prey to two key shortcomings . . . [that] the United States exaggerated the Soviet threat and [that the US] became preoccupied with it to the exclusion of regional problems. The United States jeopardized its own objectives by alienating regional states and intensifying the cold war [sic] in the Middle East."¹⁸ Hermann and Kupchan argue, independently, aspects that converge in this analysis, specifically that threatening information and images increase support for a realist-based foreign policy while reassuring information supports a more liberal policy based on respect for cultural differences.

As the civil unrest of the Eastern Europeans in Soviet bloc states began to pressure the leaders of the USSR to unleash their grip on those buffer nations between the Soviet Union and

17. Richard Hermann, "The Power of Perception in Foreign-Policy Decision Making: Do Views of the Soviet Union Determine the Policy Choices of American Leaders?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 30, no. 4, 1986, 43.

18. *Ibid.*, 43

Western Europe Richard Herman notes that “in the early 1990s, Steinbruner was among those advocating a shift in the balance of US security policy, moving from containment and deterrence to reassurance, and from active confrontation to cooperative engagement. Hermann identified cooperative engagement as a key strategic principle that sought to accomplish its purpose through institutional consent rather than the threat of material or physical coercion.”¹⁹ Those exhortations of constructive engagement came too late to stem the rise of the recently embraced forms of radical Islamic fundamentalism that were growing in the Middle East. A month before Michael McGwire’s publication of *The Paradigm That Lost its Way* (in which McGwire wrote of the failure of the policy of containment), the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade center in New York made clear that there were very real animosities toward the US in the Muslim world.. McGwire concludes that the policy of containment was an unworkable premise in a global age and that the Truman Doctrine, since it only served to create the very animosity that was brewing in the Middle East against the West.²⁰ Kupchan’s research supports McGwire’s and, additionally, Kupchan notes that the “United States accurately perceives the nature of political change, but is unable to respond appropriately. The input itself is correct; it is the decision-making process that skews the output.”²¹ The policy formulation process of US political

19. Ohaegbulam notes, “Except in Vietnam, even while U. S. policymakers were cobbling together the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CEATO) in East and West Asia to deal with the feared Communist expansion.”

20. Michael McGwire, “The Paradigm That Lost its Way,” *International Affairs*, 77, no. 4, (2001), 778.

21 Charles A. Kupchan, “Globalism in the Middle East: The Roots of Regional Security Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 103, no 4 (1988 – 1989), 585 – 611.

elites regarding the Middle East has been hampered by the linear thinking of successive administrations' embrace of containment as an effective policy tool.

The Cold War was a “competition in economic bankruptcy”²² which first destroyed the poorer Soviets and then weakened the ability of the Soviet Union to compete economically. Yet “for about forty-five years the demands of the containment strategy - military preparedness and the perceived geopolitical need for allies - channeled research, development, and some of the most capable minds of the US into activities that did little for the long-term growth of the American economy” and exacerbated the antagonisms of the Muslim populations in the Middle East resulting, F. Ugboaja Ohaegbulam asserts, in a “brain drain” that lured scholars to work on behalf of US policies to thwart Communism despite the actual weakness of the ideology.²³

Within months of the publication of Kennan's article, *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, Walter Lippmann penned a series of columns for the *New York Herald Tribune* criticizing the article and, by implication, the containment policy. As Lippmann states “‘containment’ would commit the United States indefinitely to military holding actions around the Soviet periphery. Such a policy, he feared, would mean surrendering the strategic initiative to the Soviet Union and lead to the ‘misuse of American power.’”²⁴ Lippmann's critique, given the current challenges

22. Ronald Steel, *Temptations of a Superpower*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995), 21.

23. Ohaegbulam, 34.

24. Walter Lippmann, *The Cold War: A Study in U. S. Foreign Policy*, (New York, 1947), 2-3. Since 1947 the “X” article has remained at the center of controversy, prompting conflicting interpretations by historians and subsequent explanations and clarifications by George Kennan himself (see footnote #2 for example). Despite all that has been written about the “X” article, the question seems to persist: what did Kennan mean? How did he reach the conclusion that expansionism was the motivating force behind Soviet diplomacy? How did he propose to contain this “fluid stream”? What kind of “counter-force” did he have in mind?

in the Middle East, highlights the lack of diplomatic flexibility of containment because it eschews diplomacy. The same critiques are now being repeated in the media today with regard to the war in Iraq and, more recently, in response to the events surrounding the Arab Spring. Those voices underscore the necessity of a more constructive policy in the Muslim world rather than a long term commitment such as the fourteen years that the US has had a major military presence in Afghanistan for example. Lippmann's columns constituted the first important critique of the containment policy. As he had predicted, the US was committed to military and political actions around the Soviet periphery that were economically unfeasible and politically tenuous at best. More importantly to this analysis, those actions undermined US standing in the Muslim world.

The consequences of the pursuit of the outdated policy of containment were more clearly manifested in both Eastern and Western Asia, including the Middle East. Former correspondent for *The Nation*, Steven Hubbell, asserted in 1998 that “Soviet expansionism was cited as the rationale behind the 1957 Eisenhower doctrine (which authorized backing for conservative rulers such as King Hussein of Jordan and Camille Chamoun of Lebanon, who were besieged by domestic opponents), and for adventures as varied as the overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran in 1953, support for Israel in the 1967 and 1973 wars, and the arming of U. S. proxies in the Gulf,”²⁵ in an article entitled *Containment Myth: US Middle East Policy in Theory and Practice*. “It hardly mattered that containment was singularly ill-suited to the specificities of the region. What did matter was Americans’ willingness to accept it as a sufficient justification for their government’s machinations” despite its efficacy or lack thereof.²⁶

25. Steven Hubbell, “Containment Myth: U. S. Middle East Policy in Theory and Practice,” *Middle East Report*, no. 208, (Autumn, 1998), 43.

26. *Ibid.* 44.

The Arab states proved to be nearly impervious to Moscow's ideological appeal and the containment policy did more harm than good to U. S. interests in the region. It alienated the citizenry of the Muslim world and created a "boogie man," The Great Satan, which could be summoned for all manner of ideological and cultural manipulation. It was only after the demise of the Soviet Union that the Bush and Clinton administrations began to undertake "new rationalizations," according to Hubbell, for the future. In 1997, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake determined that "the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement . . . of the world's free community of market democracies."²⁷ This is exactly what John Steinbruner had predicted and Mueller and Kreisburg had encouraged. In the new world order at the turn of the millennium, commercial and economic considerations and the promotion of democracy were strategies that the United States could have and should have developed. The damage to US credibility by then was clear and the ramifications of the policy of containment of Communism were evident.

"Nations, like individuals, "asserts John Lewis Gaddis "tend to be prisoners of their pasts."²⁸ The policy of containment is a case in point. The ideological confrontation of capitalism and Communism notwithstanding, the fact of the matter is that the two superpowers succumbed to the realist notion of spheres of influence in an attempt to protect the hegemony that each was able to exercise in that sphere. The Soviet preoccupation with its "near abroad" (those areas lying in the shadow of the Soviet state and defined by the historical forces that shaped Russian foreign policy) as well as the repeated invasions by European powers throughout the previous centuries,

27. Ibid. 8-11.

28. John Lewis Gaddis, "Containment: Its Past and Future," *International Security*, 5, no. 4, (Spring, 1981), 74.

lent an air of necessity to the Soviet preoccupation with those areas that had been asserted to be, historically, Russian interests. Moreover, the encroachment of the Western powers into Eastern Europe was, for Stalin and his successors, a matter of national defense predicated on the very real historical fears of the invasions by Napoleon and Hitler.

Inasmuch as these two superpowers were busy jockeying for position during the Cold War, the strategic importance of the Middle East (both in terms of location at the periphery of the USSR and its abundance of petroleum reserves) was paramount to the need for control of the Middle East by the US and the USSR. Yet there was no clear cut need for containment of a region that was, arguably non-politicized and undeveloped peoples?). The unintended consequences of the policy of containment such as the alienation of the Muslim world were only likely to inflame the local populations against either party at the expense of both with total disregard to the political desires of either. Islam condemns both Communism (as Godless) and capitalism (as foreign to their culture).

Capitalism was never in danger of capitulation to Marxism because culturally the West was guided in many places by a protestant work ethic every bit as powerful as the sway that Islam holds over its adherents. “The Soviet Union did not insist on imposing Communist governments everywhere within its sphere of influence - Finland”²⁹ and the Middle East were both notable exceptions. “Nor did the United States, as the case of Yugoslavia showed, consign to the outer darkness all Communist states. In general, though, and with increasing frequency as time went on, ideology did become the mechanism by which alignments were drawn in the Cold War – even to the point that the United States neglected, for many years, the possibility of

29. Ibid. 75.

cooperating with the People's Republic of China in a task in which both had a strong interest, namely containing the Russians."³⁰ Thus, what began as a policy of political containment spiraled out of control into opposing ideologies for the purposes of domestic pacification by both the Soviets and the Americans in an effort to maintain the status quo.

This policy of containment of Communism was no more than an unrelenting confrontation masquerading as statesmanship by politicians who understand Islam any better than they understood Communism and are advocating policies that are questionable at best in light of their ignorance of the facts. Speaking at his inauguration in January 1961, President John F. Kennedy stated that the US "would pay any price and bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foes"³¹ to keep the world free from Communism. President Lyndon B. Johnson cashed the check that Kennedy had written by dramatically increasing the numbers of troops in Vietnam. By 1968, there were over 500,000 US soldiers in a "police action" that was never declared a war by the US Congress and resulted in the deaths of nearly sixty thousand American soldiers. Additionally, the conflict in Vietnam strained the fabric of American society in a way that hadn't occurred since the American Civil War a hundred years earlier. However, the domino rationalization never came to fruition and Communism abroad slowly broke under its own weight despite containment. US troops have been in Afghanistan longer than any other war in which the nation has been involved historically. No dramatic change in Afghanistan seems to have been achieved, however, despite the time, blood, and treasure of a nation now weary of war. The recent diplomacy engaged by the leaders of the US and Iran, by

30. Ibid. 77.

31. President John F. Kennedy, First Inaugural Speech to the Nation, January 20, 1961. <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BqXIEM9F4024ntF17SVAjA.aspx>

contrast, has achieved what many thought impossible; the nonproliferation of nuclear arms by Iran, the release of US hostages, and the beginning of the same kind of rapprochement that diplomacy has achieved the normalization of relations with Cuba as well. Diplomacy acknowledges the value and arguments of both sides and is more constructive in the end.

The fall of Saigon signified an American defeat that left nationwide psychological scars for years to come. It inspired mass political mobilizations, and has divided supporters and opponents even up to the present day. It also highlighted the emergence of the media, as Vietnam was the first televised war. The US bombing of Vietnam and Cambodia and the associated atrocities in that “police action” brought widespread condemnation from around the world as well and caused considerable, lasting harm to America’s image abroad. The US involvement in Vietnam was the most costly application of the containment strategy in the Third World and judgments on the morality of that policy typically rests on an assumption about the threat posed by Communism and the US response. The blood and treasure lost in that conflict paled beside the loss of prestige both at home and abroad. At home, the term “Vietnam Syndrome” entered into the national lexicon, meaning that the United States should never engage in military conflict far from home without clear, viable, political objectives, public support, and an exit strategy for the military. Not until the Powell Doctrine would those issues be addressed. However, it could not have been made clearer that containment had been rendered obsolete by the inability of US policymakers to consider another policy. The strategic arms limitation talks, SALT I and SALT II, initiated during the Johnson administration and continued by Richard Nixon were diplomatic initiatives designed to limit nuclear weapons that serve as a constructive demonstration of the value and efficacy of diplomacy. “For the first time during the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union had agreed to limit the number of nuclear missiles in their arsenals. SALT I is

considered the crowning achievement of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy of *détente*.”³² It was the template for the talks between Reagan and Gorbachev more than a decade later in Reykjavik.

This brings me to the second aspect of my argument: the unintended consequences of the reconciliation of that failed experiment in containment. Both Kupchan and Hermann have asserted that these factors coalesced more in the Middle East than anywhere in the twentieth century - most probably as a function of regional oil wealth - in that the support of brutal dictatorships fostered hatred toward both superpowers. The confluence of the American foreign policy of containment of Communism and the harvesting of the material wealth of the region only served to create a hotbed of animosity toward the West. Historical, political, and economic factors have converged, in the twentieth century, to reflect the failures of containment as well as the clash of civilizations. The random borders created in the Middle East after World War I, the support of brutal dictatorships to rule those proxy states to either support or stifle Communism, and the extraction of the mineral wealth in the form of petroleum has alienated the Islamic world to such an extent that it has fostered a visceral hatred there toward the West which has been fueled by passionate theocrats intent on recreating the Middle East as a neo pan-Islamic theocracy. To that end those most invested in the transformation are not above employing the same tactics in which the two superpowers engaged in their own agenda.

Divisions between states based on political, economic, and historical factors in the Muslim world was a key point of this analysis based on biases of the political elites need to “simplify complex events and to shape incoming information to pre-existing conceptual frameworks.”³³ The relevant questions here are, therefore, was the policy of containment a moral

32. <https://history.state.gov/milestone/1969-1976/salt>

33. Kupchan, 587.

one, and what were the paradoxical effects of that morally suspect foreign policy? If the United States promotes liberalism domestically and abroad, then we owe it to the world to at least examine American foreign policy both morally as well as from the standpoint of efficacy. Yet there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the US policy of containment of Communism was neither moral nor efficacious. As I stated earlier, the brutal dictatorships supported by the superpowers in the Middle East terrorized their subjects. They were supported because they provided access to the mineral wealth of the region. They did so through the use of tactics designed to foster only divisions within the societies over which ruled. Moreover, those Machiavellian manipulations served to sow the seeds of the rise of Islamic fundamentalists that fanned the anger created and focused that animosity for their own ends.

