

# **Metaphorical Thought in Foreign Policy Why Strategic Framing Matters**

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## Introduction

This paper has several purposes. First, to convince the reader that the strategic framing of issues matters to foreign policy. Second, to show that foreign policy is understood implicitly using systems of metaphorical thought. Third, to provide a short guided tour through some of those systems, and demonstrate how they mattered in the Gulf War and Kosovo. And finally, to show why an understanding of such framing, together with a systematic reframing, is necessary for the Global Interdependence Initiative.

To make matters concrete, I would like to begin with an example of strategic reframing in the media, a *New York Times* op-ed piece from October 25, 1999.

### **Reject the Global Buddy System** By William Kristol and Robert Kagan

*William Kristol is editor of the Weekly Standard. Robert Kagan is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.*

The Clinton administration has been trying to frame the foreign policy debate for the 2000 election in the simplest possible terms: It's Clintonian internationalism versus Republican isolationism. Samuel Berger, the national security adviser, offered the fullest version of this thesis last Thursday, arguing that the Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty means we have returned once again to the "old debate" of the 1930's.

It is true that some Republicans want the United States to pull back from its overseas commitments and stay out of messy conflicts in the Balkans, East Timor and elsewhere.

But the leading Republican Presidential candidates -- George W. Bush and John McCain -- are both internationalists and free-traders. Both believe in American leadership and global responsibilities. Both supported intervention in the Persian Gulf at the beginning of this decade and in Kosovo at the end. No matter who wins next November, American foreign policy after 2001 is going to be characterized by some version of internationalism.

The real debate in the coming year will be: What brand of internationalism? This is the debate between the internationalism of Theodore Roosevelt and that of Woodrow Wilson, between the internationalism of Ronald Reagan and that of Jimmy Carter.

The Clinton administration has placed itself squarely in the tradition of Presidents Wilson and Carter, and never more so than in Mr. Berger's speech, entitled "American Power: Hegemony, Isolationism or Engagement." Mr. Berger is opposed to American hegemony and decries Republican calls for increased defense spending. The true test of leadership, he argues, is not whether the United States remains militarily powerful, but whether it signs onto international conventions such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Climate Change Treaty, provides enough money to global poverty programs and supports the United Nations.

It is on these matters, Mr. Berger argues, "that our most fundamental interests are at stake." Mr. Berger derides those who worry about the threat posed by China or Russia as "nostalgic" for the cold war. In the Clinton administration's world, there are no enemies or even potential enemies. There are only potential partners in the search for what Mr. Berger calls an international "common good."

This is the kind of utopian internationalism that the Democratic Party rejected under the hardheaded leadership of Harry Truman and Dean Acheson but embraced again after

Vietnam. It is the internationalism of Jimmy Carter, squeamish and guilty about American power and content to base America's security, and the world's security, on arms control agreements rather than on American arms. This is the internationalism which in the late 1970's and early 1980's favored the SALT II agreement and the "nuclear freeze" and opposed the Reagan arms buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Republicans in the coming election will likely propose a very different kind of internationalism. In the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, they will argue that the United States can and should lead the world to a better future, one built around American principles of freedom and justice -- but only if it has the power and the will to use that power.

Republicans will argue that American security cannot be safeguarded by international conventions. Instead, they will ask Americans to face this increasingly dangerous world without illusions. They will argue that American dominance can be sustained for many decades to come, not by arms control agreements, but by augmenting America's power and, therefore, its ability to lead.

President Clinton may enjoy calling Republicans isolationists, but a year from now, Democrats will be running against the party of Reagan. It looks as if they plan to run as the party of Jimmy Carter.

As we shall see, this document is subtler than it appears on the surface. It appeals to a general conservative worldview and to certain deep metaphors that have long shaped U.S. foreign policy. And it is a response to specific policy initiatives by the Clinton administration that depend on very different general metaphors. The broader metaphor systems being supported and decried will become clearer as we proceed.

President Clinton and Samuel Berger had attempted to frame the conservative rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as isolationism as compared to their internationalism. It was a crude and misleading attempt. The conservative opposition had a very different basis, which will become clear as we proceed. Kristol and Sagan took the opportunity to try some strategic reframing of their own: military superiority versus a foolish dependence on unenforceable international agreements; power as the only real security versus a soft-headed search for the common good.

The metaphor systems that Kristol and Sagan argue for and against have everything to do with the Global Interdependence Initiative, but not in any simple-minded way. Both systems present problems for the GII, but different problems for very different reasons. The Kristol-Sagan piece, when seen through the lens of our metaphor systems, is a poignant reminder that the GII is not an easy project. It comes up against deep-seated understandings of the world that are there in the very synapses of our policy-makers, as well as a significant segment of the both the media and the public. Supporters of GII need to know *in detail* just where those problem areas lie.

The Global Interdependence Initiative must not mistake its work as an exercise in public relations. It is not a matter of finding the right image or slogan. It requires serious rethinking of the very concepts in which foreign policy is framed. It requires a change in what is taught in graduate schools throughout the country.

And it requires an approach to communication far deeper and more thorough than traditional approaches to public relations and the media. Such an approach will, of necessity, require those who support, criticize and promote foreign policies to think in new ways both about the rationale for the policies themselves and about how they explain their views to the public. This essay is a step in that new direction, one that will be followed by more intensive research in the coming months.

## **Why Cognitive Linguistics?**

Cognitive linguistics is the field that studies this crucial part of what GII needs. It is a systematic, scientific approach within the cognitive sciences to the study of how we understand.

How we act in a situation depends on how we understand it. Our mechanisms of understanding are mostly unconscious; we have no direct conscious access to how we understand. Cognitive science, the interdisciplinary study of the mind, has made some deep and important discoveries about the mechanisms of understanding.

One is that we have systems of conceptual structures (called "frames" and "scripts") that we use to understand situations in the world. Another is that our understanding is, to a large extent, not straightforward or "literal," but rather makes use of a system of conceptual metaphors — ways to understand concepts in terms of other concepts, as when we understand affection in terms of warmth or purposes in terms of reaching destinations.

Another important finding is that language is directly connected to such unconscious conceptual systems and metaphors. How we talk matters; one can learn a lot about how people frame situations from how they talk. Conversely, having effective language to express ideas is extremely powerful. Merely hearing the language again and again plants in the mind a mode of understanding. And if you can affect how others understand situations, you can affect what they *do* in those situations. In short, there is a link from language to conceptual framing to action. And in many cases, the link is from metaphorical language to metaphorical framing to action.

We are about to begin a tour — a tour of minds. It will first take us through the minds of conservatives and progressives, showing how they conceptualize the world, from everyday life to momentous issues of war and peace. Our next stop will be the minds of most Americans, including policy-makers. There we will see the system in which international politics is understood. Our last stop will be a tour of expert minds, where we will explore the system of metaphorical thought used by professional foreign policy experts.

After the tour, we will show how the pieces all fall into place around major issues like the Gulf War and Kosovo. In the course of this discussion, we will take a look at new systems of foreign policy metaphors that have developed since the

Cold War, and at the implications for the GII. We will distinguish those foreign policy ideas that seem to support GII from those that don't.

### **A Bit of Terminology**

The subject matter that is being conceptualized via the metaphor is called the *target domain* of the metaphor. In a metaphor, a mode of reasoning from a *source domain* is used to reason about the target domain. The conceptual metaphor itself consists of a mapping between elements of a source domain and elements of a target domain. When an inference is drawn within a source domain and is applied via the metaphor to a target domain, we call that an "entailment" of the metaphor. Conceptual metaphors become important in situations where they have entailments for action.

## **1. Conservative and Progressive Moral Systems Or, How Could the United Nations Be Seen as an Immoral Institution?**

A telling indicator of problems in U.S. foreign policy was the refusal by conservatives in the U.S. Congress to authorize the payment of the debt owed by the United States to the United Nations. At first the problem was thought to be a matter of changing public opinion about the United Nations. But Stephen Kull's and Meg Bostrom's polling data revealed that the American public already had positive views about the U.N. and about paying the debt. The U.N. problem lay not with the public but with its elected leaders — a conservative majority in both houses of Congress. This section of the report addresses the conceptual nature of the conservative-progressive split.

*Moral Politics* (Lakoff, 1996) asked a number of difficult questions:

- ?? Why do conservatives and progressives talk *past* each other rather than *with* each other?
- ?? What makes their respective views on diverse issues like abortion, taxation, guns, the environment, the arts and so on hang together in a coherent whole?
- ?? What cognitive structures characterize the conservative and progressive discourse?
- ?? What kinds of conservatives and progressives are there? What differences are there within the categories?

The answer that emerged from the study was unexpected: Both used a common metaphor, namely, the *Nation as Family* — but with opposite versions of what constitutes an ideal family. For conservatives, it is a *Strict Father* family, while for progressives it is a *Nurturant Parent* family.

