

PART IV

**PLAUSIBILITY 3:
GLOBAL WARRING**

AFTER THE SUNSET CAME THE NIGHT

Global Warring 1950–1974

The work of this chapter and those that follow might best be described by considering the extent of the US government's exercises of violent force since World War II. V. G. Kiernan (1978: 281) cited one study reporting that the US “seriously threatened” to use its military to gain “diplomatic advantage” on 215 occasions from 1945 through 1977. This meant that it threatened to go to war if it did not get its way about six times a year in this period, which was not especially diplomatic. Studies of the actual frequency of US military operations since the end of World War II are limited (Blum 1999; Hermann and Kegley 1998; Z. Grossman 2001; Galtung 2001). No research systematically includes direct and indirect as well as overt and covert US military operations, especially because of the secrecy surrounding indirect, covert warring. Consequently, all estimates of the extent of US governmental violence are approximate and likely to be low due to underreporting.

Istvan Kende (1971), who analyzed existing data from the end of World War II through the late 1960s, reported that in that period the US warred more frequently than any other country in the world. Forty years later Richard Lebow (2011) corroborated Kende, finding that the US was the “world’s most aggressive state” measured in terms of war initiation. Kevin Drum (2013) claimed the US launched a significant overseas assault every forty months over the last fifty years. Drum’s estimate is low because, as he acknowledges, it excludes covert operations. John Tures (2003) used a “United States Military Operations” data set generated by the Federation of American Scientists to estimate the frequency of US military activities since 1945. He found that the US engaged in 263 interstate military operations between 1945 and 2002—an average of around 4.6 operations

per year. However, 176 of these operations occurred in the eleven years between 1991 and 2002, a rate of about 16 operations per year. One conclusion from these findings is “that there has been a sizeable jump in the number of U.S. military actions since the end of the Cold War” (Tures 2003: 8).¹ Military sources concur, reporting that “the number of military deployments has dramatically increased” since 1989 (Castro and Adler 1999: 86–95).

Back in 1971 Kende noticed something that has been a feature of US governmental sub-logic’s violence since the end of World War II. America was, and is, “interventionist” (Kende 1971: 5). Violent force resources were, and are, exported from the US core to be exercised in countries throughout Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia, Central and Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Pacific, and Europe. Because the interventions are those of an imperial core in other lands, it means the US Leviathan conducts global warring big-time.

Has this warring been consistent with global warring theory? The work of the following five chapters is an answer to this query. US global warring is studied in three periods. The first of these, covered in the present chapter, is between 1950 and 1974, when for the most part the US economy was still basking in its golden age but the New American Empire had to address the US/Soviet Union inter-imperial contradiction along with certain dominator/dominated contradictions arising from the decline of the Old Empires. The second period, analyzed in chapter 7, stretches from 1975 to 1989, when the inter-imperial contradiction was gradually fading even as economic contradictions were beginning to intensify. The third period, investigated in chapters 9, 10, and 11, covers the time from 1990 to the present, when the US/Soviet inter-imperial contradiction has disappeared but the different cyclical and systemic contradictions are intensifying and coalescing in an apparently unstoppable fashion.

The hostilities analyzed are not a random sample of US warring between 1950 and 2014, nor do they include all the interventions in which the US fought during this time. Rather, the global wars investigated were chosen because they were among most important conflicts of their moment. An overview of each of these wars’ violence is presented. Next to be analyzed are the contradictions and reproductive vulnerabilities present prior to hostility, followed by investigation of the logic of social constitution pertaining to the wars. The object of this analysis is to show how, through hermeneutic politics, elites instituted public *délires* that when implemented were violent reproductive fixes—fixes conceived of as global warring used to solve the hermeneutic puzzles provoked by reproductive vulnerabilities. For now, let us establish the global imperial context in which the US warred between 1950 and 1974.

Sunset: “avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw”

In guerrilla warfare ... avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow; seek a lightning decision.... In guerrilla strategy, the enemy's rear, flanks, and other valuable spots are his vital point, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated. (Mao Tse Tung 1937)

Sunrise for the old empires had been in AD 1410 when the Portuguese Crown conquered the Moroccan town of Ceuta, beginning six hundred years of world imperial conquest. Of course sunset follows sunrise, and the years 1950 through 1974 were, as the old boys had already discovered, the dusk of the old empires. Make no mistake, imperial domination is a lousy lot for the dominated. Many imperial subjects were conscious that they were economically disadvantaged, even if they did not know they were “exploited.” They were cognizant that they were politically weak, even if they did not know they were “oppressed.” They were aware they were culturally belittled, even if they did not know they were cultural “savages.”² This means that dominator/dominated contradictions tended to be razor sharp. It took force to keep the “savages” down. So as reproductive vulnerabilities arose for the old empires, the dominated tended to insure their dominators were “harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated.”

World Wars I and especially II led to vulnerabilities that gravely hampered the old empires' reproduction. After World War II, as Eisenhower had put it, Western Europe was in “economic collapse” because the wars' destruction had stripped the old imperial governments of force resources to dominate. Actually, this crisis of the old imperial order had been building since the end of the eighteenth century. The American Revolution, discussed in chapter 3, might be thought of as the beginning of their end. Great Britain would recover from its defeat at the hands of the Americans and start empire building elsewhere in the nineteenth century, especially in India and Africa, but the reality was that it had lost and would never recover the richest part of its imperium. Further, throughout the nineteenth century it would withstand substantial rebellion, especially in Afghanistan (1842) and India (1857).

However, the truly spectacular nineteenth-century imperial collapse was that of Spain. The Spanish economy during this time, thoroughly bettered by its capitalist competitors, was largely agrarian and impoverished. Consequently, the Spanish Crown lacked the revenues to acquire sufficient violent force resources to effectively dominate. From 1800 to the early 1900s Spain lost imperial holdings in South America, North America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. By the early twentieth century it had only three small colonies left, in Africa (largely in the Sahara, where there were few to revolt).

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was an epoch of both growth and decline for the other old empires. On the one hand, prior to World War I they had carved out new imperiums in Africa, Indochina, and the Pacific. On the other, after that war there was resistance and rebellion in these places. For example, “by 1919–20, Britain was facing revolt almost everywhere in the empire—in Ireland, India, and Egypt, as well as Palestine and Iraq” (Mitchell 2011: 94).

Then came World War II, whose losers—Germany, Japan, and Italy—were stripped of their colonies by the winners while the remaining European imperial states, especially the English, French, and Dutch, were greatly weakened. In this situation the dominator/dominated contradiction became more intense in the sense that, although colonial subjects remained subjects, their dominators’ force had collapsed, so that the balance of forces between dominators and dominated swung in the latter’s favor. Indigenous elites in dominated colonies faced the following hermeneutic puzzle: “What is to be done with our imperial masters?” The perceptual response to the puzzle was “our masters are feeble.” Its procedural solution was, to appropriate a line from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*: “Cry ‘Havoc!’ and let slip the dogs of war.” This they did by forming ideologies of independence. Along with the ideologies came revolutionary public *délires* instituting national liberation armies that choreographed rebellion along nationalist and/or Marxist lines (Moran 2006).

Nikita Khrushchev, who by 1956 had emerged from the jockeying for power following Stalin’s death as the Soviet leader, recognized what was happening and in January of 1961 told the Higher Party School of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism:

Our era ... [is] an era of Socialist revolutions and national liberation revolutions; an era of the collapse of capitalism and of the liquidation of the colonial system; an era of the change to the road of socialism by more and more nations; and of the triumph of socialism and communism on a world scale. (In Gaddis 1997: 183)

Khrushchev got it wrong about capitalism’s “collapse” and the “triumph of ... communism on a world scale,” but he was correct that it was an era of “national liberation revolutions.” However—and this is important, as Douglas Blaufarb (1977) observed—there is little evidence that the Kremlin actually organized, or even encouraged, local leftist parties to launch insurgencies. Rather, the wars of national liberation appear to have been a response to the altered state of the balance of forces in the dominator/dominated contradiction. Revolution by the dominated could now be won.

The two most important wars of national liberation were in China and Indonesia, in the former case against a client of the US, the Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, KMT) and in the latter case against

the Dutch. Remember that at the end of the nineteenth century, the old empires had competed in China while waiting for the Qing dynasty to completely collapse before instituting colonization. The Qing dissolved in 1911.³ Sun Yat-Sen, leader of the KMT, attempted to install a liberal republic. Violence followed as the country fractured into territories presided over by regional warlords. Sun Yat-Sen initially allied with the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) under and attempted to unify the country. He died in 1925, and his successor, Chiang Kai-shek, turned on the CPC, trying to destroy it. In 1934 the Japanese invaded, seeking to incorporate China into their growing empire, and the CPC was obliged to fight both the Japanese and the KMT. The Japanese fell in 1945, and in 1949 the KMT, now allied with the US, was driven from the Chinese mainland to the island of Taiwan. China was liberated.

Key to the CPC's success was its development of a procedural culture of insurgency, whose choreography was detailed in Mao's *On Guerilla War* (1937), quoted at the opening of this section, which encouraged nimble practitioners to "avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw." Such fighting, also called "irregular" or "asymmetric" war, posed grave problems for the old empires' militaries. Robert Taber ([1965] 2002: 1), in his classic account, explained why by observing that

analogically, the guerrilla fights the war of the flea, and his military enemy suffers the dog's disadvantages: too much to defend; too small, ubiquitous, and agile an enemy to come to grips with. If the war continues long enough—this is the theory—the dog succumbs to exhaustion and anemia without ever having found anything on which to close its jaws or to rake with its claws.

The old empires soon discovered they were infested with "fleas," as guerrilla warfare became the chosen choreography in the wars of national liberation (Chaliand 1982).

In 1945 Indonesia, led by Sukarno and other nationalist leaders, declared independence from the Netherlands. The Dutch demurred, provoking the Indonesian National Revolution (1945–1949), in which the *permuda* (youth groups) and the nascent republican army fought largely as guerrillas (Cribb 2001). General A. H. Nasution was in considerable measure responsible for developing what he believed to be a nationalist, as opposed to communist, form of guerrilla insurgency, articulated in his *Fundamentals of Guerrilla Warfare* ([1953] 1965). Nasution's "fleas" exhausted the Dutch, who granted Indonesia its independence in 1949, relieving themselves of a territory with the fourth largest population in the world and effectively putting themselves out of the imperialism business.

The British, with the largest empire and consequently the most to lose, withdrew peacefully from the richest territory in their empire. South Asia

(what would become India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) was the second most populated territory in the world, after China. Resistance to the *Raj* (colonial rule) had been building there since the mid nineteenth century. By the 1940s in India this had culminated in the Indian National Congress, which adopted Gandhi's strategy of nonviolence. This choreographed force resources into peaceful strings of resistance. The UK had no stomach for military action in such a populated area. Independence came with the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947. A year later Sri Lanka was granted independence.

Britain violently responded to national liberation movements in areas where the distribution of violent force resources seemed more propitious, especially in its settler colonies. There was the Malaysian Emergency (1948–1960), the Mau-Mau Rebellion in Kenya (1952–1960), the Second Chimurenga (1964–1979) in Zimbabwe, and the Aden Emergency (1963–1967) in what would become South Yemen. All these conflicts were characterized by guerilla warfare. The UK lost them all. Malaysia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Yemen were independent by the late 1970s.

Perhaps the French fought hard to maintain their empire, especially in Indochina and Algeria, where their nationals had settled. Indochina—the countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—was the grimmest violent place of the last half of the twentieth century.⁴ Vietnam announced its independence in 1945. Ho Chi Minh, head of the Viet Minh (a coalition of communists and nationalists), wrote the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence. To emphasize its kinship with the anti-imperialism that had begun with the American Revolution, he inserted in his declaration a line from the US Declaration of Independence (Ho Chi Minh 1977: 5356) The French decided to militarily oppose Ho, and so began the First Indochina War (1946–1954).

In the late 1940s the US government began to supply and finance French military operations, and in the summer of 1950, in his resignation letter to Dean Acheson, George Kennan warned, “In Indochina we are getting into the position of guaranteeing the French in an undertaking which neither they, nor we, nor both of us together, can win” (1972: 58–60). The Vietnamese, led by Vo Nguyen Giap, initially engaged in scattered guerilla engagements. These developed into a war of maneuver that finally trapped the elite of the French Far East Expeditionary Force at Dien Bien Phu (1953–1954), where it suffered crushing defeat. Kennan had been prescient. French politicians in Paris gave up the struggle, to the disgust of much of the French military, and independence was granted in 1954. Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam became independent, Vietnam being divided into two countries: communist North Vietnam, ruled over by Ho Chi Minh; and noncommunist South Vietnam, increasingly a US client. Kennan once

again would be correct when the stage was set for the Second Indochina War, known to Americans as the Vietnam War; but understanding this awaits the US entry into Vietnam, described later in the chapter.

The year the First Indochina War ended, the Algerian War of Independence began (1954–1962). This conflict was especially brutal (Horne 1977), in part because the French military sought to avenge its defeat in Indochina; in part because of Algerian tactics; and in part because France was fighting to protect its own. There were 1.4 million French or other Europeans settled in Algeria (*pieds noirs*), composing about 13 percent of the population and owning roughly 27 percent of the arable land. For example, the novelist Albert Camus was a *pied noir*. He largely backed French attempts to prevent independence; in part because his mother was still in Algeria. The Algerian National Liberation Front initially fought using Maoist guerilla tactics, but it also employed especially repressive measures against Algerians who would not support it, and specialized in terrorist tactics against opponents both French and Algerian. The French military, for their part, developed an equally ugly counterinsurgency terrorism.

But by the late 1950s and early 1960s the war was destabilizing France: six governments had been brought down, and the Fourth Republic had collapsed. Communists, a major political force at the time, favored Algeria's independence. Conservatives, *pieds noirs*, and the military favored the opposite. General De Gaulle, brought to power in 1958 in an attempt to stop the destabilization, betrayed his followers by favoring independence. The Organisation de l'Armée Secrète formed in January 1961 and began attacking French officials representing De Gaulle. This was *de trop*, and to end the instability De Gaulle allowed Algerian independence. A million Algerians had died in the carnage.

Portugal, as stated earlier, had begun the expansion of the old empires. After Algeria's fall, Portugal soldiered on alone to defend the old empire in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Cape Verde. But in 1974, young Portuguese army officers imbued with the Maoist ideology of their opponents staged a successful revolution against the dictatorship in Lisbon. Portugal became a democratic republic, and its colonies were liberated. After it was all over, I recall standing in blazing sunlight in Guinea Bissau, as a ferryman transported me across a river as dark as the River Styx. He was one of Taber's "fleas," a veteran of the fight against Portugal. As we crossed, he nostalgically reminisced about the sweet pleasures of downing Portuguese planes. In such ways the sun set on the old imperial dogs of war, fatally infested with "fleas." What happened next?

As the sun set on the old empires, it rose on the New American Empire—or rather, it didn't; because what appeared was a phantasmagoric light that blinded imperial domination. This fantastic light was the cre-

ation of mainstream US scholarly hermeneuts who wrote books with titles like *After Empire*.⁵ Theirs was a rhetorical sunshine that shone down on a peaceable US hegemony, allowing political elites, like President Reagan, to describe America as a holy “city on a hill.” To know what really happened next, we must examine actual events in lands upon which the light of the New American Empire shone.

Hal Brands, writing of Latin America in the years this chapter is concerned with (1950–1974), though he could have been speaking of other global regions, remarked that US security doctrine in the era “centered on the premise that ... countries were ... menaced by the twin dangers of subversion and insurgency” (2010: 79) by the Soviets or their clients. One set of events that marked this era is the US’s path to war to combat this menace. The five US global wars during 1950–1974 are considered representative because they were about addressing “subversion and insurgency.” Two of these hostilities were overt (Korea and Vietnam); three were covert (the Iranian Coup, the Guatemalan Coup, and the Bay of Pigs Fiasco in Cuba). Korea and Vietnam were the two major US wars of the first period of post–NSC-68 warring; meanwhile the Iranian and Guatemalan coups, along with the attempted Cuban coups, are examples of a type of covert, CIA-organized warfare favored by the Americans.⁶ Analysis begins with the Korean War.

War in the Land of the Morning Calm, 1950–1953

Here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest. Here we fight Europe’s war with arms. (General MacArthur, US military commander in Asia; in Jervis 1980: 124–127).

US security elites’ immediate post–World War II attentions had focused upon events in Europe. After all, the Russian Bear was incorporating Eastern Europe. In Italy the Communist Party was the strongest political party on the left, attracting the support of a third of voters as late as the 1970s. The French Communist Party was vigorous, having participated in three governments from 1944 through 1947. Immediately after the war, it held 159 of the 586 seats in the National Assembly. The Berlin Blockade threatened Western authority within Germany in 1947 and much of 1948. So in 1949 it was conceivable that Soviet subversion might break into Western Europe.

