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# The Dynamics of Coercion

## American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might

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*To Josh and Benjamin, my joy*

*D.L.B.*

*To Merle and Steve, for everything*

*M.C.W.*

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# 3

## Coercive mechanisms

Effective coercive strategy making requires an understanding of coercive mechanisms—the processes by which the threat or infliction of costs generates adversary concessions. Mechanisms are the crucial middle link of the means-end chain of a coercive strategy. An understanding of these mechanisms helps to answer questions of why and how coercion works and in turn allows a better understand of whether and, if so, when a particular coercive strategy is more or less likely to succeed.

By examining mechanisms, we attempt to peer into the "black box" that links attempts at coercion to the desired outcomes. Against whom should the coercer try to direct the costs it threatens? Why might the threat of costs lead to concessions? Who might benefit inadvertently from coercive threats and efforts? These questions often decide the success or failure of a coercive strategy.

Consider the following. A military strike that destroys an electric grid in south Freedonia reduces quality of life for the nation. Yet the strike may mean little to the inhabitants of north Freedonia, who feel little sympathy for Freedonians to the south due to ethnic or religious differences. Freedonia's military forces may not perceive an immediate crisis, particularly if the attacks do not affect operations of existing forces. The strike may have humiliated Freedonia's leadership if south Freedonians were key regime supporters. On the other hand, leaders might see it as useful if south Freedonia were an area of unrest and rebellion. Black marketeers, who would benefit from the disruption of normal commerce, may even welcome the strike. Understanding why, and indeed whether, the Freedonian leadership might make concessions requires recognizing that simple pain inflicted on Freedonia in a general sense does not automatically translate into coercive leverage.





To sort out whether an adversary is likely to succumb to a coercer's demands, it is necessary to think about coercive mechanisms. The strike on Freedonia's electric grid could produce concessions for several reasons. The grid's destruction, if it truly humiliated Freedonia's leadership, might lead the regime to make concessions for fear that future strikes would provoke a popular revolt, an ouster by powerful elites, or a loss at the polls. Each such possibility—undermining popular morale, fomenting elite revolt, and so on—is a mechanism that the strike might trigger. Alternatively, Freedonia's leaders may care about the welfare of the country and concede to the coercer's demands in order to preserve the population from further disruptions. Or perhaps the military, though not perceiving an immediate impact on its state of readiness, might fear that continued strikes on Freedonia's infrastructure would slowly erode its strength at home and against neighboring rivals. Freedonia's leadership might concede to keep its forces strong or even to avert the resulting threat of a coup.

We use the Freedonia example to suggest that the discussion begun in Chapter 2 on how to understand successful and failed coercion is incomplete without a discussion of how policy instruments induce the desired change in behavior. Policy instruments are discussed in Chapter 4; this chapter explores the critical intermediate step between the threatened infliction of pain and the adversary's decision to change course. This chapter also highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of various mechanisms and describes some of the conditions under which they are likely to work or might backfire. In describing these conditions, we try to look beyond the actual behavioral changes that may have taken place in various cases and to focus on whether and why adversary policy changes became more likely (or less likely) in the face of threats.

The purpose of this chapter is not to prove that certain mechanisms do or do not work. All of them have, to varying degrees, contributed to successful coercion, yet all of them have failed as well. Rather, this chapter aims to introduce the logic behind several of the more common mechanisms that military strategists and decision makers have focused on in their planning and to outline some of the problems and limits commonly associated with using them. We peer inside the black box of decision making, but we do not attempt to dissect its intricacies for any given regime. Indeed, one lesson of history is to caution against reliance on too general a blueprint of those inner workings in designing a coer-

cive strategy. This chapter presents concepts critical to the analysis of later chapters and an understanding of the limits of U.S. (or any country's) coercive strength.

## COMMONLY USED MECHANISMS

Coercers typically employ a variety of mechanisms in trying to manipulate adversary decision making. Five of the most common are power base erosion—threatening a regime's relationship with its core supporters; unrest—creating popular dissatisfaction with a regime; decapitation—jeopardizing a leadership's personal security; weakening—debilitating the country as a whole; and denial—preventing battlefield success (or political victories via military aggression).[1] All of these mechanisms, in theory, might lead an adversary to change its behavior.

These mechanisms are presented separately as ideal types in order to simplify analysis, but they overlap in practice. Viewing them first in isolation helps in understanding not only how they might be combined as part of an overall strategy, but also, as discussed in more detail in later chapters, how they might interfere with each other and destroy the effectiveness of coercive threats.

As discussed further in Chapter 4, the same coercive instrument can play on different or multiple mechanisms. Not surprisingly, coercers often try to trigger more than one mechanism simultaneously in the hopes of augmenting pressure. Air strikes, for example, might create popular dissatisfaction with a regime, decrease the country as a whole's power, and reduce the country's overall military might—unrest, weakening, and denial mechanisms, respectively.

1 In his valuable study of coercive air power, Robert Pape offers a somewhat different typology, dividing strategies into punishment, risk, denial, and decapitation. Because Pape's terms are quite evocative, we follow his terminology when possible. We use *decapitation* in a manner similar to his; we also use his term *denial*, following his general use but adding an explicit political dimension. His use of *punishment*, for us, falls under several categories, including "power base erosion," "unrest," and "weakening." His definition of risk involves the gradual escalation of damage that eventually tips the balance of costs and benefits against the adversary, leading it to concede. To us, risk is not an explicit mechanism but rather a particular application of force—the audience that suffers from the damage could be the leadership, the country as a whole, or another target. (Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 57.)



The impact of using different mechanisms simultaneously is often cumulative. When decision makers weigh costs, they do so in the aggregate. Freedonia's leaders may ignore a decrease in military strength or an increase in popular suffering if it is the only cost they face; together, however, these costs might be too much to bear. Thus, a combination of mechanisms may affect decision making when the triggering of individual mechanisms might fail. Mechanisms may combine in more complex ways as well. Popular dissatisfaction may only worry a particular regime when it also faces the potential wrath of key elites. Or, put slightly differently, the regime might have little to fear from those elites as long as mass public opinion remains favorable. For instance, regime decision makers might only change policy out of worry about a possible coup when they perceive fury among *both* the military officer corps *and* the masses, who might rally to support a change in regime.

At the same time, it is important to remember that many mechanisms for manipulating adversary decision making can operate in reverse, and the failure to trigger a mechanism as intended can inadvertently produce resistance to concessions. Creating popular unrest through military strikes might induce surrender if the decision-making process is susceptible to public outcry, but that supposed weakness also usually means that inadvertently bolstering public support for a regime might produce hardened defiance. And because many different inputs affect adversary decision making simultaneously, a single coercive threat can produce opposing effects on decision making. The same coercive air strikes that hinder Freedonia's own military operations and cause severe disaffection with the regime among the highest echelons of the army might cause a rally-round-the-flag effect among the population, resulting in policy paralysis—or contradictory policies—as Freedonian decision making is pulled in opposite directions.

Table 3.1 presents an overview of some more-recent attempts at coercion, indicating the various mechanisms that the coercer sought to trigger and the most salient results, both positive and negative. As the table shows, states usually seek to combine several mechanisms in a single, integrated coercive strategy. Moreover, some of the mechanisms they commonly used have received much scholarly attention (for example, denial) whereas others have received less (for example, power base erosion). The cases presented are neither a full survey of attempts at coercion (which would involve a review of almost all major foreign pol-

*Table 3.1. Selected Attempts at Coercion and Associated Mechanisms*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| Britain, France, Israel | Egypt | 1956 | Reverse Suez Canal nationalization; destroy Egyptian military threat; encourage Nasser's ouster | Power base; unrest | | Partial destruction of Egyptian military strength | Nasser's popularity increased; canal remained Egypt's; tension between coercers and U.S. |
| Britain | Malayan guerrillas | 1948–1960 | Defeat Communist insurgency | [Brute force] | Unrest and denial | Guerrillas defeated | Protracted effort required |
| France | Insurgency in Algeria | 1954–1962 | Defeat pro-independence movement (FLN) and its armed forces (ALN) | [Brute force] | Unrest and denial | ALN forces devastated | Protracted conflict; large losses; political exhaustion and unrest in France; independent, FLN-dominated Algeria recognized; tension within NATO |
| Iran | Iraq | 1974–1975 | Gain Iraqi concessions over their border | Denial; power base | | Iraq conceded to Iranian demands | |
| Iraq | Iran | 1982–1988 | Force Iran to halt ground offensives and aggressive stance toward Iraq | Unrest; denial; [brute force] | Unrest; [brute force] | Fear of attacks at times caused short-term de-escalation | Little or no unrest; adversary regime popularity may even have increased; led to attacks on Iraqi cities |