### **Conservative Values**

The *Strict Father* family:

The father is the leader of the family: He is responsible for supporting and protecting the family. He is the moral authority whose job is to teach his kids right from wrong by disciplining them (physically) when they do wrong. It is assumed that punishment (and only punishment) works and that it is a parent's moral duty and an expression of love ("tough love") to punish their children when they do wrong. The assumption is that only through physical discipline will children internalize moral values and become internally disciplined.

Because the world is dangerous and difficult, children must learn to become self-reliant by becoming self-disciplined and pursuing their self-interest. When children reach the age of maturity, they are on their own and parents should not meddle in their lives.

Important metaphors for morality accompany this model and define strict morality.

1. *Moral Strength*: Morality is being upright. Evil is a force in the world. You must be morally strong to keep from falling to the force of evil. If you are morally weak, you are bound to fall; that is, you are bound to do evil, and so moral weakness is itself a form of immorality. Character is inherent moral strength; if you have character you will act morally. How does one build moral strength? By self-discipline and self-denial. Competition is thus important for building character, since it forces one to be self-disciplined. Getting something unearned contributes to moral weakness, and hence is immoral.
2. *Moral Authority*: Morality is obedience to and respect for moral authority. Those in authority must appear moral or they will not command respect and obedience, and widespread immorality will result.
3. *Moral Self-Interest*: This is a version of Adam Smith's economic metaphor — If everyone seeks their own profit, then the profit of all will be maximizes. Add to that the common metaphor *Well-being Is Wealth*, and you get: If everyone seeks their own well-being, then the well-being of all will be maximized. According to this metaphor, it is immoral to be a "do-gooder," since not seeking your own self-interest upsets the system and does not maximize well-being for all.
4. *The Moral Order*: In a moral world, the moral are those in power. There is thus a natural hierarchy of morality based on forms of power. Most conservatives have the following version of the hierarchy:

God above man.

Man above nature.

Adults above children.

America above other countries.

Western culture above nonwestern culture.

Citizens above immigrants.

The hierarchy continues for some:

Men above women.

Whites above nonwhites.

Christians above nonchristians.

Straights above gays.

5. *Moral Health*: Immorality is a contagion, a disease that can spread. Thus, children should not be exposed to immorality. Hence, the V-chip, moving to the suburbs to protect the children, locking up drug users and so on.

The highest value in this moral system is supporting the moral system itself.

In the *Nation as Family* metaphor, the government is parent, self-reliant citizens are mature children, and non-self-reliant citizens are dependent children. Conservative politics is an application of strict morality to politics. The *Strict Father* family is the model of the family promoted by the conservative family values movement (e.g., Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council and The Promise Keepers).

In this metaphorical system, many things follow about politics:

- ?? The government should not meddle in the lives of self-reliant citizens (the mature children). It should impose discipline on those citizens who are not self-reliant (the immature children). Its proper role is protecting the nation from outsiders, punishing criminals and supporting the moral order.
- ?? Social programs are immoral since they give people something they didn't earn and so create dependency instead of instilling self-discipline. Supporting social programs is being a "do-gooder," which is immoral.
- ?? Profit is a reward for self-discipline, and is therefore moral. Progressive taxation punishes the most moral people, that is, those who are becoming self-reliant through self-discipline and seeking their self-interest.
- ?? Private charity promotes this moral system in two ways: It displays the moral order in which those with more than enough display their morality by giving to those who do not have enough. Those who receive charity are supposed to be grateful and thereby acknowledge the morality of those who are sufficiently self-reliant not to need charity. It permits the promotion of the moral system through control of who gets what charity and what charity is given for.
- ?? The environment is a resource for human use. Environmental regulation is therefore meddling on the part of the government with those who are (morally) seeking to advance their self-interest.
- ?? The nation must maintain its place in the moral order; it must be strong and maintain its sovereignty and hegemony. It is immoral to give up any of its authority to other nations, especially nonwestern nations. That would be a violation of the moral order.
- ?? Indigenous cultures in other nations are inferior to western culture, and it is to everyone's benefit for western culture to be brought to them. Conservative Christians have a corresponding view about converting nonchristians in other cultures to Christianity.

This is an oversimplified version, of course. There are many types of conservatives. Some are pragmatic and put pragmatic values over these values. Some have special concerns that override the general perspective. (For a discussion of varieties of conservatives, see Lakoff, 1996, Chapter 17.)

Conservative theorists and strategists fully understand the role of the *Strict Father* family and *Strict Morality* in conservative politics, largely through the operation of conservative think tanks over the past four decades. They have helped to bring

these largely unconscious models to consciousness and to provide an effective language for them. Progressives have not been as insightful in such matters. Progressive think tanks have not devoted themselves to making conscious the progressive model of an ideal family and the corresponding moral system. However, such models do reside in the cognitive unconscious of progressives. Here is an account of the corresponding models for progressives.

## **Progressive Values**

The *Nurturant Parent* family:

Both parents are equally responsible for supporting and running the family. The job of parents is to nurture their children and raise them to be nurturers. Nurturance requires two central values: empathy and responsibility.

First, empathy. To nurture a child, you have to know what a child needs. You have to be able to distinguish what each of a baby's cries means, you have to be able to get a feel for what your child is feeling. Similarly, children who are to become nurturers must learn empathy for others.

Next, responsibility. To nurture a child, you have to be completely responsible for both yourself and the child. You can't take care of a child if you aren't taking care of yourself. Similarly, children raised to be nurturers have to learn to be responsible both for themselves and for others. This is the value in progressive households of teaching social responsibility

These two primary values have many consequences: Because people are not likely to want others to be happier than they are or to be fulfilled when they are unfulfilled, happiness and fulfillment in life are an important aspect of nurturance — for both parent and child. Because empathy requires knowing another's needs, full, open, two-way communication is necessary and becomes a central value. Empathy also implies fairness to others. Responsibility for a child implies protection: nurturant parents want to protect their children from dangers — not just crime and drugs, but unhealthy conditions, cigarettes, cars without seat belts, pollution, unscrupulous businessmen and so on. Responsibility also requires competence, both at being a parent and at being a provider. Education thus becomes a value in a nurturant home. Because raising a child is not a solitary matter, the building of social ties and community is a central value. Cooperation rather than competition is stressed.

Are there moral absolutes? Of course. Help, don't harm. Be nurturant. What is character? The capacity for empathy and responsibility.

When children do something wrong — something harmful — what is the proper response? Whenever possible, it is restitution rather than retribution. Have the child do something positive to make up for doing harm. Restitution rather than punishment balances the moral books.

The *Nurturant Parent* model comes with a *Nurturant Morality*, with the corresponding central values: empathy, care, responsibility (both personal and

social), open communication and honesty, fairness, restitution as justice and protection of the helpless. The moral absolute is this: Be nurturant in all the ways discussed above. *The highest moral value is being responsible to those who need care.*

This model of family life and morality, when applied to the *Nation as Family* yields a progressive form of politics. Citizens are expected to be both personally and socially responsible. Government is expected to be empathetic towards those who need help and care and to be responsible to them. It is expected to promote the health, education and fulfillment of its citizens. As a protector, its job is to protect citizens from invasion, crime and other forms of harm, including pollution, unscrupulous business practices, things that are unhealthy (e.g., tobacco), unhealthy working and living conditions and unfair conditions. The central metaphor for nature is that *Nature is a Nurturer*, to be loved, respected and cared for. The Earth is correspondingly seen as a home. This defines a commitment to the environment.

1. There are, of course many kinds of progressives. As in the case of conservatives, there are pragmatic progressives, who are willing to sacrifice some of these principles for the sake of pragmatism — getting things to work, maximizing what you can get. And, of course, there are many types of progressives. Here are some of the main types: Social progressives, who see most issues in terms of economics and class, and concentrate mostly on eliminating economic inequalities and class differences.
2. Advocates of identity politics, who see the first priority as helping previously or currently oppressed populations — women, and racial and ethnic groups, gays, and others.
3. Biocultural progressives, whose focus is on preserving and enhancing the environment and indigenous cultures.
4. Classic liberals, who focus on civil liberties, personal freedom and equality of opportunity.
5. Radicals, whose main concern is to oppose authoritarianism in any form, whether it stems from state power, large corporations or other centers of control.

It is common for each of these to see progressive politics mainly or solely through their own lenses, and hence not to be aware of the overall progressive moral system and its basis in a nurturant model of the family. Indeed, many progressives are so unaware of their own overall unconscious value system that they have come to cede morality and the family to conservatives — even though they have clear family and moral values.

A complicating factor among progressives is the existence of an ends-means split in some cases. That is, there are progressives with nurturant ends who use strict means. They stress an authoritarian hierarchy, discipline and punishment in their means.

On the whole, very little of this is understood by progressives. Because the highest moral value for progressives is helping needy individuals, progressive foundations have not provided for the building of an overall understanding of the moral umbrella holding progressive politics together, nor have there been strategic attempts to unify progressives under the existing moral umbrella. The result is that conservatives have been far more effective in pressing their political and moral agendas. As we shall see, this has a major effect on the possibilities for the Global Interdependence Initiative.

