



The Podium

September 2017

Volume II • Edition II

An important note: All opinions and ideas expressed in The Podium are the personal opinions and convictions of featured student writers and are not necessarily the opinions of The Podium staff, the Belmont Hill History Department, or the Belmont Hill School itself.



Jared Stier '18 and
Luke Jordan '18
Collaborate

Photo: Duncan Grant '18



Photo: Duncan Grant '18

Combined Covers from Volume I

A Shot of The Podium in the Hamilton Chapel



Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

The Podium remains committed to publishing the best student-written work in history and current events, and Volume II-Edition II showcases three op-eds, two intriguing polling projects, and a depth of strong research papers. We continue to expand the involvement of younger students; Jack Weldon '20 and Jeff Segel '20 are authors of a polling project on North Korea, and Liam Kelly '20, Declan McDonough '20, Jackson Riffe '20, and Abe Tolkoff '21 also make strong contributions to the publication. For the second edition in a row, Dr. Buckley served as a polling consultant, advising boys with survey design for the Data Analysis section.

Three op-eds are being published in Volume II - Edition II. Hosting two competitions, one in April 2017 and one in May 2017, we named a winner for each competition. In April, Jack Daley's ('17) winning piece, "Not a Laughing Matter: Political Satire and the 2016 Election" criticized TV satire. Daley analyzed the "complacency, arrogance, and close-mindedness" that can result from political satire, calling into question "late night comedians, whose exaggerated viewpoints and aloof attitudes drown out more constructive, nuanced political discourse." In May, Abe Tolkoff '21 became the youngest victor of a Podium op-ed competition. Abe backed up an analysis of ISIS in Syria with strong research, advocating for troop training and ground forces: "By fully supporting the ground troops already in Syria through training, the U.S. and Coalition countries can achieve the common goal of eradicating ISIS and removing the current Syrian regime from power." Finally, Seth Israel's ('18) op-ed considering reparations for slavery highlighted how the Spanish government has responded to its history with Sephardic Jews.

Volume II-Section II also features findings on Belmont Hill's history. This edition's History on the Hill section presents excerpts from the presentation Gus Lamb '17, Lebanos Mengistu '17, Sebastian Themelis '17, James Cardichon '17, and Mr. Hegarty delivered to the community on Diversity Day. It is our hope that the publication of their research on the Atkins family's influence on Belmont Hill and connection to slave labor in Cuba prompts thought and reflection.

As questions around American civility surface in 2017, The Podium hopes it can help to reaffirm Belmont Hill's faith in the importance of civil debate, respectful disagreement, and the free exchange of ideas. For now, enjoy Volume II - Edition II.

William McCormack '18 – Editor-In-Chief
Ishaan Prasad '18, Jared Stier '18 – Executive Editors

The Podium Staff



Left to Right: Nick Gallo '18, Jeff Segel '20, Matthew Smith '19, Luke Jordan '18, Richie Kendall '19, Jake Carter '18, Ishaan Prasad '18, Jack Weldon '20, William McCormack '18, Jeff Price '18, Jared Stier '18, David Paine '18, Pat Connor '18, Duncan Grant '18, and Liam Kelly '20
Not Pictured: Declan McDonough '20, Jackson Riffe '20, Abe Tolkoff '21



Polling Consultant: Dr. Kara Buckley



Both photos: Adam Richins

Faculty Advisor: Mr. Eric Smith

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Shattered Like a Crystal Glass
A Bullied Opportunist

Jake Carter '18
William McCormack '18

Thank you to the History Department for their assistance in identifying strong essays and papers. Their dedication to The Podium is vital to the success of the final publication.



AHR Research on the Atkins Family

Excerpts from Diversity Day 2017 Presentation

Authors-2017 Advanced Historical Research Students Gus Lamb '17, James Cardichon '17, Sebastian Themelis '17, and Lebanos Mengistu '17, along with faculty adviser Mr. David Hegarty

Pieces in The Podium's History on the Hill section acknowledge and explore a component of Belmont Hill's history. For Volume II - Edition II, we provide research from Belmont Hill's Advanced Historical Research elective. Four seniors, Gus Lamb '17, Lebanos Mengistu '17, Sebastian Themelis '17, and James Cardichon '17, along with faculty adviser Mr. Hegarty, explored the Atkins family's influence on the history of Belmont Hill and their connection to slave labor on the Soledad Plantation in Cuba. During last year's Diversity Day, the five conducted an all-school presentation to relay their findings. Borrowing a line from David McCullough, Mr. Hegarty reflected that "above all, history is human. In addition to the stories of slavery in Cuba, a part of the human side of the Belmont Hill story is the Atkins family, and their connections with the school." Their work continues to prompt reflection about conflict, race, progress, and change at Belmont Hill and in the world.

Mr. Prenatt's description of Katharine Atkins (matriarch of the Atkins family for so many decades) as the "guardian angel" of the school has stuck with us over these last few months. He reiterated to us last week that "there have been many builders of this institution over the years, and she is one of them."

It seemed logical that when we started our class in January, one of the first assignments should be to read the school history. The Story of Belmont Hill was first published in 1973 in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the school. As you will hear throughout the presentation, there were times when it did not look like this school would survive, and a strong argument can be made that without the financial support of the Atkins family, this school would not be in existence.

"A school has an organic life of its own, apart from including the lives of all those who touch it. Until the morning of September 26, 1923, Belmont Hill School was unborn, merely a group of buildings, a collection of papers, a bank account, and a conception in the minds of its incorporators, headmaster, faculty, and prospective students."

The goal of the founders of Belmont Hill was to start a day school for their sons that would have small classes and give their kids the opportunity to take ownership of their education. Shortly prior to the school's founding, the "Hill" that we know today was 19 acres of undeveloped, rough, and swampy land. However, with the help of Robert Atkins, an incorporator and member of the Belmont Hill Trust, the land was purchased, and soon after, Reginald Howe was made the first headmaster of the school.

Dr. Howe was given the opportunity to apply for the position thanks to Katherine Atkins. Dr. Howe had taught at the Middlesex School at the same time that Robert had attended it, and Katherine was familiar and fond of Dr. Howe and recommended him for the headmaster position at Belmont Hill. Once Dr. Howe was hired, he was quoted saying, "What we want to do here is to make this a small school, an individual school where the spirit is large, and intimate personal relations are preserved so far as is humanly possible."

The Atkins family also had very strong connections to Cuba. Throughout their time



in Cuba, from about 1810 -1960, the Atkins family acquired a lot of wealth by taking advantage of the sugar industry in Cuba. Although Edwin Atkins, the wife of Katherine Atkins, technically did not own “slaves” because they were getting paid a minimal amount for the work they did, they were working under slave conditions doing slave work.