*Table 3.1. Continued*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| Israel | Egypt | 1969–1970 | Stop Egyptian harassment along canal | Unrest; denial | | Egypt temporarily moderated territorial goals; Egyptian leaders feared military losses and civilian unrest | Cairo turned to Soviet Union for additional support; Israel began to lose local air supremacy; disruptions of arms supply from U.S. |
| Israel | Palestinians in Jordan | 1950s–1970 | Stop Palestinian cross-border attacks and terrorism in general | Power base; unrest; decapitation | Unrest | Palestinian attacks eventually stopped due to Jordanian government intervention | Protracted effort required; diplomatic difficulties; exodus of the PLO to Lebanon with resultant war and instability |
| Israel | Lebanese Hezbollah | 1982–2000 | Stop cross-border attacks and terrorism in general | Decapitation; unrest | Unrest and denial | Hezbollah limited scope and scale of attacks | Attacks continued; Hezbollah grew in stature; attacks contributed to Lebanon's instability; domestic criticism of government in Israel leads to withdrawal |

*Table 3.1. Continued*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| Israel | Palestinians in Lebanon | 1970–1982 | Stop cross-border attacks and terrorism | Decapitation; unrest; weakening | Unrest | Palestinians limited attacks | Protracted effort required; Palestinians at times gained in stature; contributed to Lebanon's civil war; led to Israeli invasion and quagmire |
| NATO | Serbia | 1999 | Accept Rambouillet accords | Denial; power base; unrest | Denial; unrest | Eventual acceptance of accords | Long and brutal ethnic-cleansing campaign |
| Russia | Chechen guerrillas | 1994–1996 | Crush independence movement | Weakening; decapitation; denial; [brute force] | Denial; unrest | | Heavy military and civilian losses; terrorist attacks in Russia; hardened support for secession; de facto secession agreement; reintervention necessary in 1999 |
| United States | Cuba and USSR | 1962 | Force Soviets to withdraw missiles from Cuba | Weakening[d] | | Soviets withdrew missiles | U.S. withdrew Jupiter missiles from Turkey |
| United States | Dominican Republic | 1961–1962 | Oust corrupt oligarchy | Power base; decapitation | | New government took power | |

*Table 3.1. Continued*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| United States/ Britain[e] | Germany | 1943–1945 | Use bombing to reduce German desire and ability to continue war | Weakening; unrest; [brute force] | | Brute force damage aided Allied military victory, but morale damage had little impact on surrender decision | Considerable casualties, bomber losses |
| United States | Haiti junta | 1994 | Oust Cedras regime in favor of Aristede | Decapitation; power base; unrest | | Junta leaders stepped down | |
| United States | Iran | 1987–1988 | Secure free flow of oil | Weakening; denial | Denial | Iran limited attacks on tankers | Occasional Iranian attacks continued |
| United States | Iraq | 1990–1991 | Remove Iraq from Kuwait and devastate Iraqi heavy forces | Power base; unrest; denial; decapitation; [brute force] | Unrest | By Jan. 1991, Iraq was willing to remove forces | Massive effort required; Baghdad refused maximal U.S. demands |
| United States | Iraq | 1991–present | Compel Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions | Power base; decapitation; denial; weakening | Unrest (directed at U.S. allies) | Iraq grudgingly accepted inspections and refrained from regional aggression | Protracted effort required; strained U.S.-regional relations; limited compliance |

*Table 3.1. Continued*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| United States | North Korea | 1993–1994 | Compel North to abandon nuclear program and to allow International Atomic Energy Agency access; stop nuclear program; deter attack on South Korea | Weakening | Weakening[f] | North Korea refrained from continuing nuclear program but did not abandon it; no attack on South | Large inducements required, including diplomatic and economic concessions; possibility of a "demonstration effect" outside North Korea |
| United States[g] | North Korea and China | 1950–1953 | Reduce Communists' desire and ability to continue war | Denial; weakening; [brute force] | | Communists agreed to armistice after recognizing a military victory was impossible | Protracted, bloody effort required; U.S. did not achieve maximal goals |
| United States | Laotian guerrillas | 1960–1973 | Stop NVA from transiting Laos | Denial | | | Protracted effort required; limited impact on flow of arms |
| United States | Libya | 1986 | End Libyan support for terrorism | Decapitation; power base | | May have enhanced credibility with allies regarding counter-terrorism | Temporary surge in Libyan-supported terrorist attempts |
| United States[h] (Rolling Thunder) | North Vietnam | 1965–1968 | Compel North to stop supporting guerrillas in South | Denial; weakening | Denial; unrest | | Protracted effort required; little impact; PRC and Soviet aid to North increased |

*Table 3.1. Continued*

| Coercer[a] | Adversary | Dates | Coercer's Goals | Coercer's Key Mechanisms[b] | Adversary's Key Mechanisms | Outcomes from Coercer's Viewpoint[c] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Desired | Undesired |
| United States (Linebacker I and II) | North Vietnam | 1972 | Bring about cease-fire | Denial; weakening | Denial; unrest; [brute force attempt to invade South with conventional forces] | Hanoi agreed to a temporary cease-fire | Protracted effort required; U.S. scaled back goals |
| United States/NATO | Bosnian Serb forces (Deny Flight) | 1993–1994 | Reduce scope and scale of Balkan conflict | Denial | | Helped contain conflict and ensure humanitarian relief | Incomplete compliance undermined NATO credibility; conflict continued |
| United States/NATO | Bosnian Serb forces (Deliberate Force) | 1995 | Compel Serbs to accept cease-fire | Denial | | Serbs sought negotiated agreement | |
| United States/UN | Somali factions | 1993 | Stop interference with humanitarian aid | Denial; decapitation | Unrest; denial | Secured flow of aid | Brute force attempt eventually failed; increased support for anti-U.S. factions; led to early U.S. withdrawal |

Notes to Table 3.1:

[a]The distinction between coercer and adversary is often arbitrary, as both sides try to coerce each other. This column lists the coercer as the ostensibly stronger power or, when in doubt, the one most actively trying to change the status quo. At times the "coercer" used brute force far more than coercion—we examine such instances both to measure the effectiveness of the instruments in question and to assess the adversary's counters to brute force, which generally were coercive in nature.

[b]Although coercers at times attempted to use many mechanisms, not all of them worked equally or even had a positive effect. In many instances, the coercer's use of force fell into the "brute force" part of the coercion-to-brute-force spectrum; in ambiguous cases, both brute forces and the possible mechanisms are listed.

[c]The focus here, as in the rest of the book, is on the U.S. (or nominally stronger power's) perspective.

[d]The threat of nuclear attack on the Soviet heartland would, of course, also threaten the Soviet power base, leadership, and population. This classification is described later in this chapter, in the section on weakening.

[e]The Allied bomber offensive and other operations against Germany are arguably seen not as cases of coercion but as cases of brute force.

[f]North Korea used its possible acquisition of a nuclear weapon—which would enable it to inflict massive punishment on its foes—to force concessions from the United States and South Korea.

[g]Like operations in World War II, operations in Korea arguably fall more on the brute force than on the coercion end of the spectrum.

[h]Although the Vietnam conflict in general falls into the brute force part of the force-to-coercion spectrum, particular elements of it—such as several of the air campaigns against North Vietnam—can be treated as coercive in nature, though they must be judged against the backdrop of the overall war.



icy standoffs among states) nor a representative sample. The list is designed to illustrate actual attempts to use various mechanisms, focusing on prominent cases of military coercion that involve the United States or offer important lessons relevant to the U.S. position today.

An analysis of the various mechanisms must consider two basic questions: Does the mechanism in question affect decision making in the way that the coercer desires? And can coercers successfully trigger the mechanism? Some mechanisms only rarely produce the desired outcome; others have proven more reliable but are difficult to trigger. The following discussion explores these questions for the five mechanisms on which we focus.

### *Power base erosion: threatening a regime's relationship with key supporters*

Coercers may attempt to prompt concessions by threatening to undercut the adversary leadership's support among its power base. A regime's power base consists of the select group of individuals whose support is necessary for the regime to maintain political control. Economic power, political access, a position in the military, and other factors usually make some individuals more important than others to a country's decision makers. If a coercer can threaten a regime's grip on power, the leadership may concede to avoid losing control or, if it proves recalcitrant, may be swept away and replaced by a more compliant regime.[2] Thus, a regime's relationship with its power base is often a key adversary pressure point.

The identity of the power base varies by regime. In a democracy, core constituencies can include elected representatives of the party in power, key civic leaders, and others who shape and express public opinion. In authoritarian regimes, it is often the military, the security services, key tribes, certain ethnic groups, or others who control the intimidation and cooptation necessary to keep a regime in power.[3] Saddam's Iraq, Milosevic's Serbia, and other recent adversary states are

2 See Kirschner, "The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions," p. 42, for a discussion of some of these points.

3 Not all autocratic regimes are unpopular. The governments of Adolph Hitler, Ayatollah Khomeini, and imperial Japan are only a few examples of dictatorial regimes that enjoyed a significant degree of popular support.

