Regime Change and the Role of Airpower

David T. Fahrenkrug, Major, USAF
School of Advanced Air and Space Studies

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Abstract

Drawing from the vision of airpower theorists and building on insights gained from studies on various regime changes, this thesis advances a theory of regime change and outlines a strategy for the use of airpower. To remain in power, regimes must continue to provide goods to the group of people responsible for its rise to power—the winning coalition. Different types of regimes rely on different types of goods to satisfy their winning coalition. This thesis advances the hypothesis that adversely affecting these goods will create policy failure, increase dissatisfaction among the winning coalition, and cause members to seek out a new coalition and regime to provide the lost goods. Additionally, since many regimes supply goods to third parties to retain their support, an additional hypothesis was introduced to account for the influence of international support.

Analysis of an American and South Vietnamese regime change demonstrated that overthrowing a particular type of regime is directly related to attacks on certain types of goods, thus providing a better model for airpower strategists planning a regime change. The theory outlined in this thesis is founded on theoretical limits for regime types—and few regimes actually exist at these extremes. Still, the more democratic a regime, the more airpower should focus on public goods. Conversely, the more autocratic a regime, the more airpower should attack private goods.

About the Author

Maj David T. Fahrenkrug is a 1988 Air Force Academy distinguished graduate. He is an F-15C pilot with more than 2,000 hours in the F-15C and T-38. A distinguished graduate from pilot training, Major Fahrenkrug has served as an instructor, wing executive officer, flight commander, and assistant operations officer. He has flown combat missions in support of Operations Northern and Southern Watch and air defense missions for Operation Northern Guardian.

He has a master's degree in aeronautics from George Washington University and a master's in military operational art and science from the Air Command and Staff College. Following graduation from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Major Fahrenkrug will attend the University of Chicago, where he will pursue a PhD in international relations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> *Today, so eminent a soldier as Marshal Foch sees in the future of aircraft not alone the power of inclining victory towards either standard, but even the possibility of bringing such pressure to bear on civilian populations as to end war through the action of the air force alone.*
>
> —William Sherman, 1926

Early airpower theorists anticipated that the physical and psychological effects of bombing a population would cause the citizens to rise up and overthrow their leaders. This simplified causal relationship was first proven false in the great laboratory of World War II as recorded by the *United States Strategic Bombing Survey*.

> The German people showed surprising resistance to the terror and hardships of repeated air attack, to the destruction of their homes and belongings, and to the conditions under which they were reduced to live. Their morale, their belief in ultimate victory or satisfactory compromise, and their confidence in their leaders declined, but they continued to work efficiently as long as the physical means of production remained. The power of a police state over its people cannot be underestimated.[1]

While the *Bombing Survey* alluded to a possible connection between regime types and the effectiveness of airpower to stimulate rebellion, a theory has yet to be fully explored. As recently as the Gulf War and the Balkan War, advocates were still arguing that airpower was capable of overthrowing regimes. The Air Force planners of Operation Desert Storm hoped to incapacitate Saddam Hussein's regime leading to the readily apparent, but unstated, "goal of creating a set of conditions within Iraq conducive to the overthrow of its political leadership."[2] Since Desert Storm did not result in the demise of the Iraqi regime, a decade later the United States found itself leading a greatly reduced coalition in another war against Iraq, this time with the overt goal of removing Hussein and his regime.

The removal of Hussein in 2003 points to one rather definitive way to overthrow a regime: conquer the nation and physically destroy the incumbent regime. Yet conquering is expensive, in blood and treasure. Given the opportunity, overthrowing a nation's regime without recourse to all-out war is greatly to be preferred. Robert Pape wrote, "Coercion seeks to achieve the same goals as war fighting, but at less cost to both sides."[3] Thomas C. Schelling defined the opposite of coercion as "brute force," and the difference between the two is "as often in the intent as in the instrument."[4] In the case of Iraq, brute force would be the use of force to simply assassinate Hussein and his immediate loyalists. It is using force with no intent to rely on its threatened use. The political cost of assassinations can be fairly

high and they are difficult to do, so according to Schelling and other coercion theorists, there are better ways to compel leaders and their regimes to step down. The purpose of this thesis is to identify a better way to change a regime using airpower as a coercive instrument.

To try to avoid repeating the mistake of earlier theorists, this thesis begins by first proposing a theory for regime change under the duress of war or military action. While there have been many facts collected about regime changes ranging from the type of regime, to the geographic location of the regime, to its socioeconomic makeup, these alone are not sufficient explanation. Laws, which are facts of observation, cannot tell us why a particular association holds, whether we can exercise control over it, or how we might go about doing so.[5] What is needed is a theory that captures these facts by explaining *why* some regimes change during war. In this thesis, I use an analytic model developed by Robert Pape and expanded by Col Tom Ehrhard that describes a relationship between different types of regimes and different types of targets.[6] The purpose of the model is to provide a simple road map of how and why regimes change during war.[7] The regime change model presented in this thesis will not necessarily offer a prescriptive set of actions to take to overthrow a current regime, but it will identify some causal factors involved in a regime change and how those factors must be influenced if a change is to occur.

A Regime Change Theory

The theory is built upon a foundation of work undertaken by several political scientists and social theorists, and represents an attempt to consolidate their works into a concise theory on how regimes change in the context of war. The fundamental premise is adapted from public goods theory and relies on studies conducted by Ted Gurr and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita on political survival after failed policies. Regimes are often selected to not only administer the government but to also provide additional goods. To remain in power, the regime must continue to provide goods to the group of people responsible for its rise to power—the winning coalition. The winning coalition provides the regime with the necessary support to remain in power, and the regime in turn provides goods desired by the winning coalition. Different types of regimes rely on different types of goods to satisfy their winning coalition. By adversely affecting these goods, a rival coalition or regime can create policy failure, increase dissatisfaction among the winning coalition, and cause members to seek out a new coalition and regime that can provide the lost goods. The element that eluded earlier airpower theorists is the mechanism, the set of events that connects the target sets with anticipated actions that lead to defeat of the regime. The theory's mechanism relies on collective action theory as described by Mancur Olson and Mark Lichbach. Finally, using this model, airpower strategists can extract specific targets that, in concert with other instruments of power, will lead to a regime change.

"The first task of theory is to define the field under examination."[8] Therefore, a definition of the term *regime* and what is meant by the term *change* is required. This thesis generalizes Ted Gurr's regime descriptions and defines *regime* as the political leader and his immediate advisors who are formally or informally recognized as the head of state.[9] This thesis defines *change* as "to substitute another or others in place of; to remove, discard, or withdraw and replace with another."[10] In this case, the focus of the change or replacement is on the regime. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Pres. George W. Bush was criticized for confusing the issue of an Iraqi regime change with Iraqi policy change. Certainly, one would anticipate some type of policy change if a regime is changed, but the purpose of this thesis is only to undermine the incumbent regime in such a way it *can* be replaced by a rival regime. Thought of this way, this theory represents a segment of a broader regime change strategy and does not address the difficulties of supporting an alternate regime or the complex issue of nation building.

Chapters 2 and 3 propose a theory of regime change during war that explains why different types of regimes respond to attacks on different types of targets. Chapters 4 and 5 then describe a democratic and an autocratic regime, respectively, to test the theory against the limits of the proposed political spectrum. Analysis of these case studies leads to some conclusion about the validity of the theory. Chapter 6 provides some analysis and implications for the proposed explanation of regime change during war.

Notes

1. *United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (1945; repr., Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1987), 39.
2. Richard G. Davis, "Strategic Bombardment in the Gulf War," in *Case Studies in Strategic Bombardment,* ed. R. Cargill Hall (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office [GPO], 1998), 528.
3. Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 13.
4. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 5.
5. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979), 6.
6. See Pape, *Bombing to Win* and Thomas Ehrhard, *Making the Connection: An Air Strategy Analysis Framework* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1996).
7. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 7.
8. Harold R. Winton, lecture to SAASS Class XII on theory, 8 August 2002.
9. In the Polity II codebook, Ted R. Gurr develops a complex scheme to describe patterns of authority permitting far more detailed analysis and more subtle distinctions. This goes well beyond the scope of this thesis; thus, Gurr's scheme is consolidated. "Polity II: Political Structures and Regime Change, 1800–1986," *Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research*, Winter, 1990.
10. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976), 1911.

Chapter 2

The Theory

If we could directly apprehend the world that interests us, we would have no need for theory.

—Kenneth Waltz

Historically, one of the allures of airpower is a perception that strategic bombing alone can bring about a regime change. From the beginning airpower theorists such as Giulio Douhet and Billy Mitchell prophesied that the psychological power of strategic bombing would compel people to rise up against the regime. The dream was resurrected during the 1991 Persian Gulf War when Col John Warden, "architect" of the air campaign, predicted that airpower would result in a regime change in Iraq.[1] To the dismay of airpower advocates and zealots, the dream has rarely been realized.[2] So why hasn't airpower worked to change regimes as anticipated by the theorists?

The next two chapters propose a theory of regime change during war. War is perhaps the ultimate stress that can be placed on a society and a regime. Regardless of defeat or victory, war increases collective dissent and has no equal as a catalyst of revolution.[3] Helmut Norpoth observed, "War and economics have few rivals when it comes to making or breaking governments."[4] Regimes that engage in war are exposed to a potential overthrow even if the projected outcome is favorable to the nation. Further, recognizing the increasing role that airpower assumes as a national instrument of power, a discussion of how airpower is to be used as part of a combat campaign to overthrow a regime is offered. There is a significant body of literature dedicated to describing regime changes in the context of revolutions, insurgencies, and coups d'etat.[5] Unfortunately, these regime changes generally take place in small, third world, and largely nondemocratic nations. By incorporating different theories of political survival, political revolution, and collective dissent, this thesis expands upon that literature and postulates a general theory of regime change applicable to any type of political structure.[6]

A Theory of Regime Change

While governments are fundamentally organized to provide protection for the state and to control chaos within its borders, they often provide many other goods as well. In fact, a regime is often selected to not only administer the government but to also provide additional goods. To remain in power, the regime must continue to provide goods to the group of people responsible for its rise to power—the winning coalition. The winning coali-

tion provides the regime with the necessary support to remain in power, and the regime in turn provides goods desired by the winning coalition. Different types of regimes rely on different types of goods to satisfy their winning coalition. By targeting these goods, a rival coalition or regime can create policy failure, increase dissatisfaction among the winning coalition, and cause members to seek out a new coalition and regime that can provide the lost goods.

Selecting democracy and autocracy as theoretical limits for a spectrum of regimes, two propositions for weakening the domestic winning coalition through attacks on either public or private goods are proposed. In this way, overthrowing a particular type of regime can be directly related to attacks on certain types of goods and provide a better guide for airpower strategists planning a regime change. Additionally, since many regimes supply goods to third parties to retain their support, a third proposition is introduced to account for the influence of international support. Finally, because undermining or eliminating the winning coalition is not necessarily sufficient to change the regime, a rival regime must be found and supported. In the more complex strategy of nation building, a rival coalition must not only exist but also must have support and a strategy for its transition to power. These broader implications of regime change, however, go beyond the focus of this thesis.

Winning Coalition

A key to overthrowing a regime lies with the regime's source of legitimacy. In their article "Policy Failure and Political Survival," Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith postulate that regimes gain and maintain their authority through winning coalitions. In broad terms, the winning coalition is that group within the population responsible for placing and maintaining a regime in power. If the winning coalition changes or if it decides to support an opposing regime, then the incumbent is deposed.[7] Italy provides a rich example of the power of winning coalitions as that country has undergone nearly continuous governmental changes in the wake of changing winning coalitions.[8] The winning coalition may consist of a majority of voters, as in a democracy, or a small group of powerful landowners, military leaders, or bureaucrats, as in an autocratic dictatorship or monarchy.

Significant for this theory is that the winning coalition chooses the regime and that the size of the winning coalition is a result of the type of government. To clarify the definition, the smallest winning coalition in a pure democracy is equal to one-half of the participating voters plus one additional voter. In contrast, the size of the winning coalition in an autocracy is not dependent on votes from the population, and in some cases may even be controlled by the current regime.[9] Winning coalitions in an autocratic society are typically very small with respect to the size of the population and often represent less than 1 percent of the population.[10]

The size of the winning coalition is therefore used to place a regime along a theoretical spectrum of polities and will later serve to identify which type of policy failure is required to undermine the winning coalition (fig. 1).

Figure 1. Regime spectrum

In an expansion of Bueno de Mesquita's definition of the winning coalitions, this thesis recognizes that third parties can also provide significant support to a regime. Many regimes and their winning coalitions derive psychological and physical support from foreign countries and nonstate actors. Lichbach argues that if regimes are cut off from their foreign patrons, then rebellion will be dramatically encouraged. "For example, the United States cut off aid to Batista, Samoza, Marcos, and the Shah. Each dictator subsequently fell."[11] Like the domestic winning coalition, foreign countries and nonstate actors support a particular regime because they expect that regime to supply them with some good.