One way the old boys sought to prevent this was through clandestine operations. First the OSS and then the CIA began the covert Operation Gladio. Timed to coincide precisely with the Marshall Plan’s implementation, this involved training and arming paramilitary forces that employed

terrorism to advance rightist political goals in Western Europe. Operation Gladio was especially active in Greece and Italy (Brozzu-Gentile 1994; Ganser 2005). In Greece, Neni Panourgia (2009) reported, it mounted clandestine actions creating terror via unrelenting exile, torture, disappearance, and murder of leftists, culminating in the Junta of Colonels' dictatorship from 1967 to 1974.⁷

However, if the cockpit of old boys' Soviet angst had been Europe immediately following 1945, General Douglas MacArthur was right: it was in Asia that the Communists would "make their play." Actually, the "play" would be made in Korea, the place known as the Land of the Morning Calm, which was among the lesser of Washington's concerns. In the late 1940s Washington security elites, led by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, had developed a strategy called the Asian Defense Perimeter for protection of their Asian clients. Korea was not included as a country to be defended in this strategy. In fact, by 1948 the Joint Chiefs of Staff had stated clearly that "the US has little strategic interest in maintaining its present troops and bases in Korea" (NSC 8 1948: 8). Consider more closely how this Land of the Morning Calm of "little ... interest" lost its calm.

The Korean peninsula had been incorporated into the Japanese Empire in 1910. Following World War II, a decision taken at Potsdam divided it at the 38th parallel, with the northern part to be occupied by the Soviets and the southern part by the Americans. In principle, the peninsula was to be reunited following free elections. These never occurred. Nine months after Mao Tse-Tung's victory in China, war began on the Korean peninsula. On 25 June 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea, instigating a conflict that ended in an armistice on 27 July 1953.⁸ From the Truman regime's perspective, as expressed by the National Security Council, several weeks after fighting commenced, the "invasion of South Korea came as a complete surprise and shock" (NSC Action # 315 1950: 1), a "shock" they responded to with direct, overt global war in which the US and the United Nations supported the Republic of Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its allies, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

Actually, Truman's old boys should not have been so surprised. Reunification of the two occupation zones failed due to non-performance of promised free elections scheduled for 1948, sharpening the animosity between the two sides. In the South, the South Korean government agreed upon a constitution (17 July 1948), elected a president, Syngman Rhee (20 July 1948), and established the Republic of South Korea (ROK). In the North, the USSR established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea headed by Kim Il-sung. Rhee was a hybrid elite. On one hand, he was a member of a *yangban* (aristocratic), if impoverished, family; on the other,

he had received an MA from Harvard University and a Ph.D. from Princeton University. He was a Korean nationalist, but one with an Ivy League appreciation of American *délirés*.

According to one source, Rhee was recruited into the OSS by his handler, OSS Deputy Director Colonel Preston Goodfellow, sometime in the 1940s (Rang 2000). Once president, he showed an authoritarianism that expressed itself in the elimination of leftist opponents, revealing his solicitude for US interests. Many of those opponents who survived became bitter enemies, headed north as refugees and prepared for guerrilla war against the US-sponsored ROK government. Nevertheless, in principle the two Koreas were still to be reunified, which raised the question of which side of the Cold War divide reunification would occur on. This question would, it seemed, be answered in favor of the Communists because of the Rhee government's increasing unpopularity.

Cross-border attacks along the 38th Parallel became more frequent as 1950 approached, including many by the South against the North. Kim Il-sung, fearing these attacks presaged a ROK invasion of North Korea, petitioned Stalin for permission to mount his own offensive. In May of 1950 President Rhee lost an election in the South and was about to lose control of the ROK government. For Rhee, this was a time of decision. He had to either attack the North, or withdraw from government. At this vulnerable time, the Soviets granted Kim permission to attack to reunify Korea (Bajanov 1995). However, the Russian approval was qualified. Stalin is said to have told Kim, "If you get kicked in the teeth I shall not lift a finger" (in Offner 2002: 369). North Korean soldiers began an offensive toward dawn on 25 June 1949. The Land of the Morning Calm had lost its calm.

Three days after the initial attack, North Korean troops were in Seoul, South Korea's capital. The US mobilized the young United Nations and intervened on South Korea's side. After early defeats at the hands of the North Korean military, a US-UN counteroffensive organized by General MacArthur drove the North Koreans past the 38th Parallel almost to the Yalu River, which forms the border between Korea and China. When this occurred, communist China interceded on the side of North Korea. China's entry into the conflict drove US, UN, and South Korean forces back south of the 38th parallel. MacArthur, who had begun advocating invasion of China and the use of nuclear weapons, and who was increasingly insubordinate to civilian control, was relieved and replaced by General Matthew Ridgeway. Thereafter the fighting eventually deadlocked. An armistice was signed on 27 July 1953 on the basis of status quo ante. The US did not lose the Korean War, but it certainly "did not win" (Pierpaoli: 2000: 15).

Why did the New American Empire fight in Korea? Consider first that South Korea would have been no more, had the North won. To the New

American Empire, this meant that all force resources, and the value they might produce, would be lost on the Korean Peninsula. Fully 98,480 square kilometers were at risk. This was an intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction. With the intensified contradiction, heightened reproductive vulnerability posed a hermeneutic puzzle: how to relax intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction in Korea? The following section discusses the hermeneutic politics involved in the resolution of this puzzle.

Social Reflexivity of the Korean War

Why did the US fight in Korea? Of the several answers to that question, two of the more persistent are examined here before the discussion turns to the hermeneutic politics that preceded US entry into the war.

A Conspiracy: Perhaps the boldest account of the origins of the Korean War was that given by the leftist I.F. Stone in *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (1952). Written during the conflict itself, it argued that the war was caused not by the North Koreans and Stalin, but by a conspiracy of US and South Korean elites to defeat the North. Evidence recently made available by the opening of Soviet Cold War files suggests this position is simply wrong. Kim Il-sung *was* worried about South Korean raids into the North. He *did* ask Stalin for permission to counterattack. Stalin initially responded negatively but eventually granted permission, which Kim implemented as a large offensive against the South (Gaddis 1997: 71). Soviet Cold War archives, however, also make clear that whereas Stalin was not displeased by the prospect of an additional communist state, his approval was not part of any plan of “unrestrained (Russian) expansionism” (Weathersby 1993: 32). The preceding accounts for why Kim invaded the South with 90,000 troops on 25 April 1950, but it does nothing to explain why the Security Elites 1.0 counterattacked. A second influential explanation of America’s entrance into the war might be called the “defense of the defense” account.

Defense of the Defense: Yŏng-jin Kim (1973: 30) argued that after China’s fall to communism, “Japan itself increasingly appeared as the major East Asian prize to be protected”—a “major ... prize” because it was the sole country in Asia that could counterbalance China. How was such protection to be extended? Kim believed there was “recognition” among the old boys “that the security of Japan required a non-hostile Korea,” which “led directly to President Truman’s decision to intervene” (ibid.). In this view, the defense of Japan necessitated the defense of Korea. But a problem with Kim’s position becomes clear upon revelation of the interpretations that

occupied Truman's I-space, and those of his officials, in the few days prior to their authorizing intervention. This takes us directly to the hermeneutic politics of the Korean War.

"Draw the line": It is possible to gain insight into these politics because the Truman Library has released a series of documents relating to events pertinent to the conflict, called "The Korean War and Its Origins, 1945–53." The documents, especially as the war approaches, do not show the old boys soberly contemplating the hermeneutic puzzle of intensified contradiction. Rather, they reveal them wrestling with the "surprise and shock" of invasion. Korea's relevance to the defense of Japan is mentioned only once in these documents prior to the decision to intervene. This was at a meeting held on the evening of 25 June at the Blair House between President Truman and top officials of the military and the Departments of State and Defense. At this meeting Admiral Sherman, at the time chief of Naval Operations, said, "Korea is a strategic threat to Japan" (Memorandum of Conversation 1950: 3). The admiral's statement is cryptic, but what he apparently meant was that should Korea become completely communist, its geographic location could serve as a stepping stone to Tokyo. The fact that Korea was mentioned only once as important to Japan's defense in a collection of documents about the origins of the Korean War is not evidence of Kim's insistence that this consideration "led directly to President Truman's decision to intervene." It is evidence that it was something on the mind of one actor. But there was something else that more "directly" dominated the old boys' I-spaces, far more than protecting Japan.

The striking thing about their decision to go to war was the rapidity with which it was made. The North Korean offensive that began on 25 June was an instantaneous and great intensification of the inter-imperial competition. The choice to go to war was made by 26 June, and the White House had publicly announced military operations by 28 June. Let us follow events over these three days. North Korean troops invaded the South at 4 a.m. local time. Korea is thirteen hours ahead of the US East Coast, so Washington received news of the invasion by the morning of the 25 June. The first concern of the Security Elites 1.0 was to discover exactly what was happening. At 8:45 a.m. Washington time on 25 June, a telephone conference was held between military leaders in the US capital and those in Tokyo (Tokyo was headquarters for US Asian forces). Washington asked its military, "What is your estimate of objective of current North Korean effort?" Tokyo replied that "the North Koreans are engaged in an all-out offensive to subjugate South Korea" (Note Regarding Teleconference 1950: 1) and that regarding ROK, "our estimate is that a complete collapse is possible" (ibid.: 3). This, then, was a perceptual cultural message

about events in E-space. An “all-out offense” was coming from the North, with “complete collapse ... possible” in the South. This intelligence was transmitted to civilian officials in the White House, State Department, and Defense Department. These were the stark realities of the North Korean invasion.

The next evening, 26 June, senior figures in Truman’s State Department, Defense Department, and Joint Chiefs of Staff assembled at the Blair House. The Blair House is the presidential guest house, but at this time it was serving as Truman’s residence while the White House was being renovated. At the Blair House meeting a decision was made to begin all military operations, short of committing ground troops. Consequently, “Appropriate orders were issued that evening, and a public announcement made the next day” (Notes Regarding Blair House Meeting 1950: 1). At roughly 9 a.m. on 25 June, US governmental elites had discovered they had a reproductive vulnerability. At roughly 9 p.m. the next day they had their fix, and the fix was war.

After the Blair House meeting finished, Truman instructed that certain important Congressmen be requested to attend “a very important meeting on Korea” at 11:30 a.m. the next day (Notes Regarding Meeting with Congressional Leaders 1950: 1). The following morning,

the President opened the meeting by stating that he had invited a group of Senators and Congressman to the White House so he could describe the situation in the Far East to them, and inform them of a number of important decisions which he had made during the previous twenty four hours. (Ibid.: 2)

The information he imparted gives a clue as to the old boys’ response to the hermeneutic puzzle they faced. Truman told his audience,

The communist invasion of South Korea could not be let pass unnoticed ... this act was obviously inspired by the Soviet Union. If we let Korea down, the Soviets will keep right on going and swallow up one piece of Asia after another. We had to make a stand sometime, or else let all of Asia go by the board. If we were to let Asia go, the Near East would collapse and no telling what would happen in Europe. Therefore, the President concluded, we ordered our forces to support Korea as long as we could ... and it was equally necessary for us to draw the line at Indochina, the Philippines, and Formosa. (Ibid.: 4)

Elsewhere in his memoirs, remembering the North Korean attack, Truman (1956: 378–379) used even stronger language: “Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ... earlier.”

Truman had interpreted the North Korean invasion through the lens of the domino theory hermeneutic and the global domination public *délire*. The Soviets were a monster-alterity. Communism would conquer territory after territory, like dominoes falling, due to an initial push. This was the

perceptual solution of the hermeneutic puzzle. The procedural solution was to “draw the line,” but because war had already started and peaceful solutions to the puzzle were no longer possible, the old boys granted themselves Shultzian Permission. North Korea’s invasion had been understood in terms of the global domination public *délire*: Violence would be answered by violence.

There seems to have been no opposing politics among the security elites regarding the meaning of the North Korean attack. Truman’s interpretation was shared by two key officials authorized to respond to it. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson testified before Congress:

The very fact of this aggression ... constitute[s] undeniable proof that the forces of international communism possess not only the willingness, but also the intention, of attacking and invading any free nation within their reach at any time they think they can get away with it. The real significance of the North Korean aggression lies in the evidence that, even at the resultant risk of starting a third world war, communism is willing to resort to armed aggression, whenever it believes it can win. (In Jervis 1980: 579)

Again the language was strong. The monster-alterity of “international communism” would attack “any time they think they can get away with it,” even if this risked starting “a third world war.” Dean Acheson strongly supported his Defense Department counterpart and brought the Soviets into the picture, “The profound lesson of Korea is that ... the USSR took a step which risked—however remotely—general war” (ibid.).

So the president, the secretary of state, and the secretary of defense were hermetically sealed into interpreting the North Korean invasion in terms of the recent global domination public *délire*. Perceptually they believed the Soviet monster-alterity was implementing the domino theory and threatened “global war,” thus creating a risk of enormous loss of US force resources and value. This interpretation may or may not have been accurate (in fact, it was untrue with regard to any Soviet plan for “global war”), but what the old boys did know was that if they did nothing, they would lose South Korea and all its force resources. So the procedural fix for the hermeneutic puzzle was to “draw the line” and meet violence with violence. On 29 June 1950 the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent General MacArthur a cable ordering him to support the South Korean forces. This cable implemented the procedural part of the global domination public *délire*, an implementation that would be especially gory.⁹

The Korean War was of utmost significance for transforming the global domination public *délire* from an unfunded and hence unimplementable *délire* into a funded violent fix to the inter-imperial contradiction threatening the US Leviathan. Remember, Truman had been shaken by its implied

costs when he first saw it in 1949 and had accordingly shelved it. However, once he entered the war, as Pierpaoli (2000: 144) makes clear, “He also began ... to rearm the nation along the lines prescribed in NSC-68.” The defense budget quadrupled from a pre-Korean War low of \$13.5 billion to \$50 billion by the end of 1951 (Markusen, *Campbell, and Deitrick* 1991). This was a military Keynesianism: the government was stimulating the private (military) economy with enormous infusions of capital. In Pierpaoli’s terms, “The United States was now on its way to constructing a permanent national security state and defense economy” (2000: 144). Thus, the Korean War and the funding of NSC 68 began the military-industrial complex, which gave the New American Empire sufficient violent force to actually be in a position to implement the global domination public *délire*. President Eisenhower, who followed Truman in the presidency, denounced the military-industrial complex at the end of his administration, but it was there to stay, a permanent structural feature of the US Leviathan.

The year 1953 saw President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s inauguration on 20 January and the end of the Korean War on 27 July. Within months of taking office, the new president would address a major issue in Middle Eastern politics by authorizing a covert coup d’état in Iran. Why?

“That Terrible Thing”: The Iranian Coup, 1953

“Why did you Americans do that terrible thing?” she cried out, “We always loved America.... But after that moment, no one in Iran ever trusted the United States again.... Why, why did you do it?” (Kinzer 2008: xxv)

The speaker quoted in the above citation was an Iranian memoirist who, at a book party celebrating her memoir, was asked a question by the American journalist Stephen Kinzer about the 1950s CIA coup that overthrew the democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh. She responded in an “agitated and animated” (*ibid.*) fashion, calling the coup “that terrible thing” and asking, “Why, why did you do it?” The memoirist’s question is our own: Why did the US Leviathan do that terrible thing?

The answer has to do with the Republican victory in the 1952 presidential election. It had been a long time coming. Eisenhower’s triumph was the first Republican presidential win since 1928. In part, his reason for authorizing a coup in Iran concerned the ideological arguments used in the hermeneutic politics of the election campaign, which had to do with perceptions of the inter-imperial contradiction. Profits were to be made selling goods to a reviving Europe and Japan. The Korean War, as we have just seen, pumped enormous sums into US companies through defense contracts for equipment and supplies. Consequently, the 1950s were very

much part of the Golden Age of US capitalism. This meant that a faltering economy could not be used to bludgeon the Democrats in electioneering. The same was not true of national security. Here matters seemed to be worsening, especially in the US's relations with the monster-alterity.

A threesome of bad events, uninvited, clambered into the Democratic bed in the fall of 1949: in September the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb; a month later Mao triumphed in China; and in September and October division of Germany into two states formally occurred, effectively confirming Eastern Europe's loss to the Soviets. Then, the Korean War ended with its problematic outcome.

There was no doubt about it in Republican eyes. Democrats were losing to the "Commies," which was a Republican understanding of intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction. Republican Senator McCarthy called it "twenty years of treason" (in A. Fried 1996: 179). "Treason" was an abomination the Republicans were pleased to use to savage the Democrats. With a snarling disregard for evidence, Joseph McCarthy rose to national prominence by, on every day in every way, accusing government officials of disloyalty, subversion, or treason vis-à-vis the Soviet "menace."¹⁰ Of course, those accused were Democrats. Genial, grandfatherly Eisenhower, "Ike" to many, who had defeated the Germans as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe and should know a thing or two about dealing with bad guys, ran for the presidency on the Republican ticket. He promised to take a "new look" at Democratic "treason." What was this new look?