(or were) run by small cliques of individuals who wield disproportionate power over their countries' politics and economies.[4]

A leadership's power base helps it stay in power, but this dependence creates for the coercer a potential pressure point for altering adversary decision making. The same groups of individuals that are vital to a regime's survival—the ones that control the enforcement and cooptation levers essential for repressing and buying the goodwill of the population—can also topple the regime. Threats to a power base can therefore lead a regime to concede, both because elites force the leadership to change its policies (either by using their clout to demand change or by replacing the existing leadership) or because the leadership fears elite criticism and concedes to avoid a further threat.[5] Not surprisingly, internal security is of overriding concern to many states in the developing world.[6] Thus, they often behave cautiously when faced with a threat to their grip on power.

This last point raises the apparent policy paradox introduced in the previous chapter: in general, adversary regimes that depend on a narrow power base, and are therefore sensitive to disruption of relations with that base, are likely skilled or at least practiced at countering any threat from that group. Regimes faced with threats of a coup, for instance, frequently do not hesitate to purge the intelligence services, officer corps, or other security institutions. Indeed, they may do so regularly. Regimes in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and elsewhere in the world have attempted to "coup proof" their governments through overlapping se-

4 For a review of the importance of the Iraqi elite, see Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*. For general accounts of Milosevic's concern with political support, see Franklin Foer, "Slobodan Milosevic: How a Genocidal Dictator Keeps Getting Away with It," *Slate*, June 20, 1998, http://www.slate.com (accessed on March 11, 1999); and Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), pp. 32–33 and 60–70. An account of Milosevic as a diplomatic tactician can be found in Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998).

5 A leadership's fears are often difficult to demonstrate, as there is no observed action to monitor and the leaders' motivations are often opaque to outsiders.

6 See Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Problematic in the Third World," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, no. 2 (January 1991), pp. 257–283; and Stephen David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).



curity services, politicization of the military, and other measures.[7] Power base support is often a point of great susceptibility, but not necessarily vulnerability, for developing countries.

U.S. attempts to coerce Saddam's Iraq since the Gulf War illustrate some potential benefits and pitfalls of a strategy that seeks to target a regime's key supporters. Saddam's power base is narrow. He relies on the support and loyalty of family members, select tribes, Baath party officials, and military officers.[8] Maintaining their support is Saddam's overriding focus. As Amatzia Baram argues, "Throughout his career . . . whenever Iraq's foreign interests clashed with perceived domestic security interests, the latter always prevailed. Insofar as internal security is concerned, Saddam Husayn has never taken any chances."[9]

Fear of dissatisfaction within his power base—a fear that U.S. planners sought to play on—contributed substantially to Saddam's willingness to make concessions in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War, suggesting the potential effectiveness of power base approaches. The U.S.-led coalition sought to compel Iraq to fulfill various UN resolutions that called for Baghdad to detail and eliminate its WMD programs. In response to Iraq's harassment of UN inspectors and refusal to cooperate, the United States and Britain (and at times France) threatened bombing campaigns several times in 1991 and 1992.[10] Iraq backed down as a result of these threats, and Saddam showed himself extremely sensitive to U.S. threats of force as he accepted inspectors and made limited declarations.[11] Although he later proved he could

7 For an excellent review, see James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security*, Vol. 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 131–165.

8 Ofra Bengio, "How Does Saddam Hold On?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, no. 4 (July/August 2000), pp. 94–101.

9 Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, p. 2.

10 The United States used its military presence in the region, which it occasionally bolstered, to back up threats. During a standoff in March 1991, the United States sent the carrier *America* to the Gulf as an escalation option—a particularly potent threat given the large U.S. ground presence in Iraq itself and along its borders at that time. In September 1991, President Bush sent combat aircraft and Patriot missile batteries to Saudi Arabia after Iraq temporarily detained 40 UN inspectors. In these cases, Washington apparently was weighing a graduated bombing campaign to force Iraqi compliance.

11 Nevertheless, Baghdad still continued its deception campaign, hiding its weapons and claiming that any known stocks and systems were destroyed

weather a limited U.S. bombing campaign, U.S. credibility—in terms of both resolve and capabilities—was high in the days following Desert Storm, and Saddam's position at home was at its lowest ever. The combination of military defeat, popular and military rebellions, political isolation in both the Arab and international context, and a comprehensive economic embargo created massive fissures in Saddam's power base. Saddam was unsure of the loyalty of key tribes and military forces, and the near-collapse of his regime in 1991 served as a vivid reminder that another major military clash with the U.S.-led coalition could prove disastrous. Tensions within Saddam's extended family, coup plots in the upper echelons of Iraqi security services, unrest among key tribes, and other pressures made Saddam extremely cautious about confronting the United States again.[12]

At times, a power base can be turned against a leadership, leading to its removal (though such a result is arguably more akin to brute force than to coercion). The United States engineered a coup against the Diem regime in Vietnam and facilitated a coup in Chile using coercive pressure (alongside direct covert action) to create the conditions that would facilitate a military takeover. The United States, along with other members of the Organization of American States (OAS), imposed sanctions and diplomatically isolated the Trujillo government of the Dominican Republic in 1960. Sanctions on sugar, the Dominican Republic's leading product, hurt the middle-class and wealthy supporters of the regime. Dominican business and military elites—angered by the pain of sanctions and inspired by the international consensus against Trujillo—worked together to assassinate him.[13]

It is difficult to target threats and military attacks so as to produce particular effects on key power elite groups, and attempts to influence adversary policy this way can easily backfire. Dictators generally possess more-effective and more-precise tools for shaping popular unrest in

during the war. Iraq's continuing recalcitrance suggests that it is highly committed to retaining a WMD capacity and would resume its programs were inspections ended.

12 Sarah Graham-Browne, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 192–198; and Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, p. 4.

13 For a discussion of the Dominican Republic, see Kirschner, "The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions," pp. 56–63. The new regime, of course, also had its problems, leading to continued confrontations with the United States until 1965.



their country than coercers do. Coercive strategies that rely on generating elite or power base dissatisfaction with adversary policies of resistance are particularly liable to generate conflicting political pressures within the adversary decision-making system. Instead of generating elite consensus in favor of the leadership backing down, coercive threats may inadvertently heighten the internal political fears the adversary leadership associates with capitulation. Moreover, properly threatening a leader's relationship with his power base can be tricky, in part because weakness at the domestic level offers negotiating strength at the international level. If a leader's grip on his power is in jeopardy, he may have less room to compromise or concede in the face of coercive threats. A leadership in trouble at home can quite credibly vow to hold out despite mounting costs if it becomes clear that backing down will result in its downfall.[14] NATO attacks against Serbia in 1999 were designed in part to foster elite discontent with the Milosevic regime, though NATO simultaneously sought to erode popular support for Milosevic.[15] Several of Serbia's top generals were placed under house arrest, testifying to Milosevic's sensitivity about possible loss of political control during the conflict.[16] However, at least in the short term, the pressure from the military and other elite cliques that supported Milosevic and saw the profitability of that support endangered by his defiance of NATO appeared to be offset by inflamed nationalist passions among other segments of the population.

The various examples in this chapter expose a key implication for designing coercive strategies using a power base approach: because concessions entail a political price for a regime, the pain of continued resistance must offset this additional price as well as the initial level of regime commitment. Coercive pressure may make it more difficult

14 See Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics," passim, for a discussion.

15 General Klaus Naumann, who chaired NATO's military committee, declared that NATO's intention was "to loosen [Milosevic's] grip on power and break his will to continue" (as quoted in Michael R. Gordon, "NATO Plans Weeks of Bombing to Break Grip of Serb Leader," *New York Times*, April 1, 1999, p. A1).

16 Steven Brill, "War Gets the Monica Treatment," *Brill's Content* (July/August 1999), pp. 103–104.

politically for a government to make concessions, as that government may be charged with "giving in" to foreign influence.[17]

The Israeli experience with Hezbollah and the Palestine Liberation organization (PLO) within Lebanon illustrates how regimes targeted with coercion often cannot make concessions without losing domestic reign. The costs of acquiescence to an outside power's demand can be prohibitively high, especially in noninstitutionalized democracies where a compliant regime may fear for its very survival. In the early 1970s, the PLO had few high-value targets in Lebanon. More important, Israeli military strikes actually helped PLO recruitment by demonstrating the PLO's commitment to the struggle against Zionist Israel. If the PLO refrained from attacks, other Palestinian groups would gain recruits. Any leadership concessions to the Israelis were fiercely criticized and often caused a loss of popular support.[18] Thus, the Israelis risked obtaining concessions that would be meaningless, as rivals quickly denounced them. The situation is similar for any group that relies on resistance to attract new members: concessions may destroy the group more effectively than the coercer could ever hope to do.