Domestic Support

Characterizing regimes according to the size of the domestic winning coalition is important because it determines how regimes make policy and which types of policies receive priority. Bueno de Mesquita concluded that leaders and regimes attract a winning coalition and retain its support by distributing things of value. Political leaders and their regimes must provide sufficient benefits to the winning coalition so that the least satisfied member still prefers to support them rather than defect to a rival regime.

The things of value take two forms, public goods and private goods, and their relative value depends on the institutional arrangements of the state.[12] As the size of the winning coalition varies, so will the regime's emphasis on public or private goods policies. The smaller the winning coalition the more effective private goods are for securing loyalty because they are not diluted too much when they are distributed. Likewise, "the larger the winning coalition, in a country, the thinner must be spread the private goods that are available with which to purchase loyalty." As the winning coalition increases, leaders must place greater emphasis on public goods because their ability to effect individuals with private means is decreased. That means the influence of public goods assumes greater importance, and if the size of the winning coalition is large enough, there will be no incentive at all for the incumbents to provide private goods.[13] This results in the following spectrum of regimes and types of goods (fig. 2).

Figure 2. Public versus private goods policies

Democratic Regimes

In a democracy, where the winning coalition is large, the regime must depend on public goods policies more than private goods to retain its power. This is because a democratic regime has insufficient resources or authority to provide private goods to everyone in a large winning coalition. Ideally, all regimes would prefer to distribute goods privately, that is only to supporters, but it becomes difficult to segment goods as the group that enjoys them grows in size. In democratic regimes, Bueno de Mesquita concludes, "Essential backers of the government are relatively quick to defect in the face of policy failure. They . . . derive a relatively large portion of their utility from the government's policy performance rather than its allocation of private goods."[14]

In 1964 the winning coalition in the United States numbered more than 43 million voters, essentially negating any effort by Lyndon B. Johnson to influence voters with offers of private goods. However, Johnson's economic proposals to improve the welfare of all the citizens or his policies to reduce racial tensions throughout the country did impact 43 million voters. Consequently, since the relative value of public goods is increased, members of the winning coalition are more likely to abandon the regime for a rival if they do not obtain public policies to their liking.[15] An obvious strategy for an opposing coalition is to focus their promises on better public policies or highlight failures with the incumbent's current policies. The tenuous nature of the winning coalition in a majoritarian system places a burden on the incumbent regime to avoid policy failure. The goal of the incumbent regime is to enhance the welfare of the population to remove the most salient issues that can be used by the opposition to garner support for a new winning coalition.[16]

Hypothesis 1: *Regimes with a large winning coalition are weakened through failure of public goods policies.*

Autocratic Regimes

At the other end of the polity spectrum is an autocratic regime supported by a small winning coalition. As the size of the winning coalition decreases, the effectiveness of providing private goods increases. The incumbent regime will therefore dedicate more resources to private goods to

retain support from the winning coalition. Added to this, the smaller the winning coalition, the greater the impact private goods have on individual members such that the incumbent regime retains significant influence over the winning coalition.

For this reason, an autocracy is very resilient to policy failures—including those stemming from war—and does not have to rely on good public policy to retain power.[17] Instead, autocracies are more vulnerable to attacks on private goods. Since members of the winning coalition wish to retain their private goods, they will abandon their allegiance to the regime and seek out a new regime to regain their lost private goods. Because autocratic regimes by definition maintain nearly complete control of the country's resources, dissidents and rival regimes often require external support to overcome the regime. The correlation between a small winning coalition and private goods leads to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *Regimes with a small winning coalition are weakened through failure of private goods policies.*

International Support

Another key to undermining the winning coalition is the removal of international support. In some cases, the single most effective method to undermine the winning coalition and the regime is to remove external support. Third parties, both states and nonstate actors, also extend support to a regime to gain some good for themselves. Through aid, trade agreements, or international opinion, third parties are able to place tremendous pressure on the winning coalition and the regime. With small or economically weak states, this support can be so great that their influence supplants the mandates of the domestic winning coalition, and the regime becomes responsive primarily to the third party. In fact, it may be so difficult to effect a regime change under these conditions that Luttwak stipulates the absence of external support as a precondition for a coup d'etat to take place.[18] Regimes are externally supported because they supply some particular good to the third party. Different from the previous goods, this external good is supplied regardless of the type of regime. Therefore, a third hypothesis is introduced to account for the varying levels of external support provided to a regime.

Hypothesis 3: *Regimes are weakened through failure to provide external goods.*

If a regime distributes goods to remain in power, then it seems logical that adversely affecting the distribution of those goods may cause policy failure and may undermine the winning coalition. An underlying assumption in this formulation develops from microeconomic theory where individuals are motivated solely by personal interest and that their choices are rational decisions based on maximizing their utility and minimizing their

costs. While this assumption allows the strategist to quickly parse out potential targets, it does not necessarily account for those cultural or organizational situations that defy rational decision making.[19] The implications from these conclusions are captured in the three hypotheses that correlate the survival of a regime with public, private, and external goods.

Public and Private Goods

With an understanding of which types of goods need to be targeted to cause policy failure, the next task is to identify specific types of public and private goods. In general, public goods are those services and benefits that affect most of the population, while private goods are produced and consumed by individuals. By definition, public goods are indivisible and "if provided to one member of the community they cannot be denied to another." Examples include roads, bridges, national defense, police and fire protection, air pollution control, and inflationary fiscal policies.[20] Further, public goods are also usually provided by some central authority or government. Private goods, on the other hand, include special state privileges, grafts and bribes, favorable contracts, judicial favoritism, and other perks tailored to the individual. "There are really very few, if any, goods whose properties allow them to be classified as clearly public or private."[21] But, just as few governments, if any, are pure democracies or pure autocracies, establishing theoretical boundaries for types of goods enables the theorist to better target a particular good to effect a policy failure.

A privately owned factory that is a major producer of bread in the country can be viewed as both a private and a public good. Even if the factory is the sole producer of bread in the country, the type of government is more important in determining how a loss of that good is perceived. In a democracy, a single attack on one factory probably will not be viewed as a failure in the regime's national security policy if imports or other food sources can compensate for the loss. On the other hand, if the factory owner is a member of a small winning coalition in an autocracy, then his personal wealth and individual security have been threatened, and he will view the attack as a failure of the regime's security policy. The importance of attacking the good is not necessarily in the good itself, but in the regime's policy that results in the loss of that good. With that in mind, some combination of public and private goods will need to be targeted to affect regimes that are neither a pure democracy nor autocracy.

Instead of attempting to create an exhaustive list of private and public goods, categories of public and private goods are selected that will help focus the strategist in building target lists. The categories are selected using the strategy analysis framework, developed by Tom Ehrhard, applied to Mostafa Rejai's preconditions for political revolution. Ehrhard's thesis expanded on a framework first proposed by Robert Pape that forces the air strategist to determine why attacking a particular target results in a desired outcome.[22] Rejai proposes four preconditions that must exist for a

political revolution to occur: political, economic, psychological, and social.[23] The results of the analysis are captured in three general categories of public and private goods (see table below).

Table 1. Public and private goods

Category	*Public*	*Private*
Economic	National economy	Personal wealth
Security	National security	Personal security
Services	Public services	Privileges

Economic

Any state with an economy that is perceived as healthy and growing makes a poor candidate for regime change, even under the duress of war. What is required, as Norpoth postulates, is adversity in the economy such that the population and the winning coalition become dissatisfied. "Political revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of economic prosperity is followed by a brief period of sharp reversal, thus creating an intolerable gap between expected need satisfaction (aspiration) and actual need satisfaction (achievement)."[24] France's conflict over Algeria offers an example of how economic effects of war can work against a democracy. After seven and one-half years of war in Algeria, France was suffering economically and politically. Consequently, not only did the French oust the incumbent regime in a coup, but they also rewrote their constitution and established the Fifth Republic. "The Algerian crises brought Charles De Gaulle back to power in 1958 and, although initially inclined to win the war and keep Algeria a French possession, De Gaulle came to see Algeria as a cause that was hurting the French economy and tearing the political fabric of the nation apart."[25]

Attacking or undermining the economy will work well against large winning coalitions, but will have little effect on small winning coalitions.[26] Instead, the economic adversity needs to be focused against the elite majority found within the small winning coalition. A recent example of an autocratic regime change in conjunction with economic pressure came during the 1999 Balkan War over Kosovo's independence. After a brief campaign by NATO airpower that did little to adversely affect Serbia's fielded forces or to inconvenience the population in general, air strategists began targeting key supporters of Serbian president Slobadan Milosevic. Reacting to pressure from these "cronies," he ceased conducting purges in Kosovo and agreed to NATO terms for political autonomy of the Kosovo region.[27] Eventually, economic attacks against these members of Milosevic's winning coalition prompted them to seek relief by calling for a change of leadership in Serbia. In contrast, the autocratic regimes in Cuba and Iraq have suffered under economic sanctions for years with no regime change forth-

coming. Broad economic sanctions serve only to target the country as a whole without directly influencing the small winning coalition.

Security

In the context of war, security of the nation and the individual is perhaps the ultimate private and public good. Theorist J. F. C. Fuller stipulated that in the complex moral sphere of war the strongest instinct is self-preservation. "In order that man may protect himself, nature had implanted in his soul the instinct of self-preservation, and in order to assert himself, the instinct of self-assertion, and it is through the cooperation of these two that he lives."[28] For the state, self-preservation becomes evident as national security and its protection is secured by the nation's armed forces. Threats to national security and losses suffered by the armed forces naturally cause alarm for both the public and the winning coalition. Americans increasingly have been accused of being casualty averse, such that support for the government during military operations hinges on the number of soldiers killed in battle. However, Eric Larson concluded, "support for U.S. military operations and the willingness to tolerate casualties are based upon a sensible weighing of benefits and costs that is influenced heavily by consensus (or its absence) among political leaders."[29] A nation's tolerance for casualties grows with the perceived need for military action to resolve the crisis. Put differently, as the threat to national security decreases and the requirement to use military force becomes less evident, the public becomes less accepting of casualties. During the Vietnam War, the rising number of casualties coupled with questions about the value of winning led to a continuous decrease in popular support for the war.[30] Even more importantly, enemy civilian casualties are rarely ever tolerated, and the modern promises of precision weapons only increase the pressure for minimal collateral damage. Israel's siege of Beirut drew strong criticism and open protest from many Israelis for being too heavy-handed because their use of artillery and air attacks necessarily caused several hundred, perhaps several thousand, civilian casualties.[31] International law and public opinion demand high standards for a democratic regime's use of military force.

Casualties pose a different type of problem for regimes with a small winning coalition. Unlike a democracy, an autocracy is not necessarily concerned with public opinion or casualties, except in a strictly military sense. The issue is rather a matter of self-preservation for individuals in the winning coalition, whose protection is usually guaranteed by the military or elite guard units under the direction of the regime. When individuals in the winning coalition fear for their lives because the regime has failed to protect them, they are more inclined to look elsewhere for safety. A fear of death is a remarkable coercive mechanism that can serve to motivate individuals to abandon their allegiances. This is precisely how police states operate. To undermine that power, the forces serving to protect the winning coalition and the regime, particularly those providing personal protection, should be targeted.

Services

Some of the benefits citizens and members of a winning coalition enjoy because of a regime's policies are services they cannot provide for themselves. For a democracy, services take the form of public goods such as police and fire protection, roads and transportation, educational benefits, medical benefits, or even unemployment wages. Autocracies, however, generally are less concerned with public goods and instead concentrate their resources on individual services for members of the small winning coalition. These include grafts, favorable taxation, personal luxuries, and special appointments or positions in the government. Essentially, anything an individual desires but cannot provide for himself becomes the object of a regime's effort to retain support. Again, by definition, an autocratic regime wields considerable power over resources in the country and is even able to redirect external aid to bolster the winning coalition. Throughout the 1990s, the United Nations permitted Saddam Hussein to sell oil to purchase food for his people, yet enormous poverty still existed throughout Iraq while his closest supporters enjoyed lavish lifestyles.

