

THE PATH TO WAR: WHY THE UNITED STATES INVADED IRAQ

by

PETER KYLE EUBANKS

(Under the Direction of K. Chad Clay)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to explain the decision-making process that ultimately led the United States to invade Iraq in March of 2003. Emphasis is placed on the individual actors involved, and it is suggested that significant levels of uncertainty and incomplete or inaccurate information, on both sides, were the main causal mechanisms as to why the two sides were unable to resolve their disputes diplomatically. The model will show that leaders in both the United States and Iraq were acting rationally in the series of events leading to the invasion, and that it is because of the outcomes of these events, which created high levels of uncertainty about the others intentions, that ultimately left the United States with no other viable alternative aside from invading.

INDEX WORDS: Iraq invasion, United States foreign policy, Game theory, Formal theory, Strategy, Decision tree, Game tree, International affairs, International relations, Policy Analysis

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Russell Eubanks. What I am today, I credit to him.

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I would like to thank all of the faculty and staff in the political science department for helping me accomplish this task. During my time at The University of Georgia, I have on occasion experienced trying circumstances, being met with both failure and success. I would like to thank Jamie Carson and Audrey Haynes for their assistance along the way, and my profound gratitude goes out to Robert Grafstein, Keith Dougherty and Chad Clay for their advice and aid, in this project and others.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 20, 2003, coalition aircraft composed primarily of American forces began bombing strategic military centers in and around Baghdad. Days later ground forces had occupied southern Iraq; they would fully overrun Baghdad and Hussein's supposedly battle-hardened army in the weeks to come (Cordesman 2012). Historians have called it the most efficient and effective military campaign in the history of warfare, but after the invasion, an insurgency ensued (Dale 2008; Gentile 2009; Hasian 2010). Since then, both scholars and policy makers have tended to focus on the topic of counterinsurgency in post invasion Iraq, and rightfully so since it was the immediate priority, but in doing so they seem to have stopped asking the seemingly more important question. What ultimately led the United States to conduct this campaign, to invade Iraq, and why a full invasion instead of pursuing lesser military or diplomatic alternatives?

This paper will attempt to answer some of these questions as well as others. First, a theory will be developed demonstrating that there was considerable uncertainty on both the parts of the United States and Iraq as to what actions the other intended to take. Specifically, the case will be made that in 2003 Iraq was posturing by making claims to have Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in an effort to appear strong, or at least dangerous, to its domestic population as well as to other regional actors, mainly Iran. This appeared to the United States, however, to be an act of aggression towards regional allies and a potential threat to other American interests in the region.

In 1991, the United States uncovered Iraqi WMD programs, and it was unclear whether Saddam Hussein had resumed them after the war. Additionally, the United States and allies had

intelligence indicating that the Iraqi government purchased materials that could be used to make WMD. If this were not enough, Saddam Hussein periodically made statements in domestic speeches that Iraq possessed WMD and intended to use them, even though he denied having them to the United Nations Security Council and refused to grant full access to UN inspectors.

Based on his rhetoric, the United States saw Saddam Hussein as a hostile dictator who threatened American interests. He had already used chemical weapons against the Iranians in the 1980's and against the Kurds in the north who were Iraqi citizens. Seeing this, the United States had no reason to believe that Saddam Hussein would not use WMD against American allies if given the chance. Also, there was speculation that Saddam Hussein had ties to the Al Qaeda terrorist network. This posed an even greater problem for the United States if Iraq possessed WMD. The United States was clearly uncertain about the intentions of Saddam Hussein, but to at least some policy-makers at the time it seemed as if Iraq posed a significant threat to American interests.

As was already mentioned, Saddam Hussein was also uncertain about the United States' intentions. The United States had been war weary since the blunder in Vietnam, and in the 1990's had been reluctant to risk war when Iraq had taken similar actions. Such hostile threats by Iraq were generally met with sanctions or strategic airstrikes, so it is not a stretch to assume that Saddam Hussein thought he could claim to have WMD to deter Iran from attacking and meet a less substantial resistance from the United States.

The strategic interaction between Iraq and the United States that culminated in a full invasion will be formalized in the sections to come. This is an effort to clarify what actually happened during the events that led up to the invasion in 2003. The model provided incorporates the uncertainty that Iraq had about the intentions of the Iranians as well as the intentions of the

United States. It also incorporates the uncertainty that the United States had about Iraq's intentions, whether Saddam Hussein actually had WMD or was merely claiming to in an effort to deter domestic uprisings and Iranian aggression.

Following the model, evidence will be provided supporting this uncertainty hypothesis. The evidence will show that Saddam Hussein likely perceived the United States to be reluctant to risk war because of foreign policy blunders that it had experienced in recent history. It will also show that the United States likely perceived Saddam Hussein to be a hostile, reckless, and unpredictable dictator, again based on the actions the United States witnessed of Iraq in recent history. The model and the evidence provided are intended to convey that both the United States and Iraq were in fact behaving in a manner consistent with that of rational actors during the events leading to the invasion. With other, similar threats in the region and around the world, it is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of the Iraq case and help decision-makers avoid such miscalculations in the future.

PART I

TOWARDS A FORMAL UNDERSTANDING

This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

-George W. Bush

Allowing UN inspectors back into Iraq would have directly identified to the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage to Iraq.

-Saddam Hussein

II. FORMAL ANALYSIS

A STRATEGIC INTERACTION

Shown in Figure's I and II are formal renderings of the strategic interaction engaged in by Iraq and the United States. There are two actors, Iraq and the United States, and Iraq makes the first move in the game. There are nature nodes indicating the uncertainty that Iraq had about Iran's intentions, and there will be a nature node connecting the two sub-games to indicate asymmetric information and the uncertainty that the United States had about Iraq's intentions.

Beginning at the top in the sub-games (Figure's I and II), Iraq makes the first move and must decide whether to make a WMD Claim or to make No WMD Claim. The idea of making a WMD Claim is simple; claiming to have WMD will deter Iran from invading. If Iraq makes No WMD Claim, there is some probability (q) that Iran will Invade and some corresponding probability ($1 - q$) that Iran will Not Invade. If Iraq makes a WMD Claim, Iran is deterred from invading, but now the United States becomes a player.

The United States must decide whether to Do Nothing or to Demand Inspections and Disarmament. If the United States chooses to Do Nothing, the game ends; if the United States chooses to Demand Inspections and Disarmament, it becomes Iraq's move. Iraq must choose to either Comply with the United States' demand or to Not Comply. If Iraq chooses to Comply with the United States' demand for inspections (and potentially disarmament if WMD are found), then presumably the United States will not invade. However, at this point Iraq has made a claim to have WMD but has also complied with inspections and disarmed. It is now known to everyone that Iraq has no WMD, and Iran is no longer deterred by Iraq's potential threat with WMD, so