This brings us back to Fleming's *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917 – 1960* in which he frames the questions of the morality of the policy of containment in depth. “Was it moral,” he asks, “to go to the other side of the earth to build many-sided hostile walls around the two largest people’s in the world; to deplete our own economy and society dangerously threatened by nearly a trillion dollars of cold-war military expenditures, while verging upon international bankruptcy; to proscribe all revolutions in the world, lest they turn Communist, and ally ourselves with socially oppressive and obsolete groups everywhere; to ignore the mounting evidence of social evolution and achievement in Communist lands; to maneuver the Congress into giving four blank checks for world war; and to violate both the United Nations and Organization of American States (OAS) charters as well as the oldest rules of international law?”³⁴ Fleming and has argued that it “was the proclamation of the universal doctrine of containment, so foreign to

34. Fleming, 18.

our entire national history until 1946, and its prosecution, first against the Soviet Union and then against China, which became the great immorality of the postwar world.”³⁵ Fleming’s ruminations bring into stark contrast the murky problems of the foreign policy questions of the United States, their efficacy and the moral foundations upon which they are based - with very real implications for this nation’s future because of those decisions. The overarching question is that of the efficacy and morality of containment of Islamic fundamentalism via the same policy used to “contain” Communism. Zachary Karabell, in *The Wrong Threat: The United States and Islamic Fundamentalism* writes that, “In theory, it is possible to isolate two distinct views. On one side, there is a belief that Islamic fundamentalism is the new Communism and consequently must be opposed with whatever means are necessary to contain the fundamentalist threat. An adjunct of this view is that Islamic fundamentalism is the vanguard of a coming civilizational clash between the West and the Muslim world.”³⁶ National interests must be defended but it is imperative that foreign policy debates consider the morality of decisions that will determine the future of US interests in the region and what effect they may have on the flexibility of future administrations. This is important because to do otherwise threatens to poison the waters of future relationships with emerging democratic movements in the Middle East. European colonial interference in the Middle East is an obvious example of that assertion. The jumble of haphazardly drawn borders in the Middle East by Britain, France, and the other victors after WW I have been a catalyst for sectarian unrest that continues to this day.

35. Ibid. 26.

36. Zachary Karabell, “The Wrong Threat: The United States and Islamic Fundamentalism,” *World Policy Journal*, 12, no. 2 (1995), 37–48.

The political interventions of the European powers towards the Middle East have been well documented over time. Perhaps nowhere better is this done than in David Fromkin's, *A Peace to End All Peace*, in which he details the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern Middle East. The author illustrates how the European Allies came to remake the geography and politics of the Middle East, drawing lines on an empty map that eventually became the new countries of Iraq, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon and focusing on the formative years of 1914 to 1922, when everything – even an alliance between Arab nationalism and Zionism – seemed possible and oil was not a political issue. Indeed, “Fromkin shows how the choices narrowed and the Middle East began along a road that led to the endless wars and the escalating acts of terrorism that continue to this day.”³⁷ His work also highlights the confluence of the containment of Communism in the Middle East with the end of the colonial period as oil became the new international currency and the politics in defense of US interests. Fromkin notes that containment was also a means to deny the Soviet Union access to the major oil producing states in the Middle East. The debate over whether containment was so tainted from the beginning can fail to have had unintended consequences is one-sided. Recall Hubbell's³⁸ admonishment that containment was singularly ill-suited to these specific considerations. Containment was a myth based on Eurocentric descriptions of borders without regard to Muslim considerations to confront an ideology already anathema to Muslim mores. The ill-intended consequences of those misplaced foreign policy decisions have been all the yeast required for the rise of Islamic fanaticism, as a backlash to containment grew in the Muslim world. The United

37. New York Times, Bestseller Review, <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/12/06/specials/fromkin-peace.html>

38. Hubbell, 72.

States sowed the seeds of its own antagonism. Containment reflected a different colonizing approach, albeit one that retained elements of colonialism and post colonialism or elements of occupation that gave rise Islamic fundamentalism.

Simply stated, the Islamic peoples of the world put little stock in US foreign policy because they had also borne the brunt of proxy status in a war that had little to do with them in the first place. These newly created states Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and to some extent Israel, were made proxies for, first Europe and then, the United States and the Soviet Union (Syria) in the Cold War. But recall also Hubbell's well-founded assertion that the Arab states proved to be nearly impervious to Moscow's ideological appeal, and the containment policy of the US did more harm than good to US national interests in the region over time. US policymakers had little ground intelligence and lacked the cultural nuance to control many aspects of containment effectively. Muslims in the Middle East had no need of an ideology that eschewed their religion. The current global jihad against the West invokes the precepts of Allah in their cause against the United States as a remedy for past grievances often rooted in Islamic precepts of theological differences. It was the embrace of Islamic symbolism such as the initial spread of Islam in the seventh century at the point of a sword, which would impel Middle Eastern fundamentalists such as Wahhabis to respond to containment violently through fatwahs and jihad. The Truman Doctrine stoked an atmosphere of hate so raw and with such phenomenal ability to incite across the Muslim world that Islamic extremism has become the new political threat to the US due to the post WW I political interference upon which Fromkin elaborates at length. For example, in what is now northern Iraq, "the British envisaged a series of autonomous Kurdish states, to be advised by British political officers, which the French were asked to

concede in the Wilsonian spirit of self determination.”³⁹ Clearly, however, there was no real attempt to encourage self-determination but rather an effort to undermine that very notion from the start.

The creation of the modern Middle East goes back to the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 which “was approved by the British and French Cabinets at the beginning of February . . . and achieved what [Lord] Kitchener, at least, wanted to achieve; the containment of Russia in the postwar Middle East.”⁴⁰ Fromkin argues that the European powers conspired against the will of many foreign governments to divide up the Middle East into protectorates of European domination. This was done, as Fromkin makes clear, through the parochial interests of a single judge; Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the 1st Earl of Khartoum. This was just another step in the reinforcement of the historical memory of the Muslim world against the West and another leap in the building of anti-Westernism in the Middle East. The strategy of the European powers in the Middle East was simple: divide and conquer.

Nineteenth century European Middle East policy was the American template for the US Middle Eastern policy of the twentieth century such as efforts to pit opposing Arab states against one another in an attempt to distract those nations’ citizenry that they were being controlled from abroad. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was, and has been well documented as a secret negotiation by the European powers to dictate their will upon the sovereign nations of the Middle East in the name of containment of Russia. “The secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, for example, provided for Britain and France to divide up the Arabic-speaking Middle East. Other agreements provided for

39. Fromkin, 405.

40. Fromkin, 195.

Russia and Italy to annex portions of what is now Turkey.”⁴¹ Containment was predicated upon the ancient fears of the European powers, fear of both colonialism and imperial power. Those fears would echo through time and are today manifested in attacks in both Europe and America.

President Woodrow Wilson recognized the warning sign on his way to Paris to initiate his 14 points including a League of Nations. “In off the record comments aboard ship *en route* to the peace conferences in 1919, Wilson told his associates that “I am convinced that if this peace is not made on the highest of principles of justice, it will be swept away by the peoples of the world in less than a generation.”⁴² Though Wilson’s foresight was premature it was also prescient. The defender of liberty in the US also understood the need to engage liberalism abroad in the best interest of the US There was at least a reason to suspect the American policy of “containment” was ineffective and immoral from the standpoint of American values. That morally-suspect policy was a European reaction to Bolshevism and represented the vanguard of the containment of Communism and the continuation of The Great Game between the European powers and Russia. However, it also led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the name of the cultural guardianship of Islam and to self-determination by Muslims who lived under the yoke of a predetermined future which was predicated, as has been documented above, on control of the region for political control and material gain in the form of mineral and oil wealth.

David Fromkin is quick to point out that “[t]he West and the Middle East have misunderstood each other throughout most of the twentieth century; and much of that misunderstanding can be traced back to Lord Kitchener’s initiatives in the early years of the First

41 Fromkin, 257.

42. Ibid., 262.

World War.”⁴³ The uninformed rationalization of Kitchener, that Islam was a monolith spreading a pan-Islamic message to all its adherents equally, was exactly the kind of thinking that fostered a sense of anxiety in the West (Kitchener, David Lloyd George, and French Premier George Clemenceau).⁴⁴ Lack of understanding and knowledge encouraged the Western powers to paint with broad strokes their responses to the native populations’ clamor for a more self-determinate governments and ignored the promises that the Europeans had made to various tribes and clans in each of the newly-created Middle Eastern states. Muslims hated the Communists but they especially hated the duplicitous Western countries more, as it became clear to them that Western influence was no better than Russian dominance.

In fact, there were reported problems in holding Arabs together even for the purpose of revolt against the Soviets. As the leaders of the Western European nations promised the people of the Middle East an eventual timeline of self rule they also, tacitly, undermined those promises through political subterfuge. “Besides, the promise was an easy one to make; it was a territory that none of the Great Powers coveted. David Lloyd George later wrote that “no one contemplated that foreign troops should occupy any part of Arabia. It was too arid a country to make it worth the while of any ravenous Power [sic] to occupy as a permanent pasture.” It was not known then, however, that there were immense deposits of oil in the region.”⁴⁵ And therein lays the current source of Western anxiety in a region consumed by animosity for the US.

43. Fromkin, 96.

44. Kitchener was the War Minister of the United Kingdom during the early part of WW I while Lloyd George was the British Prime Minister. Georges Clemenceau was the Prime Minister of France during this period. These were the main actors in the European aspect of this drama.

45. Fromkin, 140.

Kupchan accurately concludes that the formulation of policy was “left to generalists at the top of the hierarchy – individuals with little or no regional expertise who are predisposed to view events within an East-West framework.”⁴⁶ Political considerations of Muslim issues have taken a back seat to Western interests at the expense of those interests and it is clear that much was unknown or unconsidered by the Europeans with regard to the Middle East. Thus, the unintended consequences of Russian/Soviet containment were a direct result of faulty intelligence and misunderstanding of the region and the culture. Indeed, in response to Kitchener’s tactics in Turkey British Attorney General Sir Edward Carson wrote another colleague, stating that “[w]hat I feel so acutely about is that all our calculations (if we can dignify them by that name) are absolutely haphazard.”⁴⁷ The Truman Doctrine was based on the flawed containment doctrine of the post World War I European powers that, as I have demonstrated, was envisioned by uninformed politicians and academicians in both Europe and America with unintended consequences for the Middle East with regard to those powers’ interests because they never truly cared about Arab interests in the least. They were also culturally insensitive to the mores of Islam and that led to the misinformed doctrine of containment in a region that with well-intentioned diplomacy might have eagerly embraced the opportunity to oppose a secular Communist ideology in favor of a partnership with Christian-based nations who shared the same God of Abraham. Though the nature of the situation was accurately perceived, a la Kupchan, the political response was inappropriate and has resulted in complex policy initiatives that defy political expectations in the region because they were based on coercion and not partnership and

46. Kupchan, 587

47. Ibid, 164.

respect. That relationship has been the defining nature of the perception of the West by the Islamic world in the Middle East.

John O. Beahrs described these moments in history as the paradoxical effects of political systems and asserts that they “often complicate public policy, contrary to expectation or intent. Some are unavoidable,” he went on to write, and though “effective actions require constructs that simplify the more complex . . . what is omitted often yields unexpected effects.”⁴⁸ Beahrs understated the implications of these effects in light of their importance to Kupchan’s earlier research when he equivocates that they complicate natural processes and intentional interventions alike. The two are not one and the same. What he suggests is that there are unintended consequences to any public policy. He is more clear when he announces that when “a tripartite process often occurs in which a specific social evil” [in this case Communism] “is defined as unacceptable, specific correctives are implemented,” [containment] “and instead of the expected or desired outcome, the underlying evil worsens, related new ones emerge, or the same problem reappears in different form or at some other level – sometimes with greater malignancy,” such as acts of terrorism by Islamic fundamentalists throughout the globe.⁴⁹ Beahrs contribution to this analysis is the effort and ability to identify the main factors leading to unintended consequences with some thoughts on mitigating their outcomes. He acknowledged three factors that unavoidably lead to paradoxical effects in political systems and are championed by this thesis.

48. John O. Beahrs, “Paradoxical Effects in Political Systems,” *Political Psychology*, 13, no. 4 (1992): 756.

49. *Ibid.*, 755.

Uncertainty in political maneuverings based on the self-deception of policy-makers who exclude relevant information are at the heart of many of the flawed decisions that have created the foundation for Muslim animosity toward the West today. “First are roots of uncertainty inherent in all of the human sciences; complex causality, tension between polar opposites, and value priorities.”⁵⁰ Each of these factors can be either exacerbated or mitigated by the exclusion of relevant information which can then lead to the unexpected effects. For example, the culturally uninformed position of the British regarding the Middle East after World War I, in terms of the non-monolithic nature of the Arab world, or the inability of the British to acknowledge that a devout Muslim community would never consider embracing the secular Communist ideology. The uncertainty that led them to over-engagement of the containment strategy, which did indeed play a role in what should have been a revision of the Truman Doctrine, is clearly documented by Fromkin.⁵¹

“Second, collective self-deceptions markedly increase the potential for paradoxical effects,”⁵² Beahrs declared. Both the British and the French, as well as the US government after World War II, miscalculated the ability of the USSR to achieve the industrial gains of the West after World Wars I and II and clung desperately to the realist ideology that emphasized *realpolitik* over calculated diplomacy.. It was ridiculous, however, to believe that the Soviets’ centralized economy could compete with Keynesian economics. The US based its defense of containment on that and failed to observe its most basic credo; that market economics was the best indicator of economic success.

50. Ibid., 757.

51. Fromkin, 148.

52. Ibid., 152.

Third, “exclusion of relevant information is further accentuated by large-scale social traumata,” Beahrs finally argues. The British deceived the French and themselves as easily as Woodrow Wilson promised the peoples of the world a kinder and gentler approach based on political freedoms that the colonial powers were not prepared to extend. Thus, the uncertainty of complex variables, the paradoxical effects that they have upon outcomes, and the parochial practice of self-defense in defense of realist policies, all contributed to the foment of unintended consequences in the Muslim world that led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East.