During a visit to our class, Alexa Rahman, a 2012 graduate of Harvard University who wrote about the close connections between the Atkins family and Harvard, described Edwin Atkins as someone who “saw the process of working and dealing with slaves as a form of a business transaction. He looked at his businesses in Cuba as a series of inputs and outputs.” Mr. Atkins was very much reflective of other businessmen of that era in American history.

In our research, we explored these connections between the Atkins family, Harvard and the Soledad plantation in Cuba. In 1899, Edwin Atkins gave a part of the plantation to Harvard for the study of sugar and molasses processing. In 1903, he was given an honorary degree by Harvard, and over the years donated millions of dollars to Harvard.

According to Alexa Rahman, there were “significant donations from Atkins drawing on wealth derived from slave labor at the Soledad plantation.” In that same year, 1903, Professor Oakes Ames of Harvard visited Soledad, Cuba, and couldn’t help but feel uncomfortable and troubled by how closely the Botanical Station resembled a plantation of old. The “Old Slave Bell” was particularly unsettling, and upon hearing it ring one day he remarked, “I really felt all the cruelty of slavery was summoned in that one bell tone...For a minute I believe I experienced the sensations a thinking slave must have felt when called suddenly to the awful reality of his existence, by the fearful sounds of the night bell.”

We mentioned earlier that, according to Mr. Prenatt, Mrs. Atkins was the guardian angel of the school, and from all that we have learned, that seems true to us. In fact, if you look at a brief write up of her gifts to the school, you’ll see that they were varied and significant.

We will note here that the Bell we have on our campus, in front of the lawn, and beside the front office, is from the Soledad plantation. However, we have not been able to confirm if that Bell was used like the other “Old Slave Bell” mentioned earlier.

We must also point out that in the spring of 1942, Mrs. Atkins agreed to help the school during a difficult time in the school’s history, due to a falling enrollment, and a number of faculty leaving to fight in WW2. It was unclear in the summer of 1942 whether the school would be able to reopen, but Mrs. Atkins not only helped the school financially, but also, through her contacts around the Boston area, rally some more students to enroll for the fall of 1942.

Early members of the Atkins family benefitted from the profits of the family’s plantation in Soledad before and after the family officially bought the plantation in 1886 with 177 patrocinos, former slaves rebranded as “apprentices.” Belmont Hill was in part funded by the profits of slavery but this does not change the fact that it has made its goal to provide a high quality of education along with numerous opportunities to countless students.

We can ask questions: Should first formers in the Class of 2023 be required or encouraged to learn some of the history of the school? Should The Bell in front of the lawn be removed? If not, should there be a plaque of some kind, acknowledging its origins? And as we celebrate almost one hundred years of success, we can also rightfully take pride in the academic, artistic, vocal, and athletic talent that flows through here. We can reflect on the history of our school, the progress we have made, and how that progress has been achieved.



Not a Laughing Matter

Author-Jack Daley '17
Section-Opinion Pieces

Ever since November, writers and pundits have endlessly scrutinized the results of the historic 2016 election, citing racial tension, working-class economic anxiety, sexism, poor campaign strategy, and the alleged involvement of foreign powers. However, one factor that continues to be overlooked is the effect of political satire; despite seeming harmless and amusing, political satire has played a major role in fostering complacency, arrogance, and close-mindedness among liberals, undermining the Democratic party and contributing to devastating defeats in dozens of elections nationwide.

The months leading up to election day saw an unprecedented barrage of left-leaning political satire in TV, newspapers, and social media. Whether it was Saturday Night Live's Alec Baldwin, the Late Show's Stephen Colbert, Last Week Tonight's John Oliver, or the New Yorker's Andy Borowitz, Trump's erratic style and controversial views provided a seemingly limitless source of humor. Yet, while such commentary delighted Democratic audiences, it had an insidious effect on the party. First, satirist's incessant bashing of Trump magnified a stereotype of arrogance and elitism among liberals. Second, because humor and sarcasm were often centered around Trump's extreme views on immigration and foreign policy, Democrats failed to pay attention to many of the more moderate policies and ideas--such as trade protectionism, infrastructure spending, and corporate tax cuts--that were attracting considerable numbers of moderate voters. Similarly, while satirists portrayed Trump as a highly polarizing figure supported mainly by far-right white men, he actually received votes from a diverse cross section of americans--according to exit polls, 40% of his voters were ideologically moderate, just under 10% of his voters were people of color, 15% identified as LGBT, and around 10% voted for President Obama in the last election. Lastly, the obsession with anti-Trump satire obscured the Democrat's own platform; rather than espousing the promise of their own policies and vision, their main message essentially became, "Trump is a joke."

Of course, political satire isn't showing any signs of going away during the Trump Administration. And there's nothing wrong with occasionally poking a little fun at politicians. But it is important that liberal audiences (and the Democratic party as a whole) not let themselves be swayed by late night comedians, whose exaggerated viewpoints and aloof attitudes drown out more constructive, nuanced political discourse.

Instead, Democrats must strengthen and clarify their own vision for the country, especially with regards to reducing inequality, improving health-care, expanding college affordability, supporting government social programs in a fiscally responsible manner, and fighting climate change while creating jobs and modernizing industry. With the important 2018 midterms looming on the horizon, now is the time for the left to stop making jokes and start delivering a serious message to the American people.

Competition 3 (Apr. 2017), Winner

The War Against Terror: U.S. in Syria

Author-Abe Tolkoff '21

Section-Opinion Pieces

Scarily, ISIS has taken over almost fifty percent of the country of Syria. With operations in an estimated eighteen countries and growing international recruiting, it may be one of the most malicious enemies the world has yet to face. ISIS, having completed attacks in seven major countries, poses a threat not just to civilians in the Middle East but to those all over the world; however, the Syrian government, slaughtering its own citizens and forcing the country to vote for one sole political party, poses no better alternative. To ensure both the total destruction of ISIS and the replacement of the current Syrian government, to the extent that is necessary, the U.S. and Global Coalition must continue hitting main money sources and major military equipment of the Islamic State and greatly increase support for Iraqi and Syrian Rebel forces.

According to the BBC, the Islamic State made 2.9 billion dollars in 2014 with a majority of its funding existing in black market oil and gas sales. In 2015, however, after major U.S. led coalition airstrikes, ISIS's revenue was reduced to 2.4 billion dollars and most of that decrease was in oil sales. Profits made through oil in 2014, roughly 1.6 billion dollars in oil, were reduced to 0.9 billion dollars in 2015. According to Business Insider, another main source of income for the Islamic State is extortion. The militants heavily tax those living in their territory, and such taxations include import taxes, rent for businesses, fines for breaking laws, utility bills, and income tax. While military action may not be able to reduce extortion income, raids, similar to the September 24th, 2014 raid on ISIS oil manufacturing facilities and a more recent December 15th, 2016 air raid that supposedly destroyed 14 Syrian tanks of which ISIS militants had gained control, can reduce oil income by targeting oil rigs and drilling sites.