FIGURE I – IRAQ HAS WMD

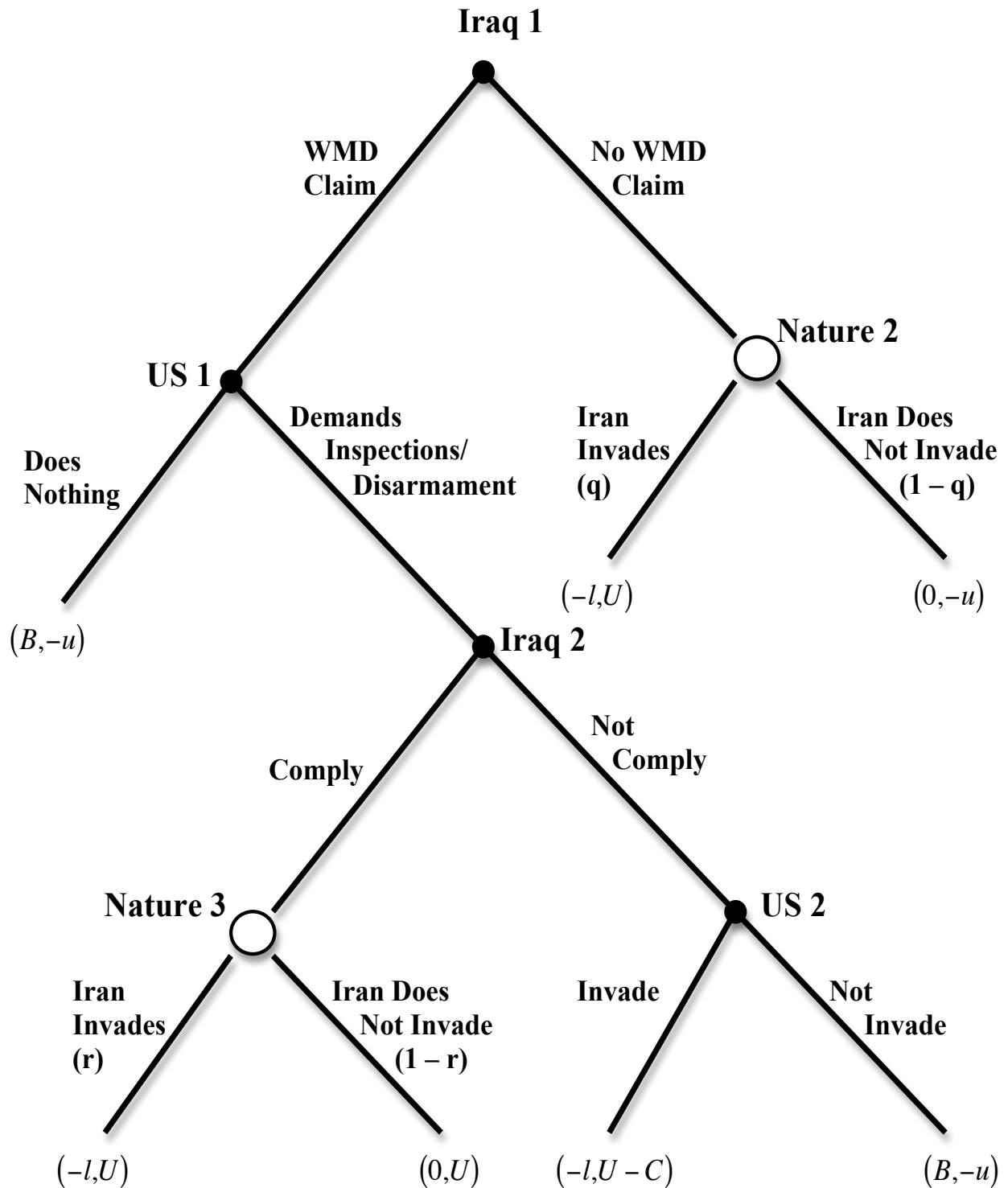
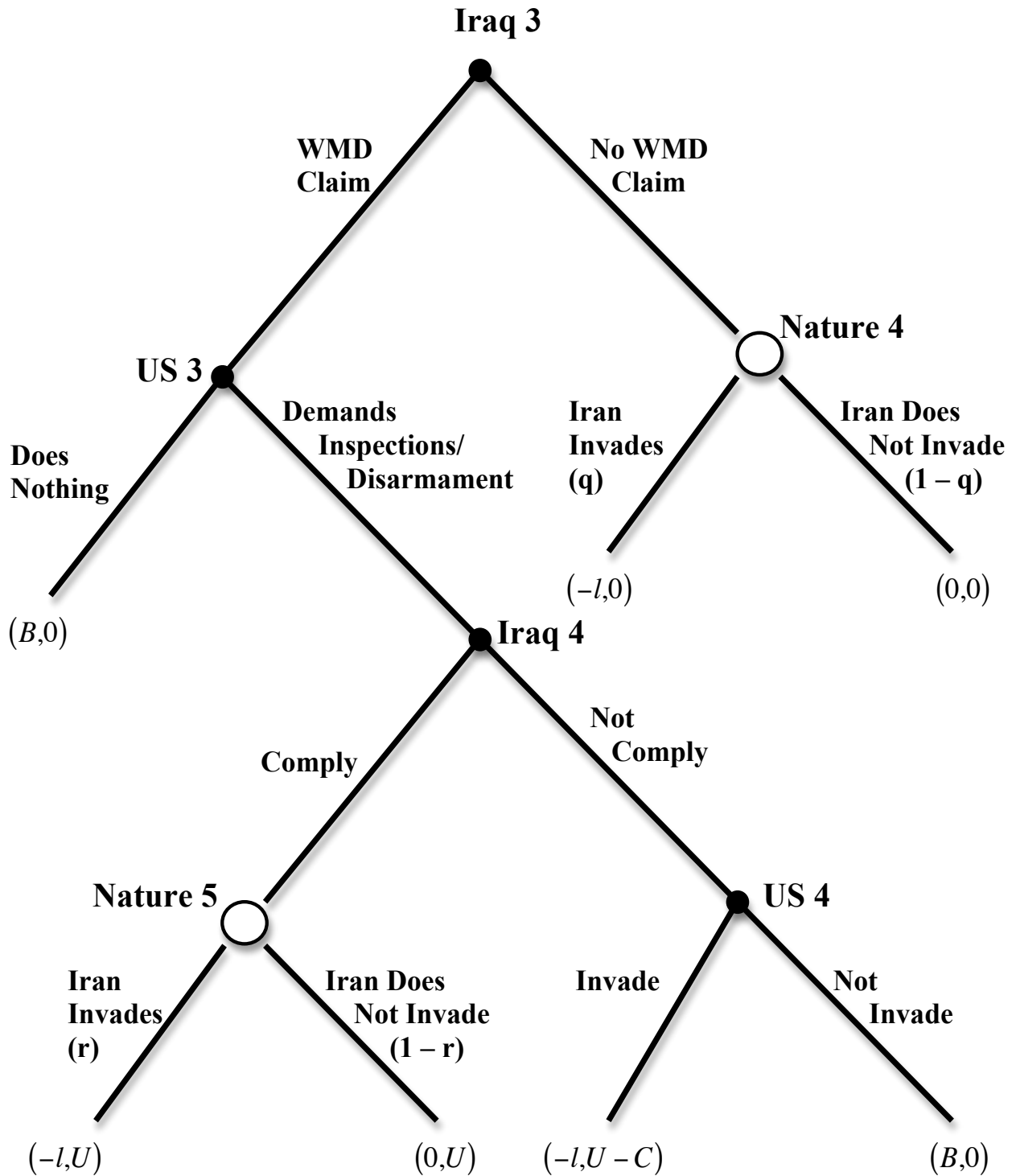


FIGURE II – IRAQ HAS NO WMD



there again is some probability (r) that Iran will Invade and some corresponding probability ($1 - r$) that Iran will Not Invade.

Backing up to Iraq's decision to Comply or Not Comply, if Iraq chooses to Not Comply then the next move goes to the United States. After Iraq has chosen to Not Comply, the United States faces the choice to Invade or Not Invade. At this point, Iraq has still deterred Iran from invading by making a claim to have WMD, but it must now deal with the repercussions of the United States. As will be shown shortly, the United States is uncertain as to whether Iraq actually has WMD or if it is bluffing in an effort to deter regional threats.

VARIABLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Variables:

Iraq

B - The benefit Iraq gets from others thinking it has WMD

l - The loss Iraq incurs from being invaded

United States

U - The benefit the United States gets from knowing that Iraq has no WMD (by Iraq being invaded *or* complying with inspections/disarmament)

u - The loss the United States incurs from Iraq actually having WMD

C - The cost the United States incurs from invading

Assumptions:

$$u > U > C > 0$$

$$l > B > 0$$

$$0 < p < 1 \quad 0 < q \leq 1 \quad 0 < r \leq 1$$

The variable B represents the benefit that Iraq gets from others thinking it has WMD. Iraq will receive this full benefit when it is successful in making Iran think it has WMD while also avoiding being invaded by the United States. Iraq gets no benefit from actually having WMD in this game. This is a strategic interaction where the aim is deterrence, so actually having WMD when no one knows it does not provide any deterrent benefit. Therefore, in this case, all of Iraq's benefit comes from others thinking it has WMD, whether it actually does or not.

The variable l represents the loss that Iraq incurs from being invaded. This game assumes that Iraq receives an equal loss from being invaded by Iran or the United States. In reality, it is safe to assume that the United States posed a greater military threat to Iraq than Iran, but the loss is equal because there is evidence suggesting that Hussein thought he could not win in a full conventional battle with the United States or Iran (Cordesman 2012). Hussein thought that his regime could not survive an invasion by Iran, even if Iran was only invading the south (hence the decision to claim to have WMD in an effort at deterrence). If Iran invaded, he would face a coup in Baghdad that would likely be successful. So the loss is equal; being invaded means that Hussein is out of power, regardless of who invades.

This leads to the assumption $l > B > 0$. It is simple; the loss from being invaded means that Hussein will be out of power, which is the worst-case scenario for him. Therefore, l will be larger than any other variable (it is negative in the model, indicating a loss and making it the smallest variable).

The variable U is the benefit that the United States gets from knowing that Iraq does not have WMD. The United States is uncertain whether Iraq actually has WMD or is bluffing, but it is assumed that the truth will be revealed if Iraq is invaded. If Iran invades, Iraq will use WMD against them if it has them, as it has threatened to do, and if the United States invades, it is again thought that Iraq would use them if it had them, but if it did not, the United States would then occupy Iraq and would be able to find any weapons that existed. So regardless of who invades, it will be known afterwards for certain whether Iraq actually has WMD or not (note that the United States incurs an additional cost if it invades). Also, the United States receives the benefit U when Iraq makes a WMD Claim, the United States Demands Inspections and Disarmament, and then Iraq chooses to Comply with the demand. Iraq complying with the demand assumes full compliance with inspections, and then full disarmament if any weapons are found. At this point it again is fully known that Iraq has no WMD, regardless of whether it was bluffing or not before, and there is some probability that Iran will Invade (q) and some probability that Iran will Not Invade ($1 - q$). Either way, the United States now knows for sure that Iraq does not have WMD, so it receives its ideal payoff of U .

The variable u represents the loss that the United States incurs if Iraq actually has WMD and is allowed to keep them with no repercussions. In addition to being a threat to Iran, it is thought by the United States that Iraq poses a threat to both its regional allies as well as directly to the United States. Iraq having WMD is dangerous for Israel, an American ally, and also poses a threat to American military bases in the region. Also, the argument was made by some at the time that Hussein had ties to Al Qaeda, a group that was certain to have the intention and capability of attacking the United States. So Iraq having WMD and no action being taken, or u , is the worst possible payoff for the United States.