Merely attacking services or causing disruptions, whether in a democracy or an autocracy, is not necessarily sufficient to undermine the winning coalition. The loss of a particular service must be directly attributed to a failed policy. Riots and demonstrations in Paris over French involvement in Algeria led to fear in the population about the regime's ability to maintain peace and stability in the country. Similar violent riots and protests in the United States during the Vietnam War kept many people locked up in their homes questioning the government's ability to provide public protection.[32] In contrast, a loss of public services will have little effect on an autocratic regime. During World War II, British bomber attacks against the German population and American firebombing of the Japanese cities caused severe interruptions of public services, yet neither the German nor the Japanese people had the ability to change the regime. While these attacks on public services may work to deny the regime's military capability by interrupting production, transportation, or energy sources, they can have an equally adverse effect on the population or rival regime that must step forward to replace the incumbent. Attacks by another nation may serve to heighten opposition to the attacking nation and rally the population around the regime. This suggests that attacks against autocratic regimes must concentrate on specific privileges the regime supplies as opposed to broad services provided by the government.

External Goods

Unlike private and public goods, types of external goods are not easily correlated to the type of regime or even the type of third party support. While the overall categories of public and private goods generally remain the same, third parties may seek either private or public external goods

depending on their political motivation. A state may seek some security interest, or economic advantage, or even have ideological aspirations for the supported regime. Further, a state's domestic politics are shaped and affected by foreign policy such that there is a dynamic interaction between the regime, the third party, and the winning coalition. Accordingly, this thesis avoids classifying external goods according to a particular type of regime or third party and simply presents some examples of external support and the associated good.

International opinion and recognition provided through the press and organizations such as the United Nations or the World Bank hold tremendous sway over large winning coalitions and democratic regimes. As keepers of the liberalist tradition espoused by these international organizations and their own winning coalition, democratic regimes are often held to a higher standard particularly with regard to the use of force. International organizations seek an external good of liberalism and the abatement of self-interest realism and expect democratic nations to do the same. During the conflict with Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, terrorists and insurgents enjoyed a considerable propaganda advantage when Israel used military force, even in self-defense.[33] Legitimate attacks by Israel against known terrorists or belligerents were reported as barbaric acts of aggression and promptly condemned by the press and the United Nations. Even today, Belgium has singled out Ariel Sharon, minister of defense during the Lebanon Crisis, for prosecution as a war criminal with no mention of any other leaders from Hizbollah, Syria, or Lebanon.[34]

In the United States, the Johnson administration continually fell victim to Vietnamese propaganda efforts aimed at dissuading the American population and the international community from supporting the war. As purported war crimes being conducted by the US armed forces were reported and televised around the world, western nations and the US population withdrew their support. The Johnson administration had failed to live up to the liberal ideals expected of a democratic nation. During Russia's war against Chechen independence, Pres. Boris Yeltsin and the war became deeply unpopular among Russian politicians, citizens, and the international community. "At the strategic psychological level, the Chechens proved adept at enlisting support from nongovernmental organizations, bringing pressure to bear on Yeltsin from outside Russia, while at the same time reaching the Russian mass public, damaging morale, and seriously affecting Russian popular support for the war."[35] As an emerging democratic regime, Yeltsin was failing to provide the external good the international community expected.

Not all regimes are susceptible to domestic public opinion or international opinion. In many cases regimes require tangible types of external support so they can continue to secure the support of the winning coalition. In return the regime supplies some explicit type of external good such as trade, basing rights, or security for the third party. In South Vietnam, Pres. Ngo Dinh Diem relied nearly exclusively on American presence

and economic aid to bolster his regime through rewards for supporters and severe punishment for dissenters. A coup that replaced Diem in 1963 was only successful because the United States "permitted" the coup to take place.[36] Diem had failed to provide the United States with a legitimate government that was willing to provide security against the spreading tide of communism.

Intuitively, if a major power is underwriting a targeted regime, then the prospects of a rival regime attracting dissenters or gaining support against the incumbent are diminished. It was not until the United States withdrew troops from South Vietnam that North Vietnam was able to overthrow the South's regime and unite the two Vietnams under one government. The practice has been repeated many times over with failed popular uprisings in Hungary, former East Germany, and many previous colonial holdings providing several examples.[37] This suggests that a good way to weaken external support is to target those goods, such as ideology, world opinion, factories, or bases that are being provided by the regime to third parties. During the Balkan War, Russia encouraged Milosevic to accept NATO's cease-fire offer out of fear that if the allies defeated the regime outright, then they would lose significant influence in that region.[38] Regimes supported by major powers make poor choices for regime change—at least until the support is removed.

This chapter began with the introduction of the theory and three hypotheses based on types of polities and the presence of external support. Because market explanations alone will not suffice in describing how to change a regime, the definitions of rationality sometimes have to be cast in the context of the domestic politics and external involvement. Therefore, the goods regimes provide are divided into categories to establish a cause and effect relationship for undermining the winning coalition. The next chapter addresses that causal relationship by describing the mechanism for undermining a regime and applying airpower to the model.

Notes

1. Davis, "Strategic Bombardment," 528.

2. The recent resignation of Milosevic in Yugoslavia is cited as a triumph by airpower alone. Stephen Hosmer, however, concludes that he did not capitulate purely because of airpower. See *Conflict over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001).

3. Mark Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 72–73. See also, Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1945–1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1971), 164; and Walter Laquer, "Revolution," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 13, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 501.

4. Helmut Norpoth, "Guns and Butter and Governmental Popularity in Britain," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987): 949.

5. For discussions on coups and small wars see Edward Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat: A Pratical Handbook* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); Max Manwarring, ed. *Gray Area Phenomena: Confronting the New World Disorder* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993);

James Corum and Wray Johnson, *Airpower and Small Wars* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

6. The theory capitalizes on research and analysis conducted by Bueno de Mesquita et al. on the connection between regime changes and policy failure. Their conclusions are extrapolated into a regime change theory by applying Lichbach's synthesis of why people rebel. See Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure and Political Survival," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, April 1999, 147–61. Mark Lichbach's *Rebel's Dilemma* remedies the controversy between Mancur Olson's collective action theory and Ted Gurr's deprived actor theory to offer a theory of collective dissent.

7. Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure," 148.

8. Italy is a parliamentary government with a multitude of parties. No single party enjoys a majority so that alliances between the parties dictate the winning coalition. These alliances are easily broken and new ones formed so that new coalitions are continually being formed, often resulting in new executive leadership.

9. Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure," 148.

10. Examples include North Korea, Cuba, China, Pakistan, and several African countries.

11. Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma,* 191.

12. Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure," 148–49.

13. Ibid., 150.

14. Ibid., 155.

15. Ibid., 150.

16. Bruce Bueno de Mequita and Randolph M. Siverson, "War and the Survival of Political Leaders: A Comparative Study of Regime Types and Political Accountability," *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 4 (December 1995): 843.

17. Bueno de Mesquita argues that autocracies with a large selectorate and a small winning coalition offer the most security to an incumbent regime. The selectorate represents the group within the population that is responsible for choosing the regime, and members have the possibility of becoming part of the ruling elite. The risk is very high for a member defecting from the small winning coalition because a large selectorate, such as the communist party, ensures that the chance of a defector finding or forming a new winning coalition that will compensate for the lost private goods is very low.

18. Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat*, 44.

19. See Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis,* 2d ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., 1999) for a description of other models of decision making.

20. Roger Benjamin, *Limits of Politics: Collective Goods and Political Change in Post-industrial Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 9.

21. Ibid., 11.

22. Ehrhard reverses Pape's model and expands the outcomes and mechanisms to incorporate effects from third parties and domestic politics. See Pape, *Bombing to Win* and Ehrhard, *Making the Connection*.

23. Mostafa Rejai, *Strategy of Political Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1973), 24–26.

24. Ibid., 24.

25. James Corum, "Chapter 4: The French Colonial Wars 1946–1962, Indochina and Algeria," in *Airpower and Small Wars* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

26. Bueno de Mesquita concludes that states with a large winning coalition enjoy greater economic growth than those with small winning coalitions. In states then with a small winning coalition, the economy is most likely already in shambles, and the majority of the citizenry experiences a very low level of aspiration. See Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure," 162.

27. Julian Tolbert, "Crony Attack: Strategic Attack's Silver Bullet?" (thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, June 2003).

28. J. F. C. Fuller, *Foundations of the Science of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1926), 116.

29. Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support of U.S. Operations* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), xv.

30. Mark Lorell and Charles Kelley Jr., *Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy during the Vietnam War* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1985), fig. 4, "Trends in public support for the Vietnam War," 19.

31. Corum, "Chapter 9: Intervention in the Mideast 1962–2000: Three Counterinsurgency Campaigns," in *Airpower and Small Wars* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

32. Louis Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 169.

33. Corum, "Intervention in the Mideast."

34. Editorial, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3 March 2003.

35. John Arquilla and Theodore Karasik, "Chechnya: A Glimpse of Future Conlict?" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 22 (1999): 217.

36. The United States was aware that a coup was being organized against the Diem government and made it known to the rival regime that it would not stop the coup and would support the new regime.

37. Luttwak describes these coup attempts in his section on Political Independence. Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat*, 38–44.

38. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Why Milosevic Capitulated in Kosovo," *New Leader*, 7 October 1999.

Chapter 3

The Causal Mechanism

The difficulty is that we are slaves of the past; like monkeys, we are obsessed by imitation; we are forever copying thoughts and actions without weighing their values or considering their results.

—J. F. C. Fuller, 1926

The previous chapter established that the key to changing a regime lies with its source of legitimacy and power, the winning coalition. Regardless of the type of regime, if the winning coalition is critically weakened or removed, then the regime has no basis for remaining in power, and a rival regime can rise up to replace it.

By inducing policy failure, the legitimacy of a regime may be weakened to the point where a rival regime becomes strong enough to overcome the incumbent. A regime change depends on the relative strength of the winning coalition and an opposition group. The mechanism is a description of how the winning coalitions are fractured, destroyed, or simply weakened through attacks on private or public goods.

The Mechanism

Early theorists anticipated that bombing a nation's population, especially its cities, would result in a popular revolt and associated uprising against the government to stop the bombing. Unfortunately, the theorists misunderstood the terror of bombing populations as a causal mechanism that connected bombing targets with an outcome of popular uprising. As a way to establish the linkage between military actions and policy outcomes, Robert Pape developed a framework of analysis that incorporates the concept of mechanism. According to Pape, "Mechanisms provide the intellectual guidance for operational air planners who then translate strategy into actual campaigns with the forces at their disposal."[1] At the simplest level, the mechanism provides a theoretical model explaining causality. Pape does not provide a detailed description of the mechanism and instead relies on general characterizations to illustrate the early airpower theorist's mechanisms.[2] Thomas Ehrhard developed a more comprehensive explanation of the mechanism concept by expanding John Pray's characterization of the mechanism as "a descriptive policy process model that shows how airpower action translates into policy outcomes—the critical linkage of ends and means."[3] He provides a more detailed explanation of causal mechanisms by dissecting the concept into three distinct elements. In this way, the causal mechanism is developed beyond the idea of a "black box"

where a target is hit and a political outcome results, where cause and effect remain indeterminate (fig. 3).

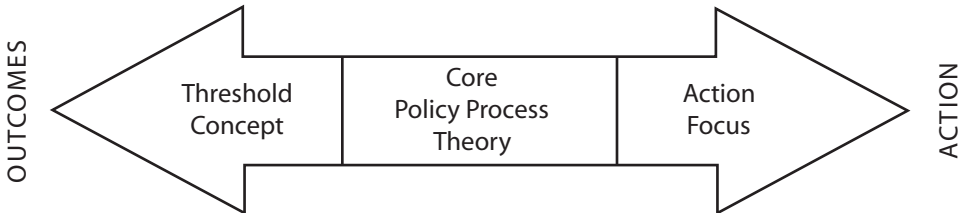

Figure 3. Ehrhard's Model. (Reprinted from Thomas Ehrhard, *Making the Connection: An Air Strategy Analysis Framework* [Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1996], 30.)

Because this thesis focuses on a mechanism for fracturing or eliminating the winning coalition, the core policy process theory is replaced with a theory of collective dissent proposed by Mark Lichbach. However, as Ehrhard points out, "mechanisms are not discrete and they interact and clash over time" so that consideration must be given for how attacks aimed at undermining the regime may equally undermine a rival coalition.[4] The next task, then, is to summarize the collective dissent theory and determine how airpower can be used to trigger the mechanism for undermining the winning coalition.

Dissent in the Winning Coalition

One of the strongest explanations for why people participate in dissent against governments and institutions is found in the deprived actor theory. This approach "maintains that deprivation produces discontent and that discontent, in turn, produces dissent." Ultimately, people's preferences, beliefs, and attitudes towards personal deprivation shape their desire to dissent against a regime or organization.[5] The purpose of attacking public and private goods is to cause deprivation for members of the winning coalition. Standing in apparent contrast to the deprived actor theory is Mancur Olson's seminal work, *The Logic of Collective Action.* The theory of collective action rests on the rational, microeconomic view that individuals will minimize personal costs through nonparticipation in collective dissent while still reaping the benefits of public goods.[6] Lichbach bridges this gap by proposing several solutions for enhancing collective dissent, or what he calls the rebel's dilemma, by merging the competing theories. He establishes baseline solutions using market theory and then discusses how a population's communal belief system, contractual institutions, and hierarchal institutions are all contexts within which the mechanism of collective dissent works.[7] Lichbach's solutions for collective dissent address the fundamental political conflict that exists between a regime and rival coalitions. Regimes recognize that to preserve their position they must prevent collective dissent and solve their own collective action problems.[8] The purpose then of attacking either public or private goods is to foster dissent and

introduce collective action problems for the winning coalition. The strategist must seek out dissenting solutions that will connect an airpower action on a particular good with the outcome of a weakened winning coalition.