## 2. Common Metaphors for Relations with Other Countries

We now turn to the second element of our background study: the commonplace metaphors used in the United States to conceptualize our relations with other countries. These are used by ordinary people and the media, as well as by policy-makers. The *World Community* metaphor is the most common of these. In it, nations are conceptualized as individual people living in a world community. A nation-person's territory is its home. There are also backyards. ("We don't want missiles in our backyard.")

The community has neighborhoods, and nearby countries are conceptualized as neighbors. International relationships are seen as social relationships. Some countries are friends or at least friendly; others are enemies or merely hostile. Some are seen as rogue nations, who do not abide by community norms. Regional military forces (e.g., NATO) are seen as forces that "police" the neighborhood. Trade treaties are seen as business partnerships, with the nations involved as "trading partners."

When a nation is conceptualized as a person, how is the self-interest of a person extended metaphorically to a nation to produce the metaphorical concept of the *National Interest*? It is in the interest of a person to be healthy and strong. Under the *National Interest* metaphor, health is economic health and strength is military strength. That is, it is in the national interest for a nation as a whole to be wealthy and well-armed. Thus, issues of pursuing self-interest for a nation tend to center around national wealth and military strength.

The *World Community* metaphor is also typically extended by another metaphor, that *Maturity is Industrialization*. The industrialized nations are grown-ups, non-industrialized nations are "undeveloped" and those in the process of industrializing are "developing." Those nations that have difficulty industrializing are often seen as "backward nations," as if they were retarded children.

The *Maturity is Industrialization* metaphor has sometimes been combined with the *Strict Father* family model, where strict parents dictate what is right and wrong, instill discipline and punish children when they do wrong. Correspondingly, the industrialized nations dictate to the developing and non-industrialized nations what is right and wrong about how they should run their economies; they instill financial discipline (through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank); and they financially punish the developing and non-industrialized nations when those nations do not do as they are told (for their own good, of course). It has become natural to think of Third World nations, via this metaphor, as recalcitrant children. And of course, such "children" should not be dictating terms to grown-ups, say, through U.N. votes.

### What Is Hidden

A crucial part of metaphor analysis is understanding clearly what is hidden by a system of conceptual metaphors. In the case of the *Nations Are Persons* metaphor

and its extension to the *Maturity is Industrialization* metaphor, a number of crucial points are hidden:

- ?? Ethnic, racial or religious divisions within a country: For example, the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda; the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo; the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds in Iraq. In recent years, major conflicts have erupted within nations, yet the metaphor does not recognize the participants in the conflict.
- ?? Individual people: Effects on governments, their leader, or the nation as a whole may be very different than effects on individuals. Thus sanctions against Iraq — the country — had little effect on the government or its leader, but had drastic effects on individual people.
- ?? The ecology: The ecology is simply left out of the metaphor.
- ?? Local culture: The cultural importance of Kosovo to the Serbs would not show up in such a metaphor. This metaphor hid the cultural significance of the divide between rich and poor in the Islamic world in the case of the Gulf War.

It is extremely important for GII to distinguish between the way the World Community metaphor is realized for most Americans and American policy-makers and the way it is realized in the United Nations.

### **The U.N. Version of the World Community**

The United Nations was founded according to a certain version of the *World Community* metaphor. It recognizes community moral norms for the human rights of individuals, as spelled out in the U.N. Charter; an acceptance of an obligation to promote community health and education for individuals through the World Health Organization and UNESCO; and an ideal of political equality in the community, as given by the one nation/ one vote structure of the General Assembly. In addition, the Security Council is based on the idea of community policing.

The U.N. *World Community* metaphor thus differs from the American version in at least two major ways: It recognizes individual people and it treats nations as equals in a democratic community (except with respect to the Security Council).

### 3. Some Expert Metaphors

The third element in our background survey consists of several expert metaphors. We will discuss: *Clausewitz's* Metaphors, the *Rational Actor* metaphor, the *Balance of Power* metaphor, the *War-as-Fire* metaphor, and the *Path-to-Democracy* metaphor.

#### **Clausewitz's Metaphors: War as Politics; Politics as Business**

Karl von Clausewitz was a Prussian general who perceived war in terms of political cost-benefit analysis. His understanding of war is central to the modern notion of a limited war. Clausewitz saw *War as Politics Pursued by Other Means*: Each nation-state has political objectives, and war may best serve those objectives. The political "gains" are to be weighed against acceptable "costs." When the costs of war exceed the political gains, the war should cease. Politics is seen in terms of business, where efficient political management is viewed as akin to efficient business management. Like a well-run business, a well-run government should keep a careful tally of costs and gains. This metaphor for characterizing politics, together with *Clausewitz's* metaphor, makes war a matter of cost-benefit analysis: defining beneficial "objectives", tallying the "costs" and deciding whether achieving the objectives is "worth" the costs.

This was considered an improvement on seeing war as unbridled slaughter. With this metaphor, war is seen as having been made "rational" and as having a point at which further killing makes no rational political sense, since there is nothing more to gain.

#### **The Rational Actor Metaphor System**

The use of what is called the *Rational Actor* model implicitly employs an extensive system of largely unconscious conceptual metaphors. Any such use has two subsystems of conceptual metaphors:

1. the *Causal Commerce system* and
2. the *Rational Choice system*.

#### **The Causal Commerce System: Causal Actions Are Commercial Transactions.**

The *Causal Commerce* system is a way to comprehend actions that are intended to achieve positive effects but may also have negative effects. The system is composed of three metaphors:

1. The *Causal Transfer* metaphor: An effect is an object transferred from a cause to an affected party.

For example, sanctions are seen as "giving" Iraq economic difficulties. Correspondingly, economic difficulties for Iraq are seen as "coming from" the sanctions. This metaphor allows us to conceptualize purposeful actions as transfers of objects.

2. The *Exchange Metaphor for Value*: The value of something is what you are willing to exchange for it.

Whenever we ask whether it is "worth" engaging in some action, such as going to war to achieve some purpose, we are using the *Exchange Metaphor for Value* plus the *Causal Transfer* metaphor.

3. The *Well-being is Wealth* metaphor: Things that provide a sense of well-being are metaphorically seen as forms of wealth. Increases in well-being are gains; decreases in well-being are costs.

The metaphor of *Well-being is Wealth* has the effect of making qualitative effects quantitative. It not only makes qualitatively different things comparable, it provides a kind of arithmetic calculus for adding up costs and gains.

Taken together, these three metaphors portray *Causal Actions as Commercial Transactions*, with increases in well-being as gains and decreases in well-being as costs. Seeing actions as transactions is crucial to applying ideas from economics to actions in general.

## Risks

A risk is an action taken to achieve a positive effect, where the outcome is uncertain and where there is also a significant probability of a negative effect. Since *Causal Commerce* allows one to see positive effects of actions as "gains" and negative effects as "costs," it becomes natural to see a risky action metaphorically as a financial risk of a certain type, namely, a gamble.

## The *Risks Are Gambles* Metaphor

In gambling to achieve certain "gains," there are "stakes" that one can "lose." When one asks what is "at stake" in going to war, one is using the metaphors of *Causal Commerce* including the *Risks are Gambles* metaphor.

## The Rational Choice System

Within the social sciences, especially in economics, it is common to see a "rational" person as someone who acts in his own self-interest, that is, to maximize his own well-being. Hard-core advocates of this view may even see altruistic action as being in one's self-interest if there is a value in feeling righteous about altruism and in deriving gratitude from others.

In the *Causal Commerce* system, where well-being is wealth, this view of rationality translates metaphorically into maximizing gains and minimizing losses. The fundamental metaphor linking "rationality" in this sense with the *Causal Commerce* system is *Rationality is Profit Maximization*. The *Rational Choice* metaphor system is an attempt to mathematicize this idea.

This metaphor system is complex and is described in very considerable detail in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, Chapter 23). The *Rational Choice* system has four parts:

1. A set of symbols and axioms characterizing the system's pure mathematics — which is a mixture of formal language theory and probability theory. This is the level at which the mathematics is done. What follows is a metaphorical interpretation of the mathematics.
2. Two metaphors, the *Branching Paths* metaphor and the *Payoff* metaphor — which map the symbols in the pure mathematics onto a person moving from location to location along a branching path making choices as to which way to go at each branch. As the mover reaches the end of a path, he receives a particular payoff associated with that location. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 522-525)
3. Two commonplace metaphors, the *Event Structure* metaphor and the *Well-Being is Wealth* metaphor — mapping the locations onto states, the motions onto actions, the choice of paths onto choices between actions, and payoff received onto a degree of well-being. The result is a sequence of choices of actions resulting in a degree of well-being (a gain or loss). The sequence of actions leading to the greatest overall gain (or, failing that, the least loss) is called "rational."
4. A special metaphor — mapping the person acting onto something else, say a country or a firm. A collection of metaphors specifying what is to count as a "gain" or a "loss" in a given application to a situation.