The variable C represents the cost that the United States incurs from invading Iraq. The United States will face the monetary costs of a military invasion, the human costs in the form of deaths and injuries, and the political costs of invading a country against the will of some policy-makers back home. All of these costs make up C . This leads to the assumption that

$u > U > C > 0$. Iraq actually having WMD and nothing being done about it, or u , is the worst outcome for the United States, so it is larger than the benefit the United States gets from knowing whether or not Iraq has WMD, or U (note that u is a loss, so it is negative in the model; what is being shown here is that u is a larger negative than U is positive). And both of these being larger than C seems valid; the United States places a large value on Iraq not having WMD and is willing to incur the cost. If C had been greater than U , there would not have been an invasion, a point that will be expanded upon shortly.

PAYOFFS

Figure's I and II show that there are two sub-games, which will be joined by information sets indicating asymmetric information shortly. Figure I shows the sub-game under the assumption that Iraq actually has WMD, and Figure II shows the sub-game under the assumption that Iraq is bluffing and has no WMD. Beginning with Figure I, Iraq must decide at Iraq 1 whether to make a WMD Claim or make No WMD Claim. If it makes No WMD Claim, there is some probability (q) that Iran will Invade and some probability ($1 - q$) that Iran will Not Invade. In the event that Iran chooses to Invade, Iraq will receive a payoff of $-l$ since it has been invaded and the United States will receive a payoff of U since it now knows that Iraq has no WMD (presumably Hussein's regime would have fallen after the invasion).

If Iraq chooses to make a WMD Claim at Iraq 1, the United States must then decide to either Do Nothing or to Demand Inspections and Disarmament at US 1. If the United States chooses to Do Nothing, Iraq receives its ideal payoff of B since it has now deterred Iran from invading with the claim to have WMD and has met no repercussions from the United States. This is a worst-case for the United States because Iraq actually has WMD and nothing is being done about it, so the United States receives a payoff of $-u$. If the United States chooses to Demand Inspections and Disarmament at US 1, Iraq must then decide whether to Comply or Not Comply at Iraq 2.

If Iraq chooses to Comply at Iraq 2, this means that Iraq has fully complied with the demand for inspections and has fully disarmed once the WMD were found (this side of the tree assumes that Iraq has WMD). It is assumed that the United States will not invade at this point, since Iraq has fully complied and it is known that Iraq is no longer a threat. However, it is now known to everyone that Iraq does not have WMD, so again Iran is a potential threat. There is some probability (r) that Iran will Invade and some probability ($1 - r$) that Iran will Not Invade. If Iran Invades, Iraq receives a payoff of $-I$ since it has been invaded and it receives a payoff of 0 if Iran Does Not Invade. The payoff of 0 is because neither Iran nor the United States has invaded, so the status quo is maintained; Iraq does not gain or lose. In both of these scenarios, the United States receives a payoff of U since Iraq chose to Comply with the inspections and disarmament and it now knows that Iraq does not have WMD. It is redundant to the United States whether Iran invades or not.

If Iraq chooses to Not Comply at Iraq 2, the United States has the next move at US 2 and must choose whether to Invade or Not Invade. If the United States chooses to Invade, Iraq receives a payoff of $-I$ since it has been invaded. The United States receives its benefit of U ,

since it now knows that Iraq does not have WMD, but it incurs an additional cost of $-C$ from invading. If the United States chooses to Not Invade at US 2, Iraq receives its benefit from others thinking it has WMD B because it has made a claim to have WMD, thus deterring Iran from invading, and not faced any repercussions from the United States. The United States receives a payoff of $-u$, since it is assumed that Iraq has WMD on this side of the tree and the United States has done nothing.

Moving now to Figure II where it is assumed that Iraq has no WMD, Iraq makes the first move at Iraq 3. Like before, Iraq can choose to either make a WMD Claim or No WMD Claim. If Iraq makes No WMD Claim, there is some probability (q) that Iran will Invade and some probability ($1 - q$) that Iran will Not Invade. If Iran Invades, Iraq receives a payoff of $-I$ since it has been invaded and the United States receives a payoff of 0. The United States has no reason to believe that Iraq has WMD here, since it has made no WMD Claim, and it does not actually have WMD, so the United States does not gain or lose. The same is true if Iran Does Not Invade. The payoff for Iraq is also 0 if Iran Does Not Invade. It gets no benefit from others thinking it has WMD, but it incurs no losses either from being invaded.

If Iraq chooses to make a WMD Claim at Iraq 3, then the United States gets the next move and must decide whether to Do Nothing or Demand Inspections and Disarmament. If the United States Does Nothing, it again receives a payoff of 0 since Iraq does not have WMD in this scenario. It is not better or worse off. Iraq receives its full benefit of B since it has successfully deterred Iran from Invading by making a claim to have WMD and met no repercussions from the United States. If the United States chooses to Demand Inspections and Disarmament at US 3, the next move goes to Iraq at Iraq 4.

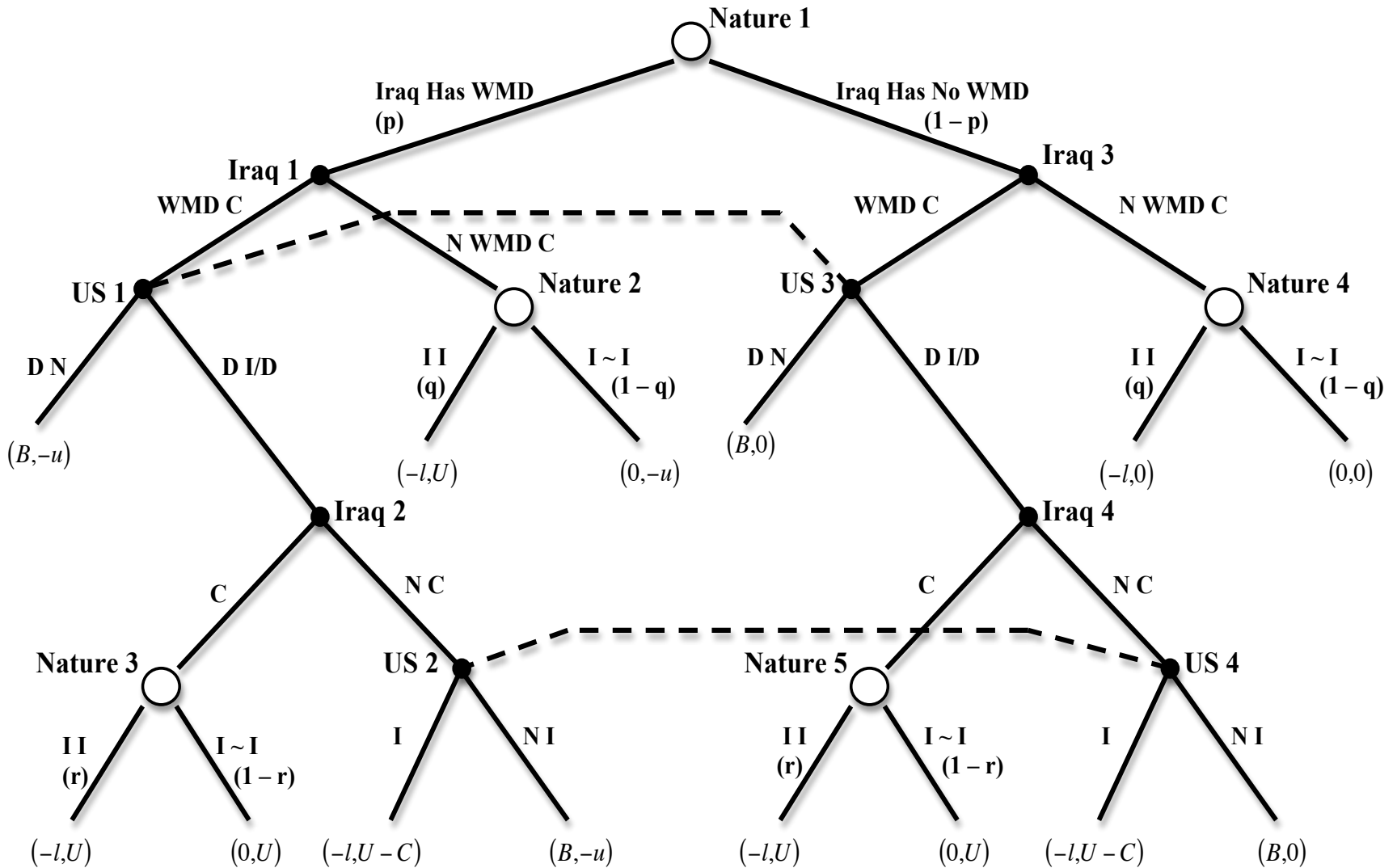
Iraq must choose whether to Comply or Not Comply at Iraq 4. If Iraq chooses to Comply, then it is assumed that the United States will not invade. However, it is now known to everyone that Iraq does not have WMD, so there again is some probability (r) that Iran will Invade and some probability $(1 - r)$ that Iran will Not Invade at Nature 5. If Iran Invades, Iraq receives a payoff of $-I$ because it was invaded and the United States receives its full benefit of U because it now knows that Iraq does not have WMD. If Iran Does Not Invade, Iraq receives a payoff of 0 since it receives no benefit from others thinking it has WMD but also incurs no loss from being invaded. The United States again receives a payoff of U , since Iraq has fully complied with inspections and disarmament and it is known that Iraq does not have WMD.

If Iraq chooses to Not Comply at Iraq 4, then the United States has the next move at US 4; it must choose whether to Invade or Not Invade. If the United States chooses to Invade, Iraq receives a payoff of $-I$ because it was invaded and the United States receives its full benefit U from knowing that Iraq does not have WMD minus the cost C of invading. If the United States chooses to Not Invade, Iraq receives its benefit B because it has successfully deterred the Iranians from invading and avoided being invaded by the United States. The United States receives a payoff of 0, since it does not receive any benefit from knowing that Iraq does not have WMD nor does it incur any cost from invading, and Iraq also does not have WMD, so there is no loss from Iraq actually having WMD.