The tension between liberalism, realism, and socialism/Communism was so distinctive in the WW I era and beyond that schools of political science began to spring up in an effort to Darwinize the science of politics. The better adapted ideology would reign. The entire twentieth century has been about conflicts between polar opposites, relieving tensions between groups; self-deception for the purpose of placating ourselves to one degree or another. American and Russian leaders have at various times throughout that period declared that the political ideology of each would overcome the others.⁵³ This may have been the most violent and precipitous era of warfare, both hot and Cold, with long-term implications for our national interests based on John O. Beahrs’ studied view of that landscape. The scholars cited here support the assertion that the duplicity of realism has undermined the unity of liberalism.

53. Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Volume 3: Statesman, 1953-1964*, ed. Sergei Khrushchev, 3 vols, (University Park, Penn State Press, 2007), 893. The actual verbal context was: "Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will dig you in" In his subsequent public speech Khrushchev declared: "[...] We must take a shovel and dig a deep grave, and bury colonialism as deep as we can."

The French deceived the British, the Russians, and the Italians, regarding their intentions in the Middle East. The US government deceived themselves about the prospects for peace in a world that was too close to its colonial past and too far removed from modern liberal ideologies of today.⁵⁴ Moreover, the US government was constrained by isolationist tendencies that had animated US foreign policy since the Revolutionary War. In fact, the only groups who did not deceive themselves were the Muslims of the Islamic world. They were all too aware of the duplicity being foisted upon them by the western world and what containment of Communism entailed for their future. Clearly, what cannot be denied is that for centuries, nations have exercised a level of political self-interest that undermines our modern-day ideas of transparency and is a remnant of realism. I assert that Lincoln, Steinbruner, McGwire, Mueller and Fromkin, Gaddis and even Kennan, would agree with this line of thought. Kupchan, Karabell, and Hermann concur.

Part of Sykes' problem "was that he did not know which of his colleagues were in favor of what; he did not understand that some of them kept their motives and plans hidden. In confidential conferences and correspondence with trusted British colleagues, he felt he could express his views openly and fully, and wrongly assumed that they felt the same way." Faced with professional and bureaucratic self-preservation from his own peers, Sykes could never understand the simple previously quoted maxim of Abraham Lincoln - that "if we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge, what to do, and how to do it." Sykes was a fervent advocate of British Imperialism without regard to consequence or the ability to transcend the present and inform the future. He failed to grasp the notion that every

54. Fromkin, 319.

action has an equal and opposite reaction and the political implications of misinformation could alter the balance of power in a profound and lasting way.

French Premier Georges Clemenceau understood that fact no better. His representative, François Georges Picot, had come to London in 1915 in order to muzzle the Russians. Reflecting the notions of The Great Game and presaging the idea of the buffer states of Eastern Europe post World War II, Picot declared that “[t]he French zone was to provide Britain with a shield against Russia. France and Russia would be balanced one against the other, so that the Middle East, like the Great Wall of China, would protect the British Middle East from attack by the Russian barbarians to the North.”⁵⁵ The British and the French were woefully underprepared to do so either, and the result was the antagonism of the people of the Islamic world with implications for future endeavors by the West in the Middle East.

The unintended consequences of those past policy decisions have come back to thwart the best expectations of US foreign policy in the present because it was predicated on an unstable foundation of real-politick. Realpolitik is about stability in theory but that foundation was undermined by the flawed notion that coercion of the Arab states to serve as nothing more than a natural barrier of sand between antagonists was every bit as flawed as the Soviets use of Eastern Europe to do the same. Yet containment of Communism, as first described by the few scribbled notes of George Kennan in response to a misunderstood ideology, was the basis for an entire half century of misguided implementation of foreign policy. Rather, US policy-makers could have cultivated effective partners in the Middle East in Afghanistan as they did during the Soviet occupation there.

55. Fromkin, 191.

Chapter Two: The Proxy State System and the Balance of Power

This second chapter examines the historic forces that sowed the seeds of discontent in the Middle East as a function of the proxy state system instituted there by the two superpowers of the Cold War: the United States and the Soviet Union. Having considered the historical forces of Europe at work in the Middle East in Chapter I - I now turn my attention to those at work in the Arab world. Concurrently, I also note the beginning of the failure of socialism/Communism outside of the borders of the Soviet Union and the increasingly anachronistic nature of the Truman Doctrine. The Cold War gave rise to feelings of empowerment in the Middle East that crystallized around the idea that, for the first time in centuries, the people of the Arab world potentially held their own future in their hands. No longer content to be pawns of the West the states of the Middle East began, haltingly at first, to take control of their own destinies - a slow process to be sure but one which would change the nature of American national priorities.

When President Jimmy Carter toasted Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, calling Iran an “island of stability” in the Middle East, it was not because the president had pressured the Shah to do the bidding of the US Pahlavi had been acquainted with eight presidents as far back as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and had actively lobbied for fighter jets, naval assets and military equipment over the course of his monarchy, including a state-of-the-art radar system to safeguard Iranian airspace from Soviet bombers. His objective was to secure the leadership of Iran in the Persian Gulf and Middle East. “The US also trained Iranian pilots and built several intelligence gathering outposts in the northern mountains of Iran, designed to track Soviet Missile tests and

intercept Soviet military communications.”⁵⁶ The relationship between Tehran and Washington was mutually advantageous and had been sought and nurtured by both Iran and the United States. Iran was considered a stalwart supporter of the US

While it is obvious that the state of Israel, which owed its very existence to the billions of dollars in foreign aid from the United States, would always be a partner in the Middle East, what was not clear after World War II was the direction of the political winds throughout the Arab world. The Israeli question was considerable but I am not convinced that it could not have been overcome by winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim people four decades before the fall of the USSR and the Eastern-bloc. Here again, the containment policy/doctrine was a factor. Even though the Americans need not have feared Arab capitulation to the Soviet Union (the Arabs had no desire to become Kremlin satellites after all), successive US administrations made every effort to forcefully coerce the Middle Eastern states into the pro-democracy/capitalist camp. They engaged that process while supporting the state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian diaspora. That was the monumental miscalculation of US policy-makers and resulted in an arms race in the region that destabilized the Middle East for decades. Yet I maintain that the enmity between the Arab states and Israel could have been overcome or avoided completely. Arab-Israeli conflicts were also among the unintended consequences of the Truman Doctrine’s policy of containment.

For his part, Nuri al-Sa’id, a former premiere of Iraq and signatory to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, (which, as a step toward greater independence, granted Britain the unlimited right to station its armed forces in and transit military units through Iraq) also courted the United States’ arms shipments. Soviet involvement in Iran’s domestic agenda had fueled Nuri’s suspicions of

56. Rosenberg, 54.

the Communist state and drew Iraq closer to the West. Those “arms shipments would focus the [Iraqi] officers’ attention on a professional task, professionally conceived, and would be a visible proof of the relative advantage of alignment with the Western powers.”⁵⁷ The efforts of the West, led by the US, were geared toward stoking the fear of the Arab states of the Soviet Union in an effort to serve the foreign policy directives of the Truman Doctrine, not the agenda of the Arabs or the Persians. This was the first fundamental failure of the policy of containment. The US used its allies in the Middle East for its own agenda without regard to its commitments to those proxy states.

Conversely, unlike the foreign distractions faced by Iran, Iraq and other Middle Eastern states, Saudi Arabia was beholden to the US for its protection from internal groups that threatened to topple the House of Saud which has ruled the oil-rich Monarchy since World War I. It is important to note, however, that the protection of the ruling family in Saudi Arabia was purely pragmatic and served the needs of the United States policy of containment of Communism just as well as the outwardly focused efforts of the US into the other Arab states in the region. The location of vast amounts of the world’s oil reserves in Saudi Arabia also made the kingdom a strategic target that the United States shepherded for its own national interests. The six-month oil embargo of 1973 – 1974 clarified to the US Congress that a fine line must be drawn between the political support for Israel and that of the House of Saud. This was the second fundamental failure of the containment strategy. The US failed to honor its own commitment abroad to the concept upon which it was based; democracy. However, economic imperatives

⁵⁷ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq – Second Edition*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000,, UK. Cambridge, UK, p. UP, 2000), 141.

were prioritized over the political (but obviously parallel) objective of containing Soviet expansion.

President Jimmy Carter reaffirmed that stance after what he had called the “island of stability” in Iran fell to students in Tehran and the Shah was forced to flee. It was by then becoming clear to American leaders that internal threats to states like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran were every bit as serious as the threats posed by Moscow and the Red Army to the United States. Indeed, as previously noted, the rising tide of discontent in the Arab world was creating a new grassroots force that was fueled by the discontent of the Arab people and informed by the manipulations of the American and Soviet governments alike. The thinking of the US government at the time was that Soviet socialism would ultimately fail, but there seemed to be little indication of that before 1989. With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Islamic fundamentalist and extremist factions within the Muslim world turned their attentions to the sole remaining antagonist to the interests of pan-Islamism: the United States. This was the third failure of containment: the absence of the Communist threat, the foundation of US policy in the region, left a conspicuous void for US policy-makers. Containment had coveted and supported Middle Eastern allies against a common enemy, Soviet expansionism. After 1991 that common enemy was gone.

American efforts to line up states like Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia against the USSR were being met with an internal reaction in those states that had been the unintended consequence of the creation of Israel. The manipulation of Middle Eastern domestic affairs (which was viewed by many in the Arab world as an intolerable interference) and reaction in the Muslim world to the subjugation of the Arab people by their despotic leaders at the behest of the US became the overarching interest in the Muslim world. “After the fall of the Shah in 1979, and the hostage

crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan . . . the United States pursued three objectives in the Persian Gulf: to keep the Soviet Union out . . . to contain Islamic Revolution, and to protect the oil fields and assure the free flow of inexpensive oil.”⁵⁸ Indeed, Carter facilitated that policy by ordering the formation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force in March 1980 to protect US vital interests by all means necessary, including military options if need be. It would become apparent to Middle Eastern states that the foremost agenda being served was that of the economic interests of the United States.

Clearly the USSR was still a viable threat to the US in the mid 1980s, as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan demonstrated. And as the Islamic revolution in Iran was unfolding, the Red Army was committing atrocities in Afghanistan that were being quietly ignored worldwide (even as Americans watched in horror as 53 Americans were held hostage in the capital of Tehran). At the same time “entire Soviet divisions were sweeping into highly populated valleys [in Afghanistan], killing everything they could find – people and livestock – and destroying irrigation and crops.”⁵⁹ The invasion of Afghanistan was, however, a Soviet reaction to the containment policy in which the US was engaged throughout the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Thus, it can be said to have been yet another consequence of the extension of the Truman Doctrine into that region.

In March 1979 the US backed a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. The Soviet leadership saw the agreement as a major advantage for the United States. One Soviet newspaper

⁵⁸ Mohsen M. Milani, *The Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic, Second Edition*, (Denver: Westview Press, 1994, p.), 207.

⁵⁹ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, (New York: Grove Press, New York, NY, 2003, p.), 106.

stated that Egypt and Israel were now “gendarmes of the Pentagon.”⁶⁰ The Soviets viewed the treaty not only as a peace agreement between their erstwhile allies in Egypt and the US which supported Israelis, but also as a military pact. In addition, the US sold more than 5,000 missiles to Saudi Arabia and also supplied the Royalists in the North Yemen Civil War against the Communist rebellion there. Moreover, the Soviet Union's previously strong relations with Iraq had recently soured. In June 1978 Iraq began entering into friendlier relations with the Western world and buying French and Italian made weapons, though the vast majority still came from the Soviet Union, their Warsaw Pact allies, and China.⁶¹ It was becoming clear that the pressure that was being exerted on the Soviet Union was beginning to have pronounced effects. Rather than scale back the containment policy, however, the Reagan administration, with the assistance of Republicans in Congress, chose to ramp up both anti-Communist rhetoric as well as arms sales to Middle Eastern states. The backlash by the Soviet Union against that policy was the Afghan invasion. This was not the result that was intended.

There were also considerations of regional strategy influencing the Soviet decision to intervene in Afghanistan. “The Kremlin wanted to control Afghanistan in order to strengthen its hand with neighbors, notably Pakistan and Iran, which were openly hostile toward Soviet policy not only in Afghanistan but elsewhere in Asia. The Kremlin believed also that Pakistan's conservative government was clandestinely aiding the Afghan insurgents.”⁶² The encirclement of Pakistan by the Soviet Union and the pro-Soviet states like India and a contingent of Afghans

60 . Minton F. Goldman, *Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan: Roots & Causes*, Polity, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring, 1984), pp. 384-403.

61. Ibid. p. 394.

62. Ibid, p. 390.

make that belief by the Russians plausible. “These circumstances had led Pakistan, to the Kremlin's considerable annoyance, to befriend China and to look to the United States and other Western countries for military assistance.”⁶³ When the Reagan administration agreed to sell F-16 fighter jets to the Pakistanis it was with the understanding that the F-16 sale was good for the Pakistanis and the Afghanis and, better still, bad for the Soviets.⁶⁴ The hallmarks of the realist theory of band-wagoning were evident throughout the region, with the United States lining up their proxies against the Soviet Union and the Soviet client states in the region lined up against the US Control of Afghanistan effectively gave the Soviets control over two of Iran’s borders and created a base of operations from which to launch a full scale strike on Iran in an effort to take control of the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets might have been a more important event than anyone dared to admit at the time and could have had broader repercussions than anyone could have imagined. That is why the Reagan administration felt that it must continue to undermine the Soviet position throughout the Middle East. However, it would have been better for the US to have encouraged the Muslim world to counter the USSR and keep those Muslim states antagonistic toward one another rather than toward the US The Arab concept of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” would have had greater effect and been better understood in the Arab world than the economic and political aspects that containment was designed to defend against.