This basic structure, to which can be added various additional factors (e.g., Nash equilibria), characterizes a mathematical theory of rational choice.

The theory of rational choice is an expert's metaphor system, used in making strategic decisions in economics and in international relations. The metaphors are, as usual, part of the cognitive unconscious, and so the models are taken as literally true.

## Neorealist Metaphors

During the Cold War, a set of metaphors for foreign policy was adopted that implicitly characterized what Hans Morgenthau had called "realism," the idea that the military and economic power to survive and thrive were at the heart of foreign policy. During the Cold War, with the advent of nuclear weapons, a neorealism evolved. It too stressed survival through military and economic power, but to avoid nuclear war, it stressed a *balance* of power.

Within academic political theory, the main architect and chief advocate of neorealism was Kenneth Waltz (1959, 1979, 1993). His books, *Man, The State, and War* and *Theory of International Relations*, set the standards for neorealist thought. For this reason, a study of his metaphors provides a fair idea of the mode of metaphorical thought involved in neorealism. Here are the major Waltzian metaphors.

### The Balance of Power Metaphor

This metaphor, whose source domain is physics, allows one to reason about international relations using one's physical intuitions, especially one's intuitions about force.

- ?? States are physical objects.
- ?? Power as physical force.
- ?? Opposing states are physical objects exerting force on each other.
- ?? Balance of power is a balance of force exerted.
- ?? A stable international system is a stable physical system.
- ?? Danger of war is instability.
- ?? Losing sovereignty is falling.
- ?? War is a collapse of the stability of the system, in which some objects move against other objects.

Hans Morgenthau took the metaphor very seriously.

Today the European balance of power has become a mere function of the world wide balance of which the United States and the Soviet Union are the main weights, placed on opposite scales.

-Morgenthau, 1951:149

Morgenthau viewed the United States and the Soviet Union as equally strong states, with the U.S. allies tilting the balance somewhat.

In the metaphorical language of the balance of power one might say, rather crudely but not without truth, that, while in the Russian scale there is a weight of seventy, the weight of the American scale

amounts to a hundred of which seventy is the United States' own strength, ten that of Great Britain and the remainder that of the other actual or prospective allies.

-Morgenthau, 1951:274

Given metaphorical mapping above from source domain elements (e.g., physical objects, physical forces) onto target domain elements (e.g., states, power), the following source domain inferences will map the corresponding entailments of the metaphor in the target domain.

Source domain: If two physical objects exert force on one another, the one exerting greater force will cause the one exerting lesser force to fall.

Target domain: If two states oppose each other, the one with the greater power will cause the one with the lesser power to lose sovereignty.

Here is an example of such reasoning from Waltz:

Internationally, if an aggressive state becomes strong or a strong state becomes aggressive, other states will presumably suffer. [...] power provides the means of maintaining one's autonomy in the face of force that others wield.

-Waltz, 1979:194

## **Bipolarity**

A special case of physical system is a magnet. It is a bipolar system, with two opposite forces. Its use in international relations goes back at least as far as W.T.R Fox's *The Superpowers* (Fox, 1944). Imagining a postwar world, Fox suggests that "the Western democracies and the Soviet Union will constitute the poles of world politics," when poles are measured in terms of aggregation of power (Fox, 1944:97). The entailments of the metaphor are clear in Fox's description of Moscow and Washington as "the centers around which potentially hostile forces tend to gather." Understanding the power of metaphor, Fox warns that "the thesis would become true simply by being believed." (Fox, 1944:100)

During the Cold War, Waltz argued a "bipolar" physical system with two major opposing forces was naturally more stable than a multipolar system with many mutually opposing forces. He uses the image of a magnet with two poles as a special case of a natural bipolar system that was stable.

Waltz viewed the international system as "anarchic" in the sense that it did not have an external controller. It was therefore crucial to his thinking that forces of nature be taken advantage of, that a "natural" balance of forces be achieved.

## Faux Darwinism and Its Metaphors

"Realism" in international relations is rife with faux Darwinist metaphors, in which evolution is seen as survival of the strongest, as in the image of two animals trying to kill and eat each other. The image, of course, has very little to do with real natural selection, which is rather a matter of adaptation to ecological niches. Indeed, one could just as easily metaphorize evolution as the survival of the best-nurtured (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, Chapter 25).

But from a *Strict Father* perspective on the world, in which competition is seen not only as natural but as moral, faux Darwinism is going to be preferred, with competition as natural and survival dependent on strength. This view is part of the neorealist perspective, and it comes across clearly in Waltz's writings. The basic form of the metaphor is this:

### The Faux Darwinian Metaphor

?? States are animals.

?? A viable position in the international system is a viable ecological niche.

?? Maintaining sovereignty is living.

?? Losing sovereignty is dying.

The entailments include:

Source domain: Animals have a survival instinct.

Target domain: States have a survival instinct.

"[States] are unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at maximum, drive for universal domination."  
-Waltz, 1979:118

Source domain: Animals must compete to survive.

Target domain: States must compete to maintain sovereignty.

"The theory depicts international politics as a competitive realm. [...] The fate of each state depends on its responses to what other states do. The possibility that conflict will be conducted by force leads to competition in the arts and the instruments of force."  
-Waltz, 1979:127

The logic of preventive war arises from this metaphor. Preventive war has to do with a state's position in the international system. If state A is increasing its power, state B might perceive A as a threat to B's position. B might choose to launch a war against A before A has grown too powerful.

Source domain: One animal will attack another if it sees it as a threat to its ecological niche.

Target domain: One state will attack another if it sees it as a threat to its position in the international system.

"The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system."

-Waltz, 1979:126

"Great powers [...] fight more wars than lesser states do. Their involvement in war arises from their position in the international system, not from their national characteristics. When they are at or near the top, they fight [...]."

-Waltz, 1979:187

Source domain: One animal will attack another if it sees it as a threat to its survival.

Target domain: One state will attack another if it sees it as a threat to its sovereignty.

"States strive to maintain their autonomy. To this end, the great powers of a multipolar world maneuver, combine and occasionally fight."

-Waltz, 1979:204

There is a direct link between the *Faux Darwinian* metaphor and the *Rational Actor* model. That link is the commonplace metaphor *Competition Is Predation*, in which people are animals. We see this metaphor in expressions about competition like these:

It's a dog-eat-dog world. It's a jungle out there. If you try that, you'll be eaten alive.

Combining *Faux Darwinism for States* with *Competition is Predation*, we get the metaphor of the state as a person seeking his self-interest — in other words a *Rational Actor*. The result is a state that seeks its "national interest."

### **The National Interest Metaphor**

- ?? A state is a person.
- ?? National interest is self-interest.
- ?? Sovereignty is personal independence.
- ?? Economic health is physical health.
- ?? Military power is physical strength.

Here are some entailments of this mapping:

Source domain: People naturally assume that they must compete to maximize their self-interest.

Target domain: States naturally assume that they must compete to maximize their self-interest.

"When faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not 'Will both of us gain?' but 'Who will gain more?'"

-Waltz, 1979:105

Source domain: It is in a person's self-interest to maximize his physical health and strength.

Target domain: It is in a state's national interest to maximize its economic health and military power.

Source domain: It is in a person's self-interest to maintain personal independence.

Target domain: It is in a state's national interest to maintain sovereignty.

"[...] the state's [...] interest provides the spring of action: the necessities of policy arise from the unregulated competition of states; calculation based on these necessities can discover the policies that will best serve a state's interests; success is the ultimate test of policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state.

-Waltz, 1979:117

## **The Economic Version of These Metaphors**

It is unusual for Waltz (and for most theorists) to consciously recognize his metaphors as such. But he is explicit about using one metaphor "analogically." It is a metaphor for conceptualizing the behavior of states in an international political system as the behavior of firms in an economic system.

## **The States Are Firms Metaphor**

?? States are firms.

?? Large states are dominating firms.

?? The international system is an economic market.

- ?? A position in the international system is market share.
- ?? Sovereignty is economic independence.
- ?? Power is expected returns.
- ?? Wars are price wars.

This metaphor yields such entailments as:

Source domain: The greater a firm's market share, the greater its ability to maintain and increase its expected returns.

Target domain: The greater a state's position in the international system, the greater its ability to maintain and increase its power.

" [...] great power gives its possessors a big stake in their system and the ability to act for its sake.

-Waltz, 1979:195

"Units having a large enough stake in the system will act for its sake, even though they pay unduly in doing so."

-Waltz, 1979:198

Source domain: Price wars are a tactic to increase a firm's market share.

Target domain: Wars are a tactic to enhance a state's position in the international system.

"When [great powers] are at or near the top, they fight [...]."

-Waltz, 1979, p. 187

This metaphor allows Waltz to reason about how the international system is managed and who is in charge:

Source domain: Dominating firms in an economic system have more to say about which games will be played and how.

Target domain: Large states in an international system have more to say about which games will be played and how.