John Foster Dulles was to be the new secretary of state. He had been rehearsing for this job since the 1940s, and in *War or Peace* (1950) had told readers how he would take a new look. The book was largely about what to do with the Bear. Its language continues the strident tones of NSC 68. The Soviets are "despotic," "fanatical," and "diabolically clever," seeking "world domination" (ibid.: 2, 224). However, there was a novel recognition. The Kremlin does not intend "to use the Red Army as an actually attacking force"; rather, it will use "class war" (ibid.: 12). This was "penetration" into a country by "intensive radio and press propaganda" to foment "discontent," "terrorism," and "civil war," leading to the country's subversion into the communist camp.

The key to meeting the Soviets' subversion was not to passively contain them. It was to aggressively "pressure" them, which might lead the Bear "into a state of collapse" (ibid.: 252). After all, Dulles had pledged in 1949, "We should make it clear to the tens of millions of restive subject people in Eastern Europe and Asia, that we do not accept the status quo of servitude and aggression Soviet Communism has imposed on them, and eventual liberation is an essential and enduring part of our foreign policy"

(in Stöver 2004: 98). This was “rollback.” Instead of the USSR being contained in existing areas, it would “collapse.” Implicit here was a notion of regime change. The Bear collapsed would be replaced by a regime genial to Republican sensibilities. What sort of procedures would do the rolling? Here matters were unclear, though Dulles did recommend covert operations (Bodenheimer & Gold 1989). Rollback might be judged a particular iteration of the global domination public *délire*, differing from the original in that it proposed regime change in the USSR. It became part of the Republican Party’s new look in the 1952 campaign.

Following Ike’s victory, Walter “Beetle” Bedell Smith was appointed undersecretary of state. Beetle had been Ike’s chief of staff during part of World War II, US Ambassador to the USSR (1946–1948), and CIA Director (1950–1953); and had acquired a fierce animosity toward the Soviets. Allen Dulles, John’s younger brother, became the head of CIA.¹¹ Together, with the elder Dulles, they were the core Security Elites 1.0 that implemented the new look. The first place they did this was in Iran, by rolling back its nationalist government. It is time to investigate “that terrible thing”—the coup against Mohammad Mossadegh, Iran’s democratically elected prime minister.

The Coup

I owe my throne to God, my people, my army and to you. (The Shah of Iran, in K. Roosevelt 1979: 199)

The person enumerating his debts above was *Shahanshah* (King of Kings), *Aryamehr* (Light of the Artuans), Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran. The person he was speaking to was Kermit Roosevelt Jr., Teddy Roosevelt’s grandson (Groton and Harvard, like his grandfather). The reason the shah was so grateful was that in August 1953 Kermit had led a CIA coup code-named Operation Ajax that helped place the shah on his throne. The Iran Coup was covert and involved largely indirect US operations.¹² *Operation Ajax* directed against the government in Teheran was the first CIA new look at the world. Additionally, it was the first American attack upon a democratically elected government and it was cheap, costing in the order of a million dollars. The Korean War had cost between 1951 and 2000 on the order of 1,001 billion dollars (R. Miller 2007).

Operation Ajax engineered the toppling of Mossadegh’s government at the insistence of, and with assistance from, Whitehall. This permitted Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to govern for twenty-six oppressive years until he was overthrown in the 1979 revolution that swept the Ayatollah Khomeini to power.¹³ Why were the British and the Americans so vexed with Mossadegh, a frail septuagenarian from an aristocratic background,

Paris-educated, whom the Soviets regarded as a “bourgeois nationalist” (in Gaddis 1997: 167)? Under normal circumstances such gentlemen were preferred clients of their imperial handlers. The emphasis in the preceding sentence falls on “normal,” for in the early 1950s in Iran, especially from the UK’s perspective, events were not normal.

What was abnormal to her majesty’s government had to do with oil. Great Britain was experiencing imperial sunset. Iran, land of ancient and medieval empire, had escaped formal English or anybody else’s colonization. Rather, it had survived as a buffer state between expanding Russian and British imperialisms. Importantly, before World War II the UK had practiced an informal imperialism there, centered on oil. Iran was a petro-state in possession of enormous oil reserves, and since the early twentieth century the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC, which would become British Petroleum, BP) had exercised a near monopoly, ensuring a comfortable accumulation of oil profits back in England. This was the British “normal” in Iran.

Lamentably for the UK, Iran had been anything but normal since the early 1900s. Initially, pesky US majors sought entrance into the oilfields. The Americans were held off during the inter-World War period. Unfortunately, the British faced severer challenges starting in the late 1940s. Iranian nationalists, recognizing the UK’s enfeeblement, demanded renegotiation of oil royalties, using Venezuela as a model for how royalties should be split—at the time, about 50-50 (Engdahl 2004: 93). The Iranian demand for higher royalties represented a significant intensification of what was earlier termed the oil company/petro-state contradiction.

Unsurprisingly, AIOC resisted renegotiating their concession, which sparked increased Iranian popular agitation for nationalization. The pro-Western Prime Minister Ali Razmara, a supporter of the AIOC, was assassinated in March 1951. The next month, the Majlis (parliament) legislated the nationalization of AIOC by creating the National Iranian Oil Company. The newly elected Prime Minister Mossadegh might have been bourgeois, but he was also a nationalist, and as such he vigorously supported nationalization, believing Iran should enjoy increased profits from its oil reserves instead of allowing them to nourish English elites. Note that the oil company/petrostate meso-contradiction was at the same time an expression of the dominator/dominated macro-contradiction between UK elites and Iran, the informal client state they sought to dominate. With nationalization came intensification of these contradictions.

At least some British elites understood Mossadegh’s oil nationalism through a racist gaze, as the work of “*incomprehensible orientals*” (Elwell-Sutton 1955: 258). The AIOC represented the UK’s single largest overseas investment at the time. Moreover, the loss of Iranian oil endangered the

UK's post–World War II restructuring strategy, which Engdahl (2004: 92) explains as follows:

While Britain during the 1950s appeared to be losing her most extensive attributes of empire, she held tenaciously to a reordered set of colonial priorities. Rather than stake everything on maintaining the extensive formal empire ... she regrouped around the far more profitable empire of world oil and strategic raw materials. ... Thus ... a strategic priority ... [was] maintenance of British interests in the oil-producing Middle East Gulf States, especially Iran.

Winston Churchill, then prime minister, tried a number of nonviolent reproductive fixes to reverse Iran's nationalization: "They first demanded that the World Court and the United Nations punish [Mossadegh], then sent warships to the Persian Gulf, and finally imposed a crushing embargo that devastated Iran's economy" (Kinzer 2008: 2–3). Mossadegh "was utterly unmoved" by these measures. Their strategic priorities defied by "incomprehensible orientals," stiff upper lips quivered in Whitehall. It was time to call in the "birdwatchers" (British slang for spies).

Granting itself Shultzian Permission, London turned to the US and demanded strategic rent in the form of assistance in staging a coup. President Truman refused, but his successor, Eisenhower, whose secretary of state was eager to give rollback a try, complied. Two birdwatchers—Kermit Roosevelt Jr. and Donald Wilber (Iranian architectural scholar, oriental rug collector, and one-time president of the Princeton Rug Society)—planned and executed Operation Ajax, assisted by elements of British intelligence and the Iranian military. Iranian politics around the nationalization of their oil confronted the Americans with a hermeneutic puzzle: What to do about this politics, which produced a reproductive vulnerability of an intensified oil company/petrostate contradiction? At this point the social reflexivity of the US old boys helps to explain why they did "that terrible thing."

Social Reflexivity: Two Contradictions and One Public Délire

There have been three main answers to the question of why the 1953 coup took place. The first was that it had to do with domestic Iranian politics; the second was that it addressed a Communist menace; and a third was that it was about oil. I suggest a fourth answer that elaborates upon the roles of both communism and oil. Let us first consider Iranian politics.

It's the Ayatollah: Darioush Bayandor (2010) argues that the overthrow of Mossadegh resulted primarily from 1950s domestic Iranian politics, and that key clerics of the time, notably Ayatollah Borujerdi, the Grand

Marja-i-Taqlid (“source of emulation”), played a crucial role in deposing Mossadegh. Bayander does not deny that there was a CIA coup attempt but argues that it failed, and that only a second attempt organized by the clerics succeeded. Bayander marshals evidence well and is possibly correct, but his views are not germane to our interest because they answer the different question of why the coup was effective, whereas our question is why the Americans did what *they* did in it. Korea had been all about the inter-imperial contradiction and containing communist expansion. Might this sort of a consideration have played a role in US involvement in the coup?

Communism and the Inter-imperial Contradiction: Donald Wilber (1954), in his originally secret CIA report of the events, insisted that Mossadegh’s regime “had cooperated closely with the Tudeh (Communist) Party of Iran.” Kermit Roosevelt (1979) emphatically supported his co-conspirator in his own book *Countercoup*. So the two CIA birdwatchers who had led the coup for the US perceived what was happening in Mossadegh’s Iran as communist expansion. This, in our terms, would be an intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction.

The phrase “blowing smoke” is American slang for deliberately obscuring something. Spies often blow smoke, and Ervand Abrahamian (2001: 198) has argued that the two spooks who ran Operation Ajax were blowing smoke. Specifically, he insists:

Throughout the crisis, the “communist danger” was more of a rhetorical device than a real issue—i.e., it was part of the cold-war discourse. The British and American governments knew Mossadeq was as distrustful of the Soviet Union as of the West. In fact, they often complained to each other about his “neutrality.” ... They also knew that the Tudeh, even though the largest political organization, was in no position to seize power. ... Despite 20,000 members and 110,000 sympathizers, the Tudeh was no match for the armed tribes and the 129,000-man military. What is more, the British and Americans had enough inside information to be confident that the party had no plans to initiate armed insurrection.

Further, at the time the Soviets clearly were not involved in plans to expand into Iran. Moscow’s relationship to Mossadegh was “distant and distrustful” (Gaddis 1997: 166).

Nevertheless, it was true that “Iran had enormous oil wealth, a long border with the Soviet Union, an active Communist party, and a nationalist prime minister” (Kinzer 2008: 4). While Mossadegh was by no means a communist, he was a social reformer. Further, Tudah might not have been in a strong position in the early 1950s, but there was no reason to automatically rule it out in the future. It was entirely possible that Mossadegh’s and Tudah’s sympathies might be disposed more to Moscow than to the

US. Thus, if he continued as prime minister the Soviets' position might well be strengthened in Tehran, and at worst Iran might become a "second China" (ibid.). Consequently, a possibility of expansion of Soviet influence into Iran existed.¹⁴ The inter-imperial contradiction certainly appeared to be intensifying. This brings the discussion to the role of oil.

Oil and the Oil Company/Petro-state Contradiction: Concerning oil, Abrahamian has said,

the oil was important both for the United States and for Britain. It's not just the question of oil in Iran. It was a question of control over oil internationally. If Mossadegh had succeeded in nationalizing the British oil industry in Iran, that would have set an example and was seen at that time by the Americans as a threat to U.S. oil interests throughout the world, because other countries would do the same. Once you have control, then you can determine how much oil you produce in your country, who you sell it to, when you sell it, and that meant basically shifting power ... to local countries like Iran and Venezuela. And in this, the U.S. had as much stake in preventing nationalization in Iran as the British did. (In Goodman 2003)

Abrahamian has a point. After all, prior to coming to Washington the Dulles brothers had worked for the law firm Sullivan and Cromwell, which represented the AIOC parent firm's business in the US. They were thus familiar with the issues pertaining to Iranian oil and moreover had their own ideas as to how the control of the oil might be rearranged. Wilber's (1954: 2) account makes clear what that John Foster Dulles wanted: "Specifically to cause the fall of the Mossadegh government, and bring to power a government which would reach an equitable oil settlement." "Equitable" meant that the American oil companies would have to get a big cut of the oil. In the 1950s, Iran, as an oil producer, was a petro-state. It wanted more of the value of its oil. The UK and the US had oil companies that also wanted more of the value of Iran's oil than Mossadegh was willing to give them. Here, then, was an oil company/petro-state contradiction impinging upon the Iranian situation in the early 1950s.

The global domination public délire: US hermeneutic politics in the early 1950s was ruled by a particular hermeneutic. In 1953, at the height of Senator McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade, Americans fixated on the understanding that the Commies were wicked, ubiquitous—even in government—and needful of riddance. Further, the Republican campaign platform of the just finished election had promised such an eradication in the international arena in the form of "rollback." The hermeneutic was clear: perceptually, communists of any variety were monsters; procedurally, they were to be eradicated.

In the first three years of the 1950s, the hermeneutic politics within the US security establishment vis-à-vis Iran sought to understand the relevance of Mossadegh's oil nationalization within the context of this anti-Communist hermeneutic. A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in December 1950, the end of the first year of the Korean War, judged that the Soviets had intended to aggressively pursue a global attack on the US's position. NIEs provide medium- to long-term estimates of the intelligence community's thinking about various topics. They were produced by the CIA in Eisenhower's time. The 1950 NIE warned of the Soviets "aggressively" attacking "world-wide" (NIE-15 1950).

A few months later the US embassy in Moscow, in a report entitled "Soviet Intentions" (*FRUS* 1951: 1582), included Iran as a target of Soviet "attack," reporting, "Elsewhere along the periphery of the Soviet orbit Iran, Yugoslavia, and Germany are the principal foci of attention and any faltering in Free World unity & determination might tempt the Kremlin to move at these parts." Mossadegh seemed especially vulnerable because he governed in a National Front government, and such governments seemed vulnerable to communist subversion, as had happened to Czechoslovakian President Beneš's regime in 1948. The State Department's Policy Planning Staff (30 July 1952) reported that there was fear that Mossadegh could be co-opted in a Czech-style coup, "where the communist organization either alone or in coalition with leftist elements in the National Front might win control of a deteriorating situation" (in Gavin 1999: 27).

At this point oil entered the discussion. During a June 1952 meeting of the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, representing the Joint Chiefs, declared, "If we are going to hold Middle Eastern oil we will have to hold a line in Iran" (*FRUS* 1952–1954: 239).¹⁵ The Security Elites 1.0 were not thinking that oil and communism were unrelated. Rather, they understood both were relevant to appreciating the situation because they supposed that Iran was vulnerable to communist subversion, and if Iran was lost, then, the military believed (according to General Collins), all Near Eastern oil was at risk.

The Washington security elite's interpretation of the Iranian puzzle by the end of 1952 was summarized by another NIE report issued on 15 January 1953:

Iran presents a more pressing problem than that existing in other states of the area, owing in part to the proximity of the Soviet Union and the strength of the Tudah party, and in part to the more immediate danger of social, political and fiscal breakdown. The longer present trends in Iran continue unchecked, the more difficult it will become to prevent a breakdown of government authority which would open the way for at least a gradual assumption of control by the

Tudah ... the Iranian situation contains so many elements of instability that it might occur at any time. (FRUS 1952–1954: 340–341)

This NIE might be thought of as the CIA's perceptual interpretation of the Iranian situation. The key understanding was that Iran might go communist "at any time." Given such a perception, the procedures to be followed included exercising violent force—violent, because Churchill had already tried peaceful means of getting Mossadegh to cooperate and these had failed. This understanding of the inter-imperial and the oil company/petro-state contradictions was in terms of the global domination public *délire*.

NSC 136/1, dated 20 November 1952 and entitled "US Policy Regarding the Present Situation in Iran," declared, "Specific military, economic, diplomatic and psychological measures should be taken to support a non-communist Iranian government or to prevent all or part of Iran or adjacent areas from falling under communist domination" (In Gavin 1999: 34). NSC 136/1 and its command to take "military ... measures" authorized implementation of the global domination public *délire*.

Actually, the decisions taken in the NIE and NSC documents had been made during the Truman administration, so when Ike and the Dulles brothers arrived on the scene the reproductive fix was already in. Moreover, the hermeneutic politics on this matter had been entirely one-sided. Wherever Ike, the Dulles brothers, and "Beetle" Smith turned, the recently implemented global domination public *délire* dominated and, under the Eisenhower administration, in the more aggressive rollback iteration.

On 3 June 1953, at a meeting held in Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' office, Kermit Roosevelt explained how he planned to carry out the coup. When he finished, Dulles asked what others thought about the plan. His brother, the CIA head; Beetle Smith; Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson; the assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs; the director of policy planning at the State Department; and the US ambassador to Iran all endorsed it, saying "we have no choice," whereupon John Foster Dulles said: "That's that then. Let's get going" (Kinzer 2008: 164). Among the principals, it was a hermetic seal. Once they got Operation Ajax "going," it became the August coup and the reason why the US Leviathan did "that terrible thing."

The coup, which may well have succeeded due to the reasons given by Bayander, was over by 20 August 1953. The next year a meeting was held between the US, UK, Iran, and other interested parties, who were called "the Consortium," to divvy up the spoils of Iran's oil. A Consortium Agreement was reached, which specified that (1) for the first time US oil companies shared in the control of Iranian oil; (2) Western majors got 50 percent of revenues, with the US and UK evenly splitting 80 percent of

this sum and the remainder divided between French and Dutch interests; and (3) Iran was allocated 50 percent of the revenues, an increase from 16 percent in the original agreement. Thus, instead of Iranian oil becoming a lost cause to all oil companies save Iranian ones, American officials used the coup to arrange a situation that benefited friends of the US, inviting advanced capitalist clients—the UK, Holland, and France—to enjoy economic carrots in the form of oil revenues. The French may have grumbled that they got only 6 percent of the loot and the Dutch only 14 percent, but they got something. The British may have grouched that they only got as much as the Americans, but they could otherwise have lost it all. First these countries received Marshall Plan Funds; next they got Iranian oil revenues. These flows of value were strategic rents the US paid to advantaged clients to attach them to the second tier of the New American Empire. Further, the Iranians got more oil revenues than had been the case under the old AIOC.