It is easier to look back in retrospect and declare that the international community should have seen the looming problems in the Middle East and the Soviet Union. And while some scholars did, most were taken by complete surprise when, first, the Eastern European states

63. Ibid, p. 391.

64. Crile, p. 113.

disentangled themselves from Soviet dominance in 1989 and, then, when the USSR itself imploded two years later. There were those who had already been posing questions about the Soviet Union, such as: “Are its problems, that all agree exist, so severe that it is susceptible to pressure? What are the limits to Soviet capacities? Does the Soviet Union have opportunities relative to others or not? Are its aggressive and imperial acts symptomatic of perceived threat or perceived opportunity?”⁶⁵ The fact is that the unintended consequences of Reagan’s effort to undermine the Soviet Union also created a vacuum of power within the region that Islamic fundamentalists filled with relative ease. This is not the level of predictability that many adherents of realism saw as the virtue of the embrace of power politics when dealing with the Soviets. However, the real threat to the US would be the decline of the Soviet Union so precipitously that a power vacuum was created. As the USSR crumbled and the United States began to withdraw the balance of power in the region shifted. That balance of power had sustained stability in the Gulf States throughout most of the twentieth century. The failure of Communism was the foundation for the rise of Islam against the West. Had realism truly ruled the day then this could have been avoided by balancing the two antagonists against one another. That is the final and most grotesque failure of containment. It is inconceivable that no one in the US government could predict that possible turn of events.

Nineteen seventy-nine seems to have been the turning point for many Middle Eastern states and actors. During the Carter administration the American embassy was overtaken by student protestors and the captives taken there were held for 444 days. The Iranian revolution overthrew the Shah of Iran and his monarchy. “When the Ayatollah Khomeini established in Iran

65. Richard K. Herrmann, “American Perceptions of Soviet Foreign Policy: Reconsidering Three Competing Perspectives,” *International Society of Political Psychology* 6, no. 3 (1985): p. 378.

the first Islamic republic in history and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and began killing Muslims *en masse*, few who knew [Osama] bin Laden could have ever imagined him emerging one day as the undisputed leader of Sunni Islamic jihadists, the architect of the deadliest terrorist attacks in American history, and the charismatic hero of Radicals around the globe be they Sunnis or Shias.”⁶⁶ This confluence of events laid the groundwork for the paradigm shift from the primacy of the containment of Communism to that of the recognition of Islamic fundamentalism as the new unknown variable. For in truth, the revolution in Iran as well as the eventual defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan, albeit with American aid, was a turning point in the awakening of the Muslim mindset that inspired a new sense of purpose in the Islamic world.

Besides Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, other states in the Middle East were drawn into conflict through proximity to Israel (and the subsequent absorption of the Palestinian refugees after each conflict there), or war with Israel and the conflicts that arose as a result of pressure between these states. “Although it is often forgotten today, the Syrian army entered Lebanon in 1976 with US encouragement and tacit Israeli agreement. Washington and Jerusalem hoped that the Syrians could stop Lebanon's 1975-1976 civil war.”⁶⁷ Yet the backdrop for all of this activity was the US/USSR dichotomy that defined their separate ideologies and the use of these Middle Eastern pawns to further their own agendas. Syria exemplifies this new multivariate relationship.

On at least two occasions Damascus sought guarantees of Soviet military support, should further fighting break out between Lebanese sects in the Shuf Mountains. “The first request was made, according to reliable sources, during the Druze-Lebanese army fighting in the Shuf

66. Rosenberg, 101.

67. Zeev Schiff, “Dealing with Syria,” *Foreign Policy*: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, No. 55 (1984), 92.

Mountains in September 1983, when US firepower directly supported Beirut's units. After the truck-bomb attack on the US Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut one month later, the Syrians again asked the Soviets how Moscow would react if Syria countered American retaliatory attacks on Syrian targets by action against the US fleet. Moscow told Damascus to stay calm.”⁶⁸ The Soviets were in no position to fight the United States, even indirectly, on yet another front. Economically they were strapped and the war in Afghanistan was by no means a *fait accompli*.

In 1982 the Israeli army invaded Lebanon after Israel received what it understood as a green light from Washington to act against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in southern Lebanon. After the war ended, the United States was also drawn into the Lebanese morass. “But the Soviets added that if Syria itself were attacked, the USSR would use its military power and, according to one report, would not even shy from using tactical nuclear weapons. Even if this threat was simply part of a war of nerves to deter Israel, it reveals the extent of Moscow's own nervousness.”⁶⁹ It also underscores the tenuous nature of the situation in the Middle East during the first four years of the Reagan administration. The second four years were not exactly a watershed for diplomacy either.

As previously stated, perceptions about the Soviet Union by the American government were not indicative of what was really happening behind the walls of the bureaucratic state. Richard Herrmann raised the question in 1985 that if “perceptions of the Soviet Union really set up a theory-driven process that interprets data as consistent with the general theory and thus

68. Ibid., 93.

69. Schiff, 94

determines policy preferences?”⁷⁰ This is something that we must consider carefully because the US intelligence agencies responsible for those perceptions were widely off the mark. How then to explain why the policy of containment was so carefully guarded for over forty years vis-à-vis the Middle East?

Herrmann notes the contention that the perceptions and personalities that dominated the White House during the Reagan administration were the most important variables explaining US foreign policy after the Cold War. Yet, in his study Herrmann found that the Soviet schema “did not predict policy choices in the Middle East very well.”⁷¹ Herrmann further concluded that the problem with predicting policy choices in the Middle East suggests that it is important to look carefully at definitions - and that other variables besides Soviet containment should have been considered. Attitudes toward Israel, for example, cut across the belief systems of many American politicians with consequences for foreign policy initiatives in the Middle East. The Reagan White House was firmly set against codling Moscow and the entire generation of U. S. presidents between Truman and George Herbert Walker Bush had been socialized to abhor the Communist ideology with obvious repercussions for our foreign policy debate. Thus, regardless of the efficacy of the policy of containment in a part of the world that clearly detested the “Godless” Soviet Union, the long line of US presidents took up the chant of containment as the focus of the American foreign policy framework. They applied it to the Middle East regardless of the fact that it only further alienated Muslims in the region and undermined the more serious concerns of the United States. Moreover, if Herrmann and Spiegel are to be believed, they did so

70 Richard K. Herrmann, “The Power of Perceptions in Foreign-Policy Decision Making: Do Views of the Soviet Union Determine the Policy Choices of American Leaders?” *American Journal of Political Science*, 30, no. 4 (1986), 841.

71. Ibid. 841.

because they had been conditioned to do so as a function of their socialization, not as a function of what would be in the best interest of the United States. Reagan compounded that problem with Iran-Contra.

Hostage-taking in the Middle East reached record proportions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. On January 20, 1980, the day that Ronald Reagan was inaugurated, the Iranian hostages were freed. Following the imprisonment of members of *al-Dawa*, an exiled Iraqi political party turned militant organization, more hostages were taken throughout the Middle East, many of whom were American. The Iran-Contra affair began, ostensibly, to improve US-Iranian relations after the Islamic Revolution and the break in diplomatic relations between the two states. Israel was to have supplied weapons to a relatively moderate and politically influential group in Iran while the US would resupply Israel and accept payment from the Israelis. The Iranian recipients of the weapons promised to do everything in their power to achieve the release of six US hostages, who were being held by the Lebanese Shia Islamist group Hezbollah, and were unknowingly connected to the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution. The plan eventually deteriorated into an arms-for-hostages scheme, in which members of the executive branch illegally sold weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of the American hostages. Large modifications to the plan were put in place by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council in late 1985, in which a portion of the proceeds from the weapon sales was diverted to fund anti-Sandinista (Contras), in Nicaragua. Thus, the policy of containment was dictated by events in far flung threads of the Middle East, Latin America, and Washington D.C.⁷²

72. Mayer, Jane and Doyle McManus, *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984-1988*. Houghton Mifflin, 1988, 292 & 437. "Teflon president not a compliment".

If the “new Arab” mindset came to fruition after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war then President Reagan’s dream of defeating the Soviets achieved containment as the decade of the 1980s approached its end. Ironically enough, this Arab mindset would begin its turnaround, after the despair of consecutive losses to the Israelis in the 1960s and ‘70s just two one or two decades before the fall of the USSR.⁷³ But why did Communism collapse as a governing system in the first place? “Addressing the question, most Western commentators have emphasized longings for freedom and the economic superiority of modern capitalism. The difficulty is not that these explanations are wrong, but that they are too general. British and American economists, businessmen, and publicists have celebrated the triumph of market principles over bureaucratized 'socialism'.”⁷⁴ Charles S. Maier did not however concur with that assessment; “socialist economics have not always failed so clamorously.”⁷⁵ The postwar reconstruction of Eastern

Domestically, the Iran-Contra scandal precipitated a drop in President Reagan's popularity as his approval ratings saw the largest single drop for any US president in history 17, in November 1986, according to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll. The "Teflon President" as Reagan had been nicknamed by critics, survived the scandal, however, and by January 1989 a Gallup poll was recording a 64% approval rating, the highest ever recorded for a departing President at that time. This was in part because of his continued effort to undermine communism in Eastern Europe as well as his work with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev to reduce the nuclear arsenals of both the US and the USSR during the Geneva Summit. While pursuing the placement of the final nail in the coffin of communism,

73. Mayer and McManus, 292 & 437.

74. Both Joel Rosenberg and Raphael Patai (in his monograph *The Arab Mind*) describe the 1973 Arab defeat to the Israelis as a moment of shame and humiliation that forever changed the focus of the Arab mind from one of defeat to one of despair. Rosenberg goes on to state that the insurgency in Afghanistan and consequent defeat of the Soviets, the debacle of the hostage rescue from Iran in 1980 and the departure of the US Marines from Lebanon after the Marine Corps barracks bombing in 1983, were turning points in the Arab psyche as well – though, in those cases as moments of pride.

75. Charles S. Maier, “The Collapse of Communism: Approaches for a Future History, Oxford University Press. History Workshop J (1991) 31(1): 34-59.doi: 10.1093/hwj/31.1.34

Europe after World War II, which was considerable, was organized through the socialist system of the Soviet Union and growth rates, according to the author, were comparable to those in the West between the 1950s and the 1970s. While acknowledging that the baseline for that growth was obviously less efficient than that of the West, it was, nevertheless, a workable system.

Maier went on to point out that the lack of the concepts of liberty and dissent in the Soviet sphere was antithetical to the political growth of a society. He argued that the dissent that did occur may have also contributed of the fall of Communism in the region. “Should not the inherent force of freedom, democracy, and civil courage be accepted as explanation enough of the breakthrough? Have these events not renewed the pre-1914 idea that history is the story of liberty? The difficulty is that history is not always the story of liberty, even in the modern age. Historical explanation is not complete unless it specifies why developments occurred when they did, and not earlier or later. It requires temporal determination.⁷⁶ Maier echoes my analysis of the twentieth century and the nature of cause and effect that cannot be predictable in such a scientific way as to be explanatory. The consequences of American foreign policy are not always clear, even in hindsight. Nevertheless, some very acute minds did indeed articulate that premise.

Some have argued that the Reagan administration outspent the Soviets with programs like the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This addresses only a part of the total package of crises that Maier declared metastasized within the Soviet regime and worked in tandem with the unintended consequences of containment. After Khrushchev was deposed in 196 the Soviets clamped down on their own dissenters and in 1968 Moscow organized an invasion of

76. Maier, 35.

Czechoslovakia. By 1981 Moscow's studied ambiguity reinforced the Polish crackdown on Solidarity. When Gorbachev abandoned those methods that had been used to subjugate the people of Eastern Europe he fell prey to what Mohsen Milani argues is the hallmark of revolution throughout history; the relaxation of tyranny against the citizens of a repressive state can, sometimes, have the unintended consequence of giving the people of that state all the inspiration that they need to undermine the political apparatus from below in a short and often violent revolution that changes the power structure and redistributes it quickly to those who seek change. The “velvet revolutions” of Eastern Europe were by no means the classic textbook definition of revolution, nor were they excessively violent, but change did come at the hands of Gorbachev’s unwillingness to crackdown on the dissenters.⁷⁷

If 1979 was a watershed moment for global change because of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets and the pressure on the USSR by the Reagan administration, in another decade a further high water mark was realized as the failing Soviet ideology was discredited. Islamic fundamentalism strengthened and the threat to the national security of the United States intensified. 1989 saw the failure of the Soviet Union to contain the uprisings in Eastern Europe (a precursor to the failure of the entire system of socialism in Russia two years later), the defeat and subsequent extraction of the Red Army from Afghanistan (which gave the *mujahedeen* fighting there a tremendous sense of empowerment), and the transition of the Reagan administration to the first Bush administration on January 20th of that year.

The Soviet collapse was a reaction to forces for transformation that have gripped West and East alike, Maier concludes, but which Western Europeans (and North Americans) had

77. Milani, p. 58.

responded to earlier and thus with less cataclysmic upheaval. The most compelling pressure was economic. “As a beleaguered President Gorbachev told the Lithuanian Communist Party in mid-January 1990, ‘it is politics that follows economics and not vice versa.’”⁷⁸ This parallels the argument that history provides a multivariate explanation for the failure of the socialist systems in Eastern Europe: functions of economics, political forces that were being shaped by current events, and the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism that was already becoming a force for change throughout the Middle East. When George Herbert Walker Bush took the oath of office in 1989, with the same refrain of a kinder, gentler nation, he unwittingly took the reins of a new world order for which he was unprepared.

Underlying the US/USSR dichotomy at the time was the Iran-Iraq war. That conflict, which began in September of 1980, was one of the most gruesome events since World War II. The estimated death toll includes more than a million lives and another million refugees as well as thousands of prisoners of war taken by both sides. The costs to each country were staggering. The infrastructural damage to both countries was enormously high and the effects on regional stability were devastating. “One group of analysts argues that the primary cause was the dispute about the 105-kilometer-long Shatt al-Arab boundary. Another group contends that this dispute was a pretext for the escalation of hostilities of other sorts, all of which were non-territorial. Both explanations of the war's origins are inadequate, because they fail to address the full range of causal factors.”⁷⁹ But the use of these two states as proxy nations and pawns was a policy that no longer bore fruit. One thing is certain, the United States was complicit in the prosecution of that

78. Maier cites an article in the *New York Times*, 15 Jan., 1990, p. A9, in which Gorbachev was quoted.

79. Will D. Swearingen, “Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War,” *Geographical Review*, 78, no. 4 (1988), 405.

war inasmuch as it served the purpose of the divide and conquer attitude in which the Reagan administration engaged regarding the Middle East. Paraphrasing Donald Rumsfeld, Arvind Rajagopal has asserted that “the idea that the US can employ allies when required and turn away from them when its mission demands . . . ignores the fact that allies are not any longer just distant nations.”⁸⁰ This underscores two factors that resonate within this thesis. First, that globalization demands a new political paradigm and, second, that the dogmas of the quiet past are, once again, insufficient to the stormy present. A new paradigm is essential and a new US foreign policy is required; one that emphasizes international law in a constructive manner.