Indeed, the high cost of concessions may produce a backlash rather than simple failure. Just as coercive threats or strikes can risk buttressing an adversary state leadership's stature at home and abroad, they can inadvertently increase the support a nonstate organization receives from sympathetic international and local sponsors. Israeli strikes helped the Lebanese Hezbollah attract more money from abroad;[19] they also provoked a nationalist backlash, strengthening Hezbollah within the Lebanese community. Israeli military activity and withdrawals from parts of Lebanon in response to Hezbollah violence further bolstered

17 For an argument along these lines, see T. Willett and M. Jalaighajar, "U.S. Trade Policy and National Security," *Cato Journal,* Vol. 3, no. 3 (1983), pp. 717–728.

18 Defiance of coercive threats also provides a way for radicals within a nonstate group to show their disapproval of the dominant group. The PLO often was cautious in its dealings with Israel. More-radical groups, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and smaller splinter groups used their defiance of Israel to embarrass the PLO, hoping to force the PLO's leadership to choose between kowtowing to Israel and the loyalty of their own supporters.

19 Kenneth C. Schow, "Falcons Against the Jihad: Israeli Airpower and Coercive Diplomacy in Southern Lebanon," master's thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1995.



the movement's reputation.[20] Over time, Hezbollah's claim to be the leading force of resistance to Israel became its source of legitimacy; continued resistance was necessary even if the coercer backed down.

### *Unrest: creating popular disaffection*

At times, an undermining of elite support for an adversary regime is too difficult to implement or may not be sufficiently menacing to force concessions. In such cases, coercers may instead or also try to put pressure on the adversary's civilian population as a whole or on major segments of that population. Such efforts are a blunt instrument—many are punished to change the minds of a few. The hope is that pressure placed on a country's population may "trickle up" and prompt decision makers to concede. Unrest strategies frequently fail, however, because the population cannot sufficiently influence decision making or because the coercive threat backfires, increasing popular support for defiance.

In theory, popular disaffection can lead a regime to concede for a number of reasons. Regime leaders may care about the well-being of the population (an issue discussed later in this chapter) and therefore direct policy away from options likely to result in suffering among the population. Or, particularly in regimes where there is considerable popular input into decision making, civilian suffering may be of great political concern to the leadership: decision makers may avoid unpopular policies—or ones they anticipate will lead to a loss of support—so as to maintain power. Alternatively, the population may rise up in response to the coercive pressure, threatening to remove the leadership unless it gives in to the coercer's demands. Or civilian suffering may undermine the adversary's capacity to fight. For example, worker absenteeism may increase along with military desertions among the rank and file, which might cause adversary decision makers to see the likelihood of military victory declining (again, this issue is discussed in more detail later). Like threats directed at a regime's power base, threats of popular disaffection can lead a regime to concede even if the level of popular unrest or suffering is low. A regime may fear that popular unrest will grow in the future and thus concede even when the immediate threat it faces is limited.

20 Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 38–39.

Punishment of civilians is a commonly used strategy of coercion, especially where the risks or practical barriers of brute force solutions or attacks directed at the adversary's military or power base are high. In medieval and early modern Europe, where conquest was typically achieved one city at a time, siege methods of warfare harnessed the threat of starvation of city residents to compel garrisons to open their gates to opposing armies. In more-recent times, coercers have bombed enemy populations, embargoed their economies, and otherwise tried to increase the suffering and misery of adversary populations in order to force leaders to surrender.[21]

Historically, coercive attempts to foment popular unrest have yielded uneven results. Sometimes such efforts have made important contributions to an adversary's decision to concede, while other times they have produced the opposite reaction. The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition provides one example of a coercive unrest strategy bringing about favorable changes in adversary decision making, at least in the short term. In January 1970, after roughly six months of limited attacks in the canal zone, Israel attacked military and military-related industrial targets deep within Egypt in order to ensure that the Egyptian populace and elite felt the war and recognized that Egypt was losing. As Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov notes, "Israel's political aims in deciding on in-depth air raids were to get the Egyptians to end the War of Attrition by threatening to weaken or overthrow Nasser's regime."[22] Israel intended the raids to humiliate Egyptian President Nasser before the Egyptian people, who would then overthrow him or at least press his regime to end the war. Nasser rightly believed that Israel sought to overthrow him and tried to shield those Egyptians most immediately affected by evacuating roughly 750,000 people to other parts of the country. High losses in the conflict, combined with a lack of any major military success, risked popular disgruntlement and led Nasser to come to the bargaining table. The war was hardly a strategic success for Israel—the end result was internationalization of the canal dispute and Israel's loss of com-

21 Matthew C. Waxman, "Siegecraft and Surrender: The Law and Strategy of Cities as Targets," *Virginia Journal of International Law*, Vol. 39 (1999), pp. 353–423.

22 Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969–1970: A Case-Study of Limited Local War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 120.



mand of the air, both serious drawbacks—but the mechanism of fostering unrest to force concessions did, to a degree, succeed.[23]

The Iraqi regime also exploited the mechamism of popular unrest in its eight-year war with Iran beginning in 1980. Both countries attacked each other's population centers to undermine morale and force concessions. The attacks initially failed, instead bolstering popular support for the war.[24] After several years of limited and inconclusive raids, Iraq stepped up its attacks in 1987, using newly acquired long-range Scud missiles that could directly strike Tehran, Iran's capital and largest city.[25] These attacks were more sustained and effective than previous attacks had been, and Iranian popular morale plummeted as a result.[26] Several million Iranians fled Tehran and other major cities in the face of

23 Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition*, pp. 117–138 and 179–180; Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, pp. 366–372; and Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, p. 16. Because of Nasser's fears of instability from air strikes, he sought Soviet assistance in improving Egypt's air defense in order to neutralize the Israeli Air Force attacks. This increased the military difficulty of Israel's strategy and forced Israel to risk a confrontation with Moscow—a tremendous geopolitical risk. Nasser successfully internationalized the dispute and cost Israel local air superiority, both grievous losses. Nasser thus gained politically from the conflict despite the "defeat" of his military forces.

Pape codes the War of Attrition as a failure for coercion, noting that Egyptian civilian vulnerability was low, that Israel's attacks were aimed at military targets, and that probably fewer than 4,000 Egyptian civilians died as the result of the attacks (Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 352). Pape overlooks, however, the large number of evacuees and the deliberate Israeli tactic of bombing military targets near civilian areas—a tactic designed to foster unrest while striking militarily important targets.

24 James A. Bill, "Morale vs. Technology: The Power of Iran in the Persian Gulf War," in *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression*, Farhang Rajaee, ed. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1993), p. 200.

25 S. Taheri Shemirani, "The War of the Cities," in *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression*, Farhang Rajaee, ed. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1993), pp. 37–38 provides a year-by-year listing of missile and air attacks on Iranian cities. Shemirani's data show a dramatic increase in missile attacks in 1987–1988, though air attacks had peaked several years earlier.

26 Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War, Vol. II: The Iran-Iraq War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 364–368; and Thomas L. McNaugher, "Ballistic Missiles and Chemical Weapons: The Legacy of the Iran-Iraq War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990), p. 5.

the attacks. Speculation that Iraq might use chemical weapons heightened the Iranians' fear. Iranians did not rise up or lose their will to fight, but genuine concern about the populace and fear of losing political support for the revolution in general propelled Iran's decision makers to consider concessions. Iraq's attacks on Iran's population thus contributed to Iran's decision to concede—an inclination further reinforced by Iran's losses on the battlefield and lack of political support from other powers.[27]

The Chechen insurgents' 1994–1996 use of terrorism and violence to coerce Russia to allow a de facto secession is yet another example of an unrest strategy, this time a very low-technology strategy conducted by a small power against a much more militarily powerful state. A series of daring Chechen strikes into Russia proper, including the taking of Russian hostages, increased popular disgruntlement in Russia and the sentiment that the game was not worth the candle. In June 1995, Chechen guerrilla leader Shamil Baseyev raided the Russian town of Budennovsk, taking more than 1,000 civilians hostage in a hospital and leaving over 100 dead, an event that turned many Russian citizens against the war.[28] The Chechen insurgents also used their attacks (and obvious survival) as "proof" that Moscow was not meeting its war aims of crushing the insurgency—a denial strategy.[29] Again, Moscow's failure to win a political or military victory contributed to its decision to make concessions, but growing popular resistance to the war was also a major factor.

Public reaction to coercive threats is extremely unpredictable, however, and a recurring historical lesson has been that attempts to force an adversary's hand by targeting its populace's will to resist often fail or backfire. One problem is that the pain inflicted sometimes fails to produce the intended unrest. Instead, the coercive campaign may raise the cost of compliance for the adversary leadership by provoking a hostile public backlash against the coercer. Russian attempts to bomb the Chechens (and earlier, in the 1980s, the Afghans) into submission simply led to unified defiance, as residents who had formerly favored peaceful solutions—or fighting each other—joined others to expel the

27 McNaugher, "Ballistic Missiles and Chemical Weapons," p. 15.
28 Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Russia's Air War in Chechnya," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 19, no. 4 (Winter 1996), p. 374.
29 Gail W. Lapidus, "Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya," *International Security*, Vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998), p. 21.



invader. In these instances, an unrest strategy increased pressure on leaders not to concede.