ASYMMETRIC INFORMATION

To this point it has been implied that there are two scenarios, one in which Iraq Has WMD (Figure I) and one in which Iraq Has No WMD (Figure II). This is because there is an information asymmetry between the United States and Iraq. Figure III shows that the United

FIGURE III – ASYMMETRIC INFORMATION



States must factor in some probability (p) that Iraq has WMD and some corresponding probability ($1 - p$) that Iraq does not have WMD when making decisions. These decision nodes are now information sets, where the United States knows what its payoff would be in either circumstance but must account for the perceived probability that one will happen over the other when making a decision. These information sets are indicated by dotted lines. Decision nodes US1 and US 3 now become Information Set US 1/US 3 and decision nodes US 2 and US 4 now become Information Set US 2/US 4.

SOLVING THE GAME – BACKWARDS INDUCTION

To begin, each player's payoff's must be solved at Nature Node's 2, 3, 4, and 5. At Nature 2, Iraq receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & -l(q) + 0(1 - q) && \text{Equation 1} \\ & -lq \end{aligned}$$

and the United States receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & U(q) - u(1 - q) && \text{Equation 2} \\ & Uq - u + uq \end{aligned}$$

At Nature 3, Iraq receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & -l(r) + 0(1 - r) && \text{Equation 3} \\ & -lr \end{aligned}$$

and the United States receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & U(r) + U(1 - r) && \text{Equation 4} \\ & Ur + U - Ur \\ & U \end{aligned}$$

At Nature 4, Iraq receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & -l(q) + 0(1 - q) && \text{Equation 5} \\ & -lq \end{aligned}$$

and the United States receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & 0(q) + 0(1 - q) && \text{Equation 6} \\ & 0 \end{aligned}$$

At Nature 5, Iraq receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & -l(r) + 0(1 - r) && \text{Equation 7} \\ & -lr \end{aligned}$$

and the United State receives a payoff of

$$\begin{aligned} & U(r) + U(1 - r) && \text{Equation 8} \\ & Ur + U - Ur \\ & U \end{aligned}$$

Now we can begin solving from the bottom. At Information Set US 2/US 4, the United States should choose to Invade iff

$$\begin{aligned} & (U - C)p + (U - C)(1 - p) > -u(p) + 0(1 - p) && \text{Equation 9} \\ & Up - Cp + U - Up - C + Cp > -up \\ & U - C > -up \\ & \frac{U - C}{-u} < p \end{aligned}$$

At Iraq 2 on the Iraq Has WMD side of the tree, Iraq must choose to Comply or Not Comply. It is known from Equation III that Iraq will receive a payoff of $-lr$ at Nature 3, and Equation IX

shows that the United States will choose to Invade when $\frac{U - C}{-u} < p$. Therefore, Iraq should choose to Comply iff

$$-lr > -l \quad \text{Equation 10}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{-l}{-l}$$

$$r < 1 \quad \text{when} \quad \frac{U - C}{-u} < p$$

and

$$-lr > B \quad \text{Equation 11}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{B}{-l}$$

$$r < -\frac{B}{l} \quad \text{when} \quad \frac{U - C}{-u} > p$$

The same reasoning is applied to Iraq 4 on the Iraq Has No WMD side of the tree. It is known from Equation 7 that Iraq will receive a payoff of $-lr$ at Nature 5, and Equation 9 shows that the United States will choose to Invade when $\frac{U - C}{-u} < p$. Therefore, Iraq should choose to Comply iff

$$-lr > -l \quad \text{Equation 12}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{-l}{-l}$$

$$r < 1 \quad \text{when} \quad \frac{U - C}{-u} < p$$

and

$$-lr > B \quad \text{Equation 13}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{B}{-l}$$

$$r < -\frac{B}{l} \quad \text{when} \quad \frac{U - C}{-u} > p$$

Under the assumptions that $u > U > C > 0$ and $0 < p < 1$, Equation's 11 and 13 will never be true. The LHS is negative, and the RHS is positive, so only Equation's 10 and 12 are relevant. With this information, we move to Information Set US 1/US 3. Here, the United States must choose whether to Do Nothing or Demand Inspections/Disarmament. It is known from Equation's 4 and 8 that the United States will receive a payoff of U at Nature's 3 and 5. Therefore, when Equation's 10 and 12 are true and Iraq chooses to Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4, the United States should choose to Do Nothing iff

$$-u(p) + 0(1 - p) > U(p) + U(1 - p) \quad \text{Equation 14}$$

$$-up > Up + U - Up$$

$$-up > U$$

$$\frac{-up}{-u} > \frac{U}{-u}$$

$$p < -\frac{U}{u}$$

Given the specified assumptions, Equation 14 cannot be true. When Equation's 10 and 12 are not true and Iraq chooses to Not Comply, the United States should choose to Do Nothing iff

$$-u(p) + 0(1 - p) > U(p) + (U - C)(1 - p) \quad \text{Equation 15}$$

$$-up > Up - Cp + U - Up - C + Cp$$

$$-up > U - C$$

$$\frac{-up}{-u} > \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

$$p < \frac{U - C}{-u} \quad \text{when} \quad p > \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States choose to Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4 (Equation 9), and the United States should choose to Do Nothing iff

$$-u(p) + 0(1 - p) > -u(p) + 0(1 - p) \quad \text{Equation 16}$$

$$-up > -up \quad \text{when} \quad p < \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States chooses to Not Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4 (Equation 9).

*Note that Equation 15 cannot be true. Also, Equation 16 will not be true because the two are equal and because it has been shown in Equation 9 that this value of p cannot exist. Therefore, there is no circumstance in which the United States will choose to Do Nothing. It will always choose to Demand Inspections/Disarmament.

From here, we solve for Iraq 1. On the Iraq Has WMD side of the tree, it is shown in Equation 1 that Iraq will receive a payoff of $-lq$ at Nature 2, so when Equation 15 is not true (it never will be) and the United States chooses to Demand Inspections/Disarmament at Information Set US 1/US 3, Iraq should choose to make a WMD Claim iff

$$-lr > -lq \quad \text{Equation 17}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$r < q$$

when Equation 10 is true and Iraq chooses to Comply at Iraq 2. When Equation 15 is not true and the United States chooses to Demand Inspections/Disarmament at Information Set US 1/US 3, Iraq should make a WMD Claim iff

$$-l > -lq \quad \text{Equation 18}$$

$$\frac{-l}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$1 < q \quad \text{when} \quad p > \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States chooses to Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4. Since q is bound between 0 and 1, inclusive, Equation 18 is irrelevant. Iraq should make a WMD Claim iff

$$B > -lq \quad \text{Equation 19}$$

$$\frac{B}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$-\frac{B}{l} < q \quad \text{when} \quad p < \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States chooses to Not Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4. It is known from Equation 9 that this value of p will never exist. Therefore, Equation 19 is irrelevant.

Finally, we solve for Iraq 3. On the Iraq Has No WMD side of the tree, it is shown in Equation 5 that Iraq receives a payoff of $-lq$ at Nature 4, so when Equation 15 is not true and the United States chooses to Demand Inspections/Disarmament at Information Set US 1/US 3, Iraq should choose to make a WMD Claim iff

$$-lr > -lq \quad \text{Equation 20}$$

$$\frac{-lr}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$r < q$$

when Equation 12 is true and Iraq chooses to Comply at Iraq 4. When Equation 15 is not true and the United States chooses to Demand Inspections/Disarmament at Information Set US 1/US 3, Iraq should make a WMD Claim iff

$$-l > -lq \quad \text{Equation 21}$$

$$\frac{-l}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$1 < q \quad \text{when} \quad p > \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States chooses to Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4. Since it is assumed that $0 < q \leq 1$, Equation 21 cannot be true and therefore is irrelevant. Iraq should make a WMD Claim iff

$$B > -lq \quad \text{Equation 22}$$

$$\frac{B}{-l} > \frac{-lq}{-l}$$

$$-\frac{B}{l} < q \quad \text{when} \quad p < \frac{U - C}{-u}$$

or when the United States chooses to Not Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4. Again, it is known from Equation 9 that this value of p will never exist. Therefore, Equation 22 is irrelevant.

EQUILBRIUM

Equation 9 shows that the United States will always choose to Invade at Information Set US 2/US 4 and Equation's 10 and 12 say that Iraq will choose to Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4, respectively, when $r < 1$. With the assumption that $0 < r < 1$, this is true. Equation's 14 and 15 show that the United States will always choose to Demand Inspections and Disarmament at Information Set US 1/US 3, and Equation's 17 and 20 show that Iraq will choose to make a WMD Claim at Iraq 1 and Iraq 3, respectively, when $r < q$. Therefore, when $r < 1$ and $r < q$, or when Equation's 10, 12, 17 and 20 are true, the game will be in sequential equilibrium, which is

S.E. 1

{(WMD Claim, Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

If $r > q$, Equation's 17 and 20 say that Iraq will choose to make No WMD Claim at Iraq 1 and Iraq 3, respectively. If this is the case, the game will be in sequential equilibrium, which is

S.E. 2

{(No WMD Claim, Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

With the assumptions that $0 < r \leq 1$ and $0 < q \leq 1$, it is possible for both r and q to equal 1. When $r = 1$ and $0 < q < 1$, Equation's 10 and 12 say that Iraq will choose to Not Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4, and the sequential equilibrium is

S.E. 3

{(No WMD Claim, Not Comply); (Demand Inspection/Disarmament, Invade)}

S.E. 1 already accounts for the case where $0 < r < 1$ and $q = 1$, so there is no need for a separate equilibrium for this case. If $r = 1$ and $q = 1$, then Iraq will be indifferent at Iraq 1 and Iraq 3.