Five centuries, and as many treaties, had determined the borders between Iran and Iraq, the boundaries of which had been overseen by both Russia and Britain with (as early as 1908) oil being the basis for claims. “In four different treaties Iraq suffered a significant loss of some of the most important of its national territory. On each occasion, the loss resulted from political coercion by external Western powers. Given this legacy and the especially humiliating character of the 1975 treaty, it is reasonable to understand why Iraq might have gone to war in 1980 when it felt that power and opportunity were in its favor.”⁸¹ That both Iraq and Iran were used as pawns by both of the superpowers is clear. The salient issue for this thesis, however, is that these historical precedents fomented an intense distaste for the Western powers which had colluded to usurp the sovereignty of the Persian Gulf states, one that was fueled by earlier Western escapades in the Middle East and one that would be framed by the containment policy in the twentieth century. It was both the economic aspect that petroleum deposits in the Persian Gulf

80 Ibid, 405.

81. Ibid., 411.

represented as well as the political containment of the Soviet Union that were the historical bases of the Iran-Iraq War. The United States only confounded the problem by arming both sides.

Gregory Sanjian, in an article entitled *Arms and Arguments: Modeling the Effects of Weapons Transfers on Subsystem Relationships*, asked the question “did they (the US and the USSR supplied arms to both Iran and Iraq) contribute to political cooperation and balanced military relationships or did they perpetuate conflictual and imbalanced relations?”⁸² Sanjian conducted a study which explored the impact of US, USSR, and certain third-party (chiefly the United Kingdom and People’s Republic of China) arms transfers on Iran and Iraq within the context of their political and military relationships during the Cold War. The model examined by the author’s study consisted of two state transformation equations that described the evolution of relations between arms importers. Testing on the models over the period 1950-91 shows the UK to have been a balancer of military relations in the Persian Gulf, the US and China, on the other hand, emerge as a consistently an imbalanced nuance. The tests also suggested that the USSR behaved conservatively, for the most part reacting to US use of arms transfers as a foreign policy tool. This study of imbalance further informs this thesis. It underscores how the US used its weapons production ability as a tool for foreign policy with implications for its prestige in the Middle East. It did so out of a sense of pragmatism. Yet that pragmatic aspect of the use of Middle Eastern states as proxies for war; be it political or economic, is no longer viable and has only served to further alienate the Islamic people. Sanjian’s research bears this out.

Arms transfers from the US to Iran began in the late 1940s and increased dramatically with the Nixon Administration. The US emerged as a destabilizer of the military relations

82 . Gregory S. Sanjian, “Arms and Arguments: Modeling the Effects of Weapons Transfers on Subsystem Relationships,” *Political Research Quarterly*, 54, no. 2 (2001), 285-309.

between Iran and Iraq, Sanjian has determined. The USSR, on the other hand, became a stabilizer because its deliveries to Iraq eased the imbalance between the importers.”⁸³ It was this duplicitous behavior on the part of the United States that would serve to alienate many in both Iraq and Iran with consequences for the future. “Cold War imperatives and each actor's role during that epoch probably account for many of the findings presented in [Sanjian’s] research. The US appears to have been a very determined exporter, increasing weapons shipments when possibly it should not have (e.g., to Iran in the 1970s), and using arms transfers to break its opponent's hold on a client-states. The USSR, in contrast, was more conservative, seldom providing weaponry to either the past or present friends of the US”⁸⁴ Obviously the US had an obligation to serve its own interests but these destabilizing arms shipments to both Iran and Iraq only proved antithetical to the possibility of a working relationship with both and fueled a growing resentment in the Middle East for the United States in general.

I have laid out the historical factors that explain the shift in Soviet strength throughout the Cold War. I have done so with an eye toward how the changing role of two superpowers affected Mid-East relations. Moreover, I have made clear how this alienated the Arab states that were used as pawns by both the US and the USSR and how that fueled Islamic *jihad*. Within these discussions I have also noted some of the causes for the failure of Soviet socialism and the rationalities for Truman Doctrine. I now move on to the emergence of the US as a global

83. Developments during the Khomeini era also contribute to the findings on the models. Arms supplies from the US to Iran had ceased (as relations between the countries deteriorated), while the USSR stepped up its weapons shipments to Iraq. The USSR's role as a subsystem stabilizer developed further as its arms transfers helped Iraq overcome Iran's prior military advantage. The US tried to restore its standing in the region by arming Iraq in 1982-83, and then again in 1987-88, but these supplies were small in relation to what the USSR had been providing.

84. Sanjian, 291.

hegemon and the power vacuum that was created as a function of the success of the containment policy.

Chapter Three: The Fall of Communist Russia and the Rise of Islamic Extremism

The years between 1989 and 2001 saw the fall of Communism throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan the United States reduced its own commitment to containment in the Middle Eastern. And as the foreign policy of realism of the Reagan years gave way to the achievement of that goal the Bush (41) administration dealt with the rising tide of Islamic identity and fundamentalist notions of Islam throughout the Muslim world. In the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the United States and the end of the Soviet threat there arose a new form of Islamic identity that relied on iconic forms of Muslim symbology and touchstones that incorporated the history of Islam against the crusaders of the West. This geopolitical about-face by the two superpowers of the world left these forces to incorporate that symbolism with the organizational techniques that they had learned from their foreign subsidizers with complicated implications for the future of the Muslim world. Popular mobilization and Islamic revivalism took center stage within the Middle East and ignited a series of conflicts that pitted the Arab states against Israel, West versus East, and Sunni against Shiite in a pivotal decade of influence and dominance along boundaries between states like Iraq and Iran, Pakistan and Iran, and Syria and Lebanon to name a few. Into this conflagration the US sought to divide the pan-Islamic movement by resupplying various Mid-East states with military support and financial aid. The backlash of that policy was the rise of popular Islam in which movements such as al Qaeda thrived. This was another of the unintended consequences of the

Truman Doctrine and containment. This third chapter seeks to explain the rise of fundamentalist Islam's usurpation of Western technology to spread symbolism specific to the Muslim world.

Within this new realist environment groups like the Taliban came unto their own with a jihadist message that demanded a response to the Western "abuse" of Muslims. Furthermore, technology and asymmetric warfare were engaged in by these groups in order to thwart the control of the US government - which still did not have a viable replacement for the Truman Doctrine of containment until the election of Bill Clinton in 1992 and the embrace of the liberal Democratic Peace Theory. Though well intentioned, it was too little too late. Regarding the democratic enlargement ideal as the antithesis of containment, Clinton set the course of US foreign policy along the lines of an economic platform that maintained that democracies do not fight one another and international trade is a form of geopolitical glue. What that foreign policy failed to take into account was the fact that democracy cannot be exported the way that other commodities are - and the notion that the Muslim world must make their own peace with the idea that globalization was upon them. It was not simply a matter of US hegemony that demanded that they reconcile that fact with Islam. On this matter the US policy-makers were behind the curve. Clinton merely recast containment through the exportation of swords into the exportation of plowshares. It was containment by any other name that had only changed to an economic, rather than military, form.

On January of 1990, after the failure of the Soviet systems in Eastern Europe, after the Soviet departure from Afghanistan, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union itself by 1991, it was very clear that the dogmas of the quiet past were insufficient to the stormy present of the modern era. The expulsion of the Soviets from Afghanistan demanded revised foreign policy in order to meet the implications of the future but was met with apathy at best. President Clinton

spoke of a peace dividend with no acknowledgement of the looming specter of Islamic fundamentalism and little understanding of the implications of the Soviet threat.

It is no secret that the United States abandoned its former proxy/client states throughout the Muslim world after the demise of the Soviet Union; but in discussing the expulsion of the Soviets from Afghanistan, Joel Rosenberg noted that after the unflinching resolve of the Afghan people to fight the Communists in their own country the US abdicated its well-earned goodwill in the region by cutting any ties with that nation afterward. The opportunity to aid the Afghans was wasted by a complacent US government whose only agenda to that time was to thwart the Soviet. We had an opportunity, Rosenberg argued, to assist the Afghans by allocating funds for schools, roads, electrical plants, and fresh water wells, but passed on that opportunity in a short-sighted foreign policy that was myopic at best. "I'm not saying we should have done everything for them," Rosenberg asserts, "but we could have helped. We should have helped; but we did not. Once the Soviets pulled out, we pulled out too."⁸⁵ That vacuum created a fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism in a part of the world where it would have been more far-sighted to continue our presence with policy implications for the next three decades. At the very least we should have been engaged in the region. This realization dawned slowly however in the US and was met with antipathy by a Republican Congress in Washington.

The new world order that George H. W. Bush (41) had promised the American electorate was long overdue, but met the fate of a single minded focus on Communism and not the long term interests of the United States. The documentation regarding the success of the policy of

85. Rosenberg, 254.

containment, vis-à-vis the Soviets, is clear.⁸⁶ Yet the long-term interests of the United States were not served by the antagonizing Western notions that it inflicted throughout the Middle East solely as a matter of US interests. Furthermore, the withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East, as a function of the efficacy continuing containment in a new form, created a similar vacuum that manifested a new identity of rage against the West in the Arab states. To that end, conservative Muslim leaders and clerics (to identify just a few) began to assert themselves as representatives for *jihad* against the Judeo-Christian powers whom they asserted were the next enemy of Islam. They did so by carefully crafting their message; usurping Arab and Islamic symbols and iconology. And they did so because the government of the United States frittered away a perfect opportunity to further engage groups that had every reason to suspect the US after abandoning them when they had completed the US goal of containment of the Soviets. Containment was, these defenders of the faith announced, merely a continuation of the crusader imperatives that had been established a millennium earlier and had underscored the worst fears of the Islamic faithful; they could trust no one but themselves and Allah. American withdrawal from the Middle East secured that perception and fundamentalist clerics recognized an opportunity to paint the US as the latest threat to Islam.

By using well understood Islamic precepts, these rising leaders of conservative Islam attracted followers to their cause and sought to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of both the American and Soviet governments who only regarded the Middle East strategically for its oil reserves. Moreover, the Middle Eastern states, having learned the organizational techniques of

86. For a much more in depth understanding of the facts surrounding the US successes in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan see Robert O. Freedman; *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East (3rd Edition)*, in which the author lays out in detail the political machinations of both the US and the USSR in the region. Praeger Publishers, 1982.

combat and subterfuge from their American and Soviet handlers, combined those skills with the usurpation of symbols integral to Islam. They did so in order to capture the loyalties of the Muslim people. Moreover, they were able to focus Muslim's hatred of the West through extremist rhetoric geared toward popular Islam as a means for the assertion of authority. Still, the US government had no one to blame but itself when it abandoned the Muslim world's interests while never considering abandoning the isolationist/containment policies of the previous century. Arms and diplomatic aid were no substitutes for active diplomacy and the vacuum of American presence in the Muslim world was realized about the same time as the rout of the Red Army in Afghanistan. Muslim interests became more palpable during this period.

As the Soviet Union was gearing up to invade Afghanistan in 1979 the Iranian Monarchy was overthrown by radical Muslim students in Tehran and several other urban centers throughout the country. A decade prior, a little known cleric (outside of the Middle East) named Ruhollah Mussavi Khomeini, was poised to take the reins of the Islamic revolution into his own hands. As early as 1964 Bijan Jazani, a young Iranian Marxist activist, had declared that "Khomeini would most likely play a major role in any future revolutionary movement, and professor Hamid Algar wrote in 1969 that "protests in religious terms will continue to be voiced and the appeals of men such as Ayatollah Khomeini to be widely heeded."⁸⁷ That prescience was too close to the mark to be ignored today and only the US lack of ground intelligence at the time could be construed to be the cause of our failure to see that the now infamous Ayatollah Khomeini posed just as serious a threat to US interests as the USSR had just after the Second World War. "The dominant

87. Milani, 11.

Milani also, it is fair to say, points out that neither declaration should be confused with predicting a religious uprising in Iran but history informs us that this was not the case and, indeed, Khomeini was instrumental in the creation of the new Islamic Republic of Iran.

view,” according to Milani, “was that Islam had become a peripheral force” in the region.”⁸⁸ Yet what followed was the upending of American foreign policy in an area that only a year before President Jimmy Carter had described as an island of stability. In retrospect, Carter was misinformed. But whether we ran out (Afghanistan) or were run out (Iran) of the Muslim world in the last twenty years of the twentieth century, it was the resulting vacuum of a policy to replace containment that set the stage for the rise of Islamic extremism after the demise of the Soviet threat. And it was from that vacuum that the greatest source of unintended consequences in the Muslim world was precipitated and the biggest failure of American foreign policy was realized. Ironically, it is now the US that is engaged in military operations in Afghanistan today and not the Russians. The Truman Doctrine has become as conspicuous in its absence as it was in its unintended consequence as a force for the rise of anti-Western rhetoric throughout the Muslim world. Furthermore, it is now the blood and treasure of the US, not the USSR that are being lost.

That policy failure was articulated by Jane Perlez, writing for the *New York Times*, on May 17, 1992. “Once avidly wooed by Washington and Moscow with large amounts of economic aid and modern armaments, the impoverished nations of Africa,” and the Middle East, were left to fend for themselves. Since the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, the superpower rivalry had “been replaced by international indifference,”⁸⁹ Perlez further argued. Moreover, though the abandonment of these states was most evident in Africa, that scenario was repeated throughout the Middle East and

88. Ibid. p. 12.

89. Jane Perlez, “After the Cold War: Views From Africa; Stranded by Superpowers, Africa Seeks an Identity, The,” *New York Times*, Published: Sunday, (New York, NY): May 17, 1992.

South West Asia. The strategic importance of those proxy states was diminished by the very success of the Truman Doctrine. "With the end of the Cold War," Muslim dominated regions "lost whatever political luster it may have once had," Michael Chege, a Kenyan political scientist working in Zimbabwe asserts. There were no compelling geopolitical, strategic, or economic reasons other than oil "to catapult it to the top of the global economic agenda."⁹⁰ Having seen the demise of the Soviet Union the Truman Doctrine was, after 1991, wholly without merit and an anachronism. Yet there was no clear direction for the future of US foreign policy even while the rise of the Middle East, as a new threat, was becoming clear. This was inconceivable to many even as the Soviet Union crumbled.