While Fabian tactics may work to some extent while confronting the Islamic State, forces on the ground fighting to regain control of entire cities and expanses of land will be the most effective means by which ISIS can be destroyed. A 2014 New York Times article, although titled "U.S. Considers Resuming Non-lethal Aid to Syrian Opposition," revealed that the U.S. runs an ongoing covert CIA operation to train Syrian Rebel forces. More freely discussed military support has expanded since then, with the deployment of U.S. Special Forces and with the March 2017 deployment of 400 Marines into the ranks of Kurdish and Syrian rebels. This deployment not only symbolized increased U.S. influence in the Syria, but also the deployment of more "conventional forces" into an area that had until recently been inhabited by special forces. Through these deployments the U.S. has created both a strong military presence in Syria and an assurance that everything will

be done to resolve the situation. Increasing military support to both the special forces, marines, and CIA agents deployed will speed up the training and fighting process and increase necessary stability in the region. Despite an increasing conflict of ethics and the general pull of the public to not fully engage in another war, it is important to complete the efforts that have already begun in supporting Iraqi and Syrian Rebel Forces and taking out ISIS money making targets systematically to limit funding as much as possible. By targeting specific areas and focusing on reducing civilian casualties, drone and other airstrikes can help bring ISIS to its knees. And by fully supporting the ground troops already in Syria through training, the U.S. and Coalition countries can achieve the common goal of eradicating ISIS and removing the current Syrian regime from power.

Competition 4 (May 2017), Winner

Following Footsteps

Author-Seth Israel '18

Section-Opinion Pieces

Starting in 1492 under the Alhambra Decree and continuing through the 1800s, Jewish people in Spain under the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were given three options: one, convert their religion to Catholicism, the religion of the Spanish monarchy; two, keep their faith in Judaism and leave Spain altogether, essentially uprooting their entire lives; or three, remain in Spain without converting and be killed for that decision. Over 200,000 Jews were exiled from the country, and tens of thousands died trying to reach freedom. Jews were discriminated against when trying to flee Spain on ships, as Spanish captains often charged them with exorbitant prices and proceeded to dump them in the ocean.

The Spanish government, recognizing the horrors and injustices of the past in their country, have begun to make amends for the blunders of their ancestors. Currently, if one can trace their lineage to the Sephardic Jewish community, the Jews who once resided in Spain, they are eligible for Spanish citizenship. With just a short language test and a Spanish cultural test, such a person will become a citizen of Spain.

Similarly, African Americans, from their arrival in America to the passing of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, and even to this day, are oppressed. Although the severity of this oppression, ranging from slavery prior to the Civil War to police brutality in modern day, has lessened over time, the American government is long overdue in taking the proper steps to solve the problems of racism. Although not nearly as severe as the history of slavery in the United States, the exile of Jewish people from Spain in 1491 and the subsequent actions driven by the Spanish government currently serve as an effective model of how a modern society can reconcile historical atrocities.

The United States government can follow in the footsteps of the Spanish government in making reparations to the ancestors of those who were treated unjustly, and the first step they should take is the direct and intense improvement of education available to African Americans. As a result of segregation in the 20th century as well as the inability to relocate due to a lack of social and economic mobility, African Americans in America have typically been confined to the urban areas of the United States. In such urban areas, the public education system is insufficient, further driving African Americans, who have already been put at a disadvantage, in a more difficult position. In order to reconcile slavery, America needs to educate those affected by the cycle, a cycle of poverty and lack of opportunity, which racism has created. By increasing access to education, improving the facilities of public schools, hiring the best teachers possible, providing

better learning materials for students, creating educational extracurricular programs, and implementing other improvements, the American government can allow those affected by the lasting legacy of slavery to escape the social and economic hole they have been thrown in and ultimately create a climate in which the effective reconciliation of slavery is possible.





Examining the 8th Amendment

Subtitle-Habeas Corpus and Guantanamo Bay

Author-Timmy McCormack '21

Section-Research Papers

In 1791, the 8th amendment was added to the Bill of Rights.¹ The eight amendment states that, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."² While the eighth amendment has been interpreted and modified in several ways, "nor cruel and unusual punishment" has remained, acting as a pillar for this amendment. When the 8th amendment was written, the "cruel and unusual" part protected perpetrators from being killed for minor offenses, such as grand theft.³⁴ It also protected perpetrators from torture, which was a common method of interrogation. Currently, the amendment provides similar protection as when it was written, but many interpret the law now as free from torture and excessive punishment.⁵ One of the main controversy surrounding this amendment is Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp, located on U.S territory in the southeast part of Cuba.⁶ Along with the 8th amendment rights possibly being violated, many also believe that Guantanamo Bay, also known as GTMO or GITMO, violates the Habeas Corpus.⁷ The Habeas Corpus is, "... the legal procedure that keeps the government from holding you indefinitely without showing cause."⁸ Some of the prisoners in the detention camp are detained on suspicion, rather than evidence that they are a threat.

The idea of prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment dates back to 1689, where it first appeared in the English Declaration of Rights. The English framers, similar to the reasons of the American framers, added this part to, "outlaw savage and tortuous forms of punishment." While this law was being created in England, American colonies still had savage forms of punishment. The forms of punishment were in violation of Britain's cruel and unusual clause, but were permissible because they had been used before.⁹ Gradually, over a period of 10 years, the colonies started to become more lenient and fair when it came to punishments. There is argument whether the British framers influenced the colonies decision, or if the colonies themselves came to a decision, but it is unclear why this change happened.¹⁰

The Writ of Habeas Corpus was first used in 1215 in the Magna Carta, and in the year 1305 by Sir William Blackstone.¹¹ In article 39 of the Magna Carta it says, "No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or exiled or in any way

destroyed, nor will we go upon him nor will we send upon him except upon the lawful judgement of his peers or the law of the land."¹² Ninety years later, Sir William used these words to help a prisoner out of a trial.¹³ Similar to cruel and unusual punishment, Habeas Corpus, gradually made its way over to the colonies. Habeas Corpus now can be found in article 1, section 9, clause 2 of the constitution.¹⁴

One of the first writings regarding cruel and unusual punishment came on November 1st, 1787 by an anti-federalist named Brutus. Brutus was writing this speech/letter to the citizens of New York, trying to persuade them that a Bill of Rights need to be added to the constitution.¹⁵ In his letter, Brutus writes, "For the security of liberty it has been declared, 'that excessive bail should not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishments inflicted – That all warrants, without oath or affirmation, to search suspected places, or seize any person, his papers or property, are grievous and oppressive.'"¹⁶ This was an impactful letter that disallowed cruel and unusual punishment in the states.