One of Lichbach's solutions to collective dissent is to increase the dissident's belief in the probability of winning. For airpower, the purpose is to demonstrate to the winning coalition that the regime is *not* winning, and *decrease* its probability of success. Rational dissidents do not participate in losing causes, and if the regime is perceived as weak or losing, members of the winning coalition will be inclined to throw their support behind a different regime. In January 1968, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched the militarily disastrous Tet offensive against US and South Vietnamese forces. Yet, they gained a strategic victory against the United States by demonstrating to the American public that Johnson's military policy was *not* working and that the communists were *not* almost defeated as the president often claimed. The winning coalition was fractured, and Johnson was advised and chose not to seek reelection.[9] Another important factor in a dissenter's calculus is the amount and availability of external support. During the war over Kosovo, Milosevic was pressured by supporters to accept NATO's proposal and end the conflict in large part because Russia supported the proposal. Significant factors in this decision were Milosevic's and other Serbian leaders' perceptions that they could not win or even continue to resist. Serbian leaders understood that they "couldn't be reckless and risk elimination of the state, the army, and the people for the sake of rhetoric, and without any substantial support in the world."[10] Increasing a dissenter's probability of winning (or not losing) by abandoning the regime is one mechanism for undermining the winning coalition.

One of the contextual situations the strategist must consider involves the winning coalition's communal beliefs such as common values and knowledge. The mutual understanding that neighbors should help each other or a perception that we must "keep up with the Joneses" may affect whether or not individuals choose to dissent and support a rival regime. Additionally, culture may skew perceptions of cost and benefits. Lichbach turns to Harrison White and his description of Japanese culture to illustrate this point. "A considerable body of literature suggests that there is a cultural strain of romantic, death-defying (or even death-seeking), self-sacrificing, expressive radicalism in Japan. Rationality pales in this sphere; the deed becomes all; means that contradict the ostensible end become common; going down in flames becomes an end in itself."[11] This "self-sacrificing radicalism" could adversely impact strategies designed to deny private goods as means of increasing dissent among the winning coalition. On the other hand, this cultural phenomenon could also be used to the advantage of a rival regime in gathering collective support. History is replete with examples of how martyrs have been quite effective in rallying support for a dissident cause.

Finally, within a community of shared values and beliefs there exist contractual institutions that include formal structures, such as local govern-

ments and religious groups, as well as informal organizations such as families, tribes, and cultural affiliations.[12] These institutions provide refuge for potential dissident members of the winning coalition who may perceive a greater probability of making a difference within these groups. Collective dissent will depend on the member's perception of the effectiveness and utility of joining another group to resolve losses. As pressure increases on the winning coalition, members will conduct a cost-benefit analysis that will be influenced by their communal relations with other groups. In Vietnam, when the French were desperately trying to maintain control of the country, even French-educated Vietnamese within the government were inclined to dissent. According to a South Vietnamese official, "Almost everyone sympathized with the Vietminh and either had relatives who were fighting or were themselves supporting the struggle in some practical way."[13] A revolutionary movement is most likely to emerge when large numbers of people are alienated from the sociopolitical system, and there is an insurgent appeal to recapture community through revolutionary action.[14]

Airpower Action

Airpower offers the capability to attack a broad range of targets and inflict varying degrees of damage. As airpower theory has matured, the purpose of the attacks has evolved to creating strategic effects rather than just destroying targets. Whether attacking public or private goods, the purpose of airpower in changing regimes is to place pressure on the winning coalition and create tension among its members to cause disintegration. US Air Force doctrine identifies fundamental capabilities provided by airpower including air, space, and information superiority; precision engagement; global mobility; and global attack.[15] Drawing then on these core competencies, airpower can be applied against the various goods of the winning coalition.

Private goods and their relationship to members of the winning coalition are perhaps easiest understood since specific targets such as private businesses, homes, retreats and vacation spots, or government positions directly correspond to a member of the winning coalition. If the theory is valid, removal of these goods should adversely affect the will and determination of a member of the winning coalition to continue supporting the regime. During the 1999 Balkan War, NATO allies targeted private goods of specific Serbian supporters to pressure Milosevic to capitulate and eventually step down. The owners of the manufacturing facilities vulnerable to air strikes were undoubtedly among the most eager to get the bombing stopped. Indeed, part of NATO's purpose in attacking such factories was to prompt the "crony" owners of industrial facilities to pressure Milosevic to end the conflict.[16] Further, going beyond simple economic pressures, influential individuals can be threatened by air strikes such that they and their family feel unprotected by the regime. In Serbia "even the most privileged elite . . . could not evade some of the vicissitudes of the bombing, such as the trauma caused by the frequent and prolonged air raid warn-

ings."[17] However, a potential second order effect the air strategist must also anticipate results from members of the population who may or may not depend on the factory for their livelihood. The precision and lethality of airpower can be used to dramatically affect individual leaders through fear and death as long as the private good relationship is clearly established.

With large winning coalitions, the problem is somewhat more complex, though by no means more difficult. If anything, it is far easier to cause disintegration of the winning coalition when it is large because loyalty is more difficult to enforce, and members require very little incentive or dissatisfaction to abandon the winning coalition.[18] The complexity comes in identifying the correct public goods that will result in dissension among winning coalition members and not instead galvanize support for the incumbent. The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, while operationally devastating for the US military, served only to rally Americans around the president. Likewise, terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 propelled popular support to its highest levels ever for Pres. George W. Bush. As Ehrhard's model demonstrates, there is a threshold concept that must be considered. If terrorist attacks were to continue unabated, then public support for the president may indeed decrease because the public perceives that the president's security policies are failing.

When using airpower to undermine a large winning coalition, the focus should be on security and the economy. In 1991 Pres. George Bush led an international coalition in a decisive defeat of Iraq with remarkably few American casualties, only to be removed from office in elections a year and one-half later because the economy was performing poorly. Even worse is when an incumbent regime *initiates* military action when the winning coalition does not perceive a threat to national security that is then followed or accompanied by a poor economy or significant loss of life for the military or civilians.

The use of airpower against a large winning coalition will in most cases be indirect. The North Vietnamese did not have to demonstrate air superiority against the United States or even mount major air attacks. Fighter hit-and-run tactics against American aircraft as well as effective ground-based air defenses demonstrated North Vietnam's resolve and sustainability while continuing to exact casualties.[19] This is even more effective when the winning coalition's national security is not threatened and the costs of continuing action are increasing. Time works against a large winning coalition because the population has little tolerance for military action, casualties, and a failing economy when national security is not an issue. What captures or destroys popular support is an ideology that is fostered and promulgated by organizations and competent leadership. Rejai writes, "Ideology seeks to relate specific patterns of action to the realization of goals and values."[20] The key to creating disloyalty within a large winning coalition is to use airpower to demonstrate resolve, persistence, and a greater ideological purpose against the incumbent regime, such as defense against aggression. In North Vietnam Gen Vo Nguyen

Giap's advice for a strategy against the United States focused on time and ideology. "Only a long-term war enables us to utilize to the maximum *our political trump cards*, to overcome our disadvantages in war materiel, and to transform our weakness into strength. . . . Thousands of small victories accumulate into a great triumph" (emphasis in original).[21]

Conclusion

The purpose of this project is not to identify specific targets, but to provide a conceptual framework to focus in-depth intelligence and analysis and to connect potential targets with a desired outcome. To extract specific targets from the private and public goods requires a thorough understanding of the regime and the population. Understanding the nature of the regime is the first step in identifying a set of targets. Regimes exist because they have established legitimacy through a winning coalition. One mechanism for changing the regime is to allow another coalition to gain relative power by decreasing, fracturing, or eliminating the winning coalition. The larger the winning coalition, the more public goods (public services, security, economy) are important to the legitimacy of the government. Conversely, the smaller the winning coalition, the less public goods are a concern of the regime and the more private goods become important to the winning coalition. Contextual elements such as domestic political conditions and the existence of external support are used to distinguish categories of public and private goods. From these categories, specific private and public goods can be targeted by airpower to weaken the winning coalition. This mechanism provides the conceptual link between attacking a certain good with airpower and achieving this outcome.

Notes

1. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 56.
2. Ibid., table 4, 57.
3. Ehrhard, *Making the Connection*, 29. Ehrhard used Pray's description of the mechanism as the starting point for developing a model of the mechanism that incorporates his concepts of third party and domestic outcomes.
4. Ibid., 30.
5. Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma*, 4.
6. Mancur Olson is regarded as the leading authority on collective action and group theory and logic; see *Logic of Collective Action* (New York: Schoken Books, 1968).
7. Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma*, 109.
8. Ibid., 22.
9. Bruce E. Altschuler, *American Presidency: A New Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 97.
10. Hosmer, *Conflict Over Kosovo*, 94.
11. Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma*, 123.
12. For a complete analysis of this context, see ibid., chap. 5.
13. Truong Nhu Tang, *Viet Cong Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 28.
14. Rejai, *Strategy of Political Revolution*, 25.

15. Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1 provides a complete description of the Air Force core competencies. AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine,* 1 September 1997.

16. Hosmer, *Conflict Over Kosovo*, 75.

17. Ibid., 73.

18. Bueno de Mesquita established that large winning coalitions are characteristic of a democratic-type regime where members of the winning coalition are easily swayed by popular support and lose very little when abandoning the winning coalition.

19. Lon O. Nordeen gives a good summary of MiG tactics against American fighters in *Air Warfare in the Missile Age*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 22–25.

20. Rejai identifies five "manipulables" that are needed to foster political revolution. They are leadership, ideology, organization, terror and violence, and the international situation. See Rejai, *Strategy of Political Revolution*, 29–40.

21. William Warbey, *Ho Chi Minh* (London: Merlin Press, 1972), 157.

Chapter 4

American Regime Change

Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.

—Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson, 1968

The 1960s stand out as a watershed period in American history. From the race to the moon, to sweeping social reforms, to Cold War crises and, importantly for this thesis, the Vietnam War, Americans experienced the most turbulent and divisive period in US history since the Civil War. The concentration of significant events sets this decade apart from just about any other in American history. Spanning the heart of this decade is the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson and the subsequent regime change that took place during the elections of 1968. The change began on 31 March 1968, when President Johnson addressed the people of the United States of America to announce a de-escalation of hostilities in Vietnam and his decision not to seek reelection. In the context of these momentous events, this thesis focuses on that change of regime and seeks to test the hypothesis that democratic regimes are subject to change by targeting public goods.

Lyndon Johnson began and ended his term as the 36th president of the United States under the most tragic of circumstances. He succeeded to the presidency following the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963, and he demonstrated tremendous leadership, knowing instinctively "that the American people would have to be rallied when the shock of the assassination wore off."[1] His address to Congress the day before Thanksgiving called on Americans "not to hesitate, not to pause, not to turn about and linger over this evil moment" but rather to press forward and to "turn away from the fanatics of the far left and the far right, from the apostles of bitterness and bigotry, from those defiant of law."[2] Johnson, capitalizing on his more than 30 years of experience in Washington and his reputation as a major power broker within Congress, was able to accomplish much of the legislation that had eluded Kennedy, including the Civil Rights Act and an $11.5 billion tax-reduction program. In 1964 Johnson's ability to build consensus resulted in an impressive record for the final session of the 88th Congress as he turned Kennedy's legislative program into his vision for a Great Society.[3] But the final piece of legislation that bolstered Johnson's standing among the American people was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

Much like Korea in 1950, Vietnam in 1964 was virtually an unknown to the American people. A former colony and part of French Indochina, Vietnam under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh officially declared its independence on 2 September 1945, and affirmed its decision in January 1946 "by

the most democratic elections ever held in a country emerging from colonial oppression, war and revolution."[4] Unknown to the Vietnamese, however, was the intervention of great power politics at the Potsdam conference in 1945, which sowed the seeds for the Cold War between communism and democracy and shrouded Vietnam's war for independence. The result was a divided Vietnam with the South becoming a bastion for Western democracy against the tide of expanding communism as embodied in the work and practices of Mao Tse-Tung, Joseph Stalin, and Ho Chi Minh. At the Geneva Conference in 1954, which followed the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam was recognized as one nation and one state possessing all the full attributes of sovereignty.