Also, Equation's 10 and 12 again say that Iraq will choose to Not Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4 if $r = 1$. Therefore, when both r and q equal 1, there will be two sequential equilibria, which are

S.E. 4

{(No WMD Claim, Not Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

and

S.E. 5

{(WMD Claim, Not Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

Substantively, S.E. 4 and S.E. 5 say that Iraq saw the probability as 1, or was certain, that both Iran and the United States were going to Invade. Therefore, it was indifferent in choosing whether to make a WMD Claim or not. Also, Iraq will be indifferent at Iraq 1 and Iraq 3 if $r = q$ but they are both less than 1. However, in this case $r < 1$ and Equation's 10 and 12 tell us that Iraq will choose to Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4. In such a case, the sequential equilibria are

S.E. 6

{(WMD Claim, Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

and

S.E. 7

{(No WMD Claim, Comply); (Demand Inspections/Disarmament, Invade)}

S.E. 6 and S.E. 7 say that there is still uncertainty as to whether Iran will Invade or Not Invade, only this time Iraq will Comply at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4 because $r < 1$ (Equation's 10 and 12). From actual events observed, S.E. 5 seems consistent with reality. Iraq perceived with relative certainty that both the United States and Iran were going to Invade. Therefore, Iraq chose to make a WMD Claim, the United States chose to Demand Inspections and Disarmament, Iraq then chose to Not Comply, and the United States chose to Invade. Hussein corroborated this line of reasoning during interrogations in 2004 (DOJ 2004).

UNCERTAINTY IN THE MODEL

It has been argued that there was considerable uncertainty, both on the side of the United States with regards to Iraq's intentions and on the side of Iraq about the United States' intentions. This uncertainty is built into the game with the use of nature nodes, which indicate that, given a particular course of action, there is some probability that the outcome will go one way and some corresponding probability that the outcome will go another way.

Nature 2 and Nature 4 come at the beginning of the game after Iraq 1 and Iraq 3 when Iraq has chosen to not make a claim to have WMD. After doing so, Iraq is uncertain as to whether Iran will Invade or Not Invade and must factor in the likelihood of either when deciding whether to make a claim to have WMD or not. Iraq is again uncertain about what Iran will do at Nature 3 and Nature 5. Iraq must account for the likelihood that Iran will Invade or Not Invade at Iraq 2 and Iraq 4 when deciding whether to Comply or Not Comply with the demand for

inspections and disarmament. Uncertainty is assumed, but we are concerned with perceived reality. Hussein could have perceived the probability to be 1 that both the United States and Iran were going to invade, therefore making $r = q = 1$.

Based on U.S. Department of Justice interrogations of Saddam Hussein in 2004, we know that Hussein perceived Iran as an imminent threat, and likewise with the United States (DOJ 2004), but Iran's capabilities and intentions were unclear, much in the same way the Iraq's were to the United States, and the United States' intentions were also unclear. Therefore, both (q) and (r) could have varied between 0 and 1, including 1, since Hussein may have made the calculation that both the United States and Iran were certain to invade.

Uncertainty between the United States and Iraq is shown in Nature 1, which indicates that there is some probability (p) that Iraq has WMD and some probability (1 – p) that Iraq does not. The United States must account for the likelihood that Iraq actually has WMD when choosing at Information Set US 1/US 3 and Information Set US 2/US 4. American policy-makers knew that Hussein had used chemical weapons against the Iranians and against its own people in the past (Karsh 2002). They also knew that Iraq had an ambitious nuclear weapons program at the time of the first Gulf War, and it was unclear whether or not the program had been disbanded (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). Also, there were a number of intelligence sources suggesting that Iraq could be continuing its nuclear weapons program (Lowenthal 2009), and Hussein was saying that Iraq had WMD in domestic speeches. None of this evidence, however, was definitive. There were advisors suggesting that this evidence showed that Iraq had WMD, and there were others who suggested that it was circumstantial and inconclusive. This is source of the United States' uncertainty about whether or not Iraq was bluffing.

At the same time, Iraq knows that it does not have WMD, but it is uncertain about what the United States perceives this likelihood to be. Iraq is uncertain about the value that the United States places on (p) and therefore is not sure what side of the tree it is playing on. In the 1990's, the United States responded to hostile threats by Iraq with sanctions and strategic airstrikes, and Saddam Hussein has told Justice Department interrogators that he expected the United States to respond with a bombing campaign. He told interrogators that he calculated the threat of Iran attacking and attempting to capture parts of southern Iraq to be a greater threat than the United States' bombs. He was, however, uncertain about what response to expect from the United States (DOJ 2004). In hindsight, he clearly miscalculated the resolve of American decision-makers, and there seems to have been uncertainty on Hussein's part as to the United States' intentions. Put differently, Hussein calculated that (q) and (r) were high, possibly even 1, and that (p) was low, or at least lower than (q) and (r).

UNITARY ACTORS

An underlying assumption of the model is that the actors are unitary decision-makers who make moves in a unified manner with no domestic opposition. Making this assumption with Iraq does not seem to pose an issue. At the time Iraq was ruled by a dictator, Saddam Hussein, who exercised full legal control over the country. Saddam possessed complete sovereignty, and it is known that even his advisors had little power to influence him (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). We know, however, that in reality this is not how it always works, especially for democracies, so further attention should be given to the United States.

The federal government of the United States divides power between three branches: the executive (controlled by the President), the legislative (divided between the Senate and the

House of Representatives), and the judicial (with ultimate authority residing in the Supreme Court). Generally, the President has much leeway with regards to military matters and is allowed to use it at his discretion (to an extent). Congress has the power to declare war and also must appropriate funds for military actions that the President decides to take. The Supreme Court can only rule on the legality of an action after it has been taken. Since this game looks at the interactions leading up to a military event, it is safe to dismiss the influence of the Supreme Court.

Congress, however, could have influenced the United States' decisions prior to the invasion, and there was definitely opposition (Fisher 2003). The link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, intelligence reports of WMD, and the uncertainty of Hussein's intentions were all debated, but ultimately Congress chose to approve the *Authorization For Use Of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution Of 2002*, or the *Iraq Resolution* (Public Law 107 – 243 2002). The *Iraq Resolution*, among other things, stated that “The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate... to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq” (Public Law 107 – 243 2002, Section 3 (a)). From this it is clear that Congress delegated all responsibilities regarding military action against Iraq to the President. Therefore, the assumption that the United States was acting as a unitary decision maker is valid. Although the President undoubtedly had advisors influencing his decisions (and creating uncertainty, as stated previously), in this instance, he possessed sole authority to make decisions.

PART II

20th CENTURY FOREIGN POLICY AND THE BUILD-UP TO WAR

By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists... they could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States.

-George W. Bush

Iran was Iraq's major threat due to their common border... Iran intended to annex Southern Iraq into Iran. Of more concern was Iran discovering Iraq's weaknesses and vulnerabilities than the repercussions of the United States for refusal to allow UN inspectors back into Iraq.

-Saddam Hussein

III. SETTING THE STAGE – IRAQ

Iraq - the fertile crescent, Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization; nations and empires have been fighting over this land since ancient times, and many tyrannical regimes have governed this fertile valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers over the last five thousand years. Because of its location along trade routes from Europe to Asia as well as its surrounding farm-rich soil, Baghdad (ancient Babylon) was once a thriving metropolis, a cultural center for literature and the arts as well as a center of commerce (Finlan 2003; Oler 2011; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

Although it has been at times a flourishing region, the land known today as Iraq has also been repeatedly conquered. In 1258, the Mongols ruthlessly invaded, destroying much of the infrastructure and the complex irrigation canals before leaving. A century later, the Mongols again invaded under Tamerlane, leaving the once thriving metropolis in ruins. This has been the story over and over again; a society builds up and then is invaded and usually devastated in the process. Each time it was invaded and conquered, a new society was built by the conquerors, but remnants of the prior people and their culture remained. The culmination of these cultures over the years have resulted in a populace that is religiously, ethnically, and culturally diverse. The significance of such a diverse population will be instrumental in shaping the politics of the region later (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

After the Mongols, the territory was then conquered and controlled by the Ottomans who, for the most part, ignored it, as did the Europeans from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Aside from its rich farmland in the valley, Iraq possessed few natural resources of significance to

western colonial powers, except for oil, which would not be discovered in Iraq until the 20th century (Oler 2011; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

IRAQ IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The twentieth century brought about change, when British forces found themselves in conflict with the Ottoman Turks in World War I. After Britain's Indian Army invaded the Ottoman Empire through the province of Basra from the east, British and French forces were able to take the Baghdad province and defeat the Turks, who conceded defeat in October 1918 (once again, the territory was conquered). This left Britain and France in control of much of the Middle East, making their diplomats responsible for dividing up the land mass. The three former Ottoman provinces of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul, three areas that were ethnically, religiously and geographically diverse, were consolidated into what today is modern Iraq (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