The Writ of Habeas Corpus, was briefly mentioned in Federalist Paper #84.¹⁷ In the paper it states,

"But I must acknowledge that I cannot readily discern the inseparable connection between the existence of liberty, and the trial by jury in civil cases. Arbitrary impeachments, arbitrary methods of prosecuting pretended offenses, and arbitrary punishments upon arbitrary convictions, have ever appeared to me to be the great engines of judicial despotism; and these have all relation to criminal proceedings. The trial by jury in criminal cases, aided by the habeas-corpus act, seems therefore to be alone concerned in the question. And both of these are provided for, in the most ample manner, in the plan of the convention."¹⁸

To simplify, this section of the paper is saying that unfair punishments (cruel and unusual punishments), directly go against the Habeas Corpus, and shall therefore not be allowed. There is a limited amount of federalist and ant-federalist papers that involve cruel and unusual punishment and Habeas Corpus. The limited amount of information and resources on this topic is one of the reasons why it is so open ended and contro-



versial today.

One of the most controversial topics surrounding cruel and unusual punishment and Habeas Corpus is Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp. Many believe that the prisoners in the camp are being held on limited evidence, and that they are treated terribly. The camp was established in 2002, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Nearly all of the 700 inmates that have entered and lived in the camp have been Muslim, or originate from a Muslim majority country. In 2009, after President Obama was inaugurated, he signed an executive order to shut down the camp, but it did not pass; therefore, the camp is still open today. However, funding to support the camp was diminished. In 2015 the U.S. Defense Department spent about 445 million U.S. dollars, to maintain the camp, which was an almost 80 million U.S. dollar decrease from 2010. In the 15 years the camp has been in activity, at least 9 inmates have committed suicide, and far more than 100 have attempted suicide. Nearly all of prisoners have inflicted some form of self-harm. To put that in perspective, if 1/7 of the world population attempted suicide, over 1 billion people would fall into that category.¹⁹

Throughout the 15 years that Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp has been in operation, there are several key dates that have drastically affected the prisoners, guards, and the image of the camp. On June 28th 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that the inmates of the camp do have some constitutional rights, but what those rights are is debatable. On July 13th 2005, in an attempt to gain information from a terrorist, a guard had Mohamed al-Khatani wear a bra, dance with other men, and do dog tricks while tied to a leash. The camp received a lot of unwanted attention and backlash for dehumanizing the inmate. While Obama was not able to shut down the camp, in 2009 he moved around 70-100 inmates to an unoccupied prison in Illinois. The public learned more about injustices at the detention camp in April of 2011, in one of the biggest classified information leaks in the history of the United States, WikiLeaks released nearly 800 U.S. military documents regarding the prisoner's backgrounds, the captures of the prisoners, and the interrogation of the prisoners. In the months of March, April, and May of 2013, the detainees went on a hunger strike, resulting in over 50 prisoners being tube fed, and several inmates being hospitalized. With all the controversies and issues surrounding the camp, is the camp an effective way to prevent terrorism and obtain information about terrorists?²⁰

The first major case involving Guantanamo Bay occurred on June 28th 2004, called *Rasul v. Bush*. Four British and Australian citizens were captured by U.S. soldiers and taken to Guantanamo Bay. When the families of the detainees heard of their arrest, they filed a Habeas Corpus because they thought that there was no probable cause to arrest the men. The Supreme Court needed to decide if they would rule over foreign citi-

zens imprisoned at GTMO. In a 6-3 decision, the Court ruled that they would preside over cases involving Guantanamo Bay and its detainees.²¹ This ruling served as a precedent for the rest of the Guantanamo Bay cases, because now the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over them.

For all rulings after *Rasul v. Bush*, the Court followed this precedent except in *Boumediene v. Bush*, which occurred in June of 2008. The Court had to rule if the prisoners should be given their fifth amendment right, which is, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury."²² In a 5-4 decision, the Court ruled in favour of *Boumediene*. This case set a new standard for cases involving GTMO.

Recently, The Supreme Court has heard additional cases from Guantanamo Bay. The first is *Kiyemba v. Obama*, 2010. In this case, 17 ethnic Uighurs detained at Guantanamo Bay filed for a Habeas Corpus, they wanted to be released into the U.S, for if they were released back into China they feared arrest. The Court had to determine if they had the power to release prisoners from Guantanamo Bay. The district court ruled that the prisoners should be released into the U.S if desired, and the Supreme Court upheld that decision.^{23,24} In addition, the supreme court decision stated that, "Most of the detainees at issue had been offered resettlement in another country - - most of whom accepted."²⁵ After *Kiyemba v. Obama*, prisoners had a fair way to be released from the prison, without having to face other punishments from their country of origin.

The next case is *Duran v. Trump*, 2017. Hassan Duran, a Somalian native, was captured in 2006 and brought to Guantanamo where he was held there for 11 years without a charge. He filed a Habeas Corpus for his release. As of now, the case is still pending. This is the most recent case regarding Habeas Corpus and GTMO. With Neil Gorsuch having been recently added to the court, and President Trump tightening the U. S's security, rulings involving GTMO may be stricter in the next few years.

The real issues surrounding the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp include, whether the camp should remain open, what changes are required if the camp remains open, and whether the prisoners at the camp should receive their 8th amendment rights. The methods used by the soldiers appear to incite more violence once the prisoners are released. According to a 2017 Politifact article, around 30% of released inmates create a new terrorist attack. These released prisoners have killed a dozen or so Americans. In 2005, a prisoner named Abdallah Saleh Ali al-ajmi was released from the camp, and in 2008, he drove 10,000 pounds of explosives into an Iraqi base and detonated it. The explosion killed 13 Iraqi soldiers and wounded 43 others.²⁶ While this is the most extreme act of terrorism after a prisoner has been released from GTMO, many of the prisoners go back into



the battle field and just fight for their group.²⁷

As for the other 70% of inmates that leave the camp, most of them are still in prison, just in the country they were captured in. Some prisoners that were released have to stay in their homes, for their own safety. Many inmates go into hiding to avoid back-lash from the terror group they were affiliated with. Rasul Kudaev was released from GTMO and went back to Russia. In Russia, Kudaev was wrongly detained and beaten. According to Human Rights Watch, “On the right side of his face (Rasul Kudaev), there was a large haematoma. His eye was full of blood, his head was a strange shape and size, his right leg was broken and he had open wounds on his hands.”²⁸ Therefore, in order for Guantanamo Bay to remain in operation, the government is going to have to create a plan so prisoners don’t receive back-lash or further penalties when they get released.²⁹ Although the majority don’t commit another terrorist attack, the camp needs to be changed in order to create a better and safer environment for prisoners and staff.

Finally, do the prisoners at the camp deserve detained at the camp deserve to have their 8th amendment rights. There are two sides to this argument. One, the citizens detained at the camp aren’t American citizens, so why should they have American citizen’s rights. The other side of the argument is that these inmates are being held, against their will, by Americans in America, so the prisoners deserve the rights of the American citizens.