Unfortunately, because of continuing Western intervention in the South, there existed two rival political authorities that each claimed sovereignty over the country. The solution for political unification was to hold nationwide elections not later than July 1956.[5] Those elections never took place, and the United States steadily took on a more active role to prop up an unpopular, but noncommunist South Vietnamese government.[6] By 1964 President Johnson recognized that if the United States did not take a more active role, the South Vietnamese government would fall, and Vietnam would become united under a communist government.

The Regime

The elections of 1964 swept Johnson and a new administration into office in one of the most decisive elections since Franklin D. Roosevelt's reelection in 1936. Johnson gained 61.1 percent of the popular vote and enjoyed a commanding lead of nearly 16 million popular votes over his rival Barry Goldwater. The use of the popular vote to measure the size of the winning coalition is more useful than the representative process of the Electoral College. Popular vote numbers are especially significant when considering the importance politicians place on polling surveys. Political scientist Herbert Asher wrote, "Polling has become an integral part of political events at the national, state and local levels. There is seldom a major event or decision in which poll results are not a part of the news media's coverage and the decision maker's deliberations."[7] Likewise, President Johnson relied heavily on polls as a way to measure popular support and, in turn, the size of the winning coalition.

In 1964 Johnson's winning coalition consisted of more than 43 million people, while the total population that voted was around 70 million people. These numbers are significant for two reasons. First, the large number of people in the winning coalition indicates that public goods would need to be targeted to cause failure of the Johnson regime. Second, the relative strength of the winning coalition compared to the number of voters indicates how much pressure would need to be applied to the public goods to tip the balance against the incumbent regime. The results of the election demonstrated that there was wide support for Johnson and his current

policies. His legislative successes in Congress and anticipation for the Great Society, the booming economy, and perceived international security gave the American people good reason to believe that Johnson would be a competent leader.

The Vietnamese Strategy

At no time did the Vietcong or the North Vietnamese publicly declare their intent to change the Johnson administration. Their strategy was focused on the removal of American forces in South Vietnam so that the process of reunification and independence could be completed. The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong understood almost intuitively that the way to *strategically* defeat US forces in Vietnam was through the American people. Ho Chi Minh continually directed his speeches at the American people independent of the "American Imperialists" in a clever strategy to isolate the US president from his winning coalition. In an address to the National Assembly in 1965, Ho Chi Minh described the tragedy of American intervention in Vietnam.

> The American people have been duped by the propaganda of their government, which has extorted from them billions of dollars to throw into the crater of the war. Thousands of American youths—their sons and brothers—have met a tragic death or have been pitifully wounded on the Vietnamese battlefields thousands of miles from the United States. At present, many mass organizations and individuals in the United States are demanding that their government at once stop this unjust war and withdraw U.S. troops from South Vietnam. Our people are resolved to drive away the U.S. imperialists, our sworn enemy. But we always express our friendship with the progressive American people.[8]

This excerpt captures the essence of Vietnamese strategy: make the war so costly in terms of the economy, lives lost, and popular opinion that President Johnson would be forced to change his policies to remain in office.

In the revolutionary tradition of Mao Tse-Tung, the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese adopted a long-term perspective on their struggle for independence. In contrast to the American perspective that the Vietnam *conflict* was a short, limited military action, the Vietnamese were fighting a *war* for national survival. "Our people are determined to persevere in the fight, and to undergo sacrifices for ten or twenty years or a longer time, till final victory, because there is nothing more valuable than independence and freedom."[9] By making the conflict very costly through protracted warfare, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese intended to create sufficient public-policy failures that would pressure the United States government into withdrawing from Vietnam. Interestingly enough, while the Vietcong viewed the American elections of 1968 as a triumph of their strategy, they also recognized that the newly elected president would prove an "obdurate opponent."[10] To the dismay of the Vietnamese, their strategy had worked to change American policy and the incumbent president, but their ultimate

objective of independence and reunification would not be achieved for almost another decade and under very different circumstances.

Hypothesis 1: *Regimes with a large winning coalition are weakened primarily through failure of public goods policies.*

National Economy

As asserted in the theory, targeting public goods is a way to undermine the legitimacy of a democratic regime. A review of the United States in the period of 1964 to 1968 reveals many public goods that could be targeted to cause Johnson's regime to fail. The first significant public good is the economy. "Though the president's ability to manage the economy is minimal at best, the public nevertheless holds him personally accountable for the state of the economy."[11]

It takes more than a failing economy, however, to undermine the coalition. There must exist a relative disparity between how the economy used to be and current economic conditions or projections that are attributed to the regime's policies. Roosevelt enjoyed tremendous popularity in 1936 when the American economy was still mired in a depression because Americans were not worse off than they were before, and they did not believe Roosevelt was the problem.

In 1966, however, despite Johnson's landslide election in 1964 and the series of major legislative triumphs between 1963 and the end of 1965, the increasing cost of the Vietnam War and the souring economy took their toll on Johnson's popularity.[12] By the end of 1966, Johnson was trapped in a war he could not afford and was facing an American population increasingly dissatisfied with growing inflation.[13]

National Security

Another public good during this period that significantly undermined the Johnson regime involved the casualties resulting from the Vietnam War. In a war with seemingly no end in sight, thousands of Americans and Vietnamese were losing their lives. A study of both the Korean and Vietnamese Wars conducted by John E. Mueller concluded that every time US casualties went up by a factor of 10, support in both wars decreased by approximately 15 percent.[14] Similarly, a more thorough study conducted by Jeffrey Milstein found that "the most significant costs to the American people were the number of American 'boys' killed and wounded in Vietnam. . . . The more casualties incurred, the more the public disapproved of the President and his Vietnam policy."[15] For the "Whiz Kids" at the Department of Defense, body counts became a measure of combat success, while for the American public they were anathema to the way Americans were supposed to fight wars.[16] Wayne Morse, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was scathing in his critique of Johnson; "We have violated the Geneva Accords and the UN Charter. We are pursuing neither law nor peace in Southeast Asia. We are not even pursuing free-

dom. We are maintaining a military dictatorship over the people of South Vietnam headed by an American puppet to whom we give the orders and who moves only under our orders."[17] Furthermore, television provided Americans with instant photographic reportage as wives and mothers were said to see their husbands and sons killed or wounded as they sat with their families after supper.[18] Clearly, President Johnson faced mounting opposition and dissatisfaction among the American people over his Vietnam policies and the increasing number of casualties.

Beyond those areas already identified, there were certain psychological and social conditions in America that worked to undermine the Johnson regime as well. Psychologically, American support for the war in Southeast Asia began to wane as it became more and more apparent that the United States was waging a limited war for the ill-defined objective of containment. The population concluded that it was not worth sacrificing American blood and treasure in this type of war. "Americans were not called to fight a heroic battle with the forces of Nazi evil but to suffer a nasty little war which could not be won and was now hated by many decent Americans."[19] President Johnson's obsession with his Great Society drove his decisions to hide increasing troop deployments and downplay American involvement in Vietnam. Even more disastrously, the administration exaggerated the ability of the South Vietnamese to resist the Vietcong or even simply to govern themselves.

The most dramatic example of American frustration over the war and a turning point for the Johnson administration was the Tet offensive in January 1968. Not only were the Vietcong and North Vietnamese not giving up as Johnson claimed, they were actually mounting a massive counterattack as part of a political and psychological strategy aimed at undermining American popular support for the war. While Tet and the related offensives in the spring and summer of 1968 exacted a heavy casualty toll for the Vietcong and the National Liberation Front, these actions "had also awakened what appeared to be a critical and growing divisiveness in American public opinion."[20] Consequently, the Vietcong were also undermining popular support for the Johnson administration. When Johnson announced that he would not run for reelection, there was little doubt in the minds of those in the National Liberation Front "that the domestic pressure stimulated by . . . persistent military action was largely responsible."[21]

Public Services

The Vietcong and North Vietnamese did not have direct access to public services in the United States. Through their propaganda campaign, however, they were able to concentrate on the psychological impact of the war and help to incite further protests against the administration.

Additionally, this extremely volatile period of time was marked with demonstrations and marches in protest of civil rights, women's rights, student's rights, and numerous other social issues. As the nation appeared to be dividing and turning upon itself, it was difficult to determine who

was against what, and a sense of helplessness, impatience, shame, disgust, and racial hatred pervaded the nation.[22] The leading causes were racial inequalities and, of course, the Vietnam War. "Johnson could not do much except appoint the Kerner Commission to investigate civil disorders. Crime and violence in the streets continued to increase. Suburbanites armed themselves as if they were living alone on a dangerous frontier. This and much more was seen as evidence of a sick disoriented society, and the ability of the federal government to do anything about it was in question."[23] Increasingly, people felt less secure because of riots and violent demonstrations, and President Johnson was again faced with decreasing popularity as a result.

Hypothesis 3: *All regimes are weakened through failure to provide external goods.*

External Goods

The final good undermined during the Vietnam War, and a particular focus of the Vietnamese strategy, was Western satisfaction with the United States' participation in the war. The United States entered the Vietnam War shortly after World War II, beginning with an advisory role and slowly escalating to offensive combat operations by 1964.[24] Even up to the point of sending combat troops, the United States enjoyed wide support from Western nations. But as the war dragged on and the nature of the South Vietnamese government became more apparent, it became evident that the Americans were not going to be able to simply contain communism, and international support evaporated.

Rolling Thunder, which was the centerpiece of Johnson's coercive efforts to convince North Vietnam to stop supporting the Viet Cong, sought to incrementally ratchet up the pressure on Hanoi through bombing. Unfortunately, as Mark Clodfelter details, "Rolling Thunder helped to create an unfavorable impression of America abroad and to wreck the President's designs for a Great Society." In 1966 and again in 1967, France, Britain, and India denounced bombing raids on oil storage facilities and power plants.[25] By 1968 few of America's traditional allies were still committed to supporting President Johnson.

> France was actively opposed. The smaller Western European countries were appalled, and Sweden was ready to grant political asylum to American deserters. For their own reasons, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore were reluctant but frightened allies or friends. They did not like the war, but were afraid of a precipitate American withdrawal that would have left them more or less defenseless. Apart from these countries, the only firm support enjoyed by the United States came from the military governments of Taiwan and South Korea.[26]

The American public reacted to the lack of international support with protests that more and more focused on a failed policy in Vietnam. "In the United States, student protestors castigated Rolling Thunder, and in Octo-

ber 1967 thirty Congressmen sent Johnson an open letter urging him to stop the bombing."[27] Johnson had failed to demonstrate to the democratic nations of the world that the United States could stop communism. The lack of external support for the Vietnam War, in concert with the attacks on public goods, would ultimately drive Johnson's announcement on 31 March 1968 not to seek reelection, to halt the bombing, and to begin an American withdrawal from Vietnam.

Private Goods

While the previous discussions reveal that the Johnson administration was primarily susceptible to attacks against public goods, there were instances of his failure to provide private goods as well. Much like a medieval monarch, presidents wield power in their own right, are surrounded by courts or entourages, and reward their supporters with special positions or privileges.[28] There were many key supporters and elected officials whose reputations and positions had been jeopardized by Johnson's policies. The midterm elections of 1966 were a blow to the Democratic Party, which suffered losses in both houses of Congress and in state elections. Johnson bore some of the responsibility for these losses by canceling campaign appearances in 20 cities and 15 states. While he still had the formal allegiance of the party, the Democrats were losing their unity. "They were becoming Johnson men or Kennedy men, or followers of a lesser man who could afford to wait until the victor emerged."[29] In many cases the reputations and political survival of elected officials and political appointees were tied to Johnson's success or failure.

Prior to becoming vice president, Johnson served for decades as a congressman and senator. Formerly a powerful senator, when he became president, he viewed himself more as a prime minister dedicated to achieving consensus and responsible to his supporters in the Congress than as the president responsible to the American public. In large measure this was the secret behind the successful passage of many of his Great Society programs. Johnson was a wheeler and dealer who intimately understood the bureaucratic games necessary to succeed in Washington. Yet, for all the power he wielded politically, he was unable to overcome failed public policies. Political promises and power brokering were insufficient to account for public outcries to Congress. Consequently, by 1968 many Johnson supporters, inside and out of Congress, shifted their allegiance to rival candidates within the party who promised to address the failed public policies of the Johnson administration.