"In economic systems, any one of the several dominating firms has more to say about all of the matters that affect it than has one firm among hundreds of small ones. [...] In international politics [...] [t]he principle entities that constitute the system are also its managers. They try to cope with the affairs of each day; they may also seek to affect the nature and direction of change.

-Waltz, 1979:199

The realist emphasis on competition of course fits nicely with the *States Are Firms* metaphor, which Waltz uses to account for *detente* and for the better relations between the Soviet Union and the United States in the late 1960s:

Source domain: Dominating firms that compete increasingly resemble each other as competition continues.

Target domain: Large states that compete increasingly resemble each other as competition continues.

"Theories of oligopolistic competition tell us (that in) important ways, competitors become like one another as their competition continues. [...] [T]his applies to states as to firms."

-Waltz, 1979:173

Waltz even forms a conceptual blend of his economic metaphor and his faux Darwinian metaphor, blending utility-maximization with natural selection, "according to which features of the environment exterminate those who respond inappropriately, while rewarding those who respond appropriately." (McKeown, 1983:44)

Interestingly, there is a common analogy between firms and states that Waltz rejects. It is commonplace in economics to assume that firms primarily seek to maximize profit, and there is corresponding assumption in neorealist theory that states primarily seek to maximize power. Waltz rejects both claims. He argues instead that survival comes before profit maximization. "To maximize profits tomorrow as well as today, firms first have to survive." (Waltz, 1979, p. 105) This brings Waltz even closer to a faux Darwinism in which survival is the central issue. He argues that states, too, primarily seek to guarantee survival before they can maximize their national interest.

There is, of course, a great more to say about expert metaphors as they have functioned in foreign policy, but these examples will be sufficient for our purposes here.

#### 4. The Fairy Tale of the Just War

It is always important to have a good story, whether in trying to persuade others or in thinking things through for yourself. When the question arises as to whether to go to war, you can't justify your decision, either to others or to yourself, without a good story. There is a classical narrative form, with two basic versions, that is used to justify war. Both versions are common fairy tale narratives.

The cast of characters: A villain, a victim and a hero. The victim and the hero may be the same person. If the victim and hero are the same person, then we have a self-defense narrative. Otherwise, we have a rescue narrative.

The scenario:

- (a) A crime is committed by the villain against an innocent victim (typically an assault, theft or kidnapping). The offense occurs due to an imbalance of power and creates a moral imbalance.
- (b) The hero either gathers helpers or decides to go it alone.
- (c) The hero makes sacrifices; he undergoes difficulties, typically making an arduous heroic journey, sometimes across the sea to a treacherous terrain.
- (d) The villain is inherently evil, perhaps even a monster, and thus reasoning with him is out of the question. The hero is left with no choice but to engage the villain in battle.
- (e) The hero defeats the villain and rescues the victim — or successfully defends himself if he was the victim — and saves the community from the threat of the villain.
- (f) The moral balance is restored. Victory is achieved.
- (g) The hero, who always acts honorably, has proved his manhood and achieved glory. The sacrifice was worthwhile. The hero receives acclaim, along with the gratitude of the victim and the community.

The fairy tale has an asymmetry built into it. The hero is moral and courageous, while the villain is amoral and vicious. The hero is rational the villain, though he may be cunning and calculating, cannot be reasoned with. Heroes thus cannot negotiate with villains; they must defeat them.

The most natural way to justify a war on moral grounds is to fit a given situation into this fairy tale structure. This is done by metaphorical definition, that is, by answering the questions: Who is the victim? Who is the villain? Who is the hero? What is the crime? What counts as victory? Each set of answers to these questions provides a metaphorical understanding of the situation in terms of the fairy tale. The metaphorical view of the *Enemy as a Demon*, who cannot be reasoned with and must be defeated in battle, arises as an entailment of the metaphor in which a just war is understood metaphorically in terms of this fairy tale.

We are now in a position to see in detail how such metaphors play a systematic role in foreign policy — not just in persuading the public, though that is quite important, but in justifying policy within the government itself.

## 5. The Gulf War

Let us begin with the war as viewed by Saddam Hussein. How did the Iraqis see the invasion of Kuwait?

The war with Iran had virtually bankrupted Iraq. Iraq saw itself as having fought that war partly for the benefit of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which had been threatened by Shiite citizens supporting Khomeini's Islamic Revolution. Kuwait had agreed to help finance the war, but after the war, the Kuwaitis insisted on repayment of the "loan." Kuwaitis had invested hundreds of billions in Europe, America and Japan, but would not invest in Iraq after the war to help it rebuild. On the contrary, Kuwait began what amounted to economic warfare against Iraq by overproducing its oil quota to hold oil prices down.

In addition, Kuwait had drilled laterally into Iraqi territory in the Rumailah oil field and had extracted oil from Iraqi territory. Kuwait further took advantage of Iraq by buying its currency, but only at extremely low exchange rates.

Subsequently, wealthy Kuwaitis used that Iraqi currency on trips to Iraq, where they bought Iraqi goods at bargain rates. Among the things they bought most flamboyantly were liquor and prostitutes—widows and orphans of men killed in the war, who, because of the state of the economy, had no other means of support. All this did not endear Kuwaitis to Iraqis, who were suffering from over 70 percent inflation.

Moreover, Kuwaitis had long been resented by Iraqis and Muslims from other nations — for good reason. Capital rich, but labor poor, Kuwait imported cheap labor from other Muslim countries to do its least pleasant work. At the time of the invasion, there were 400,000 Kuwaiti citizens and 2.2 million foreign laborers who had been denied rights of citizenry and were being treated by the Kuwaitis as lesser beings. In short, to the Iraqis and to labor-exporting Arab countries, Kuwait was anything but an innocent victim.

From the Iraqi perspective, Kuwait owed Iraq dearly — both financially and morally. From a practical perspective, Iraq needed cash and access to functioning oil fields — including the parts of the Ramailah fields that Iraq considered in its territory. Iraq saw those oil fields as its legal property, giving it a right to claim them. From a moral perspective, Kuwaitis had dishonored Iraq and Iraq was honor-bound to exact revenge. Moreover, Saddam Hussein had much to gain in the politics of the Arab world. The division between rich and poor Arabs is a persistent issue in pan-Arab politics. There the fundamental metaphors are those of the Arab brotherhood and the Islamic brotherhood, according to which all Arabs and all Muslims are seen as brothers. According the metaphors, it is the duty of rich brothers to share their wealth with poor brothers. The rich Arabs — especially the Kuwaitis and the Saudis, were doing nothing of the sort, which had created enormous resentment throughout the Arab world. Saddam Hussein knew that an attack on Kuwait therefore was not just pragmatic and justified from the Iraqi perspective, but that it would be seen by poor Arabs as a heroic move — as striking a blow on their behalf.

In addition to the brotherhood metaphors, there were other metaphors operative in Iraq as well. By the metaphor of *Moral Accounting*, a favor incurs a debt and debts must be paid. Iraq had done a favor for Kuwait, and Kuwait, rather than paying Iraq back, took advantage of Iraq's financial weakness, harming Iraq financially and dishonoring it morally. The moral books had to be balanced, and revenge is the traditional way of the balancing the moral books in Iraqi culture. Moreover, in questions of dishonor in that culture (Kuwaitis making prostitutes out of Iraqi war widows, Kuwait siphoning off Iraqi oil, and so on), the issue of manhood arises. A leader's manhood is brought into question if he does not act in such a situation.

Before the invasion, Saddam Hussein ran the idea past the American ambassador and received no negative reaction. He therefore assumed that the Americans, who had supported him and armed him as an ally against the Iranians, would not object. He did not count on the metaphor system of the American foreign policy establishment.

### **The American Metaphors in Action**

What did Iraq look like from the perspective of American foreign policy metaphors? As a developing Third World nation, Iraq was seen as a child, the United States and Western European states as adults. In addition, Iraq had been a recipient of American aid, especially military aid. The United States had helped arm Iraq and train its officers. Iraq was therefore viewed as a dependent child, even though it had one of the world's most powerful military forces. From the perspective of *Strict Father* morality (the perspective of the military, many foreign policy specialists and the Bush administration), Iraq was duty-bound to follow the rules laid down by the United States. If it did not, the duty of the United States according to *Strict Father* morality would be to punish it.

From the perspective of the *Balance of Power* metaphor, the balance in the Middle East was precarious. Building up Iraq's military capacity had been seen as necessary by the United States in order to maintain a balance of power between Iraq and Iran. If Iraq became more powerful as a result of invading Kuwait, the balance would be upset. In addition, the domino theory came into play once more. If Kuwait fell, Saudi Arabia would be threatened. Iraqi expansion had to be contained. Since the balance of power in the world was seen as dependent on maintaining the balance in the Middle East, the "stability" of the world was seen to be at stake.