As mentioned, the new British colony of Iraq was created with no regard for the cultural and religious diversity of its inhabitants, and the political ramifications will soon become apparent. Iraq's independence was ratified in 1932 by the League of Nations (Finlan 2003), at which time the newly founded state contained a conglomerate of religions and ethnicities: Shiite Arabs in the south around Basra, Sunni Arabs in central Iraq in and around Baghdad, and Sunni Kurds in the north, all of whom were either different culturally, religiously, ethnically, or all three. Further complicating things were the assortments of other ethnicities and religions scattered throughout the Kurdish and Arab areas, most of which were descendents of past conquerors. They included Assyrians, Christians, Iranian Persians (Shiite Muslims), and Jews (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

POST WWII IRAQ

The harsh realities of the Great Depression and World War II were not lost on the Iraqi people. Some of the same societal and environmental factors that made it possible for Hitler to rise to power were also present in Iraq and undoubtedly influenced the Baathist Party as it gained prominence in the Middle East. The diplomatic and military victories of Hitler and his Third Reich were seen by some Iraqi's as a way to overcome economic depression and attain regional hegemony. Early Baathist ideology had little to do with Islam and more to do with Arab nationalism, the idea being to reject the corrupt western colonial past of the region and to support and embrace a strong Arab state. Communism and Nazi Totalitarianism were rooted deeply in Baathist ideology (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

In the years following World War II, Iraq was governed by the Hashemite monarchy until the king and royal family were killed in 1958 by General Abd al-Karim Qassem and his officers. There was turmoil in Iraq after the coup; the new government, under General Qassem, was supported by a communist faction within the Iraqi populace and was opposed by the Baathist Party (one prominent Baathist Party activist being a young Saddam Hussein). In 1963, General Qassem was assassinated by Baathist Party activists in a coup attempt, but the communists were able to narrowly maintain control until 1968 when the Baathist Party officially took control under Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and his deputy, Saddam Hussein. The Baathists took control with the support of the military, which would torture and execute the opposition (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

THE EMERGENCE OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

Saddam Hussein was then al-Bakr's chief administrator as well as head of the secret police. Hussein was an admirer of Stalin and modeled his organization as Stalin had to create paranoia among the populace in an effort to attain and maintain control. Many in government made light of Hussein's significance, regarding him as a bureaucrat and often questioning his intelligence, possibly because he spoke with a Tikriti accent and was not from one of the more cosmopolitan localities in Iraq. They would all soon regret this; Hussein would prove to have a long memory. He patiently made note of these individuals while placing those loyal to him throughout the Iraqi bureaucracy and furthering his power. By the late 1970's, Hussein was in such control of the Iraqi government that he convinced al-Bakr to step down and announce him as his successor. In 1979, Saddam Hussein officially took control of Iraq (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

Saddam Hussein was more interested in controlling Iraq and expanding his power in the Middle East than his predecessors, who were more interested in creating an Arab state. On July 18, 1979, he famously called a meeting of the top three hundred Baath Party leaders and announced that there were some who were "plotting" against the regime. He denounced sixty-six senior party members, and then weeks later, after being tortured, had them executed. He had the surviving party members serve on the firing squad. This type of behavior would become a hallmark of Hussein's tactics to maintain order and obedience. No one, in government or otherwise, felt safe speaking out against Saddam. His agents could always be listening; they seemed to be everywhere and nowhere. (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

In 1980, the Iranian government was struggling to maintain power against revolutionaries, and Hussein capitalized on their weakness, seeing it as an opportunity to expand

his empire. The Iranians, however, turned out to be stronger than they appeared. After eight years of fighting, gaining and losing ground with hundreds of thousands dead, both sides were in a stalemate. Saddam had nearly bankrupted his country trying to defeat the Iranians (Karsh 2002). The Iraqi government was in debt and desperate for additional revenues, so in July of 1990, Saddam moved Iraqi troops into neighboring Kuwait to seize their oil fields. The invasion and subsequent occupation was an easy victory for Iraq, but it would prove to be short-lived (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

IV. SETTING THE STAGE – THE UNITED STATES

POST WWII/KOREA

After the Second World War, the United States found itself as one of two superpowers on the international scene, and this would define its foreign policy during the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1950, the capitalist South Korea was at risk of falling to the communist North Koreans. Policy-makers in Washington worried that if one state fell to communism, it would have a domino effect on surrounding states, which would soon follow. Since it was believed that communist states would not be sympathetic to western/capitalists interests, the United States was forced to devise strategies to counter communist expansion. One school of thought held the belief that communist economic policies and state-centered markets simply would not work, that they created a disincentive for individual entrepreneurship and thus were certain to fail given time. From this reasoning, the United States often pursued a policy of containment, or preventing its spread and thus diminishing its influence, when dealing with communist states, the assumption being that the state would inevitably collapse on its own (Fried 1990).

So in the summer of 1950, the United States invaded and occupied the Korean peninsula. In the region, the Chinese to the north were communists, and the idea was to contain them and not let their ideology spread to the south into the Korean peninsula. The United States invaded from the south, where capitalist sympathizers were holding out, and attempted to push the northerners back across the North/South Korean border. The invasion was a success; the United States managed to push the communist northerners back across the border and nearly defeated them entirely. However, after three years of fighting, and nearly pushing the North Koreans completely into China, the United States and the South Koreans were back at the original line in a stalemate. A ceasefire was negotiated between the North and South, to be held by a permanent occupation of the South by American forces.

The ceasefire was seen to be a draw by most Americans. The United States had won in that it had succeeded in thwarting the expansion of communism, but it had failed in that it had not eradicated communism on the Korean peninsula. This was at the least a moral loss, one of the first in a long line of losses to come. Others on the international scene, however, would come to see this as a defeat for the United States. They saw that a world superpower attempted to impose its will on a country and was successfully stopped by a seemingly inferior force (Diamond 2008; Fried 1990).

VIETNAM

At the same time that the United States was fighting communism in Korea, the French were struggling to maintain their colonial stronghold against anti-colonial/communist forces in Vietnam. The United States would assist the French in the late 1950's and early 1960's until they could no longer hold on, at which point the responsibility fell completely upon the United States

to prevent communist occupation in Vietnam and contain communism in southeast Asia. In many ways, Vietnam was similar to Korea; there were communists in the north and capitalist and western sympathizers in the south. The strategy was also similar, to eradicate communism in Vietnam if possible and at least contain it to the north and prevent its spread to the south if full elimination was not attainable. The fear was the same, that if Vietnam fell to communist forces, it would only be a matter of time before a domino effect took place and it spread to the rest of southeast Asia. By 1965 American soldiers were in full-scale conflict in the country (Franklin et. al. 1995).

Intense fighting commenced for more than ten years, and casualties mounted. Because of high casualty rates, budgetary constraints, political infighting, and the draft, public support for the war plummeted. Suffice it to say that the conflict in Vietnam was a war of attrition that the United States was losing, and on April 30, 1975, Saigon, the capital city of South Vietnam, fell to the communist northerners (Martini 2007). This was seen by the United States and around the world as a tactical and moral defeat; unlike in Korea, the United States had clearly been defeated in Vietnam. It seemed to the rest of the world that the American public did not have the stomach for such a war, and the stigma of this defeat would haunt policy-makers and military officers for decades to come (Diamond 2008; Franklin et. al. 1995; Martini 2007).

AMERICA'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH RADICAL ISLAM

Coming off the crushing defeat in Vietnam, the foreign policy blunders abounded for the United States. The United States and Britain had supported the Shah of Iran for more than twenty-five years. Britain had an interest in Iran's natural gas resources, and the Shah had given them near complete access. Given their colonial past, this did not resonate with much of the

population. On February 1, 1979, the former Ayatollah Khomeini, whom the United States had helped exile years earlier, returned to Tehran, sparking revolutionaries who supported overthrowing the Shah. For most of the summer the United States embassy in Tehran came under fire, but the Marines heightened security and managed to hold off the attacks. Later in the year the Shah, who had been diagnosed with cancer, was sent to the United States to receive treatment. This further inflamed revolutionaries who had suspected the Shah of being backed and strongly influenced by westerners. On November 4, 1979, Iranian students who supported the Ayatollah overran the American embassy in Tehran and took sixty-three prisoners (Farber 2005).

The new Iranian government demanded that the United States return the Shah to Iran in exchange for the prisoners. President Carter refused to do so, knowing that returning the Shah was a certain death sentence. After diplomatic attempts to free the hostages failed, the Carter administration approved a Special Forces mission to enter Iran via helicopter and rescue the hostages. The mission turned out to be a complete failure. Three helicopters suffered mechanical problems likely caused by a dust storm on their way to a refueling station just before the mission was to commence. The commanding officer was forced to abort the mission, but it was not over. While taking off again, one of the helicopters that was forced to land collided with a C-130 refueling plane, killing eight immediately. The American soldiers were forced to leave the remaining plane, five broken-down helicopters, and eight dead bodies behind as trophies for the Iranian revolutionaries (Farber 2005).

The botched mission only further ensured that any sort of diplomatic solution was off the table; the Iranian revolutionaries would now make unreasonable demands and hold the hostages merely to spite President Carter. Nothing made this more apparent than when the hostages were released on January 20, 1981, the day that Carter left office. It was all over, four hundred forty

four days after the hostages were taken, and America had had its first encounter with radical Islam (Farber 2003).