Analysis

The decision by President Johnson in 1968 not to seek reelection and the subsequent defeat of Vice Pres. Hubert Humphrey provides a robust example of a regime change in a democracy. The previous sections detailed

how attacks primarily on various public and external goods, with some loss of private goods, undermined the winning coalition's support for the Johnson regime. This conclusion is reflected in statements by a distinguished group of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish clergyman known as Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. They met in Washington to protest the brutality of the war stating,

> American conduct in Vietnam is condemned by those very standards of conduct which we imposed on a defeated enemy in the Nuremberg trial. . . . Any nation that cherishes the religious heritage that America claims should set for itself particularly high standards of moral constraint, far beyond the minimum demanded by international law, and yet the awful truth is that on occasion after occasion we have failed in Vietnam to observe even these minimal standards.[30]

By highlighting what had increasingly become a moral issue for Americans, the clergymen were declaring to Johnson and members of Congress that they no longer supported the current administration and that they were encouraging others to change their votes as well.

This change in the winning coalition was most clearly demonstrated in the New Hampshire primary election on 12 March 1968. Even though Johnson had not yet declared his candidacy for president, his narrow defeat of Senator Eugene McCarthy was an obvious sign that he had lost his overwhelming support from 1964. In fact, the entire political climate had changed overnight as the electoral process revealed the true temper of the country for the first time. While not all of it was antiwar vote, "Johnson's political future was gravely threatened."[31] Clearly, the winning coalition that had ushered the Johnson regime into office was decreasing in size as more and more people cast their votes for other candidates and even other parties.

Further fracture of the winning coalition was evident when several other challengers for the Democratic nomination emerged but never gained a decisive advantage. Robert F. Kennedy, a persistent challenger to Johnson, gained popularity over the course of Johnson's tenure as he steadily increased his attacks on the president. In March 1968 he declared, "It is clear that the only way we are going to change our policy in Vietnam is to change the administration in Washington."[32] Tragically, in the summer of 1968, an assassin cut Kennedy's pursuit of the presidency short. In addition to Senator McCarthy, mentioned above, George C. Wallace, a former governor of Alabama, was also gaining attention among segregationists in the country. His candidacy in conjunction with McCarthy's served to split the Democrats and draw support away from the incumbent candidate, Vice Pres. Hubert Humphrey.

Even among Johnson's advocates and personal advisors support was waning. "The failure in New Hampshire, followed by Robert Kennedy's declaration of candidacy, caused considerable apprehension among Johnson's advisors."[33] In a meeting with the "Wise Men" at the end of March, Johnson was repeatedly advised to halt the bombing and disengage from Vietnam.[34] These men represented a wealth of experience from several administrations

and were not motivated by any particular allegiance to Johnson. Johnson's strategy for Vietnam had failed, and now his outlook for reelection looked very grim. London *Times* editor Louis Heren summarized Lyndon Johnson's predicament best:

> No one knows for certain why Johnson changed his mind on Vietnam or decided not to run for reelection. Certainly there were several factors. There was the awful thought of years of war and the bitter knowledge that American strategy had failed. The public was aroused, and abroad American prestige could not have been lower. The Democratic party was deeply divided by McCarthy's and Kennedy's candidacies, and the coming campaign trail looked like another battlefield.[35]

Clearly, the president's evaluation of the winning coalition that had put him into office convinced him that his regime had lost the support it needed to pursue reelection.

By November 1968 a decidedly different winning coalition had emerged, and a new regime was ushered into office. The opposition that ultimately succeeded in replacing the Johnson regime was the Republican coalition of Richard M. Nixon. While Nixon gained a meager 43 percent of the popular vote and his winning coalition was slightly more than 500,000 votes larger than the rival coalition, he had overcome the nearly 16 million vote advantage that Johnson and Humphrey enjoyed in 1964. As the theory predicts, attacks on various public goods by the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese were mainly responsible for the American regime change.

Notes

1. Louis Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 16.
2. Ibid., 23.
3. Ibid., 34.
4. Warbey, *Ho Chi Minh*, vi.
5. Ibid., 90.
6. The United States and South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem had no intention of holding general elections because Ho Chi Minh and the communist Vietminh were very popular and would have easily won any statewide free election.
7. Bruce E. Altschuler, *LBJ and the Polls* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1990), xi, quoting Herbert Asher, *Polling and the Public* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1988), 2.
8. Ho Chi Minh, *On Revolution: Selected Writings, 1920–66*, ed. Bernard B. Fall (New York: Praeger, 1967), 361.
9. Ho Chi Minh interviewed by British journalist Felix Greene in ibid., 368.
10. Tang, *VietCong Memoir*, 144.
11. Altschuler, *American Presidency*, 61, quoting James W. Davis, *American Presidency: A New Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 361.
12. Altschuler, *American Presidency*, xiv.
13. "An overwhelming 86 percent rated Johnson unfavorably on inflation." Ibid., 65.
14. Mark Lorell and Charles Kelley Jr., *Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy during the Vietnam War* (RAND Corporation, March 1985), 21.
15. Ibid., 21, quoting Jeffery Milstein, *Dynamics of the Vietnam War: A Quantitative Analysis and Predictive Computer Simulation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), 55.

16. The *Whiz Kids* is a term applied to the group of young academic bureaucrats brought in during Kennedy's administration. This group relied on statistical analysis and process theory to develop strategy and measure success.
17. Warbey, *Ho Chi Minh*, 229.
18. Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell*, 148.
19. Ibid., 171.
20. Tang, *A VietCong Memoir*, 142.
21. Ibid., 143.
22. Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell*, 170.
23. Ibid., 169.
24. Ironically, during World War II, the United States supported Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh (later to become the Vietcong) as part of the Allies' effort to defeat Japan in the Pacific. Immediately after Potsdam, the United States began sending advisors in support of a southern government to oppose Ho Chi Minh and his communist ideology. In 1961 Kennedy sent American military personnel in what was supposed to be an advisory role only, though many soldiers and Airmen participated in combat operations. Finally, in 1964, when it became evident that the southern government was going to fall, Johnson dramatically increased American presence and authorized combat operations.
25. Mark Clodfelter, *Limits of Airpower* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 142.
26. Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell*, 184.
27. Clodfelter, *Limits of Airpower*, 142.
28. Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell*, 130.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 190.
31. Ibid., 193.
32. Ibid., 195.
33. Altschuler, *American Presidency*, 97.
34. These advisors were the cream of the American establishment and "had advised presidents and helped to formulate and apply policy from the earliest days of the country's superpower responsibilities." Heren lists their names, which he says, "read like a roll call of American leadership." Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell*, 202.
35. Ibid.

Chapter 5

South Vietnamese Regime Change

I am the elected president of the nation. I am ready to resign publicly, and I am also ready to leave the country. But I ask you to reserve for me the honors due a departing president.

—Ngo Dinh Diem, 1963

On 2 November 1963, South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother were brutally assassinated in a grim ending to the military coup conducted by generals formally loyal to the regime. For more than nine years, Diem had served as the purported democratically elected president of South Vietnam while his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, headed the only authorized political party in the country. Over the course of his presidency, Diem sought to build and strengthen a viable Vietnamese government in the south that could serve as a nationalist rival to the communist government of Ho Chi Minh in the north. Though the struggle for Vietnamese independence presents a complicated study in international relations and Cold War politics, the story behind Diem's tragic fall from power resounds with a simple familiarity found in other autocratic regimes. Fearing a loss of power, Diem and Nhu created a repressive government that became increasingly isolated from its supporters, the population, and the international community. Even the United States, which had hailed Diem as the "Churchill of the decade,"[1] withdrew its support and casually turned a blind eye when Gen Tran Van Don, commander of the South Vietnamese army, set about to overthrow the Diem government. The events leading up to the coup, therefore, provide insights into the proposed theory for regime change.

Stanley Karnow describes Ngo Dinh Diem as an "ascetic Catholic steeped in Confucian tradition, a mixture of monk and mandarin, [who] was honest, courageous, and fervent in his fidelity to Vietnam's national cause."[2] Following in the footsteps of his mandarin father, Diem began his political career at the age of 25 with an appointment by the French to be the provincial governor for Phan Thiet. His performance during this period, and his opposition to communist propagandists in his province, gained him a position as minister of interior for the recently installed Emperor Bao Dai in 1933. However, Diem had developed an interest in reforming nationalist politics during his time as governor, and he pressed the French to invest real influence in a Vietnamese legislature. His demands were rebuffed, and he resigned in disgust after only three months.[3] Returning to politics during World War II, he was then spurned by the occupying Japanese in his bid for prime minister and an independent Vietnam. Diem's staunch nationalism, ascetic Catholicism, and willingness to work with the Japanese resulted in harassment from the French and hatred by the Vietminh.

After the war, Diem rejected Ho Chi Minh's personal invitation to cooperate in securing independence for Vietnam and instead attempted to gain national support for himself. But Diem was no Ho Chi Minh, and he managed only to incur a death sentence from the Vietminh, which forced him to leave the country "ostensibly to attend the Holy Year celebration at the Vatican."[4] He would not return to Vietnam until June 1954, when he was appointed prime minister by Bao Dai in an attempt to shore up the nationalist government following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

During his absence, Diem spent time in the United States where he gained the attention of several prominent Americans including Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York and Senator John F. Kennedy. By opposing both Communist domination and French colonialism, Diem claimed to be a true nationalist. His thesis was simple and compelling: if colonialism were ended and Vietnam given a truly nationalist government, then the Communist Vietminh could be defeated.[5] Unacknowledged by American politicians at this time, however, were Diem's autocratic ambitions summarized in his belief that "a sacred respect is due the person of the sovereign. . . . He is the mediator between the people and heaven as he celebrates the national cult."[6] With the Cold War well under way, what the United States wanted more than democracy was a Vietnamese government that was anticommunist—and Diem appeared to be the only viable candidate.

The Regime

Following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, conferences were held in Geneva to decide the fate of Vietnam. While the Vietminh had demonstrated their effectiveness and legitimacy as a government for the Vietnamese people, the noncommunist Vietnamese leaders of Bao Dai's national government were unwilling to yield their sovereignty. Layered on top of this were the real politics of the Cold War and an American obsession with containing communism. After two months of negotiation among the great powers and representatives from the countries of Indochina, the compromise solution was the recognition of an independent Vietnam divided temporarily at the 17th parallel. The division recalled the postwar division at the 16th parallel of occupied Vietnam, only this time instead of the French it was the United States, which had blithely assumed the mantle of responsibility for supporting the noncommunist government.[7]

In Vietnam, Diem's brother Nhu was forming a coalition of active political forces called the Front for National Salvation composed of the organized Catholics, the Dai Viet, and other national groups. "The Front demanded a new regime to fight Communism, and groups that Diem soon afterward moved to destroy now demanded that he be called upon to head this new regime."[8] With an implied understanding of support from the United States, Bao Dai appointed Diem as the prime minister of the State of Vietnam and conferred on him full civilian and military powers. Diem had become the anointed leader of Vietnamese nationalist forces opposing the spread of

communism, but it was neither a coalition of Vietnamese, American, Catholic, nor French promoters that had cleared the road to power for Diem. "He was carried into office by the tide of events."[9] To remain in office, Diem quickly set about securing his power by consolidating his government and gaining loyalty from the military and government officials.

Diem inherited a demoralized country and a loosely organized political front with many factions competing for power. His first steps were to establish security by gaining control of the police, the nationalist army, and the armies of the sects. This was accomplished through deception and large monetary incentives from Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funds, as Diem and his US military advisors played the various sects against one another to buy the allegiance of their armies. Consequently, leaders from the two largest sects, the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai, joined the Diem government that they had been plotting to overthrow.[10] Similarly, Diem gained the support and dedication of some of the rising leaders of the nationalist army by first casting off French control and then enticing loyal officers with prospects for promotion and command.[11] Finally, with his newly consolidated army, Diem wrested control of Saigon from the Binh Xuyen, a criminal mob syndicate that controlled the police forces in the city and had instigated uprisings against the government. Thus, Diem gained tenuous support from the army and police forces and now needed to shore up his power within the government.

During the uprising of the sects and the Binh Xuyen, several members of Diem's government resigned in protest. This presented Diem with the opportunity to now limit his cabinet to members of his family and close personal friends and offer vacant posts to sect leaders ready to "sell out."[12] The rest of Diem's support was a product of the 1954 Geneva agreements that allowed for free movement either north or south so that individuals could live in whichever zone they preferred. With the help of US propaganda and military transportation, nearly a million Vietnamese, mostly Catholic, were encouraged to flee to the south. "The refugees from the north were to furnish Diem with a fiercely anti-Communist constituency in the south, and thus their exodus was politically important."[13] Diem is often credited with a highly successful resettlement program for the refugees once they arrived in the south, but again, there was strong political motivation for him to gain their support as well as an abundance of aid from the United States to underwrite the effort. In building his government, Diem turned to the Catholic community for reliable individuals to control the townships on his behalf, especially in the formerly Communist controlled central provinces of Annam.[14] Like any regime, the winning coalition that brought Diem to power was based on a complex combination of external influences and nationalist forces, and it was the deterioration of that coalition that would see him ousted from power.