The 8th amendment, Habeas Corpus, and Guantanamo Bay is a very controversial topic in the United States today. Whether it’s the inhumane conditions that the prisoners have to live in, the secrecy surrounding the camps and the guard’s actions, or the stories about the brutal methods of torture the guards use, the camp has been under constant scrutiny since it was created. The numerous suicides and revolts by the inmate also contribute to the negative out look of the camp. Whether or not the camp a successful method of punishment, changes need to be made within the camp to create a better environment for all.

The most important change the camp needs to make is to improve its transparency. The government needs to be more open with the activities at the camp. The public deserves to know what is happening. Another change that needs to occur within the camp is the methods used to gather and gain information. No U.S run military organization should be torturing any kind of inmates for information. The U.S needs to adopt a new form of interrogation to gather information. A final change that needs to occur is to train guards to stop dehumanizing the inmates. The guards at the camp call the prisoners explicit names, treat them like trash, and treat them inferior to themselves. This needs to stop. In order for the prisoners to give the U.S information, the U.S is going to have to make them feel comfortable, instead of angry and scared. A camp like Guantanamo

Bay is important to have, but changes need to be made in order for it to stay functioning.

Endnotes

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Mass Incidents in China

Subtitle-A Challenge in the 21st Century

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Section-Research Papers

Although plagued by the challenge of mass incidents, China is determined to claim the 21st century as their own. This coming century is a time in which the nation becomes unified and stable under the leadership of honest, ethical, and law-abiding leaders. This time should be characterized by national peace, and prosperity for all, which will be distinguished by the fealty of the civilians and proper leadership from authorities. Mass incidents are officially defined as “any kind of planned or impromptu gathering that forms because of “internal contradictions”, including mass public speeches, physical conflicts, airing of grievances or other forms of group behavior that may disrupt social stability.”¹ Mass incidents are events involving large numbers of people that can directly challenge government legitimacy.² Mass incidents occur frequently in China, around 500 a day. In 2010 alone, 180,000 mass incidents occurred in China.³ Organized in person and through the internet and social media, mass incidents take place nearly every day in China.⁴ The fact that China has over 300 million “netizens”, the largest amount of internet users in the world, increases the frequency of these mass incidents. Although they take place in a variety of locations, the reasons behind mass incidents are usually common. Most mass incidents’ aims are to defend or restore citizens rights encroached upon by authority figures or the market itself.⁵ Two major causes of mass incidents are local corruption relating to unfair land seizures, and corruption regarding unfair agricultural taxation in rural communities. Mass incidents are challenges to the Chinese government because the single-party state is threatened by any group protest.⁶

Thousands of China’s mass incidents are catalyzed by citizens gathering to protest corrupt local officials and the seizure of their land.⁷ Because of the rapid urbanization in rural China, farmers, workers, and homeowners are among the most prominent protest groups.⁸ Realizing the potential profits of selling local land, officials are selling land to developers in exchange for cash rewards. Due to the local government seizing and selling land, mass incidents in China are one of largest sources of rural, social instability.⁹ Chinese civilians take other actions to combat these injustices like writing letters to senior officials, addressing them as “respected elder” or “beloved,” requesting enforcement of pre-existing laws against corruption.¹⁰ When these peaceful measures do not correct the mistakes the government had made, people take to the streets and begin mass incidents. One specific example of this is a mass incident that occurred in the Liaoyang Province in 2002. The villagers’ complaints were not unusual: local officials were exploiting land sales for personal

gain and were violently repressing dissent. The villagers originally did not want to take to the streets, but instead decided to write letters to senior party officials. When this did not achieve the type of reform they were expecting, they began a mass incident. Tens of thousand locals took the the streets to protest this atrocity.¹¹ The mass incident that occurred in this region began on March 11, 2002, and lasted until 2003.¹² The protests in the Liaoyang province achieved their main goal: the imprisonment of several local corrupt officials. From this, protestors learned that the party would respond quicker and would address their concerns when they staged larger and more disruptive protests.¹³ Another example of a mass incident catalyzed by corrupt local officials takes place in Wukan. In the year 2011 from October to December, local villagers began protesting against corrupt officials. They were upset by 10 land seizures by corrupt local officials for sale to large-scale developers.¹⁴ Many other similar mass demonstrations have occurred throughout China due to local corruption, and no progress will be made towards claiming the 21st century as China’s if they can not control this issue.

Another catalyst of mass incidents in China is corrupt officials unfairly taxing agricultural communities. For over two centuries, it was a common practice for the Chinese government to tax farmers and other villagers of agricultural communities.¹⁵ Beginning in the year 2000, in response to many incidents, the Chinese government began to abolish local fees for rural communities and impose a single agricultural tax by enacting the tax-for-free reform. In the following years, 2004-2005, the agricultural tax was reduced, and on January 1st, 2006, the agricultural tax was abolished throughout the nation.¹⁶ This historic event marked the end to a 2,600-year long system of imperial taxation on Chinese farmers.¹⁷ The Chinese government scrapped even more agricultural related taxes in 2007, accumulating to approximately 120 billion yuan, to help boost the income of farmers throughout rural China.¹⁸ This aid relieves approximately 730 million farmers according to Fan Xiaojian, the vice minister of agriculture of China in 2005.¹⁹ This new shift in taxation created an opportunity for corrupt local officials to exploit rural communities. Local officials began carrying out arbitrary taxes and many other fees. For example, “special product tax, a slaughter tax and a farmland utilization tax.”²⁰ Although extremely unfair, local villagers were forced to pay taxes to these corrupt local officials. In parts of rural China, if citizens did not pay taxes, local authorities would go to the person’s house and take away possessions, which would then be sold to pay the tax debt.²¹ Citizens throughout the nation believe that



the party is must fight the challenge of corruption, but instead see that China's administration is "dangerously decentralized in provincial and local levels." Locals see officials as "blatantly free to collect bribes and to fake taxes whenever they please."²² Again, the mass incident in the Liaoyang province from 2002-2003 wished for senior officials to enforce pre-existing laws against corruption.²³ The level of popular consent of the political legitimacy of the regime has been reduced due to the issue of corruption.²⁴ This dissatisfaction has manifested itself in a series of mass incident throughout the nation of China.²⁵ If China hopes of obtaining the 21st century as their own, they must increase support of the party, and the only way to do this is by cracking down on corruption.