Over the next decade, while Saddam was fighting the Iranians, the United States would see a few small skirmishes; an invasion of Grenada, a covert war in Afghanistan, a small and short-lived invasion of Panama, etc., but no significant fighting took place by American forces. The Cold War would end without a shot being fired, and despite advancements in technology, plus the fifteen years that had passed since the defeat in Vietnam, Americans were still war weary. Nevertheless, the United States would find itself at an impasse when Saddam invaded Kuwait (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

V. A CLASH OF INTERESTS

IRAQ INVADES KUWAIT

In the summer of 1990, Saddam Hussein ordered the Iraqi army into Kuwait to seize its oil fields. This action made the United States and other western nations nervous; Hussein already controlled a significant portion of the world's oil supply in Iraq, and now his power would be expanded to include Kuwaiti resources as well. Further exacerbating the issue was that Hussein's army was then staged dangerously close to the Saudi Arabian border, which made European nations, whose economies relied heavily on oil-exports from the region, as well as the United States, uneasy (Finlan 2003).

If Saddam successfully invaded Saudi Arabia, the influence of western nations in the region would be significantly diminished. Iraq and Iran would then control most of the area surrounding the Persian Gulf, the vital waterway for shipping oil out of the region. In addition, Iraqi expansion in the region would give Saddam the economic resources to conquer other areas,

possibly even going back into Iran (successfully this time) and reversing the stalemate between the two. This scenario bore to close of a resemblance to that of Hitler's Third Reich in 1939, and if it were to play out, Saddam Hussein would have at the least regional hegemony, which would have global repercussions. The United States and western nations would be forced to act.

THE UNITED STATES RESPONDS

The United States' response was unexpected; President Bush, Sr. sought political, economic, and, if necessary, military confrontation to expel the Iraqi's from Kuwait. Hussein underestimated the resolve of President Bush, dismissing the effectiveness of America's stealth technology and operational capability. He believed that his French and Russian air defense systems were more than capable of countering the United States' aircraft, and he believed that his army, after fighting the Iranians for eight years, was more capable than American ground forces. He even stated publicly that, "the Americans had proved in Vietnam that they could not endure heavy casualties without losing their will" (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003, pp. 30-31). It was clear that Hussein believed Americans to be incapable of stomaching such a war, and this, along with other tactical miscalculations, would lead him to underestimate the Bush administrations determination to expel the Iraqi army form Kuwait (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

As it turned out, the United States overestimated the military capacity and will of the Iraqis. The United States took six months to deploy over half a million personnel and their supplies to Saudi Arabia in Operation Desert Shield. The war finally commenced in January of 1991 with a massive air campaign, which quickly eliminated Iraq's air defense systems, along with other military targets. A little over a month later, the ground offensive commenced with

American soldiers entering Kuwait, and almost immediately Iraqi forces began to withdraw. Kuwait would be liberated in short order (Finlan 2003; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

Military leaders and elected officials in the United States saw this as a victory; the mission of expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait was accomplished with minimal losses, but the United States failed to go all the way. Hussein would interpret this to mean that he was correct in thinking that the United States could not stomach a war with heavy casualties and that this was the reason the Americans would not fight inside Iraq (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). His opinion would be further imbedded by witnessing American military policy over the next decade (Cordesman 2012).

VI. THE PATH TO INVASION

For the remainder of his presidency, Bush and the United Nations pursued a policy of containment against Iraq while Saddam met such sanctions with hostility. The economic sanctions did not work; a black market emerged to export Iraqi oil and goods through Jordan and Syria, and Hussein would eventually rebuild his military to be stronger than ever. The next decade would see an ebb and flow of hostility and cooperation between Hussein and the west. The United States' policy for punishing Iraq, in addition to economic sanctions, was often to target strategic military sites, usually intelligence headquarters, for precision airstrikes, the idea being to inflict harm with little collateral damage and low risk to American military personnel (Cordesman 2012; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). Iraq, however, was not the only or even the most salient foreign policy concern in the 1990's.

SOMOLIA AND THE IRAQI RESPONSE

In August 1992, the United States Army began humanitarian operations in Somalia. Initially, the starving Africans greeted the Americans who provided humanitarian food rations and aid. Having been successful, the Army turned over operations to the United Nations, leaving behind a small aviation, logistical, and quick reaction force (Stuart 2006). In 1993 the Army began raids on local warlords who opposed the United States' military presence. In the worst battle, two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down in the Somali capital of Mogadishu and eighteen soldiers were killed, with over fifty others wounded (Allard 1995). After the incident in Mogadishu, American forces significantly increased, but only temporarily. The Clinton administration made it clear that these forces were present to facilitate the United States' withdrawal, which happened months later. By March 1994, most American soldiers were out of Somalia (Allard 1995; Lyons and Samatar 2005; Stuart 2006).

Hussein saw the American defeat and subsequent withdrawal in Somalia as further evidence of the United States' inability to tolerate American casualties. In October of that year, Hussein began moving a sizable force of his elite Republican Guard southward toward Kuwait, a move that signified his possible intent to overturn the results of the Gulf War. President Clinton immediately deployed credible numbers of soldiers and marines to Kuwait, moved aircraft carriers and other warships into the Gulf, and deployed Air Force squadrons to the area. Hussein apparently did not think that the Clinton administration was bluffing because he immediately withdrew his soldiers and ordered them back to their barracks (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). He likely did not initially think the United States would attack, he simply thought that Clinton could not muster the political will for a conflict in light of his recent fiasco in Mogadishu. Once

Clinton moved credible forces to the region, however, it seems as if he changed his mind. As one retired Army officer put it, “He didn’t want to wake up to a cruise missile for breakfast.”

It is unclear whether or not Clinton would have actually invaded Iraq had Hussein invaded Kuwait, but if the aim was deterrence, then it seems to have worked. In hindsight and after seeing how the Clinton administration handled other military incidents, it seems reasonable to assume that he would have simply defended Kuwait, just as Bush, Sr. had, and not go beyond into Iraq, but this is merely speculation. What is important to note here is that Hussein is clearly serious about expanding Iraq’s power in the region and he is looking to capitalize on the United States’ weaknesses by moving when the United States is least likely, because of other international ventures, to retaliate.

OTHER AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY INCIDENTS

At the same time that the Bush and Clinton administrations were dealing with the Iraqi situation, they were also adjusting to the post-Cold War environment. States in Eastern Europe were still being acclimated to a world without the Soviet Union, and many were experiencing internal dissention. When a civil war in Bosnia threatened to spill over into other nations and further destabilize the already fragile region, both the United States and Russia were forced to become involved.

Although both the United States and Russia sought the same objective, to impede hostilities and reinstitute peace, order, and stability in the region, they could not agree on specific terms. The result was an inconsistency of international involvement and indecisiveness on both sides as to how the issue should be handled. Ultimately, the United States was able to broker a partnership between the United Nations and NATO to intervene in Bosnia (Kondev 1997). It is

difficult to say with any certainty what was going on in the mind of Saddam Hussein, but it is likely that he saw this as further evidence that the United States still had not fully recovered from its failure in Vietnam and was reluctant to become involved in the inner-workings of other states.

If one assumes that the United States actually was reluctant to engage in large-scale military operations that were high in risk, a series of events to come would change that. In 1979, the United States had had its first encounter with radical Islam (Farber 2005). In 1983 Muslim terrorists bombed the Marine barracks in Lebanon, killing 241 Americans. In 1996 Muslim terrorists bombed the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 Americans and hundreds of others, and in 2000 Muslim terrorists successfully bombed the USS Cole while it was ported in Yemen, killing 17 and wounding 39 (Callaway 2009). By this point, Americans were getting fed up with radical Islam, and the attacks to come would be the straw that broke the camels back.

In 2001, Muslim suicide terrorists hijacked four passenger jets; two were crashed into the World Trade Centers in Manhattan, one into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and one crashed while en route to its likely target, either the United States Capitol or the White House, killing nearly three thousand (Lowenthal 2009). Following the attacks in 2001, the gloves were off. President Bush announced that the United States would be waging war against the terrorists who were responsible for the attacks and all those who harbored them. He was referring mostly to the Taliban in Afghanistan, where the Al Qaeda operatives and supporters responsible for the attacks were thought to have sought refuge. Within weeks the United States Central Intelligence Agency, along with Special Forces and assortments of conventional forces were fully engaged with the Taliban in Afghanistan (Lowenthal 2009; Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003; O'Hern 2008).

VII. UNCERTAINTY

In 1976, John Boyd wrote about the mental patterns that human beings develop to cope with the ever-changing environment in which they operate. He said “the activity is dialectic in nature generating both disorder and order that emerges as a changing and expanding universe of mental concepts matched to a changing and expanding universe of observed reality” (Boyd 1976). This point could not be more relevant to the strategic interaction being observed here between Iraq and the United States. In 2003 there was considerable uncertainty, both from the United States’ and the Iraqi perspective, as to what the others were thinking. This uncertainty stemmed from the actions that each had observed from the other in recent history, actions that surely influenced the “observed reality” of the actors on the other side.

IRAQ’S UNCERTAINTY

As was stated previously, the United States was involved in a series of events that led Hussein to think American policy-makers would be extremely reluctant to risk war. The United States had a draw in Korea, was defeated in Vietnam (Franklin 1995; Martini 2007), and then suffered another foreign policy blunder in Iran (Farber 2005). It then liberated the Kuwaiti’s but stopped at the Iraqi border, which was seen by some as a failure to go all the way (Finlan 2003). Following the Gulf War, the United States was again involved in a botched operation, this time in Somalia (Allard 1995; Lyons 2005; Stuart 2006), and then in Bosnia, where American policy-makers showed reluctance to fully commit to a peacekeeping mission that had the potential to escalate (Kondev 1997). The United States did, however, respond in a seemingly aggressive manner to Iraqi hostilities shortly after the Somalia incident (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003), and then the United States acted even more aggressively in response to the 2001 terrorist attacks.