The national interest of the United States and various European nations (e.g., Great Britain) depended on a continued supply of reasonably priced oil from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Iraqi invasion, therefore, was seen as a threat to the economies of the United States, Great Britain and others. Under the metaphor that health for a nation is economic health, the invasion was perceived as a threat to health and viability — a death threat. Saddam Hussein was, accordingly, described by President Bush as having "a stranglehold on our oil pipeline."

A metaphorical death threat naturally evoked the self-defense version of the *Fairy Tale of the Just War*. In that version, the United States was both victim and hero. Iraq was conceptualized, via the *Leader-for-Country* metonymy and the *State-as-Person* metaphor, as *being* Saddam Hussein. He was the villain in the fairy tale. As such, he was a monster, an animal, irrational, and beyond reason — a modern Hitler! As such, he could only understand force, not rational persuasion. At this point, the story was released that, during the war with Iran, Saddam had used poison gas against pro-Iranian enclaves in northern Iraq — against his own people!

President Bush presented this narrative to the American people, but the "No War For Oil" protesters received the public's support. At the same time he presented the rescue version of the just war fairy tale and was criticized in the press for not having a single consistent picture. In early October 1990, a national poll was taken asking the American people under what conditions they would support a war. The pollsters reported that Americans would support a rescue. The very next day, the Bush administration dropped the self-defense scenario in its public relations and settled on a rescue scenario, based on the *Rape of Kuwait* metaphor. A congressional hearing was called and a young Kuwaiti testified that she had seen rapes of Kuwaiti women by Iraqi soldiers. It turned out later (after the war) that the young woman was a diplomat's daughter who had been in the United States the whole time. Nonetheless, the *Rape of Kuwait* metaphor took hold. That is, in the rescue fairy tale, the victim was Kuwait and the crime was rape. The United States was the gallant hero rescuing the innocent victim.

It became clear later that President Bush had never believed the rescue metaphor. Instead, he believed the self-defense narrative. While running for reelection, he gave speeches describing his role in the Gulf War and how he defended America by saving its oil supply from Saddam Hussein.

## **Going to War**

The *New York Times*, on November 12, 1990, ran a front-page story announcing that "a national debate has begun as to whether the United States should go to war in the Persian Gulf." The *Times* described the debate as defined by what I have called *Clausewitz's* metaphor (though it described the metaphor as literal), and then raised the question, "What then is the nation's political object in the gulf and what level of sacrifice is it worth?" The "debate" was not over whether *Clausewitz's* metaphor was appropriate, but only over how various analysts calculated the relative gains and losses using the *Rational Actor* model. The same was true of the hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where *Clausewitz's* metaphor provided the framework within which most discussion took place. Indeed, the hearings began with Colin Powell, then head of the Joint Chiefs, giving the congressmen a tutorial on *Clausewitz* and the rational actor model. Powell himself was against the war, seeing the possible gains as not worth the costs. He favored trade sanctions instead.

Powell set the tone. In the hearings, the *Rational Actor* model, with its cost-benefit analysis, took center stage. The possible "losses" could only be American "assets": money, American casualties, equipment. Iraqi civilian lives came into the discussion only because there might be a publicity loss. Since Iraqi civilians were not U.S. "assets," their deaths could not count as "losses" or "costs."

George Bush, the American Strict Father president, conceptualized Saddam Hussein as a recalcitrant child and said that he would "teach him a lesson." Margaret Thatcher, Bush's British counterpart, kept saying that "Saddam Hussein must pay" — that is, he must be punished to make up for the moral debt he incurred with the invasion.

A crucial part in America's evolving strategy was played by the *Balance of Power* metaphor. It came out in the congressional hearings that the United States did not want to depose Saddam Hussein's Sunni Muslim minority as a goal of war, nor did it want to see Iraq go democratic. The reason was the balance of power within Iraq. There were three major groups within Iraq: the Shiite Muslims, with 53 percent of the population; the Sunni Muslims (Saddam's community), with 30 percent; and the Kurds, with 17 percent. The Shiites were seen as sympathetic to Iran. If they gained independence or took control of the country under majority rule, that would tilt the balance of power toward Iran. The Kurds wanted independence so that they could join with other Kurds and form a united Kurdistan, which threatened the territorial integrity of Turkey. It was therefore important to U.S. policy that Iraq not be split up, and either that the Sunnis kept control or that a joint government be formed. A strong government was required to hold the country together. The Sunni political organization, controlled by Saddam Hussein's family, his army and those personally loyal to him seemed the only force capable of this.

What about marching into Baghdad and taking control ourselves? Here the reasoning of the Vietnam analogy entered. We could not "get bogged down" as we did in Vietnam. There was no way that America could govern Iraq — it was a full-time job for Saddam Hussein. That would be political suicide for President Bush, and it would lead to further "instability."

### **Saddam in Kuwait**

Once Saddam Hussein's army had entered Kuwait and the United States had disapproved, there was no going back for Saddam. Had he capitulated to the warnings of Bush and Thatcher, he would indeed have looked to his people the way the West had seen him as — as a child. To be seen as a child would have been an affront to his manhood. He could not permit that. *Newsweek* reported that during the fall of 1990, a saying became popular in Baghdad: "Better to be a cock for a day than a chicken for a year." Showing one's manhood was uppermost.

What did the threat of a U.S. invasion look like to Saddam Hussein? First, it would leave him a hero in the Arab world no matter what happened — just for standing up to the United States. Second, he had to know, from the public

congressional hearings, that the United States did not consider the option of wiping out his army and leaving him without the ability to control the country. Third, economic sanctions might harm other Iraqis, but not Saddam Hussein personally. Indeed, they would hurt any potential opposition to Saddam more than they would hurt him.

### **Where The Metaphors Led**

During the fall before the war, and during the war itself, the media were drenched in metaphor. *Newsweek* had cartoons first showing Saddam Hussein "playing his cards close to his vest" (the *Risks are Gambles* metaphor). During the early days of the war, it ran a cartoon showing a boxing ring with Uncle Sam and Saddam as boxers. Saddam was on the ropes, with Uncle Sam "delivering a knockout punch."

Both the U.S. media and the policy-makers used the *Leader-for-Nation* metonymy and the *State-as-Person* metaphor in a disastrous way: They spoke and thought of the bombing and later the sanctions as "hurting Saddam," as if he were personally harmed. Other Iraqis were killed or harmed, but the ruler himself was not. Since the war, he has ruled with even greater power within Iraq.

Within days of the beginning of the bombing, President Bush went on television, describing the destruction of the bombing and expressing surprise that Saddam Hussein had not given up yet, speaking of him as "irrational." According to the United States' use of the *Rational Actor* metaphor, Saddam's costs should have exceeded his possible benefits by that time and he should have just stopped. Saddam Hussein, of course, was not using the same metaphors.

Right after the war, the *New York Times* business section, using the *War-as-Business* metaphor, ran an article declaring the war a "bargain," since the "costs" of the war (casualties, actual money spent and so on) were relatively small. Again the "costs" were "U.S. assets" and did not include the lives or health of Iraqi civilians or the damage to the ecology of the Gulf and the country itself. Indeed, one year after the war, the CIA estimated that approximately one million civilians had died as a direct or indirect consequence of the war — due to injury, starvation, illness, and other causes. As a result of continuing U.S. sanctions, it is estimated that 3,000 Iraqi civilians per month continue to die. In the *War-as-Business* metaphor, these are not U.S. losses. And they would not be tallied up as negatives using the *Rational Actor* model.

Moreover, the Iraqi civilians killed would not count in the *Fairy Tale of the Just War* as "victims." Indeed, according to the *Fairy Tale*, the only "victim" — namely, the "legitimate government of Kuwait" — was rescued. That meant reinstating an absolute monarchy, where women are not accorded anything resembling reasonable rights, and where 80 percent of the people living in the country are foreign workers, who do the dirtiest jobs and are not accorded the opportunity to become citizens. According to the metaphors used, the "victim"

was rescued, the war was a "success", the United States acted heroically, the villain — Saddam Hussein — was defeated and the war was just.

Moreover, there is one last strange entailment of the *Fairy Tale*: The war is over. The *Fairy Tale* metaphors leave out the fact that, since the official "end" of the war, an enormous tonnage of bombs continue to be dropped in Iraq — almost daily.

The war looked very different from Saddam Hussein's perspective. He balanced the moral books with Kuwait, stealing from the rich Kuwaitis and demeaning them, creating havoc in their lives and setting their oil wells on fire, costing them a pretty penny. His revenge was successful and the poor Arabs saw it. He also successfully stood up to the United States — the invading infidels — thus not only becoming an Islamic hero and a hero to poor Arabs, but affirming his masculinity in a legendary way. He continues to run rings around the United States. In addition, he increased his political hold on Iraq, since the war and the sanctions have weakened his enemies and allowed him to consolidate his rule. He has remained in power, while George Bush was defeated electorally and removed from power not long after the fighting ended.

The moral: Metaphors are not just expressions, like "collateral damage" or "surgical strike," designed to make war more palatable to the public. Rather they are ways of reasoning that both determine and constrain our foreign policies and actions.