The Coup Strategy

Much like Diem's rise to power, it is difficult to describe the coup d'etat in 1963 as a well-thought-out plan. In fact, the generals plotting the coup were in many ways simply the interim benefactors of efforts conducted by several revolutionary forces in the south. The National Liberation Front, pejoratively labeled the Vietcong, was fighting against the South Vietnamese government for reform and liberation from the repressive practices of Diem's regime.[15] The NLF was born out of the former Vietminh infrastructure and brought together various anti-Diem factions in the south. Their strategy was to simultaneously confront the enemy in the field, mobilize domestic support while undermining Diem's, and gather allies internationally.[16] Similarly, the Buddhist population, reacting to increasing persecution from Diem's primarily Catholic government, also chose to revolt. Their actions, combined with those of the Vietcong and the army, gave rise to the various events that precipitated the coup. These events also correlate with the proposed theory of regime change as each group's actions undermined the coalition responsible for maintaining Diem in power.

Hypothesis 2: *Regimes with a small winning coalition are weakened primarily through failure of private goods policies.*

Personal Wealth

Throughout the years of their regime, Diem and his brother relied on monetary incentives to gain allegiance to their new government. Whether gathering support among sects and factions or creating security forces to protect the regime, Diem's government demonstrated little restraint in using siphoned off economic aid to attract loyalists.[17] But the regime's corrupt practices eventually bankrupted the country, and potential loyalists found few incentives to continue working for the government. As a result of guerilla tactics by the Vietcong, the secretaries of state and more than half of the public officials found themselves with no security and meager pay, and their only criterion for making decisions was to avoid displeasing the president.[18] Members of the armed forces were equally disenfranchised and saw little reason to risk their lives or their positions in defense of a thankless regime. Consequently, they became quite ambivalent and rather inept at fighting the Vietcong and other anti-Diem factions.

Further, the generals also recognized that their funding and support had more to do with American intervention than Diem's benevolence. In fact, after Gen Tran Van Don, one of the organizers of the coup, revealed the generals' intentions to American military advisors, the United States pledged economic support. American ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, proposed "that the rebel generals be 'discreetly' furnished with U.S. funds 'to buy off potential opposition,' and he further recommended that they be promptly rewarded with American recognition and aid after they overthrew Diem."[19] Similarly, an American strategy to divert

Colonel Tung's special forces, whose 5,000 men were sure to defend the Ngo brothers, involved depriving them of their funding unless they deployed outside Saigon.[20] Additionally, the United States withheld funds used to pay the army "not to bind it closer to the President as in former days, but to incite it to mutiny."[21] Steadily, Diem's winning coalition was being eroded because insufficient funds were available to purchase loyalty.

Personal Security

When Diem came to power, his number one priority was to gain control of South Vietnam's security apparatus. Against most predictions, he accomplished this task in short order and established a relatively competent security force. By 1963, however, years of corruption had incited popular revolts and protest against the government so that many officials no longer felt safe or protected by Diem's regime. The Vietcong were effective at undermining allegiance to Diem by terrorizing village officials such that they only left their garrisons in the daytime to visit their villages. "The psychological effect of this terrorization of notables was, of course, to convince all the villagers that nobody was safe if their leaders were not."[22] Additionally, Diem's policies had done little to arrest the growing influence of the Vietcong and had instead forced many nationalist forces to join their ranks for no other reason than to seek refuge from persecution.[23]

The guerilla tactics were also quite effective against Diem's armies that were increasingly frustrated and cowed by their inability to defeat the Vietcong. In keeping with the teachings and practices of Ho Chi Minh, the aim of the Vietcong in attacking the security forces was not simply to capture weapons, but even more to "win domination over the people the weapons were supposed to protect."[24] The first major battle for the Vietnamese army against the Vietcong occurred at Ap Bac in January 1963 where the ineffectiveness of the US-supported Vietnamese army was revealed and the increasing lack of loyalty for Diem's regime highlighted. The South Vietnamese army was ill-trained to counter the Vietcong guerilla force, and its pusillanimous officer corps was ill-equipped to aggressively lead the army in battle.[25] "Desertions were too numerous to be ignored and morale unbelievably low. Because of the inefficiency and corruption of their officers, the troops were poorly cared for and frequently had to steal food."[26] The very forces Diem depended on to provide security for himself and his appointees was disintegrating and deserting to the Vietcong.

Similarly, loyalists to the regime began to realize that Diem was more concerned with his own security than protecting his supporters or defeating communist threats. "The regime, in fact, had no real base of political support and relied on the loyalty of a handful of key military commanders to keep it in power by forestalling any overthrow.[27] By the fall of 1963, Vietcong terrorism coupled with ongoing Buddhist protests created social upheaval and increased violence in South Vietnam such that few people, including those closest to Diem, felt secure under his governance. In particular, the public officials and generals Diem had selected to occupy key

positions in the government began to turn against the regime, forming the genesis of a coup. After an aborted coup, many of Diem's former disciples began to plot against him. Dr. Tran Kim Tuyen, Diem's secret police chief, quietly consulted with military and civilian officials, and organized a group of young colonels eager to stage a coup.[28]

Privileges

In addition to providing monetary incentives and security, Diem also gained the loyalty of Vietnamese officials and army officers by offering special privileges and positions within the government. Previous coup attempts had failed because officers and officials loyal to Diem sought out further promotion and recognition by defending the president. One attempt by two pilots, however, came very close to succeeding, and Diem only narrowly escaped because one of the bombs dropped from the attacking AD-6s failed to detonate. The rebellious pilots were among Vietnam's finest, but one was very disgruntled by lack of promotion "because his father had belonged to a dissident political party."[29] Similarly, the generals and other government officials were increasingly frustrated by Diem's unwillingness to divest power and appoint individuals outside of his family to prominent government posts. This power paranoia eventually undermined even those most loyal to Diem.

One of the most trusted individuals within Diem's security forces was Gen Ton That Dinh, the Saigon regional commander.[30] Trained in France, he had become the protégé of Diem's brother Can, the boss of central Vietnam, who had been impressed by his bravery. Dinh's bravery was equally matched by his ambition, vanity, and impulsiveness—character flaws that General Don skillfully played on to draw him into the conspiracy. Appealing to his vanity and ego, Don assured Dinh that he was a national hero worthy of a cabinet position in Diem's government and encouraged him to approach Diem with the request. Don even went so far as to hire a fortuneteller to further convince the superstitious Dinh of his forthcoming elevation to prominence as minister of interior.[31] Intoxicated with ideas of grandeur, Dinh unfortunately failed to remember that Diem was adamantly opposed to having any military officers in his cabinet. So, when Dinh made his bid for minister of interior, he was abruptly dismissed and scolded for suggesting such an idea. Taking advantage of Dinh's harsh rejection, Don was then able to persuade Dinh to join the conspiracy, "promising him the ministry of interior in a successor regime."[32] Capturing Dinh's allegiance was paramount to neutralizing the Saigon security forces and a crucial step in the coup strategy.

Hypothesis 3: *All regimes are weakened through failure to provide external goods.*

External Goods

As long as the United States continued to support the Diem regime and provide military and economic aid, there was little chance that a coup attempt would be successful. Conversely, as soon as US support was removed, it did not take long to overthrow the regime. Using Korea as the model, Americans viewed Vietnam as a divided country where communists in the north were trying to take over the democratic government of the south. As result, the United States needed a viable, noncommunist government in South Vietnam that could stand against the aggression of North Vietnam. As a part of Cold War politics, the external good that the Diem regime provided the United States was the appearance of a developing, democratic government that was stable enough to oppose communist insurgents. "Diem soon learned that the U.S. was committed to him as the only Vietnamese leader capable of rallying his country to defeat the communists."[33] When it became apparent that Diem's government was no longer able to provide this good, the United States turned to another coalition that promised to provide stability and defeat the communists.

The event often credited as signaling the end of US support for the Diem regime was the Buddhist uprising in the spring of 1963.[34] Diem's absolute intolerance for any dissent or opposition to his government led to fierce repression of Buddhist monks who were protesting the regime's religious policies. On 11 June the Buddhists punctuated their plight against the regime when one of the monks set himself on fire at a busy intersection in Saigon. The burning monk with palms pressed together in prayer left an indelible image of reverent protest as photographs of the grisly spectacle "leaped off every front page in the world the next morning."[35] But more than the self-immolation, it was Diem's stubbornness to take action to resolve the Buddhist crisis, while monks continued to go up in flames, that finally forced the United States to concede that Diem's government was indeed failing and needed to be replaced. Diem, who was used to unconditional American support for his regime because there were "no alternatives," defied US attempts to reform his government.[36] The Diem regime had become increasingly arrogant toward the United States and even began treating Americans in Vietnam as poorly as its own people.[37]

In light of the regime's belligerence, the deputy ambassador to Vietnam issued a blunt warning to Diem that if persecution of the Buddhists continued the regime risked losing US support. In Washington, the deputy's tough initiative was mirrored in a meeting between Kennedy and his advisors in which they speculated on the likelihood of a coup d'etat against Diem.[38] "The wholehearted support extended to Diem in 1955 had become little better than neutrality in 1960; now became antagonism."[39] The replacement of the compliant Amb. Frederick E. Nolting Jr., with a stern Henry Cabot Lodge marked the end of tolerance for the regime's repressive tactics. Lodge had little patience for Diem's corrupt government and, while cautious at first, was determined that a coup should take place in South Vietnam. The generals organizing the coup waited on Lodge and US mili-

tary advisors for the "green light" that the United States would extend its blessing on a coup attempt. "For the military coup d'etat against Ngo Dinh Diem, the U.S. must accept its full share of responsibility. Beginning in August of 1963 we variously authorized, sanctioned and encouraged the coup efforts of the Vietnamese generals and offered full support for a successor government."[40] As a result of the Buddhist protests, severe repression, and recalcitrant behavior, the United States feared that Diem's government was becoming increasingly unstable and susceptible to a communist revolution. By failing to provide the external good the United States desired most, a government capable of rallying the population to defeat the communists, Diem lost US support for his regime.

Public Goods

Actions by the Vietcong and the Buddhists resulted in more than just a loss of private and external goods. Just as demonstrations and riots in the United States undermined public security and disrupted public services, so did terrorist actions by the Vietcong and protests by the Buddhists work against similar South Vietnamese public goods. As Diem concentrated on solving the security problems through strategic hamlets and mass citizen arrests, he further isolated himself from any popular support. Diem's emphasis on security and survival neglected the social, economic, and political developments needed to make villages secure so that few peasants supported him.[41] Because of Diem's control of the state's security apparatus, it would take more than a popular uprising to overthrow his regime. The lack of popular support for Diem made it far easier for the generals to conduct their coup and gave the United States added justification for withdrawing its support.

Critics could also argue that the United States reacted to Diem's lack of popular support as a failure of his regime's public policies. But, the United States was not concerned with the public goods Diem supplied. What the United States wanted from Diem was a noncommunist government able to fight against the communist aggression of the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese. If a popularly supported government was the good the United States sought, then the Vietcong and the communists would have been the recipients of US aid. Diem's failure to provide public goods therefore had an indirect impact on his ability to provide external goods to the United States.

Analysis

The coup d'etat that took place in South Vietnam in November 1963 demonstrates how failure to provide sufficient private goods to a small winning coalition can result in a regime change. Further, failing to provide desired goods to a major external power supporting the regime is a recipe for disaster. As described above, the winning coalition responsible for maintaining Ngo Dinh Diem in office was clearly very small and over time

became even smaller. By the time the generals began planning their coup, only the United States remained as a major supporter of Diem's regime. Actions by the Vietcong, the Buddhists, and eventually the generals all worked to undermine the coalition supporting the regime, including international support from the United States. The most significant good that Diem failed to maintain was security for the United States against the spread of communism. Diem's failure to appease his US benefactors was a result of the Buddhist protest movement and Vietcong guerilla action against other private goods. Attacks by the Vietcong and the generals highlighted Diem's inability to combat communism or provide a stable government and demonstrated the regime's complete lack of competence.

Ambassador Lodge was firmly convinced that the regime had failed and that the United States needed to switch its allegiance to a potentially more capable government.

> We are launched on a course from which there is no respectable turning back: The overthrow of the Diem government. There is no turning back in part because U.S. prestige is already publicly committed to this end in large measure and will become more so as the facts leak out. In a more fundamental sense, there is no turning back *because there is no possibility, in my view, that the war can be won under a Diem administration* [emphasis added], still less that Diem or any member of the family can govern the country in a way to gain the support of the people who count, i.e., the educated class in and out of government service, civil and military—not to mention the American people.[42]

Lodge's statement also reveals how the opposition forces exploited Diem's weaknesses by further exacerbating the regime's collective action problem. The less Diem was able to satisfy the needs of the winning coalition, the greater the disloyalty. Lichbach states, "A political elite that no longer performs a productive function, one that is engaged exclusively in conspicuous and wasteful consumption, has often been considered a harbinger of revolution."[43] Diem's reclusive habits, harsh persecution of dissenters, and rejection of potential allies turned avowed supporters away.