Certain of Eisenhower's security elites probably thought they were rolling back the Soviets in Iran. However, the Bear was never really there, so it only makes sense to think of the coup as a preemptive rollback iteration of the global domination public *délire*. They were preempting something—Iran becoming a Soviet client—so they would not have to roll it back later. Moreover, the Shah, after thanking Kermit for his throne, allowed Iran to join the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) along with Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the UK, to defend the Middle East against the USSR as NATO did in Europe. Accordingly, the CIA coup further challenged the Soviets by adding an additional client state to the New American Empire, solidifying the US imperium in an area of the world where oil revenues kept richly accumulating while helping to pay rents to its Atlantic community clients. Finally, with US military and CIA assistance, the Shah organized a secret police that brutally repressed the Tudah, effectively eliminating them as a political force in Iran (Abrahamian 1999). Moreover, many ordinary Iranians eventually suffered under the Shah due to Kermit's fine coup. So all in all, as the Iranian filmmaker Maziar Bahari told US National Public Radio, it left "a bitter taste in Iranians' mouths" (NPR Staff 2013). We shall hear from Iran in a later chapter. Now it is time to move on to Banana Land and another adventure of the Dulles brothers.

Banana Land: The Guatemalan Coup, 1954

... the people are very polite ... (*Journey to Banana Land*, a 1950 United Fruit Company film, in Brimont 2011).

In 1950 the United Fruit Company (UFC), which had vast interests in Guatemala, produced a film called *Journey to Banana Land*. Filled with sentimental music and condescending assurances that the “people” were “very polite,” the film was above all a trip into the UFC’s self-representation, whereby the company presented itself as a benign corporation bearing fruit for the folk of Banana Land. Another, altogether different trip in Banana Land leads to the tentacles of *el pulpo* (the octopus, a common moniker for the UFC among Guatemalans) and another coup.

The 1954 Guatemalan coup d’état was a covert, indirect CIA operation that, according to Nicholas Cullather (1994: ix), a historian working for the CIA, “delighted both President Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers.”¹⁶ It was called Operation PBSUCCESS and considered another CIA triumph after Iran. It overthrew Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, the democratically elected president of Guatemala. The following events led to Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers’ delight.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Guatemala had been a place of informal US imperialism where US companies extracted capital from the country. Guatemala’s geography is favorable to tropical agricultural production. Consequently the UFC (most famous for Chiquita bananas), starting in 1901 and continuing through the dictatorial presidencies of Manuel José Estrada Cabrera (1898–1920) and General Jorge Ubico (1931–1944), gradually came to dominate the Guatemalan economy. This was especially true under Ubico, who was called “Little Napoleon” because he fancied himself as like Napoleon, and whom Tomàs Borge (1992: 55) described as “crazier than a half-dozen opium smoking frogs.”

Little Napoleon, the only son of a wealthy landowner and prominent political figure, was something of a hybrid elite. He was first privately tutored, then educated at Guatemala’s most prestigious schools before further education in the US and Europe. Unsurprisingly, he was disposed to grant favors to the UFC, which it used to secure controlling shares of the railroad, electric utility, and telegraph companies while also acquiring over 40 percent of the country’s best land and de facto control over its only port facility, in the process earning its nickname, *el pulpo*. However, a period of nationalist, social welfare-oriented reform in Guatemala began in the 1940s.

Little Napoleon met his personal Waterloo in the “October Revolution” of 1944, whereupon Juan José Arévalo Bermejo was elected and governed until 1951. A new constitution was enacted, permitting land expropriation. This, combined with Arévalo’s belief in “spiritual socialism,” horrified Guatemala’s landed elite, who accused him of supporting communism. In 1947 he signed a labor protection law whose most obvious target was

the UFC. The US embassy in Guatemala became worried and sent cables warning of Arévalo's communist leanings.

Jacobo Arbenz was the next president of Guatemala. His father was a Swiss migrant and pharmacist who initially earned enough to provide his family with a comfortable life. Tragically, the father became an addict, neglected his business, went bankrupt, and plunged the family into poverty. There was no money for Jacobo to attend university, so he attended the military academy, to which he was able to win a scholarship. Subsequently, Arbenz entered the army as an officer and married Maria Cristina Vilanova, a landowner's daughter with a taste for socialism. Instead of traveling north to attend Harvard, cavort with wealthy old boys, and become a hybrid elite, Jacobo stayed south, fell in love with a socialist, and became a committed advocate of social welfare.

Arbenz's participation in the 1944 revolution made him a hero. This fame helped get him elected president in 1951 as a reformer following in Arévalo's footsteps. Arbenz's government sought to more completely implement his predecessor's policies. The Agrarian Reform Law enacted in 1952 authorized expropriation of private corporations' unfarmed land and its distribution to peasants. In 1953 the Guatemalan government began expropriating UFC land, seizing 234,000 acres. A year later it took another 173,000 acres. Arbenz collaborated with members of the communist Guatemalan Labor Party to make the land reform program effective. Subsequent to the 1953 expropriations, the UFC began extensive lobbying of the US government for its support in their confrontation with Arbenz.

The UFC lobbying was successful. Allen Dulles described what was happening in Guatemala as the establishment of a "Soviet beachhead in the western hemisphere" (in Cullather 1999: 17). No self-respecting Security Elite 1.0 wanted "Soviet beachheads" near the US, so a coup was authorized via a series of three events. On 12 August 1953 the NSC authorized covert action against Guatemala. Three months later on 9 December, Allen Dulles approved and allocated \$3 million for Operation PBSUCCESS's general plan. Finally, on 17 April 1954 the Dulles brothers gave the green light to implement it.

Howard Hunt, a CIA officer who participated in the coup (and was, from 1972 to 1974, part of the Watergate fiasco that destroyed President Nixon's presidency), recalled the nature of the coup's activities in a film where he said, "what we wanted to do was to have a terror campaign" (in TruthGlobal 2010). PBSUCCESS's "terror" lasted from late 1953 to 1954. It included arming and training a "Liberation Army" of about 400 fighters under the command of the then-exiled Guatemalan army officer Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas that was deployed in coordination with elaborate diplomatic, economic, and propaganda campaigns. PBSUCCESS was a

success. Arbenz resigned on 27 June 1954, terminating a nationalist period of representative democracy in Guatemala known as the “Ten Years of Spring.” Eisenhower and the Dulleses, as we already know, were “delighted.” Next the social reflexivity of why they did it is analyzed.

The Hermeneutic Politics of PBSUCCESS

The social reflexivity of PBSUCCESS involved a hermeneutic politics concerning a particular hermeneutic puzzle: how to address the supposed reproductive vulnerability of a Soviet “beachhead” in Banana Land. However, to be clear: the old boys may have solved a puzzle that could well have been, but was not. Consider the following. Stalin had just died on 5 March 1953, and the ruling *nomenklatura* (the Russian equivalent of the old boys) was preoccupied with arranging the succession. The Guatemalan Communists would have appreciated some Soviet assistance. In fact, one recalled,

“We were knocking on the Soviets’ door,” one Guatemalan communist later acknowledged, “but they didn’t answer.” Pravda and Kommunist did run a few optimistic articles ...; and the Czechs were authorized to sell the Guatemalans—for cash—obsolete and largely inoperable German military equipment left over from World War II. Direct Soviet-Guatemalan contacts, though, appear to have been limited to a visit by a Soviet diplomat interested in bartering agricultural equipment for bananas: the deal fell through when each side realized that the other had no refrigerated ships. (Gaddis 1997: 178)

After the coup, the CIA seized Guatemalan archives to find proof of Soviet support for the Arbenz regime. Historian Piero Gleijeses gained access to these archives and searched them. The only evidence he found of Soviet dealings with Guatemala were bills from the Moscow bookstore Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga to the local Communist Party for \$23 (1992: 184–188). Soviet intervention in Guatemala prior to the coup seems limited to a request for payment on an outstanding bill.

Still, the US and Guatemala were in a dominator/dominated contradiction due largely to the UFC’s economic imperialism. Arbenz was intensifying this contradiction with his moves against *el pulpo*. His land reform had the potential to weaken the UFC and the old landowning elites, the very parties most likely to appreciate Washington’s embrace. Had Arbenz been successful, it is entirely possible that Moscow would have sought Guatemala as an ally and gradually moved it into its orbit. Perhaps the UFC might have been nationalized and its bananas rerouted to the USSR in exchange for military hardware. However, as of 1954 there was no “beachhead.” The notion of the hermetic seal helps account for why the “old boys” moved against Guatemala.

A Hermetic Seal and the Fixing of a Vulnerability that Was Not

By early 1954 Washington was firmly of the opinion that Arbenz was a communist. Once the hermeneutic puzzle of Guatemala was reduced to the fact that its president was a “Commie,” his country could be treated as fair game for US spooks. Of course, Arbenz was not a Communist. He was pretty much, in Immerman’s (1982: 182–186) terms, “a middle-class reformer.”¹⁷ How could the US government have made such a mistake?

The hermetic seal forged by the joint operations of UFC and US government actors answers this question. The story of these operations begins with the UFC, which was acutely sensitive to what was happening in Banana Land because Arbenz’s land reform was swallowing their territory. As this was occurring, the UFC public relations department hired two especially effective hermeneuts—Thomas Corcoran (whom FDR had nicknamed “Tommy the Cork”) and Edward L. Bernay. The Cork had worked with FDR during the New Deal and gone on to be the first truly powerful US government lobbyist. Bernay, a native of Vienna and a nephew of Sigmund Freud, believed in manipulating public opinion using the subconscious and was in many ways the creator of US public relations (Tye 1998). Both men were hired to communicate the perceptual message “that attacks on the company (UFC) were proof of communist complicity” in Arbenz’s regime (Cullather 1994: 18). Additionally, the Cork employed Adolf Berle and Robert LaFollette Jr. to assist him with his lobbying. The Washington elite considered Berle a “wise-man” on Latin American affairs. LaFollette was a hero of political progressives in the US. Bernay “laid down a PR barrage that sent correspondents from *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, and *Chicago Tribune* to report on Communist activities in Guatemala” (ibid.).

How influential the UFC actually was in the CIA’s intervention in Guatemala has been debated. Kinzer and Schlesinger ([1982] 1999) argued it was decisive. Gleijeses (1992) suggested that UFC’s lobbying efforts were not all that pivotal. Certainly the UFC helped in two ways “to create a sympathetic audience” for the knowledge that the Arbenz regime was going Communist (Immerman 1980: 638). First, the likes of the Cork, Bernay, LaFollette, and Berle directly brought this knowledge to the principals among Eisenhower’s security elites by visiting with them in their offices and arguing their briefs. Second, the journalists hired by Bernay saw to it that the same knowledge appeared in mass-circulation publications. Appy (2000: 200) reports that “every major article about Guatemala” in this press “cast the government as pro-Communist.” According to John Prados (1996: 91–108), CIA officers remembered that it was a summer 1953 meeting between the Cork and Beetle Smith that led to actual planning for the Guatemalan coup.¹⁸

At the same time, CIA hermeneuts reported information that replicated knowledge coming from the Cork and Bernay. During the early 1950s, “officers in the Directorate of Planning believed they were witnessing something new. For the first time Communists had targeted a country ‘in America’s backyard’ for subversion and transformation into a ‘denied area’” (Cullather 1994: 2). Equally, officers in the Office of Policy Coordination, which was part of the CIA but also reported directly to the State Department, worried as early as August 1950 about “the rapid growth of Communist activity in Guatemala” (ibid.: 18). The 19 May 1953 NIE asserted that Arbenz’s agrarian reform might “mobilize the hitherto inert peasantry in support of the Administration” and consequently “afford the Communists an opportunity to extend their influence by organizing the peasants as they have organized other workers” (NIE-84 1953: 1064, 1700).

Gleijeses (1992: 152) interviewed José Manuel Fortuny, head of the Communist Party at the time, about this assertion and found it to be essentially correct: the party supposed that by helping implement the land reform, it would be laying “the groundwork for eventual radicalization of the peasantry.” However, and this is important, the party also believed that Guatemala was in a “feudal” stage of development, which necessitated that it should first become capitalist before any socialist transformation could occur. Yet by 1952, CIA analysts regarded the Communist threat in Guatemala as great enough to warrant clandestine action, which they recommended.

Even more hermeneuts in the State Department at this time produced knowledge of communist perfidy in Banana Land. For example, the State Department’s desk officer for Central America, who was responsible for passing information arriving from the different embassies on to higher officials, cabled that “the trend toward increased Communist strength is uninterrupted” (Gleijeses 1992: 22). John Moors Cabot (Harvard and Oxford), of the Boston Cabots, traveled to Guatemala at this time. As the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American affairs and consequently the highest ranking State Department official dealing with Latin and Central America, Cabot was thought to be an objective commentator because even though his family was tied to the UFC, he had initially opposed any Guatemalan intervention. In April 1953, he met with Arbenz and other officials in the Guatemalan administration to negotiate with them about issues of compensating the UFC for its expropriated land and suppressing the Communists in the government. The negotiations were testy, prompting Cabot to report:

My talks in Guatemala were highly unsatisfactory. The Foreign Minister was a complete jackass. ... President Arbenz had the pale, cold-lipped look of an

ideologue and showed no interest in my suggestions for a change in his government's direction. He had obviously sold out to the Communists and that was that. (In Moulton 2009: 70)

Having met with the president who had “sold out to the Communists,” Cabot felt obliged to report that there was no way the Arbenz regime could be persuaded to mend its ways. Hence, he recommended, “a CIA-organized coup was the only solution” (in *ibid.*). In effect, this interpretation was that Shultzian Permission needed to be granted with regard to Guatemala because peaceful attempts at controlling Banana Land’s “direction” had failed.

There was more from Foggy Bottom. The formidable Paul Nitze, still head of the Policy Planning Staff, worried that Guatemalan communism “would be difficult to contain” (*ibid.*: 21). This worry raised the issue of the domino effect. Consequently, a draft NSC policy paper insisted in August 1953 that “a policy of non-action would be suicidal since the Communist movement under Moscow tutelage, will not falter nor abandon its goals” (*ibid.*: 25). A new ambassador to Guatemala, John Peurifoy, took up residence in October 1953. Fresh from fighting communism in Greece, Peurifoy, an admirer of Joseph McCarthy, told Congress, “Communism is directed by the Kremlin all over the world, and anyone who thinks differently doesn’t know what he is talking about” (*ibid.*: 16). Peurifoy immediately began reporting back to the State Department that Guatemala was in danger of communism “directed by the Kremlin.”¹⁹

There is one final actor in this story. Ann Whitman was Eisenhower’s personal secretary and the wife of Edmund Whitman, the public relations director of the UFC. Ann’s conversations with Ike are discretely not in evidence. However, it is possible she whispered the UFC line in the presidential ear: “The Commies are coming, the Commies are coming—to Guatemala.” A conclusion emerges from the preceding, if one contemplates the bobblehead doll.

“Bobblehead” dolls are toys often seen dangling from rearview mirrors in cars or arranged on mantles. They consist of large heads, usually of famous individuals, attached by springs to small bodies in such a way that a light tap causes the heads to nod vigorously. When this happens, they look like they are talking. Eisenhower and the two Dulles brothers were the principal Security Elites 1.0 authorizing the Guatemala coup. Wherever Ike and the Dulleses turned—to the press, the CIA, the State Department, UFC Lobbyists, the Cork, Bernay, LaFollette, Berle, Cabot, Nitze, Peurifoy, or the discrete Whitman—there were hermeneuts with heads wagging up and down, busy bobbleheads saying identical things: the monster-alterity had its “beachhead” because Arbenz was a “Commie,” and if you knew

this, you felt you had to act against it. All of which is to assert that the principal old boys had made a global domination interpretation of the situation in Arbenz's Guatemala.

Peaceful operations to remove Arbenz were impracticable because attempts to diplomatically fix the vulnerability, like the Cabot mission, had failed. So Shultzian Permission was granted, and by 1952 the CIA was working on a violent fix based upon the global domination public *délire*. The 12 August 1953 NSC authorization of covert action against Guatemala; Allen Dulles's approval for PBSuccess in 9 December 1953; and the 17 April 1954 joint Dulles brothers "full green light" for the coup all implemented the global domination public *délire*, because these actors were hermetically sealed into a belief in the intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction.