In an earlier article, published in the *Times* on March 30, 1991, Tom Wicker exposed the deficiency in the Bush (41) administration's thinking. After the invasion of Kuwait, by neighboring Iraq (led by Saddam Hussein), George H. W. Bush fashioned a modern coalition to evict the Iraqis from the oil-rich gulf state. "Certainly the US had a military strategy that proved highly successful in evicting Iraq from Kuwait. But a military strategy is no more than an instrument of the higher political purposes for which a war supposedly is fought."⁹¹ What was needed, and yet was sorely lacking in American foreign policy regarding the Middle East (and the greater Muslim world) at this time, was a clear and coherent approach to dealing with the rising threat that to US economic interests in the region. The "recent unsettling events in the Middle East," asserted Wicker, "raise the question whether George Bush ever developed a

90. Michael Chege, "Remembering Africa," *Foreign Affairs, America and the World 1991/92*, 71, no. 1, (1991/1992), 146-163.

91. Tom Wicker, "In the Nation; A Confused Strategy," *New York Times*, (New York, NY), March 30, 1991.

coherent national strategy to guide him in the Persian Gulf War and its aftermath.”⁹² It would appear that in the absence of the strategic policy of containment that no long-term policy plan had been put in place regarding the Middle East and this lack of strategic foresight would come to haunt the United States in ways that the American people could never have imagined. “Surely it must have been clear to the Bush Administration's war planners that if Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party Government in Iraq were destroyed by the war, the resulting power vacuum would be dangerous,”⁹³ wrote Wicker at the time, and yet the administration had still not conceived of a plan to the Islamic fundamentalist challenge.

The success of the policy of containment enabled two outcomes. First, it armed our client states in the region against the Soviet threat with both conventional munitions and operational abilities. Second, it also acted as a source of irritation to the masses of those states - in that the US did so by propping up a series of authoritarian regimes whose only interest was to stay in power at the expense of their own people. Each successive US administration backed figures such as the Shah of Iran, the House of Saud, and the Baath party of Saddam Hussein. The US did so at the cost of any good will throughout the region. After having armed those despots, we turned a blind eye toward their repressive regimes in the name of US national security. The security of Israel was an integral part of that strategy but Israel is also fundamental to the safekeeping of US interests throughout the Middle East.

When containment succeeded the US government cut its presence in the region, including foreign/diplomatic aid, and left those former proxy states with huge arsenals of American made weaponry, operational techniques, and no economic aid to offset the effects of decades of

92. Ibid. p. A-1.

93. Ibid. p. A-1.

repression. The Soviets, until the collapse of the USSR, did the same. The two superpowers used the Muslim world as a global chessboard and when the game was resolved cut and run, leaving the peoples of that part of the world economically destitute. It was in that environment that the Muslim people turned to the admonitions of Sunni and Shiite clerics alike against the only remaining Great Satan; the USA.

In the absence of any clear American policy in the Middle East, the Muslim clerics of the Middle East and Persian Gulf states were able to rely on fiery rhetoric and the symbolism of Islam to incite and foment antipathy toward the West. In 1994, for example, Chris Hedges, writing for the *New York Times* reported that the revolution in Iran was at a crossroads. “The mullahs' selective use of the Muslim holy book, the Koran, to justify their domination of this nation,” Hedges wrote at the time, “has a corollary. If you replaced the Koran with copies of *Das Kapital*, and substituted a few catch phrases, what is happening might make even Molotov feel at home. Iranian critics of the current regime are already calling the process “Islamic Communism.”⁹⁴ A campaign of propaganda had been foisted upon the masses of many Muslim states supporting conservative Islamic groups’ efforts to take control of those states in which they operated. “The Iranian leadership would flinch at such comparisons,” noted Hedges, “not only because it feels that its experience is unique, but because the battle is glossed over with the language of social welfare. And its image of itself as a religious regime declares it an enemy of both Western capitalism and atheistic Communism.”⁹⁵ Nevertheless, that propaganda was

94. Chris Hedges, “The World: Body and Soul; Revolution In Iran Hits Crossroads,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), August 14, 1994.

95. *Ibid.* p. 3.

designed to assert authority in a region that had been vacated by both of the superpowers at the end of the Cold War and marked the beginning of the rise of Islam as a force for change.

The documentation of the miscalculated abandonment of the Afghans was clarified by Rosenberg when he stated unequivocally that “the provisional post-Soviet Afghan government collapsed in 1992, and into the vacuum rushed radicals, specifically Mohammed Omar – aka Mullah Omar – the ferocious and fanatical *mujahedeen* commander who one lost an eye in a firefight with the Russians but recovered and went on to found the Taliban, one of the most extreme jihadist organizations on the planet.”⁹⁶ Building a purely Islamic country, based on the Sharia law, Omar fashioned the Taliban from the ground up on the ashes of the past experiences of his dealings with both the Evil Empire of the North, the Soviet Union, and the Great Satan: of the United States.”⁹⁷ The Afghans had been raped and pillaged,” Rosenberg recalls, “and they had now been abandoned and betrayed by the infidels from the West.”⁹⁸ How that betrayal and abdication of superpower responsibility was rewarded is best understood through the lens of what Patrick D. Gaffney calls “popular Islam.”

The term “popular Islam” suggests a variety of meanings across different fields of discourse, asserts Gaffney. “Most generally, it occurs as a term of contrast. It describes one set of phenomena presumably associated with the populace or the masses against another set joined to the elite. On another level, however, as a unit of analysis, popular Islam also serves as a

96. Rosenberg, 254.

97. Raphael Patai notes that, “[a]lthough national states have been in existence within the domain of Islam for centuries, the traditional Muslim religious law, the so-called Sharia, recognizes only one indivisible Muslim entity.” 216.

98. Rosenberg, 254.

symbolic index for the assertion of authority.”⁹⁹ It covers a wide swath of cultural aspects of society including orthodoxy, authenticity, legitimacy, social justice, modernity, alignment, popularity, and accountability. “More recently, popular Islam has arisen as a concept of major significance in discussions of the ideological, social, political, and economic tensions that currently challenge many regimes and to some extent the entire international order of the contemporary Middle East.”¹⁰⁰ It is also the method by which extremist groups throughout the Middle East and the Muslim world manifested links to Islamic extremism in the name of the pan-Islamic movement against the West. It is, in a word, identity. Popular Islam is at the root of the Arab mind and the neo-Muslim mindset. It is the force behind Islamic extremism and, as such, “popular Islam has come to be variously identified with the perceived properties of everything signaled by Islamic fundamentalism.”¹⁰¹ It is, in effect, the equivalent of the American populist movements which paint with broad strokes general messages that resonate with a large percentage of the populace in order to generate a civil backlash against corrupt elites in the name of the suffering of the masses. It does so, often, through the use of religious edicts, *fatwas* (religious doctrines), and *jihad* (struggle) against the oppressors, the infidels, and the apostate. It is powerfully symbolic in nature.

If the reality of *jihad* is Islamic interdependence however, it is not clear if the idea of national indomitability could be sustained vis-à-vis radical Islamic fundamentalism. It may have led to more defensiveness and stridence, more internal repression in the Middle East

99. Patrick D. Gaffney, Popular Islam, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Political Islam* 524, (1992), 38-51.

100. Ibid., 39.

101. Ibid., 40.

domestically, and more enemies abroad that are recognized as antithetical to Muslim interests. On the other hand, these *fatwas* and *jihad* have been an effective propaganda tool for mobilizing the masses against a unified enemy; in this case the West in general and the United States specifically. Often it appears that the rhetoric of Islamists seek two goals. First, the mobilization of the people against the West through the use of imagery iconic to the Muslim world; which was the primary goal of the Muslim revivalists, was immediate and primary. Second, the revivalists of Islam sought a return to their roots in a world that had moved beyond their ability to control. That inability led them to inculcate the Western lessons that they had learned, earned, and garnered. The interesting fact however is that Islam is adapting despite what its most vociferous guardians claim they are defending; fundamental adherence to Islam.

The tipping point for the US was the threat to US economic interests in the Middle East. For the states in which Islamists thrived, defense of Islam and claims to orthodoxy were admissible insofar as they did not put their own state's legitimacy in question despite US interests. There has always been a risk of repression being used as a tool by Islamists who made use of this kind of rhetoric in the public sphere. However, the rhetoric of Muslim morality has not generally allowed for debate that pointedly question concepts of government and equal representation within the orthodoxy of Islam. Moreover, Muslim extremists that have championed fringe elements of Islam have incorporated a dogma of winning the hearts and minds of the local peoples by supplying food, water, electricity, and basic necessities to the people of places like Gaza, the West Bank, Cairo, and Beirut. They have not been interested in questions of liberty, individualism, or US interests. Thus, the rhetoric of Islamic fundamentalists became a tool for the unified fight against the West, the "other" as it were, rather than a call for the overthrow of the existing governments of the Arab and Persian Gulf states. It did so within

the template of fulfilling a basic social service. Providing the peoples of these war-torn areas with the basic necessities has won the hearts and minds of those people, not the championship of their civil liberties.

If, as the Arab saying goes, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” then extremists have proven themselves a friend to Muslims while objectifying the West as the “other” – and thus the enemy. It is for this reason that the governments of the Middle East allowed the rhetoric of firebrand clerics and mullahs to go unchecked. Terrorism served as a method of iconography and unification. Yet the leaders of some states, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in particular, turned a blind eye toward activities that they deemed based on misguided Koranic interpretations by groups such as the embrace of Wahhabism, *al Qaeda*, or fundamentalist elements within the Muslim world. Extremists feel that they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. These elements have traded on the propaganda techniques that the Western powers had taught them to focus against the Communist infidels and redirected in order to incite rage against the Western capitalist infidels.

The rhetoric that encouraged these terrorist acts was the real instigator in the post Cold War era. During the early 1990s the Taliban, the same freedom fighters that the US had supplied and supported during the Reagan years, grew in strength in Afghanistan while the rhetoric of a little known group, *al Qaeda*, became more vitriolic. It was that cabal of Islamic fundamentalism that began launching attacks on both civilian and military targets of the West throughout the world. The sole intention of this Sunni extremist group was to inculcate the specter of fear in the Muslim world against the West through asymmetrical warfare in the name of the prophet Mohammed. It can be argued that they were misguided by extremist notions of Islam, as many scholars of Islam have asserted - but in the end it was indeed an effective technique for

mobilizing the Muslim masses against the “Zionist crusaders” who sought to exterminate the last drop of Muslim blood in an attempt to overthrow the righteous place of Allah in the Middle East and the holy places of Mecca and Medina and Jerusalem. Not ironically, the state of Israel, Islamic fundamentalists have reasoned, is a platform for Western enforcement of their interests. Here these two issues meet as one.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the next target for the Islamists was the United States, and having tasted the blood of the Red Army in Afghanistan they felt that Allah was on their side. They were empowered to do the work of God. No matter that the US had armed and trained the *Mujahideen* against the Soviets. Our blind foray into the holy land during the 1990 expulsion of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait and our stationing of troops in Saudi Arabia was all that was needed for al Qaeda to take up the call to expel the new infidel army from the holy land of Mohammed. As Porter Goss, the Former Bush CIA put it: “they are energized and determined, and they know how to exploit asymmetric warfare to their purpose.”¹⁰² This came to fruition in 1993 when the Twin Towers in Manhattan, in New York City, were bombed.

Muslim cleric Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman, had been linked to El-Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian sentenced to seven to twenty-three years for crimes related to the slaying of Rabbi Meir Kahane, an Israeli right-wing leader. Mohammed A. Salameh, the suspect arrested in the bombing of the World Trade Center, was said by law-enforcement officials at the time to have been a follower of the blind Muslim cleric, Rahman, who preached a violent message of Islamic fundamentalism from a walk-up mosque in Jersey City. Radical Islam had not been recognized as such an imminent threat by then.

102. Rosenberg, 188.

Whether the sheik had any connection to the World Trade Center bombing was unknown in 1993 but there were issues regarding Rahman's credentials. His name did not come up publicly, since he had over-extended his tourist visa. In private, law-enforcement officials said only that they knew Mr. Salameh was a follower of the radical cleric and that the link between the men was stronger than simply attendance at the mosque. But it was determined that Rahman had eluded detection even though he was on the official United States terrorist list and widely regarded in Egypt as a spiritual leader of several radical underground Islamic extremist groups known collectively as Islamic Jihad. These groups advocated violent revolution against the Egyptian government and they had an agenda regarding the United States as well. Rahman became a charismatic preacher in mosques in Brooklyn and New Jersey. His followers were growing and thought to number in the thousands in the New York area and in Egypt, where his speeches were brought back on cassette tapes. The fifty-five year-old cleric appeared as almost a helpless figure, blind, with one eye without a pupil, the other an empty socket. Nevertheless, his message -- aimed particularly at the young was a violent one, calling for the murder of "infidels" and the creation of a pure Islamic state in Egypt. He did so through the technology of cassettes and mass media."¹⁰³

Khomeini too had exercised control over his followers through the use of technology. Milani noted that fifteen years earlier the cleric employed technology and that "with Khomeini gaining free access to the Western media, a war of nerves had had begun between him and the Shah – a war in which the Ayatollah proved to be a master tactician."¹⁰⁴ This was yet another

103. Alison Mitchell, "The Twin Towers: The Sect; Suspect in Bombing is Linked to Sect with a violent Voice," *New York Times*, March 5, 1993.