A leader's defiance in the face of a coercer's attempts to cause civilian hardships may enhance that leader's stature even in the absence of military success. Egyptian President Nasser lost the Suez War but attained more popularity than ever by his defiant stance toward Israel, France, and Britain. As Donald Neff notes about the attacks on Egypt:

> The bombings, though carefully kept away from civilian targets, were nonetheless having the same counterproductive result that they had had in London during the Nazi aerial war. They were stiffening civilian resolve and morale. During the rest of the crisis, Nasser was greeted by shouts repeating his defiant motto as he drove through Cairo streets.[30]

Leaders may gain politically despite their countries' overall suffering and losses.

Many historical uses of air power to foster unrest demonstrate the related difficulties coercers face when seeking to trigger this mechanism. After World War I, some air power theorists speculated that aerial bombardment could induce social and political collapse. Italian air power advocate Giulio Douhet speculated:

> [W]e need only envision what would go on among the civilian population of congested cities once the enemy announced that he would bomb such centers relentlessly. . . . How could a country go on living and working under this constant threat, oppressed by the nightmare of imminent destruction and death?[31]

British Air Force planning during the interwar years emphasized the morale effects that strategic bombing might have on enemies in future conflicts, inducing them to surrender and thus alleviating the costly stalemate of the previous conflict.[32]

These prophecies were not borne out by Allied strategic bombing attacks in World War II, however. The United States almost totally destroyed Japan's largest cities, particularly vulnerable because of their many wooden buildings, through air raids. Over 900,000 Japanese

30 Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p. 393.
31 Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, Dino Ferrari, trans. (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), pp. 20–22.
32 For a review of British thinking, see Phillip S. Meilinger, "The Historiography of Airpower: Theory and Doctrine," *The Journal of Military History*, no. 64 (April 2000), pp. 480–482.

civilians died from air attacks.[33] Germany suffered almost as much, with 40 percent of its major urban areas destroyed.[34] Allied bombing killed over 300,000 German civilians and injured another 780,000. Over 1.8 million Germans lost their homes. Yet the regimes were not toppled. As the most comprehensive postwar survey of the bombing concluded, "Under ruthless control [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."[35] This conclusion was reiterated in the official British history of the air campaign: "The cardinal error of intelligence was the description . . . of the German people as exhausted, disaffected and liable to panic and revolt when, in reality, . . . they were vigorous, calm, stoical and loyal."[36]

The World War II experience, the most comprehensive attempt to use air attacks on civilians to force the adversary to concede, offers evidence that air strikes trigger effects that might cause popular unrest—just not enough or not in ways to trigger the appropriate mechanisms for altering adversary decision making. Postwar studies of air attacks indicate that allied air strikes produced feelings of anger, fear, and apathy among victims. Sustained bombing disrupted the rhythms of daily life in Japan and Germany; damage to the transportation and civil infrastructure made life far more difficult.[37] The effects were real but often marginal. The revolts, uprisings, and paralysis predicted by Douhet and others did not materialize. One survey of Germans by the U.S. military indicates that towns that were not bombed were almost as supportive of accepting an unconditional surrender as those that were bombed.[38] Al-

33 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 129. In part these attacks stemmed from a lack of precision. Despite the hopes of theorists, bombing accuracy was poor, and large targets such as urban areas were the only targets that bombers could be sure of hitting.

34 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pp. 128 and 254–255.

35 This conclusion, taken from the United States Strategic Bombing Survey commissioned after the war, is described in Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power*, p. 9.

36 Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, Vol. 1 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1961), pp. 26–29.

37 Irving L. Janis, *Air War and Emotional Stress: Psychological Studies of Bombing and Civilian Defense* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1951).

38 Bombings did have a larger impact on morale when their level exceeded the expected level—thus, the massive firebombing of Dresden did undermine morale. Subsequent bombings that were less destructive, however, had little effect as popular expectations adjusted. (Quester, "The Psychological Effects of Bombing on Civilian Populations," p. 205.)



though air strikes on Japanese cities did lower Japanese morale, they neither induced nor created the probability of an uprising.[39] Air Marshall Harris, who orchestrated the British bombing effort, conceded after the war: "The idea that the main object of bombing German industrial cities was to break the enemy's morale proved to be wholly unsound."[40]

Many regimes can ignore popular sentiment in formulating their policies. Neither the Nazi regime nor imperial Japan regularly consulted with the populace through elected bodies or less formal means. Most authoritarian regimes share this characteristic. They face few institutional mechanisms through which a disgruntled population could change regime behavior. Even in democratic states, leaders are often able to control information, place items on the popular agenda, and otherwise dominate decision making.[41]

Populations may have little choice but to suffer quietly if they oppose a policy. And when coercive operations threaten—whether wittingly or unwittingly—to foster popular instability, target regimes often are well-prepared and skilled at maintaining order. If widespread domestic unrest appears likely, many regimes will increase police presence, use mass arrests, and even execute potential opposition members in order to preserve their power.[42] It was relatively easy for the Nazis and the militarist government in Japan to crush any popular opposition before it became serious. During Operation Allied Force, Milosevic shut down independent newspapers and radio stations inside Serbia and used state-run television to stoke nationalism. The threat of popular unrest is therefore not a pressure point for most authoritarian regimes.

39 United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japanese Morale* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 1947), p. 21.

40 Arthur Harris, *Bomber Offensive* (London: Greenhill Books, 1990), p. 78.

41 Downs and Rocke, "Conflict, Agency, and Gambling for Resurrection," p. 362.

42 See Ian Lustick, "Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism Versus Control," *World Politics*, Vol. 31, no. 3 (April 1979), pp. 325–344, for a review of the use of force to control unrest.

The historical difficulties of fine-tuning the effects of coercion on adversary popular politics, and thus on adversary regime decision making, highlight some of the methodological points of the previous chapter, including the need to shed the binary framework in thinking about whether coercive threats succeed or fail. Military strikes and other coercive threats may erode adversary popular support or inflame nationalist passions, or both. Analyzing possible outcomes as either a "yes" or a "no" obscures the potential for threats aimed at popular attitudes and behavior to backfire, hardening adversary resistance and alleviating coercive pressure, or even to split the population, with some segments becoming more supportive of the regime and others opposing it.

The value of unrest, moreover, is best appreciated when the additive and synergistic effects of different coercive mechanisms are recognized. The Chechens, Israelis, and Iraqis did not use manipulation of adversary public opinion as their sole means of forcing concessions from, respectively, Russia, Egypt, and Iran. Rather, they used the threat of unrest in combination with military denial (discussed later in the chapter) to raise the adversary costs of continuing the fight.

### *Decapitation: threatening the leadership's personal security*

In addition to threatening the well-being of elites and the populace as a means of influencing adversary decision making, coercers can try to menace the lives of the adversary leadership itself. In some respects, this is the most direct method of influencing adversary policy choices, as it imposes threats on the decision makers themselves rather than manipulating the fortunes of others in the hope of moving decision makers' policy preferences.

Decapitation strategies can bring about the desired behavioral changes in several ways. Actual assassination can bring to power a different individual or regime that may change policy, though a successful attack on a president or dictator, of course, would generally fall into the brute force category of strategies. During the Cold War, some U.S. nuclear warfare planners considered whether a first strike might be capable of disabling the enemy's retaliatory force by eliminating Soviet leaders in their bunkers.[43] The threat of a leadership attack, however,

43 Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 393.



might intimidate enemy leaders into making concessions even if an actual attack failed or was never carried out. This latter phenomenon is purely coercive. And even the successful execution of a leadership attack can have truly coercive effects as well, because such an attack might spur the replacement leadership to adopt more-conciliatory policies than would otherwise have been chosen.

Although coercers seldom publicly acknowledge assassination attempts or even their consideration of assassination as an option, threats to adversary leadership figures are not uncommon. Indeed, the norm against assassination may be in decline.[44] During the Gulf War, the United States used the threat of decapitation to augment its conventional military campaign. Although fear of decapitation did not coerce Saddam Husayn to leave Kuwait in accordance with U.S. demands, the threat to Saddam himself seems to have played a role in convincing Iraqi leaders not to use chemical or biological weapons during the conflict. Iraq probably considered WMD use during the war. Baghdad had large stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons, had used chemical weapons against Iran and Kurdish villagers, and had deployed chemical weapons in the theater of operations. But Saddam refrained from using them this time around. In a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Traqi Aziz, Secretary of State James Baker had warned that the United States would hold the persons who used WMD individually responsible and would punish them accordingly.[45] U.S. officials also deliberately used vague but ominous language to describe their response to WMD use, suggesting the possibility of massive punishment to reinforce the decapitation strategy.[46]

Decapitation threats are often used by nonstate groups as a means of influencing their adversaries' behavior. Several radical Palestinian

44 Ward Thomas, "Norms and Security: The Case of International Assassination," *International Security*, Vol. 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000), p. 126.