For the Chinese government to decrease the number of mass incidents in their nation, they must continue to reform the land ownership system so that corrupt local officials are unable to seize land and sell it off to developers, and crackdown on those local corrupt officials that have ties to this type of corruption. Up until 2015, Chinese land was divided into rural and urban land regimes. Rights of the urban land are granted to the state, while rural land is collectively owned. While the rights to urban land can be sold and developed, rural land can not. It is divided into many subcategories like construction land, agricultural land, resource land, and wasteland. This rural land is not able to be exchanged in China's land markets, although it may be transferred from village to village.²⁶ As urbanization has ravaged China, the rural land has become desideratum by locals and developers alike.²⁷ Many local officials, unjustly abusing their authority, are changing rural land into urban land and selling it off to developers.²⁸ As China is unable to control property prices, officials are using their power to initiate illicit deals regarding land. One specific example of this is Chinese official Luo Yaping, also known as "Land Granny." Luo Yaping, head of a land sub-bureau in a district of Fushun, a city in Northeast China, was able to use her authority over compensation and land development to obtain 145 million yuan, approximately 21 million dollars. During the years 2001-2007, she made her fortune from false compensation claims and illegal land deals.²⁹ Reforms to combat this issue have been underway since 2003, and the first major success occurred in 2015, when the Chinese government set up the first official guidelines for the establishment of rural land markets, released a document titled, "Opinion of the State Council Secretariat on Guiding the Healthy Development of Markets for the Transfer and Exchange of Rural Property Rights." Furthermore, anti-corruption campaigns pertaining to the real estate markets are tackling this issue of corruption. Specifically, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, MOHURD, released a list of 45 property developers and brokerage firms that have worked with corrupt local officials and a list of nine types of illegal

practices they are involved in.³⁰ This was almost immediately followed by a CCDI investigation, and arrests of local officials involved in the scandal.³¹ Moreover, documentaries produced by CCTV, China Central Television, have been aired. These documentaries highlight the work the CCDI has done against corruption relating to real estate. For example, the documentaries publicize cases against large real estate companies like Vanke and Dalian Wanda and the corrupt officials involved with them.³² One specific area dealing with this issue of land usage rights, real estate, infrastructure development relating to corruption is the Qing'an County. In 2015, a Qing'an Discipline and Inspection Department cadre, Fan Jiadong, squealed on a ring of corrupt local officials. Those arrested by the CCDI, in this case, were found to have extensive ties to real estate developers and other local officials.³³ In addition to the dealing with the issues of the real estate and house bubble issue, the anti-corruption campaign is also cracking down in other areas.

In order for the number of mass incidents to be decreased, the Chinese government must issue a nationwide crackdown against corruption. A crackdown against corruption would lead to less corrupt local officials and less unfair taxation against rural communities. According to the 13th 5 Year Plan, "The effort to strengthen Party conduct, government integrity, and the fight against corruption must be forever ongoing; we cannot afford to ease up or come to a halt."³⁴ Currently, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the CCDI, is undergoing one of the largest campaigns against corruption in China's history. Since Xi Jinping took office in March 2013, 414,000 officials have been disciplined by the party for corruption, and 201,600 prosecuted for the infraction in court.³⁵ Even though the Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao governments took the problem seriously, their similar anti-corruption campaigns fizzled out after 18 months.³⁶ However, the Xi Jinping administration has launched an unprecedented anti-corruption campaign, and according to President Xi Jinping himself, the issue of corruption is "a matter of life and death."³⁷ He described this aggressive campaign as "serious but complex." The party claims its campaign will "catch the tigers and the flies."³⁸ On a local level, the anti-corruption campaign has been extremely successful. Approximately 15,450 local officials were convicted of corruption in 2014 in Shanxi, one of China's most corrupt provinces, nearly an increase of 30% from 2013.³⁹ The anti-corruption campaign has been extremely popular with China's masses, but not as much with civilian bureaucrats and military personnel.⁴⁰ It has been even more popular among world leaders. A Harvard study in 2014 showed that Xi Jinping has the highest approval rating of any world leader.⁴¹ In 2014, the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2014 gave China a corruption rating of 36, falling to 100th place.⁴² In the latest report by the same agency, China has improved to 79th place.⁴³ If Xi



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The Austrian Empire

Subtitle-Challenges Associated With an Ethnically Diverse Popoulation

Author-Robert Griffin '19

Section-Research Papers

Under the principal rule of the House of Habsburgs, the Austrian empire was a dominant power in Eastern and Central Europe from its rise in 1278 to its ultimate dissolution in 1918.¹ Economic growth and relative prosperity characterized much of the history of the empire as it attained the status as one of the Great Powers in the European continent. A vast territory, the empire encompassed an area of 676,000 square kilometers with a population exceeding 51 million people by 1910.² The dynasty enjoyed prosperity and economic growth throughout much of its past, yet today it most often draws the interest of historians not for its status and achievement, but because of its unique domestic situation. The empire was inherently a heterogeneous state: eleven different ethnicities, all varying in their culture, language, and ideals, resided within its boundaries. In the early centuries of empire, religious uniformity in the form of a predominantly Catholic population served as a common thread among the ethnic groups. However, following the Protestant Reformation in 1517, this unifying feature disintegrated as new religious groups emerged and the extent of Catholicism diminished.³ The division among ethnicities now apparent, Habsburg rulers subsequently employed primarily authoritarian tactics to prevent domestic turmoil. For the most part, restrictive measures, such as those enforced by Austrian chancellor Klemens von Metternich, were successful in containing nationalism within the diverse empire. However, 1848 acted as a turning point when nationalistic fervor reached a boiling point, resulting in domestic uprisings that set the stage for future change in the political structure. Franz Joseph's attempts to quell nationalistic sentiments by shifting towards more liberal policies were unsuccessful as they sowed the seeds for future conflict by igniting aspirations for self-rule. Specifically, the Compromise of 1867, through its creation of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, only exacerbated separatist movements within the empire by promoting the ascendance of the Magyars.⁴ Ultimately, the Austrian empire's inability to effectively manage the multiple ethnic groups within its rule was the main cause rooted in the empire's decline.

In the early centuries of the Austrian Empire, Habsburg monarchs successfully ruled over the multitude of nationalities under their control through the implementation of authoritarian policies. Although they were often oppressive in nature, measures of this type played an instrumental role in preventing domestic turmoil by limiting the emergence of nationalistic sentiments among ethnic minorities. These actions became even more crucial to maintaining Habsburg rule following the Napoleonic era from 1799 to 1815.

Dominated, especially in France, by revolutionary warfare, this era not only significantly altered the balance of powers, but it also warned the European states of the potential catastrophes associated with internal uprisings. In an attempt to begin a new age of international cooperation, the great powers of Russia, France, Great Britain, Prussia, and the Austrian Empire met in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. Here, Austrian foreign minister Prince Klemens von Metternich emerged as the principal architect in reconstructing international order, commencing a period of relative peace in Europe known as the age of Metternich.⁵ Although immensely influential on the international scale, Metternich was resolute in his intent to maintain the Austrian empire's dominance as a great power. Recognizing liberalism as the driving force behind the French revolutions, Metternich adamantly opposed the ascendance of nationalist and liberal sentiments in Europe. Instead, he worked with emperors Francis I and later Ferdinand I, to expand the principles of conservatism throughout Austria.⁶ In regards to ethnicity, at the time Austria was the most diverse European entity, comprised of Hungarians, Germans, Czechs, Croats, Slovenes, Slovaks, Serbs, Poles, Ukrainians, Romanians, and Italians.⁷ As a result, Metternich recognized that Austria was especially susceptible to internal uprising and, in his view, nationalism and liberalism were the main threats that could jeopardize the empire's existence. At its core, nationalism can be defined as the promotion of a collective identity among a group of people sharing a similar culture and language. Liberalism, in contrast, has further political implications and is characteristic of parliamentary governments that extend and partition ruling authority among the people. The two sentiments are intimately connected, however, and in the case of Austria, any single minority group beginning to form a common national identity would subsequently increase liberalist desires, triggering a cascade of events culminating in separatist movements.