Did the reproductive fix that was PBSuccess fix a nonexistent vulnerability? No and yes. There was no Soviet "beachhead." Arbenz was not a Communist. His regime had no plans to make Guatemala Communist, though the local Communist Party did hope the agrarian reform would strengthen its position. What was happening in Guatemala was not a steep, sudden intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction, but the bobbleheads were hermetically sealed into the belief it was. Their hermeneutic blindness led them into Banana Land fantasy. Still, there was another contradiction in Guatemala—the dominator/dominated contradiction—and it *was* intensified by Arbenz's policies. PBSuccess terminated those policies. So although the vulnerability fixed by the coup did not arise from the inter-imperial contradictions, it was an outcome of the dominator/dominated contradiction.

For Guatemala, the consequences of the fix were grim. The coup provoked long-lasting repression. When a small insurgency developed against the government of Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, the client installed by the coup, his government, with US assistance, developed a counterinsurgency program that killed tens of thousands. Armas's government gave way to undemocratic regime after undemocratic regime, and for four decades Guatemala was a land of counterinsurgency involving right-wing death squads invariably assisted by the US military. The UN-supported Historical Clarification Commission of Guatemala reported in 1999 that over 200,000 were killed during this time and assigned blame to the US government and the Guatemalan military (CEH 1999).

There was another unintended power of Operation PBSuccess. Ernesto "Che" Guevara was in Guatemala during the coup. There he met, and fell in love with, the Peruvian militant Hilda Gadea (2008). As they experienced the coup, Hilda helped transform Che from a politically inert person who was ethically repulsed by inequality and repression into an activist

committed to revolutionary action. The couple fled to Mexico, where he met Raul and Fidel Castro, and the rest of the story is Cuban history. It is time to travel to Cuba to narrate that story, and one of a CIA coup that failed.

The Bay of Pigs: Cuba, 17–19 April 1961

It should be borne in mind that the United States is now not at such an inaccessible distance from the Soviet Union as formerly. Figuratively speaking, if need be, Soviet artillerymen can support the Cuban people with their rocket fire. (Khrushchev 1960)

I have previously stated, and I repeat now, that the United States intends no military intervention in Cuba. (Kennedy 1961)

The Bay of Pigs invasion occurred at the very beginning of the administration of Ike's successor, John F. Kennedy (JFK). We need to begin with a sense of the new presidency, acquired by turning to a poet. The first line of Percy Shelley's poem "To Jane: The Invitation" urges, "Best and brightest, come away!" Further inspection of the poem indicates Shelley wanted Jane to "come away" into the woods, where they would do God knows what to each other's bodies. David Halberstam (1969) reported that when JFK became president, he asked the "best and brightest" to "come away" with him to Washington, and the old boys (especially from Harvard) were delighted to accede to the dashing young president's request. JFK took office from Ike on 20 January 1961. Three months later the "best and the brightest" were in "deep shit" (US slang for "serious trouble"). Why?

It began with a speech that Nikita Khrushchev, who by the late 1950s had established himself as Stalin's replacement, gave at a teacher's conference on 9 July 1960. In this speech, quoted at the beginning of this section, he threatened to support the Cuban Revolution with Soviet "rocket fire." Ike, still president at the time, was not amused. Nine months later, under the freshly inaugurated Kennedy administration, Cuba was invaded by CIA-trained, armed, and led Cuban counterrevolutionaries at the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs).²⁰ The operation had been planned and organized by the Eisenhower administration's CIA—largely by the same officers responsible for Operation PBSuccess—but was implemented by JFK's "best and brightest." It was a disaster.

Brigade 2506 hit the beach at the Bay of Pigs on 17 April 1961 and directly came under intense fire. By the next day, when Kennedy wrote the letter denying US involvement quoted at this section's outset, the brigade had been cut to pieces, effectively terminating the invasion. Our route to

explaining this fiasco and its implications for US empire-building leads first to understanding the Cuban Revolution of 1959, which in turn requires knowledge of the rule of President Fulgencio Batista.

“Our son of a bitch”: Following Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-American War (1898), Cuba became first a formal and then an informal US colony. Cuba, as the largest and most populous of the Caribbean Islands, promised the greatest opportunities for US capitalists. In 1895, US private investments in Cuba totaled \$50 million. By 1925, they were around \$1.5 billion. These investments were deeply resented by Cubans who believed the gringos (North Americans) were exploiting them. This resentment became especially intense during the worldwide depression of the 1930s. It prompted Cuba’s then President Ramón Grau San Martín to enact legislation that reduced the influence of the US government and American businesses in Cuba. The US responded by supporting Cuban military officer Fulgencio Batista’s overthrow of the Grau government in 1934.

Batista was a hybrid elite, though not a typical one. He came from modest circumstances, and his early school years were spent at an American Quaker School in Cuba. After a rapid political rise beginning in 1933, he became Cuba’s president (1940–1944), but then a political reversal precipitated his migration to the US, where from 1944 through 1952 he split his time between New York’s Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and a home in Daytona Beach, Florida. His American sojourn seems to have solidified his sense that good things came from accommodating US interests (Argote-Freyre 2006). In 1952 he led a successful coup that allowed him to establish a second presidency, which lasted until he was overthrown in 1959. Earl T. Smith, the US ambassador to Cuba just prior to Castro’s victory, explained how valuable Batista had been to US enterprise in 1960 Senate testimony, declaring “that American business was for the Government of Cuba, because the Government of Cuba gave normal protection to American business” (US Senate 1960).

“Protection” allowed US business to develop until it largely controlled the Cuban economy. By 1956, in addition to their extensive sugar holdings, Americans owned 80 percent of Cuban utilities and 90 percent of its mining industry (Kraft and Anderson 2004), with firms like Bethlehem Steel Corporation and Speyer and Company controlling much of Cuba’s national resources. The banks, the country’s entire financial system, and most industry were dominated by US capital. Additionally, Cuba became a major tourist destination, and many of its nightclubs and casinos were the property of the American Mafia. In short, Cuba was a profitable client state in the New American Empire, and Batista was a model of a hybrid elite dexterously enabling his handlers’ plans for capital accumulation. In

the view of Arthur Gardner, another 1950s ambassador to Cuba who spoke at the same Senate hearings as had Ambassador Smith, “I don’t think we ever had a better friend” (US Senate Committee on the Judiciary 1960).

Batista had initially attempted some social reform, but by the 1940s his regime was reactionary, corrupt, and brutal. Thus, while Cuba was good business for the Americans, it was bad for business for ordinary Cubans. President Kennedy said of Batista’s Cuba, “I believe that there is no country in the world ... including any and all the countries under colonial domination, where economic colonization, humiliation and exploitation were worse than in Cuba, in part owing to my country’s policies during the Batista regime” (in Daniel 1963: 16). These were strong words, and at least some of the Washington governmental elites might have agreed with Kennedy at the time. Meanwhile, the viewpoint expressed by William Wieland, an important State Department official in the 1950s, takes a mournful tone: “I know Batista is considered by many as a son of a bitch ... but American interests come first ... at least he was our son of a bitch” (in H. Thomas 1998: 650). JFK was acknowledging that by the end of the Batista regime, Cuba had become a particularly repressive client in the New American Empire. Wieland was noting that the tyrant was the US’s “son of a bitch”—a prickly situation likely to raise revolutionary ire, which it did.

“*Going wild and harming*”: The Cuban Revolution began in 1953 when poorly armed Cuban rebels led by the Castro brothers attacked the Moncada Barracks in Santiago. The attack failed, and nearly all the rebels were killed or captured. Following the Moncada debacle, the Castros fled into Mexican exile, where, as we already know, they met Che Guevara, who had just come from Guatemala City. Che and the Castro brothers trained their own army for a guerilla war against Batista. On 2 December 1956, Castro and eighty-two others aboard the boat *Granma* landed in Cuba. Batista’s soldiers quickly reduced their numbers, but most of the important leaders made their way into the Sierra Maestra Mountains, where they formed the 26 May Movement. Two years of guerilla insurgency followed. Eventually, in late 1958, Batista and his generals concluded the situation was hopeless. Forsaking his Daytona home, Batista fled to Spain on New Year’s Day 1959 with a fortune reputed to amount to \$300 million. Fidel Castro arrived triumphantly in Havana on 8 January.

This handed the old boys in the US government a hermeneutic puzzle: What was happening in Cuba? Of course, a first alarm was that the revolution might be due to Communism. Opinion was initially divided on this possibility. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, for example, initially told Eisenhower, “The Provisional Government [of Cuba] appears free from Communist taint” (in Gaddis 1997: 179).

However, Washington elites very soon came to suspect that communism was playing a part in the revolution. For example, a memorandum reporting a debriefing between State Department officials and the Harlem congressman Adam Clayton Powell, who had visited Castro in March of 1959, reported that

The Congressman has concluded that Fidel is very close to a nervous breakdown or crack-up of some sort. "He has gone haywire." Many friends and staunch supporters of Fidel reported to him this same concern. Also, Mr. Powell believes that the Communists are taking advantage of the chaotic conditions to move in to positions of strength wherever they can and with disturbing success so far. (Powell, Weiland, and Stevenson 1959: 1)

Nine months later, in January 1960, Allen Dulles called for Castro's overthrow on the recommendation of Colonel J. C. King, head of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, who had concluded that a "far left" dictatorship existed in Cuba (in Rabe 1988: 128). Eisenhower seems to have accepted the CIA's interpretation, as in one of two meetings held at Foggy Bottom that month he labeled Castro a "madman" who was "going wild and harming the whole American structure" (in *ibid.*).

"For the Russians," Gaddis (1997: 181) reports, Castro's victory "came as an enormous surprise; one of them remembered it as 'a completely unexpected miracle.'" To exploit the "miracle," the Kremlin signed a trade agreement in February 1960, instituting an exchange of Cuban sugar for Russian oil, machinery, and technicians. Cuban-Soviet-bloc trade rocketed from 2 percent of the island's trade in 1960 to 80 percent by the end of 1961 (LaFeber 2002: 213). On 18 February 1961, Ike told Senator Smathers that the Castro situation was "intolerable" (*ibid.*: 128). In early March, a ship bringing arms to the Castro regime exploded. Castro blamed the CIA. At an NSC meeting on 17 March 1960, Eisenhower authorized a plan developed largely by Richard Bissell and Tracy Barnes, two Groton old boys and former PBSUCCESS operatives. The plan, called "A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime" (code-named JMARC), was designed to eliminate Castro.

Meanwhile, on 17 May 1960 Cuba passed an Agrarian Reform Law that threatened expropriation of US businesses' landholdings. Cuba proceeded to nationalize 850 million dollars' worth of US property and businesses by June, prompting the US Senate to hold hearings in August to address the situation. The previously quoted Ambassador Gardner informed these hearings:

Senator DODD. In your own mind, Mr. Gardner, do you consider Castro a Communist tool, or do you think he is an important Communist himself?

Mr. GARDNER. I think he is a tool.

Senator DODD. Would you agree that insofar as the security and welfare of the United States is concerned, it doesn't make too much difference—it is not important whether he is a tool—

Mr. GARDNER. I don't think it makes any difference.

Senator DODD. What do you think we ought to do? He is confiscating our property. He is causing trouble. He has created an espionage beachhead in the hemisphere.

Mr. GARDNER. I think we ought to morally support any movement of Cubans that is willing to take the job on. And I don't think there is any question that there are such people. I think we can't do it ourselves, because you know we can't send Marines down. That would be the most terrible thing in the world. But we can, under cover, support and let them know that we want to have a change. (US Senate 1960)

What had happened with the rise of the Castro regime was a coalescence of both the dominator/dominated and the inter-imperial contradictions. Recall that in the former contradiction, the dominator's acquisition of more force resources from the dominated intensifies the contradiction for the dominated; conversely, the dominated's acquisition of greater force resources from the dominators intensifies the contradiction for the dominators. What happened in the Cuban Revolution, as just described, was the latter outcome. Rebels in a dominated state (Cuba) conquered the government in that client state, thereby acquiring control over its force resources and denying them to the dominator state (the US). In the inter-imperial contradiction, the contradiction was intensified if one of the parties to the contradiction lost or gained force resources relative to the other party. As a result of Castro's victory, Cuba increasingly drifted toward the USSR, putting at risk whatever force resources the US had previously been able to extract from there. Cuba, in Ike's words, was "going wild and harming" the New American Empire. Pretty "intolerable"!

Why were negotiations between Washington and Havana not explored at greater length? Otherwise put, why was Shultzian Permission granted so quickly? Consider Eisenhower's and Kennedy's responses to the hermetic puzzle of Castro's Cuba. Gleijeses noted, "Eisenhower and Kennedy ... agreed that Castro represented a deadly threat to US interests, and that the United States had the right to intervene to remove the threat" (1995: 42). This understanding was possibly seared into Eisenhower's I-space as a result of Khrushchev's 9 July 1960 warning that he might defend the Cuban Revolution with Soviet rockets. This certainly reduced the likelihood of peacefully resolving the problem. Ike's response to Khrushchev was simple. The US would not tolerate "establishment of a regime dominated by international communism in the Western Hemisphere" (Eisenhower 1960). Kennedy was effectively trapped into accepting this position

because during his campaign for the presidency in the fall of 1960, he had attacked the Eisenhower administration for letting “a Communist menace ... arise only 90 miles from the shores of the United States” (in Gleijeses 1995: 24). Khrushchev’s threat, which led to Eisenhower and Kennedy’s responses, made it difficult to solve the Cuban crisis through peaceful measures. Shultzian Permission was in effect granted. Accordingly, the Americans attacked on 17 April 1961, and two days later the Cuban military had decisively eliminated Brigade 2506. The invasion implemented the global domination public *délire*.

Some months afterwards, Che Guevara sent a note to Kennedy via the White House adviser Richard N. Goodwin, saying: “Thanks for Playa Girón [the Cuban term for the Bay of Pigs.] Before the invasion, the revolution was weak. Now it’s stronger than ever” (in Anderson 1997: 509). It was not the Kennedy administration’s best moment. His security elites seemed far from the best and the brightest. Why? This leads to the murky realms of hermeneutic deception.

Hermeneutic Politics: The CIA and Hermeneutic Deception

The argument can be made that the hermeneutic politics ending in the Bay of Pigs attack resulted from hermeneutic deception. Chapter 1 explained that such deception is based on messages whose meanings deceive actors about situations in which they have to act. In the case of JMARC, the messages the CIA sent to the White House about what was meant to happen were not what the CIA understood would happen, and ultimately the Bay of Pigs fiasco resulted from this ruse.

The CIA handled the procedural fix; and Allen Dulles largely assigned this task to the two Groton old boys Bissell and Barnes, and those working for them (David Atlee Phillips, Jacob Esterline, William Robertson, and Howard Hunt). This was the old crew from PBSuccess. Peter Wyden (1979) has argued that the CIA’s Cuban blunder was due to “groupthink”—another way of expressing the notion of the hermetic seal. But the groupthink for those deciding how to bring Castro down involved a hermetic seal #2 within a hermetic seal #1.

As a group, the CIA, like most of Washington elite of the time, was sealed into the understanding “Castro must go.” This was hermetic seal #1. But the Bissell group was further sealed into their vision of *how* he would go. This was hermetic seal # 2, discussed next. It is important to grasp that the Bissell team, in formulating how to eliminate the Castro regime, did not work with the CIA’s Directorate of Intelligence (DOI). Bissell’s colleagues never told the DOI that they were planning to overthrow Castro, which meant that they could not coordinate operations. However,

it was the DOI that did the actual intelligence work of the CIA, gathering information about what was occurring in Cuba. This meant Bissell's group was under-informed about the most recent Cuban events.

Critically, the Bissell team was unaware of what the Castro regime was doing militarily, which was important because of a lesson Che and the Castro brothers had learned from PBSUCCESS: they realized that Arbenz had been defeated because his armed forces were neither strong nor reliable. The Castro regime successfully addressed this failing. Bissell's old boys, for their part, knew Castro should be eliminated in the same way Arbenz had been removed. That is, they had hermetically sealed themselves into their interpretation of the situation. Their understanding was a reiteration of their Guatemalan success, where a small counterrevolutionary force supported by the CIA had defeated the military of a country where the CIA desired regime change. Why did Bissell's men hold this understanding? Perhaps it was because the memory that PBSUCCESS had worked was sealed in their I-spaces, whereas they had sealed out knowledge that Che and the Castro brothers had fixed what made PBSUCCESS a CIA success.

In the JMARC plan, Brigade 2506 was tasked with doing to the Castro regime what the small counterrevolutionary force led by Armas had done to Arbenz. Brigade 2506 consisted of 1,297 soldiers who actually landed at the Bay of Pigs. Of course, lacking intelligence, Bissell's plotters did not know they would face a Cuban army of approximately 20,000 and a militia of 200,000. Brigade 2506 never had a chance: 114 of those who landed drowned or were killed in action, and 1,183 were captured. JMARC was a fool's fix.