45 The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* reprinted the Bush letter to Saddam that was conveyed at the Baker-Aziz meeting (*The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, January 20, 1991, p. 21). See also Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p. 87; and Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359.

46 As with most coercive strategies, two mechanisms—in this case, decapitation and weakening—were involved. Saddam probably refrained from using WMD in response to the combination of the hint of a nuclear threat and the threat to his personal status in Iraq.

groups, for example, have used the threat of assassination to extort money and support from Arab leaders, particularly those in the Persian Gulf. The Abu Nidal organization obtained millions of dollars by threatening officials and diplomats from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Regime officials supported the radicals financially and tempered their diplomatic condemnation of the radicals' actions because limited concessions preserved their personal security.[47]

Despite their apparent directness, assassination threats have not historically proven very successful for coercive purposes, because the lives of leaders are seldom a pressure point.[48] Israel has assassinated a host of Palestinian terrorist and political leaders, but these efforts have done little to stem the long-term conflict—Israel's attacks have sometimes disrupted military operations, but its foes' commitment to violence has remained strong.[49] Israel has also assassinated several leaders of the Lebanese Hezbollah, but their successors have proved equally committed to the struggle. Similarly, in 1996, when Russian forces finally killed Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev after repeated attempts, Chechen fighters did not let the loss of their leader deter them from continuing their rebellion against Russian forces.

Part of this poor record is explained by the fact that for some leaders, the threat of assassination from abroad is far less likely or credible than the immediate, and often lethal, costs of backing down in the face of coercion.[50] Authoritarian systems (and civil wars in particular) often

47 Yossi Melman, *The Master Terrorist: The True Story Behind Abu Nidal* (New York: Adama Books, 1986), pp. 96–97; and Daniel L. Byman and Jerrold D. Green, *Political Violence and Stability in the States of the Northern Persian Gulf* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999).

48 For a review, see Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); and Murray Clark Havens, Carl Leiden, and Karl M. Schmitt, *The Politics of Assassination* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970).

49 Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Toward a Policy Analysis of Countermeasures* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1980).

50 The difficulty of credibly threatening successful decapitation, however, is not universal. Syria's Hafez al-Asad has, to a degree, used this strategy successfully in Lebanon. Asad's government has assassinated a number of communal leaders, such as Druze Leader Kamal al-Jumblatt in March 1977, to intimidate other groups into falling into line. The presence of roughly 30,000 Syrian troops and a massive intelligence network—to say nothing of a demonstrated willingness to kill rivals of all sorts—lend Syria both more capabilities and more credibility than most coercing states enjoy in this regard.



bring to the fore highly committed individuals. The hardened attitudes of the Hezbollah and Chechen rebel leaders tend to be the rule, not the exception. Some leaders also are personally committed to their policies and ideologies and prefer to risk death rather than make concessions.[51]

In addition to its limited chances of success, assassination can create tremendous political complications and unintended consequences for the coercing power. In 1997, the Israeli Mossad bungled an attempt to kill a Hamas leader in Jordan. In response to Jordan's outrage, Israel released Hamas's spiritual leader as a concession, strengthening the movement Israel sought to weaken. On January 5, 1996, Israel killed Yahya Ayyash, a Hamas terrorist who had orchestrated a series of attacks on Israel. Not only did the Hamas not stop its attacks, but Ayyash's martyrdom led the Hamas to respond brutally, launching several attacks that killed dozens of Israelis and contributed to the electoral defeat of the Peres government.

Decapitation also raises thorny ethical and international legal issues that limit its use, though these constraints remain ill defined, and the way in which decapitation strikes are viewed at home and abroad is likely to depend on many contextual factors, such as whether they occur in peacetime versus wartime and the extent to which an adversary leader has been demonized.[52] In the United States, Executive Order 12333 prohibits "assassination," though this term is subject to differing interpretations.[53] U.S. decision makers may also be especially inclined to avoid decapitation strategies for fear of eroding international norms against assassinating political figures, in part because they fear that U.S. officials might become more vulnerable as well. Rather than imposing

51 Stephen Hosmer, *Operations to Remove Enemy Leaders* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, forthcoming).

52 Louis R. Beres, "The Permissibility of State-Sponsored Assassination During Peace and War," *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal*, no. 5 (Fall 1992), pp. 231–249. Some commentators argue that the United States may kill enemy military officials, including leaders such as Mohammar Qaddafi, as part of self-defense (see Patricia Zengel, "Assassination and the Law of Armed Conflict," *Military Law Review*, no. 134 [Fall 1991], pp. 145–146).

53 A survey of international and domestic law bearing on U.S. assassination policy is found in Michael N. Schmitt, "State-Sponsored Assassination in International and Domestic Law," *Yale Journal of International Law*, no. 17 (Summer 1992), pp. 609–685.

strict barriers on the mechanism's use, these types of constraints generally impose additional costs on the coercer that must figure into the policy calculus like any other costs.

### *Weakening: debilitating the country as a whole*

Instead of focusing on individuals or the elite of an adversary's population, coercion can involve the destruction of a range of infrastructure, industrial, communications, and other targets that make up a country's economic strength and social cohesion. The weakening mechanism targets the entire country with the threat of pain. Of course, the country as an entity does not make decisions, but individual leaders, elites, or the population may decide to make or force concessions to avoid further pain to the country.

There are several reasons why leaders may make concessions when their country as a whole is suffering. Leaders may respond to a weakening campaign because their power base or the population in general cares about the well-being of the country. In such cases, the causation of the weakening mechanism becomes one step removed and thus more difficult: coercers must be able to inflict enough general costs that specific audiences take the steps necessary to change regime policy or to cause it to be changed. If the coercer's strategy relies on indirectly rupturing power base support or provoking popular unrest by weakening the country as a whole, the same factors that affect those mechanisms, discussed earlier in this chapter, will generally apply (i.e., the process could be understood in terms of the power base or unrest mechanisms rather than as a separate mechanism). However, leaders may care about the overall strength of the country and the well-being of the populace independent of the pressure placed on them from their constituencies, whether due to a genuine concern for the suffering of their people or to other ambitions that require a strong regime.

The threat of nuclear punishment generally relies on the weakening mechanism.[54] Though a devastating nuclear strike would, of course, affect the population, the leadership, the military, and the power base of

54 The U.S. policy of massive retaliation, the dominant strategy during the Cold War, clearly relied on the weakening mechanism. However, the policy of "flexible response" was more of a denial strategy, while at times the United States considered using nuclear weapons as part of a decapitation strategy.



a country, it is conceptually much simpler to think of such a strike as affecting the country as a whole for two reasons: it would wreak such devastation that normal policy-making processes would be wiped away, and all constituencies are likely to react strongly to a nuclear threat.

At the other end of the spectrum, though, weakening comes into play in economic statecraft. The British behavior in the 1956 Suez crisis, during which the United States successfully used financial pressure to coerce Britain to end its campaign against Nasser's Egypt, illustrates how the weakening mechanism can compel concessions. During the crisis, the United States threatened to refuse the British government access to additional funds to prop up its currency, raising the specter of a British economic crash. The Eden government had relatively little domestic support for the Suez mission among the British populace. Rather than see the country as a whole weakened, Prime Minister Eden ended the invasion. He recognized that a withdrawal of U.S. support would be disastrous for Britain and made concessions to avoid this scenario, even though the collapse of the Suez campaign sped the demise of his government.[55]

For many coercive standoffs, however, the rather simple model offered by Eden's Britain is complicated by the disconnect between a country and its leadership. Many autocratic governments care little about the well-being of the country as a whole. In Eden's place, they would have accepted an economic crisis and continued with the war. The general effort to weaken a country does not usually directly or immediately affect an ongoing military campaign or a regime's domestic priorities. Moreover, governments have proven skilled at diverting resources from civilian projects and from less-critical military activities to their priorities, making it harder to use general punishment to force them to concede. Governments also can manipulate pressure, using any resulting shortages or problems to punish political opponents while ensuring that loyal followers are relatively unaffected. In such cases, the weakening mechanism is of little value.

At times, the punishment is simply too diffuse; the pain inflicted does not match the potential benefits (measured in ideological terms, political terms, and so on) of continued resistance. Or the pain and threatened pain may be so diluted that they fail to create mass protest or to disrupt the regime's relations with its power base. In sum, attempts to use the

55 Neff, *Warriors at Suez*, pp. 409–410.

weakening mechanism often fail because they do not directly affect adversary pressure points.