In an attempt to prevent such separatist movements, Metternich strove to dampen nationalistic desires by imposing authoritarian and conservative policies.⁸ He advocated for the continuation of the absolute monarchy, while in effect opposing a parliamentary government, which, in his outlook, would serve as a route for ethnic groups to accumulate power.⁹ Furthermore, Metternich also tried to suppress the spread of liberalism through censorship of the press and by restricting freedoms of expression. This was particularly evident in the university setting, where learning environments readily fostered liberal ideals. In August of 1819, Metternich created the Carlsbad Decrees, which were a set of policies that imposed strict limitations



on Austrian universities.¹⁰ For example, article 1 of the doctrine required that “A special representative of the ruler of each state shall be appointed for each university,” with the purpose of observing “carefully the spirit which is shown by the instructors.” In a similar press law, Metternich mandated that no publication shall appear in the daily press without the approval of appointed officials.¹¹ Evidently, by restricting freedoms of the press and placing limitations on education, Metternich aimed to control and restrict any ideologies that were liberal in nature. Indeed, Metternich’s policies were overwhelmingly successful and maintained the conservative status of Habsburg rule by preventing revolution within the empire.

In 1848, a fervorous revolutionary sentiment swept across the European continent and fueled violent uprisings within the Austrian empire. Metternich’s policies, although successful in their intent, were oppressive by nature and stimulated discontent among many ethnicities. The revolutions that broke out across Europe in 1848 acted as the spark to ignite rebellion against the authoritarian rule of the Habsburgs in Austria.¹² On March 13, riots erupted in the streets of Vienna as protesters attempted to overthrow the autocratic government for radical liberal reforms. Threatened by the tenuous situation, Metternich was forced to flee the empire, ending his rule as foreign minister. Similarly, another group of protestors led by Lajos Kossuth rebelled against the conservative elements of the empire and advocated the creation of a constitutional government. On April 11, the group articulated their demands in an article known as the Twelve Points, which they published in a daily newspaper without prior approval. Importantly, this action was an apparent deviation from the laws outlined in the Carlsbad Decrees, suggesting that reform in Austria was advancing. Indeed as the domestic unrest spread, Austrian authorities succumbed to nationalistic desires and passed the April Laws, legislation that, among other things, ended censorship of the press and created a constitutional monarchy.¹³ However, these reforms were exceedingly superficial measures, proposed only to diminish the upheaval caused by revolution. In fact, by June the Habsburg military responded with force by crushing the remaining revolts and restoring Habsburg dominance.¹⁴ Although the revolutionists did not immediately achieve their aims, the outbreak of nationalism in 1848 served as a turning point in the Habsburg monarchy as it paved the route for future political change. In December, Emperor Ferdinand I was forced to abdicate the throne in favor of his younger brother Francis Joseph, whose liberal policies spelled doom for the Austrian empire.¹⁵

Unlike Metternich, Franz Joseph attempted to decrease nationalism within the empire by increasing liberal reforms. One of the most important, and perhaps disastrous, of these reforms included the Compromise

of 1867 or the *Ausgleich*. This agreement was a deviation from past reforms in that it marked Austria’s transition from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.¹⁶ In the years preceding the compromise, the Austrian empire had been weakening since the revolutionary storm in 1848. After engaging in the Austro-Prussian war in 1866, the empire was further weakened by repeated military defeats to Otto von Bismarck’s superior Prussian army.¹⁷ With the potential of the Magyars, a group of Hungarian upper-class bourgeoisie, allying with the victorious Prussians, Franz Joseph was desperate to save the empire from crumbling under his rule. Consequently, the emperor implemented the Compromise of 1867, an agreement that granted Magyar dominance in Hungary and permanently divided the empire into the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary.¹⁸ Franz Joseph hoped that this extension of ruling authority to the Magyars would prevent the very dissolution of the empire that appeared quite possible in the years prior. However, due to its failure to extend autonomy to the other ethnic minorities, the compromise only heightened the nationality problem within the empire. By promoting the ascendance of the Magyars, the agreement placed other ethnicities in a subordinate position, failing to meet non-Magyar demands for greater political autonomy. Likewise, Magyars dominated all economic aspects of the new dualist system and invested little capital in the already impoverished lower classes. Similarly, the Magyars attained a disproportionately high status in the government, occupying 405 of the 413 parliamentary seats despite the fact that they made up less than 43 percent of the Hungarian population.¹⁹ This executive dominance allowed the Magyars to promote their language and cultural values in the public realm in a process known as Magyarization. Through this policy, Magyar became the only language taught in schools and used in business proceedings.²⁰ The process was particularly influential in the academic setting, where Magyars assumed 92 percent of all teaching positions.²¹ In response, frustration grew among the non-Magyar nationalities that felt oppressed and persecuted by Magyar dominance. Seeking to promote empire wide equality, Franz Joseph made genuine attempts to forge similar compromises and reforms with other nationalities. For instance, he created a liberal constitution that maintained in Article 19 that “All races of the state... shall have the inviolable right of maintaining and cultivating its nationality and language.”²² The article, however, did not serve as an answer to the demands of ethnic groups and instead sowed the seeds for division among different nationalities by “ethnicizing Austrian politics.”²³ Furthermore, Magyar leaders vehemently opposed self-rule and prevented any extensions of power to those not assimilated in Magyar culture. In the Austrian half of the empire, a similar situation unfolded where Germans gained dominance in nearly all political and cultural aspects of life. Overall, once the Germans



in Austria and Magyars in Hungary gained political dominance in their respective state, they overwhelmingly placed their interests above those of other linguistic groups despite the fact that they comprised just as much of the population.

Not surprisingly, resentment towards the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary expanded among the non-German and non-Magyar ethnicities. Additionally, the extent of nationalism significantly grew as minorities began to attain a national consciousness through the creation of a common “enemy.”²⁴ Nationalistic sentiments translated into aspirations for self-rule and greatly influenced separatist movements throughout the empire. These intents were made clear in an 1895 Congress meeting as Serbian and Romanian leaders demanded that “The non-Hungarian nations of Hungary be awarded complete freedom on the basis of the territory where the language is spoken.”²⁵ Such separatist tendencies considerably weakened the Austrian empire as more and more citizens lost support for the dual monarchy and instead sought self-determination.