"Ships that pass in the night": Solving the hermeneutic puzzle of Castro's Cuba was the first challenge of the new Kennedy administration, so let us get a sense of the qualities of its main actors. Kennedy had once said, speaking of the virtues of McGeorge Bundy (National Security Advisor 1961–1966), "You can't beat brains" (in Halberstam [1969] 1992: 44). There were a lot of "brains" in the Kennedy administration. McGeorge Bundy had been a "legend" at Groton, the "brightest boy" at Yale in his time, and a Dean at Harvard (ibid.: 47). Secretary of State Dean Rusk had been a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, the "star" of JFK's cabinet, had been a "whiz kid" at Berkeley, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and going on to become president of Ford Motor Company, where he used his smarts to turn the declining automotive giant around. Walt Rostow (McGeorge Bundy's deputy) had been an undergraduate at Yale, became another Oxford Rhodes scholar, returned to Yale for his Ph.D., and went on to become a professor at Harvard, where he was a *wunderkind* in the development of modernization theory.²¹ But if the Kennedy

officials were so academically accomplished, how, then, with their brains, did they perpetrate the fool's fix of JMARC?

Gleijeses (1995) argued that the newly elected Kennedy White House and the largely Eisenhower era CIA were like "ships that pass in the night." He provided evidence showing that Kennedy's "brains" assumed Brigade 2506 would, if it encountered stiff resistance, escape destruction by melting into the countryside and conducting guerilla warfare. According to Gleijeses, the CIA professed the same belief as the White House but tacitly assumed that Kennedy would commit US troops rather than let the brigade be overrun. Allen Dulles is reported to have said, "We felt that when the chips were down, when the crisis arose to reality, any action required for success would be authorized rather than permit the enterprise to fail" (in D. Talbot 2007: 47); that is, that JFK would send in the Marines. So the brains supposed one thing would happen to save the situation while the CIA believed another thing altogether, and neither the administration nor the CIA knew what the other thought. These thoughts were ships that pass in the night.

Furthermore, in the dark night of secret operations in Cuban waters one ship was actually sending false signals to another. This was detected by Lucien Vandembroucke, who discovered certain of Allen Dulles's papers in the Princeton University library. He believes that in these Dulles confesses that the CIA tried "to steer past" Kennedy an operation he mistrusted (1984: 365–376). Bissell (1996: 173) himself seems to make a similar admission in his memoirs, written at the very end of his life, where he recalls, "Fear of cancellation [of the attack] became absorbing. . . . It is possible that we in the Agency were not as frank with the President about deficiencies as we might have been." Bissell was worried about "cancellation" because there were rumors that Kennedy might appoint him CIA Director when Dulles resigned, and he wanted a great success to bolster his credentials. So the agency was not "frank." It hid "deficiencies." Evan Thomas's (1995) research among CIA officers of the time showed that "some old CIA hands believe Bissell was setting a trap to force US intervention."

In March of 1960 Ike had approved JMARC but not its implementation. JFK, now President, had the option to authorize implementation. In early 1961 the Joint Chiefs of Staff evaluated JMARC, decided it had only a 30 percent chance of success, and recommended against it. Kennedy accepted their recommendation, but Bissell immediately revised it, papering over its deficiencies. On 4 February at a meeting held to discuss the revised plan, all the old boys with responsibilities toward Cuba were present—Bissell and Dulles from the CIA, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the two Bundy brothers, Nitze, and McNamara. Senator William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, was also

invited. Everyone spoke favorably of the CIA's revised JMARC, and at the end Fulbright was asked to comment. He denounced the plan in vigorous terms. A vote was taken: all the brains in the administration voted for the revised proposal. JFK accepted their judgment. Here ships passed in the night in the sense that one ship (the CIA) sent a message to another (the Kennedy administration) that all was clear ahead, when an iceberg was looming. It was a hermeneutic deception in which "deficiencies" of procedural interpretation led actors into dangerous waters, resulting in the Bay of Pigs debacle.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was a global warring that occurred after intensified, coalesced dominator/dominated and inter-imperial contradictions provoked reproductive vulnerability. The old boys' perceptual solution of the puzzle was consistent with the domino theory hermeneutic and the global domination public *délire*. Perceptually the Castro regime was another falling domino; procedurally they had to go. Shultzian Permission for violent force was given because Khrushchev's threat of Soviet rockets in defense of Cuba indicated peaceful negotiations were impractical. Ike's March 1960 authorization of JMARC and JFK's February 1961 authorization of its enactment implemented the global domination public *délire*.

The invasion was a debacle for two reasons. The first was that the CIA's procedural solution of the Cuban hermeneutic puzzle was based on Bissell and his agents' being hermetically sealed in a delusional view of Castro's Cuba as like Arbenz's Guatemala; while the Castros and Che, aware of what had happened to Arbenz, made certain it was not. Second, the CIA's hermeneutic deception told JFK's "brains" that the invasion would be a success, when what they really meant was that if it was not a success, then Kennedy should send in US soldiers, which he was not prepared to do. After it was all over, Kennedy cleaned house at the CIA—Dulles gone, Bissell gone, Barnes gone. A few years later when Kennedy himself was gone, it was rumored the CIA might have settled the score with the young president.²² It is time now to analyze the largest and most violent of the 1950–1975 global wars, the Vietnam War.

Vietnam: 1961–1975

At the time of the Vietnam War, Vietnamese called the struggle "Chiến tranh giữ nước chống Đế quốc Mỹ," the "Resistance War against the American Empire to Save the Nation." Americans, especially those who fought there, referred to it simply as "Nam." Some of these "grunts" (ordinary soldiers) recalled Nam as a "cluster fuck" (a botched operation), at least for the New American Empire. Few dispute this judgment.

Beginning in 1961 and continuing through 1975, US security elites waged overt and covert, direct and indirect warfare throughout Indochina (the three countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia that had comprised French Indochine). Prior to US hostilities in Afghanistan, this was the longest single war in US history. Most combat operations were in South and North Vietnam, where US forces dropped 8 million tons of bombs, 400,000 tons of napalm, and 18 million gallons of Agent Orange and other chemical defoliants. Additionally, they employed “the ‘Daisy Cutter,’ a monster-sized bomb weighing 7.5 tons” that

destroyed everything in an area equal to ten football fields; the AC-47 helicopter gunship ... armed with three Gatling guns that together fired 18,000 rounds per minute ... phosphorus bombs, laser guided bombs, and fragmentation bombs, the latter designed to maximize internal body wounds with flying flechettes that tear into the flesh. (Parenti 1989: 44–45)

Constant bombing, napalming, and defoliating left two-fifths of Vietnam’s land unsuited for forestry or agriculture for a long period. The violent force used by the US government in Vietnam “probably exceeded the amount used in all previous wars combined” (Gettleman 1985: 461).

Some of this firepower was intentionally deployed against “slants” (a derogatory term for ordinary Vietnamese), especially when grunts, who were either “rabbits” (white) or “soul brothers” (black), conducted Zippo Raids—called such because Zippo lighters were used to ignite the thatch of peoples’ huts—that “massacred whole villages.” At the same time they “murdered prisoners of war; set up ‘free fire zones’ in which all living things were subjected to annihilation; systematically bombed all edifices, including hospitals, schools, churches” (Parenti 1989: 43–44).²³ Still this horror might be likened to a stately dance.

A Dance of War: Dances have steps. The choreographing of those steps began at the Japanese surrender in August 1945. At that time, Ho Chi Minh’s guerillas occupied Hanoi and proclaimed a provisional government. Ho Chi Minh was a leader of formidable intellect and organizational skills.²⁴ In 1941 he returned to his homeland from an exile imposed on him because of his anticolonial activities, and in the next year he founded the Viet Minh, part political party, part guerrilla force. In October 1945 the French returned with an army to reclaim their colony. It became clear that the Vietnamese would have to fight for their independence, which they did in what became the First Indochina War (1945–1954), largely fought in North Vietnam. France, economically and financially impoverished in the years after World War II, requested US support in their imperial twilight. Both the USSR and the new, communist People’s Republic of China recog-

nized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and China began to militarily supply the Viet Minh, largely with American weapons seized from Chang Kai-shek's defeated Nationalist Army in China.

The communists, from the Washington old boys' perspective, were expanding in two places in Asia at this time—on the Korean and the Indochina Peninsulas. We have already analyzed the US response in Korea. Washington authorized military aid to the French a month after the Korean War began, and it continued until the French defeat in 1955. Over this period the US paid much of the cost of all French war supplies (Wall 1991), making the conflict a US indirect global war.²⁵ In effect, the US was using the French to fight the Vietnamese in the First Indochina War, as the British had used the Iroquois to fight the French in the Seven Years' War.

US assistance notwithstanding, the French were defeated by the Viet Minh under General Vo Nguyen Giap, in part because Giap, a formidable tactician, was increasingly able to mount conventional military operations with Chinese supplies and training. In May 1954 French troops suffered a devastating rout at Dien Bien Phu, after which France began withdrawal. To decide the post-French disposition of Indochina a conference was organized in Geneva; its results became known as the 1954 Geneva Accords. Among other things, these formalized the division of Vietnam but also scheduled a vote in 1956 to decide whether to reunite the countries. Ho Chi Minh's Communists received the North. A regime headed by the French-supported emperor, Bao Dai, got the South and installed Ngo Dinh Diem as his prime minister. Hanoi instructed approximately 10,000 Viet Minh fighters to remain in Diem's South Vietnam.

With the French gone, the Diem regime was the US government's client in the struggle against communist expansion.²⁶ Diem was fiercely anti-communist. With US assistance he created a South Vietnamese army to eliminate communists. The North Vietnamese responded by using the Viet Minh who had stayed behind to create a Peoples' Liberation Army (the Viet Cong, VC) to oppose Diem. The year 1956 came and went without a vote to reunify the two Vietnams, heightening the struggle between the two sides. Diem's army was unable to resist the VC, who by the end of 1961 were in control of much of South Vietnam's countryside. In October 1961, six months after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy's young administration decided to send US combat troops to serve as military advisers. This was the formal beginning of direct US intervention in Nam. Thereafter, the US fought overtly and directly, committing more and more of its own troops.

McNamara visited South Vietnam in 1962 and reported, "we are winning the war" (History Place 1999). Fantasy! By 1963 most of the countryside was lost to the VC. South Vietnamese army units could not stand before their VC counterparts. At this time US officials decided that their

problem was Diem, a client they had trouble controlling who was losing support throughout Vietnamese society, especially among Buddhists (“The Overthrow” 1971, II: 1–2). On 4 July 1963 a Buddhist general contacted the CIA in Saigon concerning the possibility of a coup against Diem. The CIA and the US ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge, agreed to the overthrow. The coup began on 1 November 1963. Trapped in the presidential palace by the mutinous troops, Diem called Lodge and asked, “What is the attitude of the U.S.?” Lodge responded to the man he had betrayed, “It is 4:30 AM in Washington, and the U.S. government cannot possibly have a view” (“The Overthrow” 1971, II: 4). Lodge continued the conversation by inquiring about Diem’s safety. The next day Diem was assassinated.

Between Diem’s assassination and the end of 1965 there were seven successive governments, five in 1964 alone, as coup followed coup. None of the different client regimes were effective against the VC. Generals Khanh, Nguyen Cao Ky, and Nguyen Van Thieu led a coup in December 1964. The US ambassador at the time, General Maxwell Taylor, summoned the coup leaders to the embassy and reprimanded them, only to find General Khanh complaining in the press that the Americans were practicing “colonialism” in South Vietnam (History Place 1999). The general was correct: the US officials were trying to make Vietnam into a client state. The problem was, they were failing.

When a war is being lost, one military iteration, not always the wisest, is to add more violent force. Washington elites implemented this strategy for the four years after 1964. US soldiers called new replacements “turtles”; because they were so slow to arrive. There were roughly 16,000 military advisers in South Vietnam in 1964. President Johnson, who had replaced the assassinated President Kennedy on 23 November 1964, and who promptly orated, “I don’t want any damn Dindinfoo” (History Place 1999), authorized the use of napalm on 9 March 1965, after which things heated up. There were roughly 125,000 US soldiers in Vietnam in July 1965, 390,000 in December 1966, 475,000 in July 1967, 495,000 in November 1968, and 543,000 in November 1969. The turtles acted like cheetahs, arriving lickety-split.

In reply, the Soviet Union and China provided North Vietnam with substantial military assistance.²⁷ The North was able to move North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to enter the fight as early as the summer of 1964. The US began bombing the trail in Laos and North Vietnam. Between 1964 and 1973 roughly 580,000 bombing missions were conducted in Laos alone. By September 1968, nine hundred US aircraft had been shot down and up to ten thousand NVA supply trucks were on the Ho Chi Minh trail every day, replenishing VC and NVA soldiers.

On the evening of 29 January 1968, Bill Forbes took his Boy Scout troop for an overnight campout in a park near Saigon's Tan Son Nhat airport. The kids had a great time, though they heard noises in the jungle surrounding the park. The next morning Bill marched them out of the park and home. A few hours later the VC and NVA marched through the scouts' campground and attacked the airport.²⁸ Then, President Johnson got his own "damn Dindinfoo" because the noises the scouts had heard was maneuvering to begin the Tet Offensive (January–March 1968), when communist troops attacked extensively throughout South Vietnam. US forces halted the offensive but did not defeat their enemy, which strengthened the presumption that they could try again in greater force. In the wake of the Tet campaign, Johnson asked Clark Clifford, then secretary of defense and a respected statesman, for advice. On 25 March Clifford convened the "Wise Men," a dozen elder statesman and soldiers of unimpeachable old boy credentials. After deliberating, they advocated withdrawal from Vietnam. This was the end for Johnson. He announced he would not stand for re-election.

Richard Nixon, campaigning on a pledge of "peace with honor," won the presidency and would govern for five years (1969–1974). There was neither peace nor honor with Nixon and his key foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger. Kissinger, who was respectively Nixon's national security advisor and then his secretary of state, was a German Jewish immigrant who attained old boy status, albeit with a Bavarian accent, by performing brilliantly in Harvard's undergraduate and graduate schools, becoming a professor there, and eventually teaching McGeorge Bundy's course in political science. Nixon, at Kissinger's urging, authorized the secret bombing of Cambodia in 1969–1970. There would be 3,500 bombing raids in one year, destabilizing the Cambodian government and leading to the Khmer Rouge's victory (Shawcross 1979). Under Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge turned Cambodia into killing fields where millions were exterminated, about which Kissinger is supposed to have said, "Why should we flagellate ourselves for what the Cambodians did to each other?" (Kawilarang 2004: 178). Christopher Hitchens (2001) argued that Kissinger was a war criminal due to his Vietnam War activities.

Secret negotiations had been ongoing in Paris since May of 1968. Under the policy of "Vietnamization," instituted in 1969, South Vietnamese soldiers were trained to replace the departing Americans. January 1973 saw the Paris Peace Accords signed, officially ending the war. Nixon declared that "we had won the war" (in Record 1996: 2). US combat troops left in March 1973. Thereafter the NVA invaded South Vietnam in force. Vietnamization failed. By 25 April 1975 the North Vietnamese had surrounded Saigon. Five days later they took the city.

At this juncture, why not contemplate a dance? Consider the pavane—a slow, processional dance of stately steps. Renaissance aristocrats throughout Europe favored it for revels. The Vietnam War might be imagined as an unhurried pavane of death: first the Americans killed, then the Vietnamese killed, next the Americans killed, then the Vietnamese killed, and so on, to the music of firing weaponry. But make no mistake about it: the dance ended badly for the New American Empire. Its final steps were recorded in images of helicopters atop the CIA headquarters in Saigon evacuating defeated Americans and their South Vietnamese allies. Metaphorically they left millions upon millions dead in the ballroom, posing the question of why the old boys went to the ball and did the dance in the first place.²⁹

The Social Reflexivity of Vietnam

Is the conflict explainable in terms of global warring theory? Certainly. First, with the loss of North Vietnam to the Communists followed by the VC's successes in South Vietnam, it was clear that the New American Empire was in open global warfare with North Vietnam, which was supported by the USSR and China. The fighting was over territory, meaning that the inter-imperial contradiction was intensifying. Further, because this intensification was due to already occurring military operations, it was clear that a peaceful fix was not possible, so Shultzian Permission was effectively granted, enabling a violent fix in order to relax the contradiction. All this information is congenial to global warring theory. However, there have been other explanations. Before further making the case for a global warring theory, let us therefore examine three other accounts that have been important. Attention turns first to the possibility of plain old loopiness.

The March of Folly: In the US, public opposition to the Vietnam War grew throughout the 1960s and was especially strong among American intellectuals (Hixson 2000). A frequent question these opponents posed regarding the war's proponents was "Are they idiots?" The formidable popular historian Barbara Tuchman (1985: 7) addressed this question in her book *The March of Folly*, answering it in the affirmative and claiming that the war's champions suffered from "wooden headedness." Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* ([1969] 1992) documented the actions of Kennedy's and Johnson's officials with regard to Vietnam, leaving readers with the sense that they did exhibit such folly.

Consider the single, but telling, case of President Johnson, who once asked his friend Senator Richard Russell—on the reactionary right—for advice on Vietnam. Russell, a rural Georgian, is reported to have coun-

seled, “We’re just like a damn cow over a fence out there in Vietnam” (in McNerney and Israel 2013: 295), which meant the US military was in a place it should not be and could not win. LBJ agreed with his old friend and replied, “I don’t want to commit us to a war” (ibid.: 294). But even though Johnson didn’t want to “commit,” commit he did and with a vengeance, increasing the number of US soldiers there by approximately 500,000. Doing what you do not want is injudicious.