Mounting security failures from Vietcong attacks, insufficient funds to buy support, and a paranoia about giving more promotions or special appointments prompted even staunch Diem supporters to seek out a new government or as a minimum to look the other way as he was removed from office. As Lichbach argues, the increasing evidence that the regime was failing led to further decreases in individual support for Diem and his brothers. On the second day of the coup, one of the personal aides who had escaped from the palace with the brothers "decided to shift to the winning side" by secretly telephoning the generals and revealing where Diem and Nhu were hiding.[44]

In the end the generals, like the United States, were not interested in reform per se but feared a communist victory and the loss of their positions and possibly their lives. Diem had failed to create a government capable of defeating the communist insurgents in the south, and a fear that even confirmed anti-Communists might seek to join the National Libera-

tion Front convinced the country's military leaders that the Army had to overthrow Diem if South Vietnam was to remain noncommunist.[45] They were well aware of previous coup attempts that had been thwarted by forces loyal to the regime because Diem's coalition had remained strong relative to the opposition forces. Therefore, the generals set about to capitalize on the actions of the Buddhists and the Vietcong, and the growing unpopularity of Diem's oppressive government, by seducing key individuals away from defending the regime and by gaining assurances from the United States not to intervene on Diem's behalf.

As the theory predicts, the generals succeeded at these tasks because the Diem regime failed to provide sufficient private and external goods to retain support from its winning coalition. A combination of poor choices on the part of the regime and direct action by the Vietcong, the generals, and the Buddhists resulted in a complete fracture of Diem's winning coalition. Even more importantly, the general's new winning coalition included the vast external support of the United States.

Notes

1. Lyndon Johnson quoted by Stanley Karnow in *Vietnam: A History* (1983; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 229.
2. Ibid.
3. Dennis J. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 211–12.
4. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 233.
5. Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Political History* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 385.
6. Ngo Dinh Diem quoted by Karnow, *Vietnam*, 229.
7. Tang, *Vietcong Memoir*, 39.
8. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 387.
9. Ibid., 386.
10. The leaders of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sect were bribed with as much as $3 million each to rally to Diem. Ibid., 394. See also Karnow, *Vietnam*, 238.
11. United States Department of Defense, *United States–Vietnam Relations 1945–1967*, IV.B.5 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971), 1. This series of reports is also known as the *Pentagon Papers*.
12. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 394.
13. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 238. See also, Truong, *Vietcong Memoir*, 36.
14. Because the Geneva accords divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel, the communists were required to evacuate the central provinces of Annam. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 219.
15. Reasons for opposing the Diem government are articulated in the Manifesto of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front. Tang, *Vietcong Memoir*, 319–22.
16. Ibid., 86.
17. Another of Diem's younger brothers, Ngo Dinh Can, "built up a publicly financed private network of police and security agents, many of whom he placed in agencies of the central government." This secretive force of loyalists provided the regime with added security and intelligence at the expense of American taxpayers. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 445.
18. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 229–32.
19. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 316.

20. Ibid., 309.
21. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 338.
22. Ibid., 299. Between 1959 and 1961 the number of South Vietnamese government officials assassinated soared from 1,200 to 4,000 a year. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 254.
23. In the early years of the regime, Diem's armed enemies were merely mauled, not destroyed, and they banded together with former Vietminh fighters all fleeing Diem's "Denounce the Communist" campaign. Together, this group formed the guerilla core that would eventually become the National Liberation Front. Tang, *VietCong Memoir*, 63–64.
24. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 301.
25. A meager force of some 200 Vietcong guerillas faced off against more than 2,500 Vietnamese soldiers, exacting heavy casualties from the army by shooting down five helicopters and managing to escape virtually intact. For more detail on the battle, see Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 461–62 and Karnow, *Vietnam*, 276–79.
26. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 462.
27. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, 1.
28. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 470.
29. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 281.
30. Dinh commanded Colonel Tung who was in charge of the special security forces used exclusively to protect the Diem regime.
31. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 472.
32. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 318.
33. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, 7.
34. A weeklong celebration throughout South Vietnam commemorating the ordination of Diem's older brother, Monsignor Ngo Dinh Thuc, prompted Buddhist monks to stage a similar event the following week in honor of Buddha's birthday. Troops, however, were sent in to disperse the crowds, resulting in several women and children being killed. *Pentagon Papers*, 4. For additional commentary, see also Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 465–69; Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 327–37; and Karnow, *Vietnam*, 295–97.
35. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 297.
36. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, iii.
37. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 468.
38. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, 11.
39. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, 336.
40. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, viii.
41. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 453.
42. *Pentagon Papers*, IV.B.5, 20.
43. Lichbach, *Rebel's Dilemma*, 69.
44. Karnow, *Vietnam*, 324.
45. Buttinger, *Vietnam*, 465.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The truth is that the mistrust of theory arises from a misconception of what it is that theory claims to do.

—Julian S. Corbett, 1911

After a century of aviation, strategy and technology are coming together to achieve unparalleled success for airpower. Even so, the hope and belief that airpower will transform the realm of war "so that in the future the mere threat of bombing a town by an air force will cause it to be evacuated" is a strategy still waiting for a theory.[1] More problematic is that politicians continue to rely on airpower as a coercive instrument of policy capable of delivering devastating force with few associated costs. Eliot A. Cohen describes airpower as an "unusually seductive form of military strength, in part because like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment." Beneath the institutional rhetoric of airpower functions and capabilities is an unspoken belief that airpower can do it all—including the overthrow of a regime. From World War II, to Operations Desert Storm, Allied Force, or Iraqi Freedom, theorists and strategists have sought out ways to topple regimes. Yet, for all the air campaigns conducted and all the promises offered, little thought has been given toward developing a theory that explains how to change a regime and how airpower can be used to that end.

Many works exist that describe regime changes, the conditions that make one more likely to occur, and even a "practical handbook" for conducting a particular type of regime change;[2] still, no general theory exists to explain why or how a regime change occurs. Theory does exist to explain how governments gain and maintain power and why people will or will not rise up against a government or institution. Drawing from the vision of airpower theorists, and building on insights gained from studying various regime changes, this thesis advanced a theory of regime change and outlined a strategy for the use of airpower.

The thesis builds upon studies conducted by Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith on how regimes remain in power and the effect policy failure has on different types of governments. A regime is often selected not only to administer the government but also to provide additional goods. To remain in power, the regime must continue to provide these goods to the group of people responsible for its rise to power—the winning coalition. The winning coalition provides the regime with the necessary support to remain in power, and the regime in turn provides goods desired by the winning coalition. Bueno de Mesquita et al. conclude that different types of regimes rely on different types of goods to satisfy their winning coali-

tion.[3] This thesis advanced the hypothesis that by targeting these goods a rival coalition or regime can create policy failure, increase dissatisfaction among the winning coalition, and cause members to seek out a new coalition and regime to provide the lost goods.

Using democracy and autocracy as theoretical limits for a spectrum of regimes, I argued that the domestic winning coalitions are undermined through attacks on public and private goods respectively. The case studies demonstrated that overthrowing a particular type of regime was directly related to attacks on certain types of goods, thus providing a better model for airpower strategists planning a regime change. Additionally, since many regimes supply goods to third parties to retain their support, a third hypothesis was introduced to account for the influence of international support. While not necessarily related to the type of regime, my analysis of both regime types found that international support should be treated as part of the winning coalition. Thus, in all regime changes, the strategist must consider the amount of international support provided to the regime and target external goods correspondingly.

Since this study was conducted in response to theorists' claims that airpower could cause the overthrow of a regime, there must necessarily be some conclusions for airpower's role in a regime change. Since there are few airpower examples from either the Johnson or Diem regime change, the conclusions are expanded by applying current airpower capabilities. The theory outlined in this thesis is founded on theoretical limits for regime types—and few regimes actually exist at these extremes—thus, the conclusions for airpower will have more nuance than the tested hypotheses.

The more democratic the regime, the more airpower should focus on public goods.

This first conclusion follows directly from the first hypothesis and is illustrated by the Johnson regime change. Johnson lost support from his winning coalition because his public goods policies failed. In particular, the rising cost of the war, the increasing number of casualties, and rising domestic violence all contributed to his decision to not seek reelection. Further, there was little international support for Johnson or his policy in Vietnam. Even though North Vietnam's strategy was not the overthrow of the Johnson regime, its strategy centered on making the war so costly for the United States that the president would be forced to withdraw troops from Vietnam. While the North Vietnamese were fairly successful at using airpower to frustrate American military objectives, their strategic success lay ultimately with their ability to increase costs for the Americans.

The North Vietnamese were very effective at using hit-and-run tactics and aggressive air defenses to create huge economic and security costs for the Johnson regime. It was difficult for President Johnson to claim a successful security policy in Vietnam while the North Vietnamese pilots continued to claim kills against purportedly better trained and better equipped American pilots. Further, mounting losses prompted Johnson to continue

building up American forces, resulting in increased costs for the taxpayer. Additionally, spurious air attacks on US assets using guerilla-type warfare protracted the conflict, increased material costs, and adversely affected popular support. The North Vietnamese used airpower to make the war costly for the Johnson administration in terms of the economy, casualties, and public opinion. Private goods played almost no role in the American regime change. Even more telling is the fact that the North Vietnamese strategy never called for targeting any of those goods. Similarly, when undermining a democratic regime, the air strategist must concentrate on those public and external goods that are most susceptible to attacks from airpower.

The more autocratic the regime, the more airpower should focus on private goods.

Again, this second conclusion follows directly from the second hypothesis as demonstrated in the Diem regime change. The fact that the Diem regime was overthrown without the use of airpower is not a very useful lesson for the air strategist contemplating this theory. Instead, the air strategist should recognize that the Diem regime was changed through failure to provide private and external goods and that many of those goods would have been susceptible to attack by airpower. For example, minimal amounts of airpower could have been used by the Vietcong to target regime officials or security structures with even more devastating effect than their terror attacks already achieved. Recent uses of airpower in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom are a testament to this growing role for airpower.

The most significant goods the Vietcong and the generals needed to address were those being supplied to the United States. Airpower could have been used quite effectively to demonstrate failure of the regime to protect American interests in the region through attacks on US supplies, the South Vietnamese army, or even the regime itself. This denial strategy could have interdicted American aid and military support supplied to Diem or interrupted the regime's ability to supply goods to the winning coalition.[4] As an illustration of the effectiveness of denial, during the course of the war, the North Vietnamese were able to counter American bombing efforts by replenishing both public and private goods with Russian products brought in through the northern ports. From 1971 to 1972, when the US military was finally authorized to mine North Vietnamese ports in conjunction with Linebacker I and II bombing campaigns, negotiations for a peace settlement that ended the war followed.[5]

A more recent example is found in President Bush's address to the nation just prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom. He declared that if a military campaign was needed it would be directed against "the lawless men who rule" Iraq and not against the Iraqi people, and that the military would be given "clear instructions on actions they [could] take to avoid being attacked and destroyed."[6] While analysis is yet to be completed, the precision bombing campaign seems to have proven quite effective in taking away Saddam's power by "tearing down his apparatus of terror" and deny-

ing the regime access to support. With autocratic regimes, airpower can be used to target private and external goods, deny access to support, or even destroy the regime itself—the ultimate policy failure.

Thomas Ehrhard warns air strategists to consider that "an effect in one entity can influence strategic effects in another."[7] Certainly, the air strategist needs to consider all types of goods: public, private, and external and the effect targeting one may have on another. Further, as the type of regime moves further away from the extremes, the strategist will be forced to consider more than just public or private goods. Confusing the selection even more will be those democracies that appear very autocratic in their administration of government or those autocracies that are heavily dependent on popular support. Considering *all* types of targets *all* the time, however, is useful only with unlimited time, resources, and knowledge. In the end, the power of this theory is that strategists contemplating a regime change are able to narrow their choices by correlating types of regimes to particular types of targets.

Notes

1. William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power—Economic and Military* (1925; repr., New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 6.
2. Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat*.
3. See Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Policy Failure."
4. The author expands Robert Pape's definition to incorporate denying a regime the ability to provide goods or even gain access to its support. See Pape, 69–79.
5. Clodfelter, *Limits of Airpower*, 196.
6. George W. Bush, president of the United States, "Remarks to the Nation," 17 March 2003.
7. Ehrhard, *Making the Connection*, 21.

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