## 6. Kosovo

During the early stages of the Kosovo war, there was a certain sense of déjà vu as the Gulf War metaphors reappeared. President Clinton spoke of "teaching Milosevic a lesson" — again invoking the metonymy of *Leader-for-Nation* and the metaphor of the *Country-as-Person*, the metaphor of developing nations as children with punitive morality. After a few days of bombing, President Clinton said he was surprised that Milosevic hadn't given up yet. He said he would make the bombings "costly" to Milosevic. Here again we see the War as Business and the Rational Actor metaphors at work. The U.S. cost-benefit model was not the same as Milosevic's.

As in the Gulf War, we saw in Kosovo the use of the *Fairy Tale of the Just War*. Again there was a rescue scenario. Again the villain (Milosevic) became a Hitler — an irrational person whose appetite for power had to be contained. The containment metaphor was crucial: If we don't stop Milosevic here, he will go on to Macedonia, Albania, maybe Greece and Turkey. The *Balance of Power* metaphor came in to play. President Clinton referred to the Kosovo area as an earthquake zone where many fault lines converged. The idea was that the region was unstable, that the use of force was likely and that it would cause considerable damage. The Kosovo War was seen as a fire that, unless it was put out, could spread into a regional conflagration.

Again, there was oil in the background — the vast reserves of the Caspian Sea. The issue of where the main pipelines will go has not been resolved and is ever present: Who will control the territory through which the pipelines go? Will there be a pipeline across the Balkans?

As in the Gulf War, the other side had very different metaphors. Under Tito, Serbia had been carved up to give the Serbs less power. Regions of Serbia went to Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and so on. One of Milosevic's themes was uniting "Greater Serbia," regaining territory that Serbs once held and where Serbs lived. Kosovo was assumed to belong rightfully to Serbia, since its holiest religious shrines were there. Milosevic brought religion and territorial aspirations together with the *Christian Knight* metaphor. Serbs have for centuries seen Kosovo as their holy territory, invaded and taken over by Muslims, but eventually to be won again by Serbs. The *Christian Knight* image invoked the idea that eliminating the Albanians from Kosovo was a holy crusade to free holy Serb territory — another form of a just war.

The lessons of the Gulf War were not lost on Milosevic. He knew that, like Saddam Hussein, he could hide most of his air force and an huge oil supply. He knew that a NATO attack would just tend to make the Serbs, under attack, rally around him. He was not afraid of NATO bombing. He knew that, as in the Gulf War, the bombing would just make his hold on the country stronger

## What Was Different?

Despite these similarities, there were important differences. George Bush had refused to intervene in Yugoslavia, saying that it was not in our "national interest." In the terms of the *Nation-as-Person* metaphor, there was no threat to the economic health or military strength of the United States, as there had been in the Gulf. Moreover, the Bush administration had been very careful to distinguish between conflicts *between* nations, as in the Gulf, and conflicts *within* nations. This was in accord with the *Nation-as-Person* metaphor and the *Rational Actor* metaphor. In each case, the country was seen as a single individual with no internal structure.

But during the 1990s, the major conflicts have been *within* countries — in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Sudan and East Timor — rather than across national boundaries, with ethnic cleansing and genocide on such a scale that it could not be ignored. This fact simply does not gibe with the old metaphors.

It does however fit well with a metaphor that has been gaining prominence since the 1980s — the *Path to Democracy* metaphor. The idea behind this metaphor is the assumption that (1) democracy is the most moral form of government, and (2) democracies do not go to war against each other. If more and more countries become democracies, the theory says, then there will be less and less war. This raises the question of what democracies are and how countries get to be democracies. There is an enormous body of literature on this, but the basic idea, accepted in most of the literature, is that there are certain observable properties of Western democracies: free elections, a free press, civil liberties, an independent judiciary, civilian control of the military, free markets and thriving institutions of civil society. Once a country is on the *Path to Democracy*, it will continue on that path and eventually become a full-fledged democracy. Thus, even countries that may currently have dictators should be supported (say, by military aid and World Bank loans) if they are seen as being "on the path." That, for example, was the reasoning behind the U.S. support of the Indonesian government, even after the Cold War. It lies behind support for trade with China, the idea being that more of a free market economy in China will inevitably lead to greater democracy. And it lay behind the Dayton Accords, which were designed to move Bosnia toward a democratic capitalist state, which it is assumed will make it a peaceful state. Kosovo is seen in the same way.

The *Path to Democracy* metaphor fits very well with another major metaphorical adjustment in foreign policy. Previously, the *Nation-as-Person* metaphor had defined the national interest as (1) military strength and (2) economic health, in that order. But since the end of the Cold War, the Clinton administration has reversed the order, putting economics first. The move to economic globalization is seen by the Clinton administration as a move toward greater democratization, and hence, according to theory, toward greater world peace. According to this policy, the carrot of commerce is seen as replacing the stick of war as much as possible, and as bringing major economic interests in each country to the side of peace. In such a view of foreign policy, the primary role for troops is as

peacekeeping forces, as we have seen in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and most recently in East Timor.

Consequently, the Clinton administration's policy in dealing with Milosevic (up to the point of bombing) was to minimize the use of force, maximize negotiation and try to integrate Yugoslavia into the global commercial system, which would set it on the path to democracy.

### **Why Did the United States Intervene? The International Social Norms Metaphor**

One of the most important developments since the end of the Cold War has been an extension of the World Community metaphor, in which nations are persons. Sociologists have long studied community norms of behavior. Taking the *World Community* metaphor seriously, international relations theorists have applied sociology to international politics, arguing that the creation and maintenance of international social norms is crucial in maintaining world stability through defining norms of behavior for states (See Katzenstein, 1996).

The *International Social Norms* metaphor has affected American foreign policy in significant ways. One has to do with treaties and international conventions: the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Convention on Children's Rights and so on. Treaties define what socially respectable nations don't do: For example, they don't test nuclear weapons and they don't allow child slavery.

The second manifestation of the idea of international social norms has to do with community interventions. There are levels of violence that are just unacceptable in a stable, morally and socially organized world community. Just as a responsible community of people must intervene when an individual gets unacceptably violent, so a responsible world community must intervene when an individual state gets unacceptably violent.

Moreover, just as it is in the interest of an individual to live in a community where social norms for reasonable behavior are accepted, so it is in the national interest of a state to live in such a world community. This metaphorical change in the nature of the national interest is what made intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo — as well as East Timor — a matter of our "national interest."

Conservatives in America have not supported President Clinton's foreign policy, just as one would expect. They see the reversal of military/economic priorities to favor the economic as both foolish and immoral. First, they see globalization via trade organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) as a sellout of American sovereignty and hegemony — an overturning of the *Moral Order*. They believe a new military buildup is warranted. The conservative criticism on Kosovo is that either (1) it was not in the national interest, or (2) if we were going to go in, we should have gone in earlier and with troops. The first is a consequence of the Nations-as-People metaphor. The second is a consequence of strict father morality — the idea that force, and only force, works, that punishment is always required of wrongdoers.

Here we can see clearly the target of the Kristol-Sagan op-ed piece with which we began this paper. Their target is an idea — the *International Social Norms* metaphor. The argument is a familiar conservative argument, the anti-gun control argument: Social norms won't protect you; you need guns to protect yourself. Apply the *World Community* metaphor and you get: International social norms as established by treaties and interventions won't protect America; only more weapons will.

An important aspect of the idea of international social norms concerns poverty. Just as it is immoral for a community to ignore the plight of the poor, so it is immoral for a world community to ignore the plight of poor nations. So the United Nations and the Clinton administration have pushed for debt relief, foreign aid and loans. To Kristol, Sagan and other conservatives, this is welfare on an international scale; it is immoral since it provides something not earned and therefore encourages moral weakness and dependency. Thus, Kristol and Sagan identify "global poverty programs" with support for the United Nations — framing U.N. dues as welfare payments.

President Clinton's idea that the *International Social Norms* metaphor redefines the "national interest" is by no means established with the public. Clinton still had to defend intervention in Kosovo on other grounds. Here is an excerpt from a speech reported in the *New York Times* (May 14, 1999:A12).

Bringing the Kosovars home is a moral issue. But it is a very practical, strategic issue in a world where the future will be threatened by the growth of terrorist groups, the easy spread of weapons of mass destruction, the use of technology, including the Internet for people to learn how to make bombs and wreck countries.

This is also a significant security issue, particularly because of Kosovo's location. It is just as much a security issue for us as ending the war in Bosnia was. Though we are working hard with the international community to sustain them, a million or more permanent Kosovar refugees could destabilize Albania, Macedonia, the wider region, become a fertile ground for radicalism and vengeance that would consume southeastern Europe. And if Europe were overwhelmed with that, you know we would have to then come in and help them.

The old idea of the national interest as the self-interest of the *Nation-as-Person* is still very much with us. Even the president, who set the policy of intervention to defend international norms of state behavior, has to defend it using the old ideas of a balance of power, a threat to our security, and containment. Despite the changes, neorealism is still very much with us.