### *Denial: preventing military and political victory*

Another common mechanism linking coercive threats to altered adversary decision making is that of rendering impotent an adversary's strategy for winning a crisis or conflict. The above four mechanisms primarily involve imposing costs, but denial centers on preventing a foe from gaining the desired benefits of resistance. According to Pape, "Denial strategies seek to thwart the enemy's military strategy for taking or holding its territorial objectives, compelling concessions to avoid futile expenditures of further resources."[56] Denial works when adversary leaders recognize that they cannot gain benefits and will continue to pay costs if they do not concede.

Denial in coercion is not the same as denial in war. Coercive denial hinges on the perception that benefits will not be achieved; denial by warfighting rests on making that perception a reality. A denial strategy at times blurs with brute force, as both usually seek to defeat an adversary's military, but while coercive denial focuses on convincing an adversary that future benefits are unattainable, conventional warfighting focuses on physically stopping an adversary regardless of what its leadership believes. In practice, this distinction is one of degree: if the attack focuses on demonstrating to the adversary that it cannot succeed, then the attack falls into the coercion realm; if the attack focuses on preventing the adversary from succeeding, then the attack is brute force.

History offers strong support for the proposition that an adversary is likely to come to the negotiating table when it sees its strategy for victory being thwarted. Pape, in his study of coercive air power, makes a convincing case that bombing, when directed at fielded forces, can yield success—as long as those forces are essential to victory. On the other hand, if the forces attacked are not necessary for an adversary to gain victory, air strikes accomplish relatively little.[57] Pape's argument on air power can easily be extended to a broader argument about coercion: coercive strategies are more likely to succeed when the coercer can hinder an adversary's strategy for victory.

56 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 69.
57 See Pape, *Bombing to Win*, passim.



The use or sponsorship of guerrilla warfare to exhaust a foe can be a form of denial. In 1974, Iran provided considerable funding, arms, and a haven to Kurdish guerrillas battling Iraq in order to place pressure on Baghdad. Baghdad had long sought to dominate the Kurdish north, using scorched-earth methods and population transfers alongside a counterinsurgency campaign to crush the Kurdish fighters. Iraq in 1975 recognized, after over a year of unsuccessful fighting, that it could not defeat Kurdish insurgents as long as they had Iran's backing. Moreover, the continued unsuccessful campaign threatened to weaken the Baath regime's support among the Iraqi elite. Because Baghdad foresaw that it would not be able to gain victory, it agreed to Iran's demands about their contested border.[58]

The key to successful denial is to defeat the enemy's actual strategy for victory, not simply to stop conventional military operations. As Pape argues, for denial to be effective, "the coercer must exploit the particular vulnerabilities of the opponent's specific strategy."[59] To force an adversary to recognize a military stalemate or defeat, denial campaigns often attack military production, interdict supplies to the battlefield, shatter enemy air defenses, disrupt communication and command, and defeat fielded forces.[60]

The degree to which these efforts are effective depends on the nature of the adversary and its strategy. Pape argues that Operation Rolling Thunder in Vietnam, as well as the U.S. interdiction efforts in Laos and during the Korean War, failed in large part because the resource needs of the adversary's fighters were limited.[61] Although the United States devastated the transportation grid and hindered throughput, the fact

58 Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 13–20; and Phebe Marr, *A Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 232–233.
59 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 30.
60 Robert Pape, "The Limits of Precision-Guided Air Power," *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, no. 2 (Winter 1997–1998), p. 97.
61 Operation Rolling Thunder sought to systematically target the enemy's economic assets. The goal was to destroy the North's war-making capability, which in turn would lead the insurgency to collapse. Rolling Thunder destroyed 65 percent of the North's oil storage capacity, 59 percent of its power plants, 55 percent of its major bridges, and thousands of vehicles and rail cars. Almost 90 percent of the targets were transportation related—the strikes hindered movement, but they did not affect infiltration. (Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power*, pp. 100 and 134.)

that the guerrillas and soldiers required relatively few supplies allowed them to use the degraded transportation network effectively.[62] In contrast, Operation Linebacker in Vietnam succeeded because the North Vietnamese had switched to a conventional military strategy. U.S. air power proved highly effective at cutting off the supplies and infrastructure necessary for conventional operations. After failing to sustain conventional operations in the South, Hanoi realized that military success depended on removing the United States, particularly the U.S. Air Force, from the conflict.[63]

Some adversary strategies are difficult to counter through denial. In 1993–1994, North Korea sought to reinvigorate its nuclear program in order to gain both defensive advantages and coercive leverage over its neighbors. Denial was not a viable option for compelling Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear program, as the United States and its allies lacked the ability to disrupt the North's means of attaining its goal—a well-developed technical infrastructure for producing a nuclear device. In theory, the United States could have used force to destroy the scientists, engineers, and technical infrastructure, but it lacked both the intelligence necessary to target those individuals and assets and, equally important, the political support at home and in the region for such drastic and unprecedented preemptive attacks.

Denial strategies often become more and more similar to a brute force approach because of the adversary's response. In response to the successful denial of one of its strategies of victory, an adversary may shift to another strategy, and then another if the second fails. Thus, the coercer may find itself trying to counter multiple enemy strategies for victory, leading it to escalate to the point that its actions are not distinguishable from brute force efforts.

In some cases, adversaries may be willing to pay the price of military defeat to score a political victory, in which case military denial becomes more difficult to harness for coercive pressure. Consider Egyptian

62 Mark Clodfelter argues that air power was ineffective when North Vietnam was employing a guerrilla strategy but effective when North Vietnam used conventional military operations: "Because of revamped American political objectives and the North's decision to wage conventional war, Linebacker proved more effective than Rolling Thunder in furthering U.S. goals in Vietnam" (Clodfelter, *The Limits of Airpower*, p. 148). See also Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pp. 193–194.

63 Pape, *Bombing to Win*.



President Anwar Sadat's ambitions in the 1973 Yom Kippur War with Israel. Sadat recognized that in a drawn-out battle, his forces were no match for Israel's. He successfully used surprise, however, to score impressive short-term gains. Although Israel eventually defeated Egypt's forces, Cairo's initial successes and the considerable Israeli losses gave Sadat increased credibility at home and focused increased international attention on the Middle East. Both these factors helped Sadat negotiate with Israel successfully and regain the Sinai through diplomacy. Israel did not, and indeed could not, produce the desired concessions simply by defeating Egypt's fielded forces.

Similarly, Saddam Husayn's 1997–1998 challenge of the UN weapons inspection regime proved frustrating to the United States and its allies. Despite their overwhelming military superiority, the U.S.-led coalition had few options for using that superiority so as to credibly threaten to deny Saddam's ability to achieve his political ambitions with respect to WMD development. From autumn 1997 through the end of 1998, Saddam blocked United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) inspections on numerous occasions. He probably intended to speed the lifting of sanctions and, more important, to demonstrate to his supporters that he remained defiant.[64] Saddam's strategic objective was not only to get the sanctions lifted, but to do so in a way that would reinforce his prestige at home and abroad. In essence, he could demonstrate to his power base that the WMD programs they favored remained intact while forcing the end of sanctions. The United States responded by increasing its military forces in the region and threatening strikes if Iraq refused to comply with its demands. A series of deals, breaches, U.S. threats of air strikes, and new deals and compromises ensued, resulting in, initially, a watered-down inspection regime and, eventually, the complete collapse of the inspections process in December 1998.

Although Saddam did not succeed in getting the sanctions lifted, the United States and its allies failed to restore an inspections regime. Military denial, in this instance, was not a practical choice for policy makers, because Saddam's strategy for victory relied on creating a crisis over inspectors' access, a difficult strategy to counter through military means. Conceivably, the United States and its allies could have offered military protection to the inspectors, "denying" Saddam the ability to

64 Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, p. 79.

expel them and forcing him to attack coalition forces to hinder inspection activities. Yet this would have required a massive effort—one calling for large numbers of ground troops—for which there was little allied support. In addition, such protection still would not have forced Iraq to cooperate with the inspectors, which was essential for them to gain a full accounting of Iraq's weapons programs. Indeed, the use of air strikes or other military measures might even have aided Iraq's political strategy, adding to Saddam's prestige and leading to squabbling among coalition members.

Denial may take time. It is not enough for an adversary strategy to fail—adversary decision makers must recognize that their strategy is failing and that the coercer can continue the pressure as long as necessary. Before they accept defeat, they usually try to hold out until they are sure that the coercer can sustain the pressure. In addition, they often step up their counter-coercion in hopes of forcing the coercer to halt the denial campaign.

## SECOND-ORDER COERCION

The five commonly used coercive mechanisms involve direct pressure on the adversary insofar as they are directed at groups, individuals, or military forces within the adversary itself. At times, however, a coercer may have only minimal direct leverage or may lack sufficient information to use its leverage effectively, leaving only the option of indirect pressure: leverage with a third party that can influence the adversary. Although a third-party approach is generally ignored by analysts of coercion, it is common in diplomacy. The United States, for example, may have little influence with North Korea when it attempts to convince it to stop its WMD development or refrain from selling missiles to rogue states. Yet Washington can, and does, press China to use its more extensive influence with Pyongyang to push North Korea to make concessions.