Johnson was not alone in his pessimistic view of the war. As early as JFK’s administration, a fair number of high members of the officer corps warned Kennedy and his security elites that Vietnam was a risky military option. During LBJ’s administration, General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff throughout much of the war (1964–1970), had offered an overview of the military situation that concluded in 1967 that “the Main force was stalemated ... and there is no evidence that pacification will ever succeed in view of the widespread rot and corruption of the government, the pervasive economic and social ills, and the tired, passive accommodation prone attitude of the armed forces of Vietnam” (in Buzzanco 2002: 186). Equally, George Ball, under secretary of state for both JFK and LBJ, counseled against the war from the beginning as an unwinnable quagmire (Halberstam [1969] 1992: 174). Other high officials reached similar conclusions at the same time. According to W.W. Rostow (1996–97: 39), Robert McNamara believed the war to be “a problem with no solution” as early as the years 1965–1967.

On such assessments, Robert Buzzanco commented: “Given such bleak judgments it would take a rather great stretch of the imagination to expect success in Vietnam. Yet the war continued with the White House and the military as concerned about avoiding responsibility for failure as with actually improving the situation in Vietnam” (Buzzanco 2002: 187). Simply put, by 1967, the president, his secretary of defense and the chairman of his Chief of Staff, among others, supposed the war was unwinnable but persisted in it. Explaining the war as the result of its elite actors’ folly clarifies that what the “best and the brightest” did exhibited their “wooden-headedness.” Unexplained is why they danced their stately pavane of irrationality in the bloody ballroom of Vietnam.

“The new men were tough.”

Golf had long symbolized the Eisenhower years—played by soft, boring men with ample waistlines who went around rich men’s country-club courses in the company of wealthy businessmen who were tended by white-haired, dutiful negros. ... In contrast, the new men [Kennedy brought into his administration] were tough. (Halberstam [1969] 1992: 39)

The role of gender in conflict has become a topic of interest. Jeffords (1989) has extended this interest to the study of Nam. The old boys who conceived and prosecuted the war were indeed *all* male, raising the question of gender's role in the war. Kay Halle, an old Kennedy family friend, provided insight concerning women's positions at the highest levels of the Kennedy administration. When JFK was staffing the White House and asked her opinion of who might be hired, "Halle suggested that he should choose more women. He abruptly changed the subject, for as Halle observed, he considered women largely 'decorative butterflies and lovely to look at.' Kennedy was simply not comfortable being in a room with women who sought to be equal partners in the political process" (Leamer 2002: chap. 21). If women were to be absent, what sorts of men were to be present?

As already noted, Kennedy had once said of the virtues of McGeorge Bundy that "you can't beat brains" (in Halberstam [1969] 1992: 44). Actually, you could. The men in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were in Halberstam's words not "soft boring" men, as had been the case in Ike's time; rather, they were "tough." Robert Dean (2002: 378) expresses the matter as follows: "the war managers" in the Kennedy/Johnson administrations "used ... a sort of scholastic deduction premised on an imperial psychology of masculine strength and threat." They judged acting aggressively in fierce competition with great strength to be the measure of a "good man"—virtues learned in their prep schools.

Kennedy, when he came into the presidency, worried about an America he thought was getting flabby, so he "warned of 'creeping softness'" that was "worrisome to him because he identified the strength of male bodies with the strength of the state" (in Dean 2002: 370). About Bobby Kennedy, JFK's brother, Halberstam ([1969] 1992: 273) has said, "Toughness fascinated him. ... he judged men by how tough they were." Rusk was "a man who believed in force" (ibid.: 307). Bundy's course at Harvard, Government 180 (the one Kissinger would also teach), concerned US foreign affairs and taught what at that time was known as "ultrarealism": "Its proponents believed that they were tough, that they knew what the world was really like, and that force must be accepted as a basic element of diplomacy" (ibid.: 56).

President Johnson expressed his toughness in a language heavily scented with sexuality. Speaking of a member of his administration who had turned against the Vietnam War, he confided, "Hell, he has to squat to piss" (in Halberstam [1969] 1992: 532). Remarking on one bombing raid, he bragged, "I didn't just screw Ho Chi Minh. I cut his pecker off" (ibid.: 380). Defending his decision not to call a bombing halt, he explained, "Oh yes, a bombing halt, I'll tell you what happens when there is a bombing

halt. I halt and then Ho Chi Minh shoves his trucks up my ass. That's your bombing halt" (ibid.: 379). In response to criticisms that all this bombing might lead to Chinese intervention, he lectured, "I'm going up her leg an inch at a time. ... I'll get the snatch before they know what's happening, you see" (ibid.: 379–380). So Johnson spent his time figuratively "screwing" Ho, while protecting his own "ass" from enemy trucks, all the while going for some "snatch." Tough guy!

Of course, in the 1960s being "macho" was culturally hegemonic for men. You were "rock hard" because that was good; you avoided being "soft" because that was "queer" and bad. If you were "rock hard" you got rewards. Joseph Alsop, an influential columnist of the era, rhapsodized about Kennedy, "'Isn't he marvelous!, he's got 'balls'" (in Halberstam [1969] 1992: 24): here we have the old boys' cultural ideal as testicular warriors. I suspect that this "rock hard" masculinity was, at least in part, responsible for the US's entrance into the Vietnam War.

This argument may be extended as follows, using Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) notion of symbolic capital. Being tough and aggressive yielded considerable symbolic capital among the elite of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This meant that in any situation, including Vietnam, a real man behaved in a hard, forceful manner. The symbolic capital thus acquired overcame any reservations they might have had about the rationality of committing US troops to Vietnam. In this view, then, Johnson's awareness that Vietnam was not "worth fighting for" was overcome by reluctance to lose the symbolic capital of his "balls."

This argument appears plausible as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Certainly, the JFK and LBJ men had "balls." Certainly they would be tough, but this means that they would be expected to act hard-hitting in almost any situation. It explains nothing of the specifics of why they desired to act tough in the particular situation of Vietnam in the 1960s. The fact that the elites were "rock hard" explains why they would want to dance dirty in any pavane in which they participated, but not why Vietnam War would be the dance they choose. A third, economic reason, explored next, has been offered for US participation in the conflict.

Role of the Military-Industrial Complex: This explanation has to do with the economic interests of what Eisenhower had termed the military-industrial complex. It was offered by some in the anti-war movement during the conflict. William Engdahl (2004: 114) expressed it when he wrote:

It was clear that a significant faction of the American defense industry and New York finance had encouraged the decision of Washington to go to war ... because the military build up offered their interests a politically saleable excuse

to revive a massive diversion of US industry into the production of defense goods. More and more during the 1960s the heart of the US economy was being transformed into a kind of military, in which the cold war against the communist danger was used to justify tens of billions of dollars of spending.

In this view, the US fought in Vietnam so that the military-industrial complex could be strengthened by a “military Keynesianism”: the state’s provision, during economically difficult times, of fiscal stimulus to military enterprises in order to resolve those difficulties (C. Johnson 2008). Undoubtedly, the Vietnam War offered a sizable financial stimulus to the American defense industry.³⁰ Equally, the sale of US Treasury bonds, which the government used to finance the war, was a source of plentiful profit for Wall Street during the conflict. However, there is a problem in this analysis.

Keynesianism of any sort was a policy tool for addressing economic distress, but the years from the end of World War II until the early 1970s were the golden age of US capitalism. In fact, the years of decision-making about warring in Vietnam were the very best years of that golden age. As Robert Brenner (1998: 58) reports, “Between 1958 and 1965, GNP grew at an average annual rate of 4.6 percent, faster than in any other period of comparable length after 1950. ... Behind this spurt lay a spectacular rise in the rate of profit.” Washington chose military escalation in Vietnam in the years from 1959 through 1965. Therefore, JFK’s and LBJ’s security elites decided to get tough with Vietnam in precisely the years when they would not have done so as a way of stimulating the economy, because the economy did not need to be stimulated. It was roaring along.

Engdahl’s position could possibly be upheld if it is recognized that there is a military variety of Keynesianism in which fiscal stimulus is supplied to military enterprise regardless of how the economy is functioning. I will term this “turbo-military Keynesianism.” (1998: 56) reports that “during the 1950’s, approximately 10 per cent of GNP went to military spending.” There were both good and bad times economically during the 1950s, which means that Washington continually provided military financial stimulus to the economy, as NSC 68 had recommended and the Korean War demanded. Hence, the US appears to have been committed to a policy of turbo-military Keynesianism at this time.

However, such a policy cannot be said to be *the* cause of the Vietnam War, as this would mean Washington fought the war to get the financial stimulus to military enterprise, when in actuality the fiscal stimulus was being supplied regardless of whether or not wars were being fought. New York financiers and military contractors undoubtedly “encouraged” Washington to send money their way during the Vietnam War. It was good business.

But it still does not explain why the Security Elites 1.0, rock hard on their Viagra of toughness, got so tough in Vietnam. Exploration of the hermeneutic politics of the tough guys will aid such an explanation.

“Crucified”: *The Hermeneutic Politics of Vietnam*: The hermeneutic puzzle of the Vietnam War had both perceptual and procedural solutions. The perceptual solution is addressed first, as follows. After the success of Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe and Mao’s victory in China, the two communist giants contemplated further enlargement. The language of this planning was belligerent. For example, a lecture broadcast on Radio Moscow in 1949 announced:

The plans of the already bankrupt pretenders to world domination who are trying to surround the Chinese People’s Republic with a police ‘cordon sanitaire’ composed of their vassals are built of sand. The powerful movement of liberation among the peoples of Southeast Asia testifies to this fact. Millions of workers of Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaya, India, Burma, Southern Korea, the Philippines ... have become convinced by the experience of the Chinese people that only a persistent and consistent struggle against imperialism under the leadership of the Communist Party ... backed by the USSR can bring about liberation from the oppression of the modern slave owners. (In Sacks 1950: 227)

The speech promised “persistent and consistent struggle” against Western imperialism in all of Southeast Asia plus India.

In 1949 Stalin met with Liu Shaoqi, the foremost theoretician of the Chinese Communist Party at that time, and together they formulated an “elder brother/junior brother” strategy for Asia’s liberation. The junior brother, China, would seek to directly take advantage of Western weaknesses in colonial areas. The elder brother, the USSR, would provide guidance and material assistance to the junior brother’s activities (Gaddis 1997: 159). Liu (in Sacks 1950: 232–233), in a Radio Peking broadcast toward the end of 1949, gave a sense of how well they believed expansion policy was going:

The war of national liberation in Vietnam has liberated 90 percent of her territory; the war of national liberation in Burma and Indonesia is now developing; the partisan warfare against imperialism and its lackeys in Malaya and the Philippines has been carried on over a long period; and armed struggles for emancipation have also taken place in India ...

Liu was clear that when he spoke of war, he meant it literally,

It is necessary to set up wherever and whenever possible a national army which is led by the Communist Party, and is powerful and skillful in fighting the enemies. ... Armed struggle is the main form of struggle for the national liberation struggles of many colonies and semi-colonies.

So the Soviets and Chinese were preaching territorial acquisition by the end of the 1940s and thought they were doing rather well at it.

Of course, the CIA was eavesdropping. In 1949 it warned Washington elites that the Kremlin would employ China “as an advanced base to facilitate Soviet penetration of Southeast Asia” (in Gaddis 1997: 153). The very next year, the CIA’s cautioning appeared vindicated. North Korea invaded the South. The junior brother helped the North Koreans with troops, and the elder brother provided sophisticated weapons to its junior brothers. Militant communism appeared on the march in Asia, just as it had been, successfully, in Eastern Europe. This expansion was an intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction that presented a hermeneutic puzzle.

Long before the Kennedy and Johnson administration, Washington elites had explicitly interpreted such events in accordance with the domino theory hermeneutic. In 1949 NSC-64 had applied it particularly to Southeast Asia, as the following quotation from it makes clear:

It is important to the US security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further communist expansion in Southeast Asia... The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina were controlled by a Communist-dominated government. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave balance. (In Jervis 1980: 586)

An even more specific application of this hermeneutic to Vietnam occurred during the Eisenhower administration. As the French were being defeated, Ike held a press conference (7 April 1954) to discuss this situation. A journalist asked Eisenhower,

Mr. President, would you mind commenting on the strategic importance of Indochina to the free world? I think there has been, across the country, some lack of understanding on just what it means to us.

To which the President responded,

you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the “falling domino” principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences. ...

Then with respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply can’t afford greater losses.

But when we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking

really about millions and millions and millions of people. (“President Eisenhower’s News Conference” 1954: 382–383)

Thereafter, every US president throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s at some point applied the domino theory hermeneutic to Vietnam. In 1961 the Departments of State and Defense sent President Kennedy a joint memorandum, the product of prolonged deliberation at the highest level. William Bundy had written the first draft; Robert McNamara, among others, had revised it. It stated:

The loss of South Viet-Nam would make pointless any further discussion about the importance of Southeast Asia to the free world; we would have to face the near certainty that the remainder of Southeast Asia and Indonesia would move to a complete accommodation with Communism, if not formal incorporation within the Communist bloc. (In Sheehan et al. 1971: 150)

In a televised interview just prior to Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, David Brinkley and the president had the following exchange :

Mr. Brinkley: Mr. President, have you had any reason to doubt this so-called “domino theory,” that if South Viet Nam falls, the rest of Southeast Asia will go behind it?

The President: No, I believe it. I believe it. (In “The Overthrow” 1971, II: 828)

So, beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations, the hermeneutic puzzle of communist military expansion in Asia generally, and Vietnam specifically, was perceptually solved by the domino theory hermeneutic.³¹

The procedural solution to this hermeneutic was that the communist monster-alterity “had to be stopped.” However, the correct procedural solution to the hermeneutic puzzle remained a riddle. Remember that Kennedy had decided in 1961 to commit American troops, but they were there to be “trainers,” not actual combatants. Procedurally, then, the hermeneutic puzzle would be solved by the US fighting an indirect war as it had previously done in the First Indochina War. This solution failed because the trainers failed, resulting in serious deterioration of the South Vietnamese government’s military situation in 1962 and 1963. Then, on 22 November 1963, Kennedy was assassinated, and a renewed hermeneutic politics ensued over the proper way to prosecute the war—a politics in which the hermetic seal had a role.

There were two main sides in this politics: enthusiasts of aggressive, escalating military operations, called “hawks,” faced off against advocates of less aggressive or no military operations, labeled “doves.” Those closest to President Johnson—Bundy, Rusk, and initially McNamara—were hawks

who sought escalation. Perhaps the most important of the doves who encouraged de-escalation or withdrawal were Averill Harriman, George Ball, Roger Hilsman, William Truehart, Michael Forrestal (son of Truman's Secretary of Defense James Forrestal), and Paul Kattenburg. Johnson himself was something of an uncertain actor. He clearly fancied himself a tough Texan, but one who harbored serious doubts about success in Vietnam, as his talks with Senator Russell made clear. Further, his major political goal was implementation of the Great Society: a set of civil rights and anti-poverty domestic programs designed to extend educational and health care benefits to the majority of Americans. The politics in Vietnam's hermeneutic politics after Kennedy's assassination concerned whether Johnson would end up a dove or a hawk.

Three strings of events combined to seal Johnson into a hawk position. The first of these was elimination of the doves in his administration. The elder statesman Harriman was a patrician who was respected for having been governor of New York, US ambassador to the Soviet Union and Great Britain, and secretary of commerce. Under Kennedy he became the under secretary of state for political affairs, where his influence was considerable, but thereafter it waned in the Johnson administration. In mid 1964 Rusk placed him in charge of African affairs at Foggy Bottom, removing him from any Vietnam responsibilities.

Hilsman, though a dove, was an actual tough guy who had been a commando in Merrill's Marauders in the Burma Theater during World War II. He became a counterinsurgency specialist for Kennedy, who favored him. In 1963, as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, he infuriated high-level officials in the State and Defense Departments, challenging their optimistic assurances of the war's success. Rusk fired him in March 1964.

William Trueheart had been deputy chief of mission in Saigon and, at times, acting ambassador during the early the 1960s. Consequently, he was particularly knowledgeable about the realities of Vietnam. He too critiqued the military's rosy accounts of military operations. Trueheart had been Hilsman's protégé, and as Hilsman's star imploded, Trueheart's followed. Promised the position of deputy assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs under Hilsman, he was recalled to Washington in December 1963 and made desk officer for all of Southeast Asia—except Vietnam!

Michael Forrestal worked in the White House as one of McGeorge Bundy's most important aids. Unfortunately, he was a "known doubter" about the war (Halberstam [1969] 1992: 377) and in July 1964 was therefore forced out of the White House into a position lacking any responsibility for Vietnam. Paul Kattenburg, the State Department's Vietnam desk officer in the 1960s and the head of its Vietnam Working Group, had the nerve to advocate withdrawal from Vietnam at an NSC meeting on 31 August

1963, and to be the first known US official to do so. He was subsequently relieved of his position in early 1964 and exiled as a counselor officer to the US embassy in Guyana. He never made ambassador.