104. Milani, 115.

instant in which the Islamists used the “weapons” (those being organizational and technical) of the West against their avowed foes for the purposes of bringing down those enemies of Islam, as they described them. The clerics and mullahs of the Middle East who were now opposed to the West used the technology that the West had created against the very enemy that the Western powers sought to destroy; Communism. The embrace of technology to serve their purposes has in fact accelerated dramatically. “In the past couple of decades, terrorist groups have thrived by exploiting information technology, which has lessened their dependence on physical havens. By utilizing networks such as the internet, terrorists’ organizations have become more network-like, not beholden to any one headquarters.”¹⁰⁵ It brought their message of jihad to a level that was far easier to disseminate to more people than any fiery sermon from a mosque could ever hope to accomplish and gave weight to that message in ways that the United States government refused to acknowledge or mitigate. It was, indeed, a master stroke. Milani’s insight into the importance of Khomeini’s use of technology is correct. This was a fulcrum of the success of fundamental and radical Islam. The nebulous nature of the threat made it difficult to perceive however.

Until the 1990s the US had been engaged in a war against an identifiable and wholly cognizant entity; the Soviet Union. Additionally, as I mentioned earlier in this thesis, there has been a tension between the foreign policies of realism and liberalism that have become personified by the Republican and Democratic parties in the US. Under Reagan, the dominant theme was realism. That foreign policy continued to be the focus of US policy throughout the first two years under George H. W. Bush but gradually moved toward a liberal mindset toward

105. Paul R. Pillar, “Even If We Win in Afghanistan, Will US be Safer?” *Washington Post* August 13, 2010 – The writer was the deputy chief of the counterterrorist center at the CIA from 1997 to 1999. He is director of graduate studies at Georgetown University’s Security Studies Program.

the end of Bush's presidential tenure with his declaration that a "new world order" was arising. That somewhat liberal approach came to complete fruition under the administration of Bill Clinton. The shift in policy from realism to liberalism would not, however, mitigate the formidable force of the use of the technology by Khomeini or others but that shift in policy was made formal in 1992. Economic issues were the major focus of the Clinton administration even if those issues were founded on neo-containment through economic means.

During the eight years of the Clinton administration the foreign policy goals of the United States were championed under the flag of the Democratic Peace theory. "If the Cold War had focused the United States on containing global threats to democracy and open markets, Clinton advised his NSC, its end freed him to find ways to expand the community of market democracies," including those in the Muslim world.¹⁰⁶ So on August 18 [1993] Anthony Lake [Clinton's National Security Advisor] summoned NSC members Jeremy Rosner, Leon Fuerth, and Donald Steinberg to his White House office for the express purpose of devising a strategic vision with an accompanying catch phrase. What became known as the "Kennan Sweepstakes" was set in motion.^{»107}

Democratic Enlargement, under the auspices of the Democratic Peace Theory, was what the Clinton administration finally settled on as their vision for American foreign policy. This had the benefit of encompassing defending US economic interests with defense of the United States through constructive democracy abroad. "Clinton likened enlargement to the old anti-Communist

106. Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine,," *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (Spring, 1997), 110-127.

107. Martin Walker, Comment: The Clinton Doctrine, *The New Yorker*, October 7, 1996. P. 7.

“domino theory” in reverse: It posited that where Communist command economies collapsed, free markets would eventually arise and flourish - now the age of geopolitics has given way to an age of what might be called geo-economics," - journalist Martin Walker wrote in the October 7, 1996, *New Yorker*.”¹⁰⁸ The problem was that this vision, while it was less hostile than the realist alternative, came with unintended consequences of its own. Democracy has been demonstrated not to be a fungible commodity that could be counted on to make a difference in the lives of ordinary men and women in the Islamic world where the main concerns were shelter, water, and food. Democracy was a concept that was specific to the West and only occurred over hundreds of years beginning with the enlightenment and came to fruition in the cauldron of American notions of exceptionalism. Yet, as Rosenberg pointed out, the US should have done more in the Middle East to link democratic principles to sustainable support for the Muslim people. Having abdicated that role, the simple promotion of democracy was not a viable replacement for the policy of containment. Despite Muslim sensitivities it was, moreover, framed within the containment strategy of a new economic realism. The Democratic Peace Theory should have been incorporated in a more holistic manner and incorporated into the foreign policy of the United States in concert with other fundamentals of American foreign policy.

**Chapter Four:
Arab Spring, or the Culmination of the Historical and
Political Missteps in the Middle East during the Twentieth Century**

The culmination of the argument presented in this thesis found its beginnings in late December of 2010 near the small Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid. Mohammed Bouazizi, a university student who also worked as a fruit vendor, was the victim of the rampant political corruption that flowed from the country's leadership down to even the most local municipal police forces. Tunisians "watched for 23 years as Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's dictatorship became a grating daily insult. From Tunis — the whitewashed, low-rise capital with a tropical, colonial feel — to the endless stretches of olive and date trees in the sparsely populated countryside, the complaints were uniform: It had gotten so you couldn't get a job without some connection to Ben Ali's family or party. The secret police kept close tabs on ordinary Tunisians. And the uniformed police took to demanding graft with brazen abandon."¹⁰⁹ Bouazizi was forced to bear humiliations, one after another, at the hands of a female police officer. Finally, after the theft of his fruit and scales the police officer who had stopped Bouazizi, Fedya Hamdi, and two other officers beat Bouazizi and then Hamdi slapped him in the face in front the crowd. For Middle Eastern men, such treatment at the hands of a woman is a source of grave shame. Shortly afterward the boy returned to the market and set himself ablaze in protest. The resulting protests resulted in hundreds of deaths. Those events lit the fuse of a much larger conflagration

109. Marc Fisher, "In Tunisia, act of one fruit vendor sparks wave of revolution through Arab world," *The Washington Post Online*, March 26, 2011. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-tunisia-act-of-one-fruit-vendor-sparks-wave-of-revolution-through-arab-world/2011/03/16/AFjfsueB_story.html

throughout the entire Middle East, one which would spread like wildfire throughout the Islamic world for years to come.

By mid January, 2011, Ben Ali had fled to Saudi Arabia under pressure. Anti-government demonstrations throughout the countryside forced Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi to resign and he was replaced by veteran politician Beji Caid Essebsi. Created by the vacuum of power left by the flight of Ben Ali and his friends and family and aided by rising social media sources such as Facebook the people of Tunisia now had access to some inconvenient truths which had never seen the light of day because of the censorship policies of the Ben Ali regime. Following the announcement of the results of Tunisia's first free election in October in which the rigidly Islamist *Ennahda* party won most of the seats in the constituent assembly events in Tunisia only became more politically entangled with Islamic extremism. Into the vacuum flowed the most passionate agendas by those most willing to sacrifice civility for theological beliefs founded on hardline Islamic principles. Unrest was triggered over art exhibits deemed offensive to Islam. Clashes at the US Embassy in Tunis resulted in the deaths of four attackers because of a film deemed anti-Islamic. Hundreds more were wounded or killed in clashes between police and protesters in Siliana, near Tunis in late November and early December at the end of 2012. By this time, the protests in the Maghreb had extended beyond the borders of Tunisia. Two years earlier, days after Ben Ali had fled the country and gone to Saudi Arabia, Egypt's Day of Revolt brought together thousands of protesters after the internet campaign inspired by the uprising in Tunisia animated similar unrest in Cairo.¹¹⁰

110. "Timeline of unrest in Tunisia since the popular revolt," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation News*. December 11, 2015. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-19/timeline-of-unrest-in-tunisia-since-the-popular-revolt/6330940>

Social media sites such as YouTube and Twitter had been blocked by government run agencies in both Tunisia and Egypt in order to inhibit the coordination of protests in the two African states. The relatively recent rise of Facebook took officials by surprise. Attempts to control the dissemination of information and coordination of anti-government gatherings had been the bedrock policy of dictatorships in the region for decades. However the quickly changing landscape of the social media world presented serious challenges authoritarian governments determined to stifle dissent. “The events in Cairo were coordinated on a Facebook page - tens of thousands of supporters clicked on the page to say they would take part . . . thousands joined the protests after an internet campaign inspired by the uprising in Tunisia.”¹¹¹ On January 25, 2011, demonstrators remained in the city center around Tahrir Square late into the night, vowing to camp out overnight and appeals on Facebook for food and blankets were made to support the protestors’ efforts. Egyptians had seen and heard about the toppling of Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and now they wanted to wrest control of their own government from President Hosni Mubarak who had been in power since 1981 and was responsible for many of the same social and political problems that brought about the unrest in Tunisia - rising food prices, high unemployment and anger at official corruption.¹¹² Frustrations in the Arab world over these social challenges and their recognition fueled by new social media platforms spilled into the streets of Cairo. After eighteen days of protests and demonstrations, Hosni Mubarak was forced to resign in February 2011, three decades after having taken power. Once again, into the political void created by Mubarak’s arrest a group of Islamic fundamentalists rushed in to fill the

111. “Egypt protests: 3 killed in ‘day of revolt’” *British Broadcasting Corporation News*. January 26, 2011. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12272836>

112. *Ibid.*

vacuum. Egypt is not the Islamic monolith that many believe. “Parliamentary elections in 2011-12 saw the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi elected president. He dissolved the House of Representatives and changed the military's leadership. Public opposition to Morsi began to build in November 2012, when he issued a decree granting himself far-reaching powers, and were fuelled [sic] by the passage of what many considered an Islamist-leaning draft constitution.”¹¹³ In June of 2013, after millions of protesters once again took to the streets, Morsi was deposed. A state security sponsored crackdown on the Islamic brotherhood resulted in the deaths of nearly a thousand Morsi supporters and the charter that had been approved under his leadership was thrown out and replaced with a new constitution in 2013. The Arab Spring now took on a self-sustaining wave of clashes throughout the Maghreb, the Levant, and even the Arabian Peninsula. What was unique about the protests in Egypt was the fact that it had been a proxy state of both the British and the Americans for nearly a century.

Just two days after the Egypt's Day of Revolt tens of thousands of protesters and opposition figures took to the streets of the capital of Yemen, Sanaa and called for the removal of their president, long-term President Ali Abdullah Saleh, as well. What began in the little-noted West-African nation of Tunisia was now beginning to spread to regions that relied heavily on western and US support. Groups such as *al Qaeda* and ISIS in the Maghreb seized opportunities provided by the war in Iraq, the unrest in the Maghreb, and the frustrations of the people on the street, to create chaos and unrest in order to gain control of huge swaths of the region. David Ignatius wrote in the October, 2015 issue of *The Atlantic*, that what was “ravaging the Middle East right now is obviously deeper than ISIS. It has become commonplace over the last year to

113. “Arab Uprising: Country by country – Egypt” *British Broadcasting Corporation News*. Accessed February 7, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-12482291>

observe that we are witnessing the collapse of the post-Ottoman order—that the “lines in the sand” conjured in 1916 by the British and French diplomats Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot are being blown to dust.”¹¹⁴ Ignatius acknowledged the need to form stable counter forces to those who would seek to exploit the political voids left when outside powers decided to abandon regimes formerly supported by the West. “Attempts by the United States or Islamist rebels to topple authoritarian regimes—in Iraq, Libya, and now Syria—create power vacuums.”¹¹⁵ Propping up and then later toppling dictators throughout the Middle East has been the hallmark of the West since the World War I. Either in an effort to control the natural resources of the region or as proxy states to inhibit control there by other nations, the US and the West have sown the seeds of their own failure. The post WW II policy of containment of Communism was simply the extension of the pre and post WW I protocols of The Great Game that Britain had employed to stifle the interests of both the French and the Russians. The fall of the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991 made those interests moot except for the defense of the petroleum industry necessary to fuel the economies and markets of the West. In neither Egypt nor Yemen were large petroleum reserves a serious factor. However, once the ball had started rolling the Arab Spring took on more serious dimensions as Islamic fundamentalist groups realized that controlling oil-producing regions of the Middle East would both hurt US interests while also providing a source of income to support Islamic jihad against the West. The unrest was stoked and the protests spread. The Arab Spring exploded into life.

114. David Ignatius, “How Isis Spread in the Middle East and How to Stop It,” *The Atlantic*, October 29, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/how-isis-started-syria-iraq/412042/>

115. Ibid

The Moroccan people took to the streets to demand a change of government and constitutional reforms of their own on February 20, 2011. That same day anti-Gaddafi fighters seize control of Libya's second largest city. The fighting resulted in several hundred deaths. Cities further east, including al-Baida and Tobruk, were already under rebel control. Days earlier on February 17, dozens were killed as demonstrations erupted in cities across the country in Libya's Day of Rage. Fighting in Benghazi resulted in hundreds of deaths. Back in Tunisia, on the 27th, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi was forced to resign after violent protests over his ties to former President Ben Ali. On March 14, at the request of the Bahraini government, about 4,000 Saudi Arabian troops were dispatched, to be followed by 500 UAE police. Then, on March 15, 2011, anti-government protesters demonstrated in Damascus, the Syrian capital, in a rare show of dissent against the country's hardline regime. The pace of unrest and protest began to pick up speed. Pro-democracy movements in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria were being viewed as an unstoppable force for democratic change throughout the entire Middle East, but in each of these instances the unrest by civilian populations was being met with fierce resistance by supporters of the regimes being protested. Then, on March 19, 2011 French jets began bombing Libya just hours after United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 was passed. The US, the UK and other countries joined in the bombings shortly afterward.¹¹⁶ The Arab Spring was, by the summer of 2011, becoming a full-blown pan-Islamic revolution in nearly all of northern Africa, and many parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh was the victim of an assassination attempt, rebels battled for control of Tripoli in Libya, and the year culminated in a series of clashes, battles, elections, and transfers of power

116. Ismael Naar, "Timeline: Arab Spring," *AlJazeera Interactive*, last modified December 17, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2013/12/timeline-arab-spring-20131217114018534352.html>

that hadn't been witnessed in the Middle East since 622 A.D., when the followers of the Prophet Muhammad spread the message of Islam at the point of a sword.