Indirect coercion, of course, requires far more effort than indirect diplomacy. Coercion through a third party requires the coercer to induce or compel the third party to become a coercer itself (or to use brute force) against an adversary. Because third-party coercion requires coercion or suasion to work twice, the problems facing coercers generally multiply. The coercer must be able to shape the behavior of the



third party in such a way that the third party's response will effectively shape the adversary's will in accord with the coercer's overall objectives.

A useful illustration of successful indirect coercion is Israel's attacks on Palestinians in Jordan during the 1950s. Israeli policy recognized that Palestinian terrorism could not be stopped directly by Israeli actions and that a third-party host was better positioned to control activities from within its territory. As Moshe Dayan declared about Israel's policy in the early days of the state's existence:

> We cannot guard every water pipeline from explosion and every tree from uprooting. We cannot prevent every murder of a worker in an orchard or a family in their beds. But it is in our power to set a high price on our blood, a price too high for the Arab community, the Arab army, or the Arab government to think it worth paying. We can see to it that the Arab villages oppose the raiding bands that pass through them, rather than give them assistance. It is in our power to see that Arab military commanders prefer a strict performance of their obligation to police the frontiers rather than suffer defeat in clashes with our units.[65]

Israel relied on third parties—Arab military commanders—to restrain movements that Israel itself could not stop. After several years of unsuccessful Israeli attempts to stop infiltration, which led to about 100 casualties a year from 1951 to 1954, Israeli reprisals in the 1950s succeeded in forcing the Jordanian government to stop Palestinian raids. Israeli reprisals against refugee camps and villages in Jordan provoked local demonstrations against the Jordanian government, which the people felt was failing to protect them.[66] King Hussein became militantly anti-Israel in his public diplomacy, but at the same time he ordered the army to crack down on any infiltration in order to prevent domestic unrest. After 1954, infiltration fell dramatically. Israeli raids had threatened King Hussein's quest for national integration, prompting him to seek the *status quo ante*.[67]

Jordan once more became a key base of Palestinian operations after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Plagued by Palestinian cross-border attacks

65 As quoted in Bar-Joseph, "Variations on a Theme," p. 152.

66 Israel primarily struck at Arab military objectives instead of towns and villages after attacks on Palestinian civilians in Jordan led to condemnation in Israel, the United States, and elsewhere (Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949–1956* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], pp. 274–276).

67 Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 37–51; and Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, pp. 100–101.

from refugee camps in Jordan both before and after that war, Israel engaged in retaliatory strikes against Palestinian militants in Jordan and, at times, Jordanian villagers and the soldiers protecting them. This failed to stem Palestinian terrorism, because the high commitment of the Palestinians made them reluctant to give in to Israeli pressure. In addition, the Israeli attacks raised support for the militants among both the Palestinian community at large and the more radical states in the Arab world, increasing funding and recruiting for the militants.

Because Israeli retaliation led Palestinian groups to stay well armed and active, it damaged the credibility of the Jordanian government in the eyes of its own populace. Amman could not keep order in its own country, despite trying to police its borders more effectively—efforts that angered the Palestinians but did not satisfy the Israelis. Thus, Israel's operations again raised the specter of unrest in Jordan, as local guerrillas became more active, better armed, and highly critical of the Hashemite regime. Because Hussein greatly feared internal unrest and sought to integrate Palestinians into a larger Jordanian national identity, the Israeli attacks threatened to impose unacceptable costs. Hussein, while outwardly professing defiance of Israel, instructed his army to crack down on Palestinian cross-border operations. When the Palestinian militants turned against the regime and undermined his control over Jordan, Hussein ordered his army to suppress all Palestinian guerrillas, leading to a bloody battle in 1970 that forced the Palestinian guerrillas to flee to Lebanon.[68]

As this example demonstrates, for a strategy such as Israel's to work, the third party (in this case, Jordan) must have the necessary leverage to act as a coercer itself—a condition that may be missing. That is, the third party must have influence over the ultimate target and must have the potential willingness to exercise that influence in ways that accord with the primary coercer's ultimate objectives. In the early 1970s, Israel tried a strategy similar to that employed in Jordan in the 1950s and 1960s in order to force the Lebanese government to crack down on the PLO. The Lebanese government, however, was not strong enough to crush the Palestinians. In response to Israeli attacks, Maronite Christian officers led the Lebanese army into clashes with Palestinian commandos. But by 1969, the army was forced to retreat and give the PLO de facto military autonomy in the so-called Cairo agreement. The Palestinians continued their operations with little interference. Indeed, the end result was a disaster for Israel, as other groups, such as the Shi'a, formed militias because they were convinced that the government was too weak to protect them. This contributed to the collapse of the Lebanese state and the proliferation of anti-Israel militant groups.[69]

68 See Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 37–51, and Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, pp. 100–101, for information on 1950s operations. See Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, pp. 378–381, for information on the Palestinian guerrillas and the crisis in Jordan in 1968–1970; also see Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, pp. 232–234 and 298–299.



## CONCLUSION

There is no best mechanism for successful coercion. The ideal mechanism (or combination of mechanisms) varies according to the vulnerabilities of the regime and the particulars of the crisis in question. There are many ways to force a regime to change its behavior, but even the most historically effective mechanisms can backfire or work only in certain circumstances. What worked against Iraq in 1993 may fail against Serbia in 2001, or even against Iraq in 2001.

When triggered simultaneously, several mechanisms may reinforce each other, helping to achieve escalation dominance by increasing the overall degree of pressure on an adversary and cutting off adversary countermoves. However, various effects of threats on key groups and institutions within the adversary political system can also combine in unpredictable or counterproductive ways, alleviating coercive pressure or adding to the costs associated with concessions.

The discussion of mechanisms in this chapter suggests that successful coercion may not always be possible. As Schelling observed in *Arms and Influence*: "Coercion by threat of damage also requires that our interests and our opponent's not be absolutely opposed. . . . Coercion requires finding a bargain, arranging for him to be better off doing what we want—worse off not doing what we want—when he takes the threatened penalty into account."[70] In some cases, the perceived costs of giving in are so dreaded that virtually no military threat will compel the adversary to bend. Pape argues that the reason Germany did not surrender to the Allies was that German leaders feared occupation by Russia and the likely vengeance for atrocities committed by Germany in

69 Dilip Hiro, *Lebanon: Fire and Embers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 81–110.

70 Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 4.

the East. Thus, the massive bombing campaign against Germany, as well as continued *Wehrmacht* battlefield defeats, could not sway a German leadership that saw continued punishment and likely defeat as preferable to occupation.[71] The German case may be extreme—it is not clear whether, by the end of the war, the German leadership had even a remotely plausible theory of victory—but it illustrates that coercion can be impossible under certain circumstances.

The importance to coercive strategy making of identifying proper mechanisms for a particular crisis has tremendous implications for selection of the proper instrument, the focus of the following chapter. When choosing among air strikes, sanctions, diplomatic pressure, or other means of inflicting costs, policy makers must remember that the best choice depends on identifying the most appropriate mechanism, which requires an understanding of the adversary regime and its particular vulnerabilities. At times, coercion is best done indirectly, using another state or actor that has more influence over the adversary. At best, failure to properly understand an adversary may cause the instrument to work less effectively than it otherwise would have. At worst, the instrument may backfire, leaving the coercer even farther from its goals.

71 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 310.

# 4

# Coercive instruments

Effective coercive strategy making calls for an understanding of the tools of the trade. Coercion, in practice, requires that abstract notions of costs, benefits, and mechanisms be translated into concrete policies. The choice of instrument to be used depends on instrument effectiveness, costs to the coercer, and the overall political context. The wrong choice can lead to failure or counterproductivity.

The range of coercive instruments is vast. Xenophon writes of the Spartans devastating the countryside around Athens and blockading the city, reducing it to starvation in order to force the Athenians to tear down their walls, shrink their navy, change their constitution, and fall in line with Spartan foreign policy.[1] In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Vatican placed entire nations under interdiction in order to force their leadership to comply with its demands. The British empire relied on "gunboat diplomacy" to enforce its will on its colonies. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union threatened to use their nuclear arsenal during several crises. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has bombed Serbia, killed militia members in Somalia, supported sanctions on Iraq, issued diplomatic demarches on subjects ranging from trade disputes to narcotics trafficking, and utilized a host of other means to threaten adversaries with costs.

This chapter surveys some key strengths and weaknesses of the instruments often used by the United States and other major powers to in-

1 For an interesting review, see Anna Missiou-Ladi, "Coercive Diplomacy in Greek Interstate Relations," *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (1987), pp. 336–345.