Of the doves, this left only George Ball, then under secretary of state for economic and agricultural affairs. He had warned Kennedy,

“Within five years we’ll have 300,000 men in the paddies and jungles and never find them again,” ... But JFK thought he knew better, caustically answering, “George, you’re crazier than hell. That just isn’t going to happen.” (Polner 2010: 1).

So although Ball was a dove, he stayed because, according to Halberstam ([1969] 1992: 378), in 1963 and 1964 he was more concerned with European affairs and let Harriman deal with questions of Vietnam. Clearly, one part of Johnson’s hermetic seal into a hawkish position was the elimination of doubting doves to advise him.

Another way the seal was tightened was to add hawks’ voices. William “Bill” Bundy was the older brother of McGeorge “Mac” Bundy and the son-in-law of Dean Acheson. He had been in McNamara’s Defense Department and was trusted by him to hew to a hawkish line. Roger Hilsman’s old position as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs went to Bill. Though he himself eventually came to doubt the war, in 1964 he firmly and completely championed the line of his brother Mac, and his former boss in Defense. Shortly before he was pushed out at State, Kattenburg got in a “furious argument” with Bill over Vietnam policy (Halberstam [1969] 1992: 370). Bundy was supposed to have insisted “that Kattenburg was performing a *disservice* by his pessimism” (ibid.: 370), and it was for reasons such as this that dovish “disservice” was sealed out of the hermeneutic politics of Vietnam in 1964.

A third way of sealing Johnson into an aggressive stance vis-à-vis Vietnam was to threaten his manhood. JFK had messed up in the Bay of Pigs fiasco but redeemed himself a year later during the Cuban Missile Crisis (October–December 1962). In the summer of 1962, the Soviets began to install long-range missiles in Cuba, only ninety miles from Miami. Kennedy ordered Khrushchev to remove the weapons. Khrushchev demurred, and suggested quite publicly that Washington risked nuclear war. It was high noon: Kennedy and Khrushchev faced off like two gunslingers in a cowboy movie. The Russian flinched. Soviet missiles were dismantled and returned to the USSR. JFK had proven his virility (though secretly he had dismantled missiles targeting the USSR in Turkey).

Now, two years later, another time demanded a hard man. Joe Alsop—one of the most hawkish columnists, who had ties to the Bundys—began to write columns urging drastic action in Vietnam. “For Lyndon Johnson,”

Alsop insisted, “Vietnam is what the second Cuban crisis was for John F. Kennedy. If Mr Johnson ducks the challenge we shall learn by experience about what it would have been like if Kennedy had ducked the challenge in October, 1962” (in Halberstam [1969] 1992: 500). Alsop was saying that if Johnson did not escalate, he was not the man Kennedy had been.

Johnson was trapped. Wherever he turned, no one was left to argue a dovish line, but everyone championed a hawkish line. Wherever he turned, he knew he would be said to have “ducked the challenge” if he did not take the hawk line.³² Unsurprisingly, Johnson took a hawkish line. On 8 November 1964 Rusk cabled Maxwell Taylor, ambassador in Saigon, announcing that “our present tendency is to adopt a tougher program both privately and publically against them” (in *ibid.*: 487). “They” were the North Vietnamese: the tough had got “tougher.” Soon the US was bombing the North. By 5 March 1965 the US Marines had landed as combat troops, and by 1968 there were over 550,000 combat troops in-country, dying at a rate of 1,000 per month. So the final solution to the procedural hermeneutic puzzle of the Vietnam War was to escalate and escalate and escalate again; yet it was to no avail. The tough got beat.³³

President Johnson had headed the most powerful social being in history. Presumably, he was an actor of greatest agency. After leaving the presidency, he told an interviewer,

I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved in that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs. . . . But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe. (L. Johnson 1990: 45)

Knowing he had lost control within the Democratic Party because of Vietnam, Johnson chose to withdraw from the 1968 presidential election and retired to his ranch in Stonewall, Texas, where he grew his hair long like a hippie, drank heavily, smoked like a chimney, and was soon deceased (in 1973). Thus died a person who, having possessed the greatest agency, nonetheless believed he had been “crucified.” It is time to decide whether the evidence from the foregoing discussion is consistent with global warring theory.

First, the inter-imperial contradiction intensified in Vietnam in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the Diem regime lost chunks of territory to communism, producing a reproductive vulnerability. The fact that the land loss went on bloodily for a number of years in hard-fought guerilla operations made it impossible for US security elites to overlook, making its fix more

urgent. A domino theory hermeneutic interpretation of the vulnerability developed as early as 1950 during the first Indochina War and was continually reapplied during the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations. Perceptually, the old boys all agreed that Vietnam might fall and, like a domino, push other Southeast Asian countries toward the communist monster-alterity. Shultzian Permission was granted because fighting was already ongoing, ruling out peaceful fixes. In October 1961, JFK ordered commitment of US troops to South Vietnam. This order, as an implementation of the global domination public *délire*, might be seen as the Vietnam iteration of the global domination public *délire*.

After Kennedy's assassination (22 November 1963), however, the procedural solution of the puzzle led to divisive hermeneutic politics among the security elite. Two contestants—hawks and doves—battled over to how to proceed in Vietnam. The hawk position, escalation, was hermetically sealed into Johnson's I-space. On 8 November 1964, Rusk sent a cable to Taylor announcing that the administration was getting "tougher." This cable, a further implementation of the global domination public *délire*, provoked an extraordinarily violent procedural solution to the hermeneutic puzzle. Thus the stately pavane of the "best and the brightest" became a dance of death. In the end Johnson was "crucified," and up to three million Vietnamese died for his crucifixion.³⁴ It is time to summarize this chapter's analysis and determine whether the five global wars considered here support the plausibility of the global warring theory.

Conclusion

The years between 1950 and 1974 are often described as the onset and the height of the Cold War, raising the question, what was the Cold War? The five analyses of conflicts in this chapter offer an answer to this query. Each instance of of global warring involved intensification and/or coalescence of the inter-imperial, oil company/petro-state, or dominator/dominated contradictions. The Security Elites 1.0 interpreted the vulnerabilities these posed as fixable via the global domination public *délire*. For different reasons, Shultzian Permission was granted in each case. Additionally, in each case the global domination public *délire* was implemented and then followed by global warring. This evidence supports the plausibility of global warring theory. As for the question of what the Cold War was, it provides an answer: it was the playing out of those strings of events explained by the global warring theory. Let us move on to the years 1975 through 1989, when the times were changing, especially for the contradictions facing the US Leviathan.

Notes

1. Hinkle, Biddle, and Wallis, using Defense Department sources, conducted research for the US military on the frequency of its military operations roughly between 1970 and 1995. One of their conclusions was that “data are of too poor quality for use in meaningful planning” (1998: 7). This alarmingly suggests that the Pentagon is ignorant of how often it wars. However, Hinkle et al. found that the US annually participates in 6.56 military operations in which there is likely to be violence.

2. During the 1950s, especially in francophone areas, a literature developed documenting the phenomenology of colonial domination, especially in Fanon (1967) and Memmi (1957).

3. Edgar Snow (1994) and Peter Zarrow (2005) provide accounts of China’s drive to independence from the turn of the twentieth century until 1949.

4. Dalloz (1990) and Fall (1961) provide excellent accounts of the First Indochina War.

5. On April 26 2011 Amazon.com advertised sixteen books with the title *After Empire* or a similar title.

6. Perhaps the most significant victory for US global warring in the period between 1950 and 1975 was its indirect, covert operation in support of the 1965 overthrow of President Sukarno, which helped prevent Indonesia, the fourth largest country in the world, from becoming communist (Reyna 1998).

7. According to Panourgia (2009), of the \$3.4 billion in Marshall Plan funds allotted to Greece, only \$1.2 billion went to economic aid. The remainder was allocated to security.

8. The extensive literature on the Korean War is reviewed in Millett (2007). Cummings (1981), Halberstam (2007), Ridgway (1986), and Weathersby (1993) provide useful accounts.

9. There are many, varied estimates of civilian and military deaths during the Korean War. According to CNN approximately 2,800,000 North Koreans, South Koreans, and Chinese were killed or went missing during the war, and an estimated 1,600,000 of these were civilians (CNN 2013).

10. Scholars speak of the “McCarthy Era” (roughly 1950–1954) as a time when, due in considerable measure to Senator McCarthy, “America developed an obsession with domestic communism that outran actual threat and gnawed at the tissue of civil liberties” (R. Fried 1990: 3).

11. The Dulles brothers, Princeton old boys, were from a family with a Christian calling—their grandfather was a missionary and their father a minister; also, John’s son became a cardinal and his daughter a minister. John focused upon the “spiritual” when fighting Communism (Dulles 1950: 262–266). Pious the Dullesees may have been, but they were also capitalists who during World War II had operated through a network of American oil companies and Nazi corporations (Loftus and Aarons 1994). Kinzer (2013) has an excellent biography of the Dulles brothers and their times.

12. The CIA’s role in the coup is described by one of its planners in Roosevelt (1979). Works that place the coup within its geopolitical context include Kinzer’s journalistic classic (2008); also useful are Heiss (1997) and Elm (1994). Abrahamian (2013) argues the coup was part of the conflict between Western imperialism and Iranian nationalism.

13. There is some debate over the relative importance of the Americans and the British in executing the coup. The Americans acknowledge the British played a “pivotal role” (Bowcott 2000).

14. Tehran might not have turned toward the USSR during the 1950s because Irano-Russian relations were strained during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Czarist Russia expanded into Iran’s sphere of influence in Central Asia and into Iran itself (Heravi [1969] 1999: 25–52).

15. The Joint Chiefs of Staff was established by the National Security Act of 1947 in the Defense Department to advise the Defense secretary. It consisted of a chairman, the chief of staff of the Army, the chief of staff of the Air Force (established as a separate service by the

same act), and the chief of Naval Operations. The Marine Corps commandant was to be consulted on matters concerning the Corps but was not a regular member.

16. Streeter (2000) provides a useful review of the literature on the Guatemala coup. Kinzer and Schlesinger ([1982] 1999), Immerman (1980), Gleijeses (1992), Cullather (1999), and Peter Chapman (2009), are all useful for studying the 1954 CIA coup in Guatemala.

17. No literature demonstrates Arbenz to have been a communist (see Kinzer and Schlesinger [1982] 1999), though he had “friends” among Guatemalan communists (Gleijeses 1989: 453).

18. The point argued in the text is not that the US arranged the coup in Guatemala to aid the UFC. John Foster Dulles was quite clear about the UFC’s significance: “If the United Fruit matter were settled, if they gave a gold piece for every banana, the problem would remain just as it is today as far as the presence of communist infiltration is concerned, That is the problem, not United Fruit” (in Immerman 1980, 1982: 739). Rather, the UFC helped get the CIA to stage a coup by producing the knowledge that Guatemala was going Communist.

19. Appy (2000: 315) believes that “the prominence of the Peurifoy report in his [Ike’s] memoir may have been decisive in persuading Eisenhower to go forward with the plan.”

20. Rasenberger (2011) provides accounts of the events that gave rise to the Bay of Pigs invasion. Hunt (1972), already encountered in Operation PBSUCCESS, gives an account of a CIA operative on the ground. Schlesinger’s (1965) account of Kennedy’s brief presidency catches Kennedy’s understanding of the fiasco. Farber (2006) offers an interesting rethinking of the origins of the revolution.

21. The topmost Kennedy elite came from a broader, less wealthy background than did the members of earlier Cold War administrations. McNamara’s father had been a sales manager in California. Rusk was from a poor, rural Georgia background. Rostow was the son of Russian Jewish socialist immigrants to New York. Kennedy himself was Irish. His father had made money, at least some of it through illegal means, and sent all his children to the best schools. But the family certainly remembered when families like Bundy’s (who were Boston Lowells) insisted “the Irish were ... an inferior race of moral delinquents” (Vorhees 2007: 31).

22. A number of books have argued for CIA involvement in JFK’s death. Douglass (2008) is a useful place to start in this literature. Tracy Barnes is one CIA official alleged to have been involved in the assassination. He returned to the old boy nesting ground, working for Brewster Kingman at Yale University as an administrator dealing with race relations and gender equality.

23. Consider “Bob,” who admitted to killing women and children during a commando “raid” he commanded against a tiny village in 1969. Bob insisted his troops had fired only when they themselves came under fire. However, a woman in the attacked village told another story. Bob’s men rounded up the women and children and shot them. One soldier under Bob’s command during the raid corroborated her story. The Bob was Bob Kerrey—later a U.S. Senator, a president of a university, a former state governor talked of as a presidential candidate (Vistica 2003). Next contemplate “John,” a Swift Boat commander in the free-fire zone of the Mekong Delta responsible for massacring, among others, civilians (St. Clair 2013a). “John” was John Kerry—later a senator, a presidential candidate, and secretary of state under Obama, known for lecturing others on their morality.

24. Ho’s biographers include Duiker (2000) and Brocheux (2007). Because he rose to head the state, he can be described as elite. Further, he was certainly a hybrid elite. Ho’s father, not an especially privileged person, was nevertheless a Confucian scholar and teacher, and saw to it that his son received a Confucian education. As a teenager Ho attended a French *lycée* in Vietnam; lived in America from 1912 to 1917, acquiring not elite US culture but that of labor in the working-class jobs he held; spent time in the UK; and was politically transformed into a communist in France between 1919 and 1923. Thereafter he alternated between Russia and China until returning to Vietnam in 1941.

25. A detailed account of US military assistance to the French in the First Indochina War from the perspective of the US military can be found in US Office of Joint History (2004).

26. Diem was a hybrid elite, but one created by the French for service in their empire. On the one hand, he was Catholic, like many French. On the other hand, his father had been a Mandarin in the service of the Vietnamese Emperor. Among other responsibilities, the father appears to have been Keeper of the Eunuchs (Jacobs 2006). A difference between Diem and Ho was that Diem came from an elite class position in Vietnam, while Ho did not.

27. In April 1965, China signed a military assistance agreement with North Vietnam to provide for Chinese air defense, engineering, and railroad troops. The Soviets provided weapons, especially for air defense. Approximately three-fourths of the military assistance is estimated to have come from China (Jian 1995; Gaiduk 2003).

28. “Bill Forbes” is a pseudonym. He was an old Yankee.

29. Estimates of Vietnamese civilian and combat deaths range from 1 million to over 3 million; see Hirschman, Preston, and Loi (1995) for a review of the mortality estimates.

30. Higgs (1988: 2) estimated US military purchases between 1961 and 1975 at 2408.5 billion 1982 dollars.

31. Discussion of the domino theory can be found in Guan (2001) and Slater (1993).

32. Some argue that the hawks were less hawkish than previously thought. Bird, for example, maintains that “documents show that the Bundys, and other decision-makers registered deep doubts about the American enterprise in Vietnam” ([1998] 2000: 17). Registering “doubts” is not advocating withdrawal. Hawks may have had “doubts,” but they always supported escalation when decisions were made about how to proceed in Vietnam. Further, hawks made certain it was known that the dove position was, as Bill Bundy had put it in his exchange with Kattenburg, a “disservice.”

33. There have been other explanations of why the US lost (Record [1998] is a useful introduction to this literature). Two have been especially significant: that the US lost because of the strength of the anti-war movement; and that the US military was not allowed to fight with all its resources. Some imply the peace movement was treasonous because it contributed to restraining the military. I believe both views are incorrect and encourage dangerous interventions. The US lost because the tough guys met somebody tougher. The Tet Offensive made clear that US ground forces could not defeat their opponents. This left winning to the air war, which failed either to interdict North Vietnam’s resupply of its forces in the South, or to cause North Vietnam to sue for peace. Imagining that the US lost because it did not fight hard enough is dangerous in that it implies that if only America fights harder, it will win. As tough guys know, sometimes there are tougher guys out there.

34. Debates about who had it right about Vietnam—the hawks or the doves—have flourished since the end of the war. Michael Lind (1999: 156) claimed to have examined all sides in these debates and discovered the “genuine lessons of the Vietnam War,” which were that the hawks were right. The heart of his argument was that the Cold War was a third world war—a position also taken by Nixon (1980)—“in which,” according to Lind, “the future governance of the international system was at stake, and in which the great powers opposing the United States and its allies were the moral equivalents of Nazi Germany” (in Gaddis 2000: 131). The Vietnam War was “necessary” for precisely the reasons given by US security elites during the conflict: “to defend the credibility of the United States as a superpower” in the struggle to govern the international system (Lind 1999: xv). There are empirical problems with Lind’s position, discussed in Gaddis (2000). It rings jingoistic with its denunciations of the Communists as monsters. Mao is likened to “Robespierre” (Lind 1999: 64), and Ho Chi Minh is “vicious” (ibid.: 32). The US’s opponents are dismissed as Nazis. Lind does correctly point out that the Cold War was a global conflict between two social beings; however, he overlooks that these social beings were empires doing what was necessary, given intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction. Finally, Lind regards the US as having fought for “credibility.” Credibility does have a place in discussions of Vietnam, because the war’s outcome established the credibility of the view that the US could be militarily defeated.