So judging from this evidence, one could reasonably conclude that Hussein thought the United States would only attack those who attacked it directly. Americans were busy fighting terrorists in Afghanistan, and surely they would not want to become involved in two wars at once, especially if one of the aggressors (Iraq) was only involved in regional disputes not targeted at the United States directly. Hussein, who ruled a divided country that was constantly on the verge of civil war (Murray and Scales 2003), was first and foremost concerned with maintaining order within his own borders. He was then concerned that any sign of weakness on his part could prompt an invasion by the Iranians (Cordesman 2012), a point that will be expanded upon shortly.

Also, there is evidence suggesting that the top military brass in Iraq were afraid to give Hussein accurate information. There was a strong incentive to only tell Hussein what he wanted to hear in fear of being seen as a traitor and subsequently punished, as was the case for the sixty-six Baath Party leaders who were tortured and executed in 1979 (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). This inability of top military advisors to make available accurate information only furthered Saddam's uncertainty.

THE UNITED STATES' UNCERTAINTY

The United States was also influenced by the uncertainty of Hussein's true intentions. As was stated previously, Saddam staged his brutal display of terror against his own party leaders in 1979 (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003), and then invaded the Iranians in 1980 (Karsh 2002). After nearly bankrupting Iraq attempting to defeat the Iranians, he desperately invaded Kuwait (Finlan 2003), and then attempted to again in 1993 before being deterred by a show of force by the United States (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). It was clear to the United States that Hussein was

interested in expanding Iraq's power in the region, but it was unclear which threats were real and which were empty words used merely as propaganda to maintain domestic control and to deter regional enemies.

Further convoluting the United States' perceptions was the lack of consensus about the actual state of Iraq's WMD programs and the nature of Iraqi relationships with Al Qaeda (Fisher 2003). Significant amounts of uncertainty on both sides will play a large role in the events leading up to the invasion. As Boyd suggested, this uncertainty was both unavoidable and relative to the individual actors involved; the observed reality of one is not necessarily consistent with the observed reality of another (Boyd 1976).

VIII. WAR

In March of 2003 the United States invaded Iraq; decision-makers justified their actions by saying that Iraq possessed WMD that could, at the least, be targeted at American allies in the region, and potentially even at the United States. It was also thought by some that Saddam Hussein had formal ties to Osama bin Laden and/or Al Qaeda, which would further the risk of such weapons being used against the United States if Iraq possessed them (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). After all, Al Qaeda had been successful in attacking the United States less than two years prior (Webster 2011).

IRAQ'S WMD PROGRAM

Hussein had made claims to his own people that Iraq possessed WMD. In hindsight, it is clear that he was acting strategically; telling Iraqi's that their government possessed such weapons would deter any domestic opposition to his regime. He had used chemical weapons

against the Kurds to the north already (Finlan 2003), so Iraqis had no reason to believe that he was bluffing about having them or about his willingness to use them against citizens if he felt the need. Also, the Iranians, who posed a direct threat to Iraq's sovereignty, would have no reason to think otherwise, for the same reasons mentioned above. Iraq had already used chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers in the 1980's (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

On the international stage, Hussein denied having WMD, but he maintained a veil of secrecy with regards to many of Iraq's military weapons programs and the United States was unsure about the extent of Iraq's WMD programs. American intelligence officials and policy makers did know that Iraq possessed one of the most ambitious nuclear weapons development programs in the world in 1991, but because of Hussein's penchant for secrecy, the United States and other western nations felt the need to demand that United Nations weapons inspectors be allowed to enter Iraq and survey military facilities (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

The United States felt the need to demand inspections because, at the time, it was known that Iraq possessed chemical weapons, which were not a large threat to those outside of Iraq, but Hussein was also making claims that Iraq possessed other, more powerful WMD. In addition to making these claims, he was threatening to use WMD against American allies, plus it was thought by some that he was also conspiring with and harboring members of Al Qaeda, who undoubtedly posed a threat to the United States and its allies, so the United States needed to be sure of Iraq's capabilities (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003).

The inspectors were allowed, but Hussein did not allow full disclosure and he continually signaled that he had something to hide. On one occasion, when the inspectors were leaving an Iraqi weapons factory, large trucks were seen leaving and the inspectors were not allowed to see what they were carrying. The United States knew that Hussein had purchased materials that

could be used to make nuclear weapons, but there was no consensus as to whether he was using the materials for this purpose or not (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). Again, it seems as if Hussein was acting strategically; he thought that Iran posed a more direct threat to Iraqi sovereignty than the United States. Signaling that Iraq possessed WMD seemed like the right move for Hussein, who was looking to deter the Iranians from attacking.

FURTHER UNCERTAINTY FOR THE UNITED STATES

From the perspective of the United States, however, it seemed as if Iraq, based on multiple sources, had WMD and intended to use them against allies in the region and possibly supply them to terrorist organizations that could use them to attack the United States directly. American policy-makers saw Hussein's use of chemical weapons against Iraqi citizens in the north as a sign that he was capable of and willing to use such weapons against others (Finlan 2003). They also viewed Hussein's failure to allow full access to weapons inspectors as a sign that he had WMD but was hiding them (Murray and Scales, Jr. 2003). Plus, multiple intelligence sources, including one noteworthy human source, codenamed CURVEBALL, suggested that Iraq possessed WMD (Lowenthal 2009). Hussein's claim to his people that Iraq possessed such weapons, his unwillingness to allow full access to inspectors, and American intelligence sources all led the United States to think that Iraq possessed WMD and posed a significant threat.

IX. SADDAM HUSSEIN'S INTERROGATION

After the invasion in 2003, a manhunt commenced to find the former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. The search ended in December when Hussein was captured in a village near Tikrit, at which time he was interrogated by multiple American officials. One such series of

interviews, conducted on February 13, May 13, and June 11, 2004 by Federal Bureau of Investigations Supervisory Special Agent George L. Piro, are of particular relevance to this study (DOJ 2004).

In those interviews, Agent Piro asked Hussein why he refused to allow inspectors into Iraq in accordance with United Nations Resolution 687, which called for Iraq to destroy any chemical or biological weapons in its possession. Hussein responded that Iraq did destroy such weapons in compliance with UNR 687, it simply was not witnessed by the inspectors (DOJ February 2004). He later stated that the purpose of Iraqi WMD were to deter regional enemies who posed a direct threat to Iraqi sovereignty. He justified this by saying that this is why no WMD were used during the first Gulf War; Iraq's sovereignty was not threatened. Hussein makes it clear that he wanted to show that Iraq had WMD to protect surrounding Arab countries, which "were frightened of Ayatollah Khomeini and Iran" (DOJ May 2004).

Hussein later said that "Iran was Iraq's major threat due to their common border" and that he "believed Iran intended to annex Southern Iraq into Iran" (DOJ June 2004). He then explained that Iran's WMD program had continued to develop and grow while Iraq's weapons capabilities had been lost due to UN inspections and sanctions. When asked specifically why he stopped complying with UN inspections, he responded that "he was more concerned about Iran discovering Iraq's weaknesses and vulnerabilities than the repercussions of the United States for his refusal to allow UN Inspectors back into Iraq... the UN inspectors would have directly identified to the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage to Iraq (DOJ June 2004).

In addition to the prior evidence provided, these interviews leave little doubt as to what Saddam Hussein was thinking. It is clear that he was concerned with Iran invading and imposing

on Iraqi sovereignty while also being concerned that posturing for Iran would prompt an American attack. He simply regarded the Iranian threat more salient.

X. APPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The model presented is a case study that is meant to explain why the United States invaded Iraq. It is not meant to be a generalizable theory of war, but it is structured in a way that other countries could be used in place of the current two while remaining applicable. That being said, it is useful in understanding the shortcomings of policy-makers in the buildup to the invasion. A study of these shortcomings will provide policy-makers in the future with a framework to build upon when they find themselves in similar strategic interactions with incomplete information.

The study is limited in that the details are case specific; much of the game is based on prior interactions between the two actors as well as the particular idiosyncrasies of the top decision-makers. This means that, if applied to other countries, the expected utilities of the actors will likely be different. Further studies could include figures that outline alliances between other nations and the two actors involved (Bueno de Mesquita 1981).

XI. CONCLUSION

This case study is compatible with prior theories of war. It is consistent with prior realist theories that are strictly state-centered (Bueno de Mesquita 1981), but it adds domestic element in that Hussein is also thinking about how the Iraqi people view his power (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992). The theory suggests and the model conveys that, based on a long history between Iraq and the United States, a considerable level of uncertainty developed where each

side was misinformed as to the others true intentions. This level of uncertainty about what the other was doing ultimately culminated in the United States invading Iraq.

The implications of this study are important for policy-makers going forward. In the future perhaps more care will be taken when such incomplete and often contradictory information is available. There are other states in the region that are similar to Iraq, i.e. Syria and Iran, and others like North Korea, in which there is a very real possibility that the United States could find itself in a similar situation as it did with Iraq. Having a fundamental understanding of the United States' successes and failures on the way to the Iraqi invasion will be vital when policy-makers inevitably find themselves in strategic situations with these other nations.

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