### **Neoliberalism as Economic Neorealism**

Indeed, the president's focus on global economics as the principal arena of international relations can be seen as a metaphorical version of the old neorealism, with neoliberalism as economic neorealism. It is reminiscent of

Waltz's metaphor, *States are Firms*, where competition between states is like competition between firms.

Finally, the neoliberal approach to foreign policy brings with it a system of metaphors of overwhelming importance:

1. The Market Is a Force of Nature.

Despite the fact the WTO requires hundreds of pages of trade regulations to maintain the global market, the market is still seen as a natural phenomenon very much as described by Adam Smith's *Invisible Hand* metaphor: If everyone seeks his own profit, then the profit of all will be maximized. As we saw above, the commonplace metaphor that *Well-being is Wealth* maps the *Invisible Hand* metaphor into the metaphor of *Moral Self-Interest*, which plays a major role in conservative thought: If everyone seeks his own well-being then the well-being of all will be maximized. This is the metaphor that implies that it is immoral to be a "do-gooder" — to seek the well-being of others — since that will interfere with the overall maximization of well-being.

The *Invisible Hand* metaphor and the *Moral Self-Interest* metaphor together imply that it is both impractical and immoral to bring non-economic, ethical issues into the global economic system.

2. Trade Is Democracy.

In this metaphor, free trade is freedom. The achievement of global free trade is the achievement of global democracy; freedom to sell is freedom to run for office; and freedom to choose what to buy is freedom to choose who to vote for. A world with free markets is thus a community with free elections. Taking this metaphor literally is to identify democratization — the creation of moral states, states that do not go to war — with free trade.

We can now see that these metaphors relate to each other. Global free trade can be seen as an international social norm: A moral country does not place high tariffs on the goods of another country. Free trade corresponds to democracy. And a world that follows international social norms is a democratic world.

### **Are There Sinkholes on the Path to Democracy?**

As we have seen, these views are coming under attack by conservatives. Some of them are coming under attack from progressive as well. Doubts have been raised as to whether the *Path to Democracy* metaphor is apt. Countries to which we have given aid to move them toward democracy seem not to be becoming democratic.

As the internal nature of states becomes part of foreign policy, culture is seen as playing a huge role, and the question has been asked: Do some states just not have the right cultural conditions for democracy? Russia and Serbia are often cited as such.

## 7. Implications for the Global Interdependence Initiative

We are now in a position to see why framing, especially metaphorical framing, is so central to the GII. Consider the task of bringing into American foreign policy such matters as:

- ?? environmental concerns
- ?? human rights
- ?? women's rights
- ?? children's health
- ?? humane labor practices
- ?? the rights of indigenous cultures to continue to exist

These living concerns run up against two brick walls — the old neorealist policy (which is very much still in existence) and the new neoliberal one. They are inconsistent with *both* metaphor systems.

None of these concerns exist in the neorealist metaphors. Consider the metaphor that *States Are Persons*, rationally pursuing their self-interest, namely, military strength and economic health. Each state is seen as having *no internal structure*. Each state is a unit, with only two interests — power and money. In such a picture, endangered species, rainforests and global warming do not exist. Nor do the rights or health of any particular individuals or groups. AIDS in Africa is just not in the picture. These issues are also absent from the *Balance of Power* metaphor, where states are physical objects.

They are also out of the picture in the neoliberal metaphors. The view of *States as Firms* in economic competition has no place for educating women in Third-World countries, or preserving bioregionalism, or protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. When the market is seen as a force of nature, real nature is at best hidden and at worst destroyed, as if it were a resource to be used or a product to be sold.

If the issues listed above are to play a major role in foreign policy, both of these sets of metaphors governing how the international system is conceptualized will have to change. The best hope for this is the extension of the *World Community* metaphor to a version of the *International Social Norms* metaphor. The GII can be seen as promoting a set of norms. Here's some of the things good countries do.

- ?? They value their environments; they don't destroy or degrade them.
- ?? They guarantee human rights and civil liberties.
- ?? They uphold the rights of women to equal treatment.
- ?? They take care of their children's health.
- ?? They make sure workers are treated fairly and humanely.
- ?? They protect the cultures of indigenous people.

Or to put it more generally, good countries are nurturant toward their citizens and their environment.

From this perspective, the protesters against the WTO in Seattle can be viewed as supporting such a system of such nurturant norms on a global scale. They were asserting that such nurturant norms are inconsistent with the WTO's proposed free trade norms. This need not mean that all forms of the globalization of trade are hurtful. But those that contradict nurturant norms are. One can, from this perspective, see the Seattle protesters are saying one thing in unison: Place norms of care above profit!

What we have is a clash of metaphors, with the metaphor of *Nurturant Global Norms* contesting with the *Invisible Hand* metaphor of neoliberal economics, which promises maximal prosperity: The profit of all is maximized is everyone is free to seek his own profit.

Many of the goals of GII appear to fall under the *Nurturant Norms* metaphor, a metaphor that seems to appeal more to progressives than to conservatives for reasons cited above.

Conservatives appear not be able to see these issues as legitimate concerns for foreign policy. The *Man-over-Nature* codicil of the *Moral Order* metaphor views nature as a resource to be used for human profit. That excludes preserving the environment as a paramount global value. The *Western-over-Nonwestern-Culture* codicil in the *Moral Order* metaphor sees indigenous cultures as primitive and inferior, not worth being preserved. The *Moral Self-Interest* metaphor sees do-gooders as immoral, and so rules out working for international rights for women or against child labor laws.

There are, however, a few places where the metaphors of the *Strict Morality* system do fit some of these goals. The *Christian-over-Non-Christian* codicil of the *Moral Order* metaphor implies that Christian missionaries should have the right to convert indigenous people worldwide — including in China. This is seen as a matter of "human rights," and so there is some conservative Christian support for at least some "human rights" (though it contradicts the rights of indigenous people to preserve their culture). There are conservative Christian groups that conceptualize nature as God's creation, and so, via the *God-over-Man* codicil of the *Moral Order*, see the destruction of the natural world as a sacrilege. Though that group is not all that widespread, there are possibilities for extending the view. The conservative concern for preserving American sovereignty and hegemony can for, some conservatives, lead to support for American labor in its attempt to institute fair labor practices, like child labor laws, around the world. In all these cases, there are possibilities for coalitions of strange bedfellows on particular issues, but not for overall support.

For these reasons, the most receptive audience for GII will be a progressive audience, though the different types of progressives will view the separate parts of the GII agenda in different, and largely predictable, ways. This creates a challenge if the GII is to attract a broad-based constituency for its alternative views.

## Conclusion

It would appear from initial analysis that the *International Social Norms* metaphor is an appropriate umbrella for the overall goals of the GII. This metaphor is still in the process of being established as a legitimate part of foreign policy. It is strongly contested by conservatives for reasons given above. And the main trends in foreign policy — neorealism and neoliberal globalization — both appear to clash with it. In sum, there is a serious job of reframing to be undertaken before any new model can stand a chance of dethroning the old models that continue to constrain our imaginations and direct our policies. Without such attention to the frames we bring to the job, we are likely merely to substitute new monsters for old.

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George Lakoff is Professor of Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, where he has been since 1972. He was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Indiana University and previously taught at Harvard University and the University of Michigan. He is a founder of the Rockridge Institute and is on the Advisory Board of the FrameWorks Institute.

Professor Lakoff has been a world prominent scholar of linguistics since the mid-1960s. As a founder of the Generative Semantics movement of the 1960s, he played one of the most significant roles in integrating mathematical logic into modern linguistics. In the mid-1970s, with the development of cognitive science, he was a founder of the Cognitive Linguistics movement, which brought new insights from the science of mind into linguistics. He also helped develop the major techniques for studying conceptual systems and discovered the mechanisms governing unconscious metaphorical thought. Since the late 1980s, he has been working with a group at the University of California at Berkeley on the development of a neural theory of thought and language, attempting to answer the question, How can the brain, which is composed of billions of neurons that work via chemical mechanisms, think using concepts and communicate using language?

Professor Lakoff has been the one of the most prominent figure in linguistics applying the study of conceptual systems to other disciplines, including literature, philosophy, mathematical cognition and especially political and social issues. During the Cold War, he worked on the analysis of the metaphorical conceptual system presupposed in International Relations Theory, especially in the work of Kenneth Waltz on balance of power and in the Rational Actor Model. Also during that time, he worked on improving US-USSR communications with the University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. He has published a widely read study of the metaphorical thought used to conceptualize the Gulf War (by both sides). His 1996 book, *Moral Politics*, was the first full-scale application of cognitive science to the study of the conceptual systems of liberals and conservatives in the United States.

Professor Lakoff is a member of the Science Board of the Santa Fe Institute, a past member of the Governing Board of the Cognitive Science Society, and past president of the International Cognitive Linguistics Association.

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