Small peaceful protests started in Syria on in January of 2011 and escalated to an ongoing internal conflict. The wave of Arab uprisings that began with the Tunisian revolution of January 2011 reached Syria in mid-March, when residents of the small southern town of Dara'a took to the streets to protest the torture of students who had put up anti-government graffiti. Protesters demanded reforms, the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad, allowing political parties, equal rights for Kurds, and broad political freedoms, such as freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. Such demands were unheard of in Syria. "For decades, the security state established by Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father, encouraged certain social and economic inequalities as a means of divide and rule. Hafez won the support of Syria's working class and peasantry, largely from Syria's Sunni Arabs who make up 60 percent of the population, by building a large socialist state that provided employment and subsidies. He won the backing of Syria's non Sunni Arab minorities – the Christians (10 percent of the population), Druze (3 percent), and his own Alawi sect (10 percent). These groups welcomed Hafez's secular Arab nationalist identity discourse as a means to integration, an identity that he promoted through expanded state institutions, notably the army and the ruling Ba'ath party."¹¹⁷ Like Egypt, Syria is not a homogeneous society. It's an amalgam of different groups who have for decades been played against one another for the purpose of fostering divisions and maintaining control over the Syrian people. Additionally, economic liberalization policies instituted by al-Assad were uneven in their distribution,

117. Christopher Phillips, "Syria's Bloody Arab Spring," London School of Economics Ideas Reports, http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR011/FINAL_LSE_IDEAS__SyriasBloodyArabSpring_Phillips.pdf

reflecting similar divisions to those that had instigated unrest and protests in the Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. “The potential for sectarian conflict has been another tool used by the regime to cling onto power. For decades the regime promoted itself as a bastion of stability for Syria’s heterogeneous population compared to the sectarian chaos in neighboring Iraq and Lebanon.”¹¹⁸ What is being played out in the Islamic world today is exactly the scenario that this thesis proposes is a function of the unintended consequences of short-sighted despotic leaders from former proxy states of the US and the USSR. Syria, a former Soviet proxy state has undergone the same challenges that US client state Egypt underwent only a short time earlier. When the overwhelming force of millions of Muslims challenges the government apparatus and throws down their leadership the void created provides an opportunity for more fundamentalist forces to rush into. The basic framework of my argument is being witnessed throughout the Islamic world and provides a compelling defense of my main argument. Of course, all of these events were presaged by the events in Iraq following the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001.

When the Bush (43) administration invaded Iraq in 2003 an al-Qaeda recruit named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, certain that the Americans would do so, aligned himself with what remained of Saddam Hussein’s intelligence network, and carried out a series of bombings that shook the former US client state to its knees. Specific targets were chosen to pit Sunni against Shia, Christian, and Kurd, fracturing the nation in a way that assured a generation of improvised devices, sectarian killings, and unfettered bombings. Past administrations have not engaged in a viable political vehicle that can accept global parity in a global world of equity and social

118. Ibid.

reform. It remains to be seen whether the current Obama Administration can prime the pump of international cooperation.

What has framed this debate over the last sixty years is the shift between realist defensive and liberal economic ideologies. The emerging global economy demands a more constructive approach. The realism of the Truman Doctrine of containment has been supplanted by an economic containment of non-liberal polities in the Middle East in response to Islamic extremism. The realist foreign policy of the United States has been usurped by economic initiatives that were predicated on the realist debates of the Cold War and modified to serve a global marketplace. On their own, each of these ideologies is woefully unequal to the task of global harmony.

What I have labeled unintended consequences in earlier sections of this thesis some economists call “cumulative causation.”¹¹⁹ This cross-disciplinary reference is a familiar analog but, more importantly, also implies a causal relationship between the shifting ideologies of realism and liberal and fundamentalist extremism of any kind. Additionally, these two disciplines of international relations represent a cultural aspect of the social spectrum that is idealized by both capitalists and Muslims. National defense and economics serve only to reinforce our understanding of political science in the modern world when they are tempered by a cultural acknowledgment. Though numerous articles have articulated the relationship between these schools of thought, the fact is that the growing interconnectedness of a world (within the rubric of global computer viruses, avian flu epidemics and an alarming increase in AIDS, malaria,

119. Cumulative causation refers to a self-reinforcing process during which an impulse to a system triggers further changes in the same direction as the original impulse, thus taking the system further away from its initial position in virtuous or vicious circles of change that may result in a continuing increase in advantages (to some people or activities) and disadvantages (to others).

swine and avian flu and cholera throughout the world), has rendered containment as obsolete as isolationism was in the pre Cold War world. We should engage the tenuous nature of our global community and appreciate what new foreign policy will rule that debate. The East-West divide that underscored the Cold War has become the template for a new economic divide that is clearly more threatening than a constructivist approach that is more encompassing in nature. The Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has referred to the modern world as a global village for good reason.

Our global village is at an impasse and yet our interconnectedness is a fact. The realist dogmas of the past cannot serve well the present liberal economics of a global world. The United States, most of Europe, and the West seek to operate in a global economic climate that is inclusive of the Middle East. This is a defining moment of change for Middle Eastern foreign policy and US foreign policy writ large. This moment may well define our realistic expectations for the next hundred years. It is imperative that our understanding reflect that possibility and assimilate that expectation in a culturally sensitive manner. Realist thought, joined to liberal economic understanding, with an eye toward globalization must be tempered by cultural understanding and a willingness to seek understanding between competing ideologies.

That globalization has become reality within the last twenty years is an indication of the power of the shift toward global cooperation as well. Moreover, that shift is a manifest function of the impact of globalization on a real-time basis. We are being drawn closer to one another every day by computer applications, twenty-four hour news cycles, and global currencies such as the Euro and the dollar. Economic forces have drawn the world ever closer on a number of levels and this fact represents the biggest reason for the necessity of an ideological re-examination of the importance of our far-flung economic foreign policy initiatives. Those forces exacerbate the

need for a new understanding between the Western and Muslim worlds. Mitigation of extremist threats must accompany the real-time electronic nature of our global communications systems along with the economic interconnectedness of the East and West. The world is no longer as clearly polarized as it was once was. The Truman Doctrine is, finally, obsolete. The new foreign policy of the US must be inclusive of both the economic realities as well as the ideological and cultural differences between states. The time has arrived for implementation of a long overdue embrace of our mutual humanity in ways that foster cooperation – not enmity. Indeed, The Democratic Peace theory embraces trade and mutually advantageous economic policy as a buffer against military confrontation between states. Marxism, Socialism, and capitalism have not proven to be complete failures but they have demonstrated significant flaws. This thesis demands that a cross-disciplinary consideration be given to Middle Eastern/Asian and African economic disparities in order to meet the challenges of political strife stoked by globalization. We can no longer assume that one system is the correct template for the world. Indeed, Geoffrey Hodgsons challenges this view – “not by arguing here for the feasibility or superiority of a socialist [ideology] or any other alternative to capitalism. It is asserted that the pronouncements on the “end of history” ignore the tremendous variety of forms of capitalism itself. In addition, a theoretical blindness to the immense variety within the modern system [which] is curiously engendered by influential economic theorists from both the Right [sic] and the Left [sic]”¹²⁰ is a *fait accompli*. “In particular however, although both Karl Marx and Friedrich Hayek have contributed an enormous amount to our understanding of how capitalist systems function, they both sustain a view of a singular and purified capitalism. They both also ignore the fact that

¹²⁰ http://www.booksandideas.net/Conceptualizing-Capitalism.html#.VUsF2_HIVPw.twitter

variable systemic impurities are essential to the functioning and development of the system. Overall, there is a gaping hole in even the most inspired theoretical analyses of capitalist systems.”¹²¹ We cannot rely on those quiet dogmas of the past to secure the vision of our mutual futures. Cultural divisions throughout the world must inspire our future decisions on foreign policy because they are real and, therefore, must be addressed. More importantly, recognition of the legitimate grievances of Muslims is a priority.

This is the real challenge for the future of the West within the Middle East and for the United States. Cultural sensitivity and reasonable economic realism represent the basis of the future global network as a guiding force for stability. It has the opportunity to suspend the Hobbesian notion of all against all in favor of a perfect union of a more global nature. That nexus is predicated, observed Hodgson's on the assimilation of societies of specialized economics into their own cultures. It cannot be predicated for one group on the less seriously viable economic culture of another from outside of the identity of Middle Eastern into the mainstream of states within an Arab culture of faith-based sensitivities. In other words, neither the United States, nor indeed the Western world, can dictate the nature of the liberal democratic ideal that the Middle East can or will embrace. We cannot export *our* democracy but, rather, must allow the Middle East to import its own variety such as the Chinese and Russians have done in the past. Will those imported seeds bear fruit? Only time will tell but they will, over the long run, be more stable and sustainable affectations of Western liberalism that anything that the US or the West could impose on the Arab world. That, more likely than not will be an economic and cultural compromise that will, in the end, bear more fruit than a doctrine of containment and imposition that the

¹²¹ http://www.booksandideas.net/Conceptualizing-Capitalism.html#.VUsF2_HIVPw.twitter

containment of Communism policy ever entailed or achieved. What was once inevitable is now rendered obsolete. That is the lesson of the Truman Doctrine. There is reliable evidence that culture is the defining issue of the future of a more globally engaged US foreign policy initiative.

The conclusion of this thesis is antithetical to twentieth century predicates but, rather, synthesizes a more constructive debate in the twenty-first century model that is proposed by a diplomatic peace initiative. The Truman Doctrine of Containment of Communism was insufficient to our stormy present. Indeed, these words were intoned by current US President Barack H. Obama who recalled our sixteenth president at his final State of the Union Address on January 13, 2016, when he stated that at our best, our nation did not, “in the words of Lincoln, adhere to the ‘dogmas of the quiet past.’ Instead we thought anew, and acted anew. We made change work for us, always extending America’s promise outward, to the next frontier, to more people. And because we did -- because we saw opportunity where others saw only peril -- we emerged stronger and better than before.”¹²² These are complex issues that are nuanced and remind us of what Karen Elliott House, cited at the beginning of this presentation that a dialog was, rather than relying on confrontation, possible on both sides “if for no other reason than to clarify opposing positions that are essentially irreconcilable.”¹²³ In the Iranian diplomatic initiative that the current administration recently negotiated we envisage that very bargain, “Grand” though it has been proposed, and that remains to be seen, it is a dialogue that inspires a

122. Barack Obama “Remarks of President Barack Obama – State of the Union Address As Delivered” January 13, 2016, *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama---prepared-delivery-state-union-address>

123 These quotations are taken from the press release of the report, *Freedom in the World 2001 - 2002: The Democracy Gap*

level of nuance that is moving the United States of America toward a diplomatic solution with the Republic of Iran that has been irreconcilable for nearly forty years, The Obama administration has been the champion of a carrot-based dialogue that embraces the Democratic Peace Theory and a more constructivist approach that validates the repudiation of the realpolitik stick that the United States has cobbled together to coerced the Middle East into for the last century.

This synopsis of the Arab Spring has been covered more succinctly by Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan, and Steven Roach in the third edition of *International Relations: The Key Concepts*.¹²⁴ The international system is anarchical, and “International relations are best understood by focusing in the distribution of power among states. Despite their formal equality, the uneven distribution of power means that the arena of International relations is a form of “power politics.”¹²⁵ In a global world more interconnected than in any time in history however that template is no longer a viable foundation for state interaction. Five factors which Griffiths, O’Callaghan and Roach document, “Western intervention, a shared discontent with the corruption of Arab rulers, the struggle for a common Arab identity, political instability, /civil strife, and the role of the social media”¹²⁶ have all been documented in this thesis. Throughout the twentieth century the Western powers have politically dominated the Middle East. They have done so by propping up a series of bad actors whose greed and defiance of their constituent’s basic civil rights have created an atmosphere of hate toward both leaders and their foreign

124. Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan, and Steven C. Roach. *International Relations: the Key Concepts*, (New York, Routledge, 2014), p. 14.

125. Ibid., xi

126. Ibid., 13

backers. The sub context of a cultural and religious identification has been seized upon by theological ideologues who are pitted against an emerging multicultural groundswell demanding more secular governance based on the respect of individuality. This notion has been fueled in large part through the social media. Shared culture, albeit often a matter of individual choice, is arising as a new metric for how the twenty-first century will move forward. A final instance—that of the American/Iranian “Grand Bargain” regarding the loosening of international sanctions against Iran for guarantees of nuclear non-proliferation—is a case in point.

The deal struck between the Iranian Republic and the US is important because “American laws serve as the foundation for many of the US and international sanctions limiting Iran’s economic activities.”¹²⁷ Pushed through Congress by the Obama administration, the deal releases seized Iranian assets in exchange for international inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities; and though decried by hawks in Congress, this deal strikes to the heart of my thesis. In this case, the diplomacy and respect of cultural differences as well as similarities has resulted in a constructive *rapprochement* that has put aside nearly forty years of diplomatic stagnation between these two states. Yet that is not to say that there is not a great deal of sympathy for Western notions of individualism and culture in the Muslim world.

The spontaneous outbursts that have been the tell-tale hallmarks of the Arab Spring have been fueled by a respect for the rule of law and the notion of democracy in general. Rather than cultural monoliths in the Middle East, there is a plain multi-cultural and theological tapestry that reflects the “melting-pot” concept of American Exceptionalism, even if imprecisely. The common Iranian respects these American values. Zainab Salbi, writing for the New York Times

127. Larry Hanauer, “The days after a deal with Iran: Congress’s role in implementing a nuclear agreement,” *Rand Corporation Perspective: Expert insights on a timely policy issue*, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE139/RAND_PE139.pdf.

notes that “It is true that some people in the Middle East harbor feelings of disdain and mistrust of the Western world, but such sentiments are not straightforward feelings of hatred. Rather, they reflect a dynamic of love-hate, or love-resentment-anger. The true complexity of these feelings emerges in whispers during dinner-table conversations, through nuanced gestures or comments that people utter only in their native tongues and almost never in English or to Westerners. These comments reflect the “unspoken” feeling that is close to the nerve and too sensitive to acknowledge to the outside world.”¹²⁸ Muslims witness the same inconsistent values, financial corruption, and both moral “corruption” and racial bigotry that fuels many of the challenges in their own states. There is room for agreement and compromise between the two factions who share the same God of Abraham as the Jews. We must simply come together in a mutually-shared atmosphere of respect that values global trade, basic human rights, economic equity, religious tolerance, and diplomatic respect based on dialogue and communication. In a globally connected world that should prove easy. *Realism* has not been an altogether successful foreign policy in the emerging global world of connectedness and has undermined the standing of the United States throughout the Middle East.

128. <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2015/05/26/what-people-in-the-middle-east-are-saying-in-private-about-the-west/>

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