Although a number of factors undermined the Austrian empire’s success, the challenges associated with managing an ethnically diverse population acted as an insurmountable hurdle following 1848. A shift towards more liberal policies at this time allowed nationalistic sentiments to flourish and corresponding aspirations for political autonomy emerged. Defeat to the Allied powers in World War I officially brought an end to the empire in 1918. The development of separatist tendencies following the Ausgleich suggested the empire had already been on a path to dissolution long before the first shots were fired in the world war. Indeed, a reconstruction of international borders that followed the war indicated that the solution to demands for greater autonomy could only be achieved through the creation of separate nations— an event that would certainly have threatened Austria’s existence even without global war. Ultimately, cultural and political independence was granted to the different nationalities after the empire was fragmented into a number of separate entities including Czechoslovakia, The Kingdom of Serbs, and the independent nations of Austria and Hungary. In a broader spectrum, the questions of nationality that dominated the Habsburg Empire were by no means unique to Austria. For instance, numerous parallels can be drawn between the circumstances in the Austrian Empire and the situation in the European Union today. Just as the monarchy had failed to create an overarching imperial identity, the EU has continuously faced the challenge of constructing a unifying Europeanist sentiment that transcends national boundaries. While the EU has, for the most part, achieved this feat, the inability of Habsburg rulers to promote such a collective identity allowed cultural divides to persist within the empire. Overall, it is these very cultural divisions that served as the primary factor contributing to

the weakening of the Austrian empire and its ultimate dissolution in 1918.

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MI-5 and the Abwehr

Subtitle-Dueling Intelligence Agencies of World War II

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Section-Research Papers

Over the course of World War II, the Double Cross division within MI-5, the domestic British military intelligence agency established in 1909, employed 120 double agents.¹ Yet, the Abwehr, the German military intelligence agency established in 1919, never exposed a single double agent.² MI-5's incredible ability for uncovering, turning, and then utilizing double agents stems from the interconnected British intelligence community, MI-5's supportive culture, and MI-5's centralized nature. Contrarily, the Abwehr's inability to recognize and terminate double agents stems from the dysfunctional German intelligence community, the Abwehr's unsupportive culture, and the Abwehr's decentralized nature. First, while MI-5 cooperated and collaborated with the other British intelligence agencies, the Abwehr, led by an anti-Nazi conspirator, was undercut by the other German intelligence agencies. Second, while MI-5 fostered strong relationships with its double agents to ensure loyalty, the Abwehr often trained its agents poorly and held the handlers accountable to the agents, which sowed the seeds for treason and misaligned incentives. Finally, while MI-5's neat, compartmentalized structure allowed for careful coordination of double agents, the Abwehr's disorganized structure, exacerbated by an internal anti-Nazi conspiracy, prevented the recognition of intelligence inconsistencies among agents.

While MI-5 had a friendly relationship with the rest of the intelligence community, the Abwehr had a combative relationship with the other German intelligence agencies. On the one hand, MI-5 communicated and collaborated regularly with the other British intelligence agencies, such as MI-6, established jointly with MI-5 in 1909 as a foreign intelligence service, the GC&CS (Government Code & Cipher School), which broke the Enigma cipher machine used to transmit Abwehr signals in late 1940, and the RSS (Radio Security Service), which intercepted radio and wireless traffic.³ To foster strong connections between MI-6, the GC&CS, and the RSS, the Twenty Committee (XX Committee), which oversaw the Double Cross Division (B1a Division), meet weekly beginning in January of 1941.⁴ At these meetings, Twenty Committee members as well liaison officers from the other British intelligence agencies discussed deception plans and misinformation. By sharing information, the Twenty Committee ensured that personnel from other organizations could work together with double agents to maintain the cover of all intelligence operatives involved.⁵ Additionally, this cooperative relationship allowed for a jointly controlled and carefully orchestrated deception. First, coordination between MI-5, the GC&CS, and the RSS aided in the recruitment of double agents, as in the case of Eddie Chapman, codenamed Agent ZIGZAG.⁶ The GC&CS and

RSS had tracked down an Abwehr agent in training codenamed Fritzchen, who parachuted into Britain in 1942. Informed by the GC&CS and RSS, MI-5 was waiting for Chapman when he landed, and subsequently turned him into a prolific double agent.⁷ Second, coordination between MI-5 and the GC&CS allowed the Twenty Committee to establish a "closed loop" of deception.⁸ Because the GC&CS had cracked the Enigma code, the GC&CS could inform MI-5 of all Abwehr radio transmissions.⁹ Consequently, the Twenty Committee assessed the Abwehr's skepticism regarding any misinformation sent via double agents. To enhance a deception's overall believability, double agents could disavow any report the Abwehr did not believe while the Twenty Committee could pursue more vigorously any misinformation the Abwehr did believe.¹⁰ On the other hand, Heinrich Himmler's Gestapo, the Nazi secret police, and Reinhard Heydrich's Sicherheitsdienst (SD) undermined and attacked the Abwehr, led by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris.¹¹ Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, who had founded the Schwarze Kapelle, a secret anti-Nazi movement, sought to undermine Hitler whenever possible throughout the war.¹² As a result, Himmler and Heydrich, who suspected Canaris of disloyalty, sought to delegitimize and oust Canaris from his position, and eventually they succeeded in undercutting the Abwehr's ability to conduct operations. First, when the Abwehr failed to recognize the impending Allied invasion of North Africa in 1942, Himmler and Heydrich heightened their suspicion of Canaris' disloyalty.¹³ Then, when an Abwehr couple, along with an Abwehr agent, defected from Turkey into Britain, the SD began formally investigating the Abwehr and Canaris.¹⁴ Finally, because the Abwehr had frequently sabotaged British and Italian ships traveling through Spanish ports, the Abwehr disrupted political ties between Hitler and Francisco Franco, the Spanish dictator.¹⁵ Thus, Hitler, questioning the Abwehr's ability to conduct operations in neutral countries, permitted Himmler to shut down all Abwehr operations in neutral and Axis countries. Further, Himmler slowly dismantled the Abwehr, shutting down the apparatus needed to conduct successful operations.¹⁶ On February 19, 1944, Himmler ousted Canaris from his position as head spymaster, and in the Spring, Himmler's Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) absorbed the remnants of the Abwehr.¹⁷ While MI-6, the GC&CS, and the RSS aided MI-5 in its deception endeavors, the Gestapo and SD undermined the Abwehr's capacity to perform its covert operations abroad.

While MI-5 supported its double agents to ensure loyalty, the Abwehr often trained its agents poorly and held each handler accountable to his agent, sowing the seeds of disloyalty among both the agents and the

handlers.¹⁸ To foster loyalty within double agents, MI-5 utilized empathy to turn Abwehr agents, supported each agent with an entire staff of auxiliary personnel, and gave each agent financial incentives and leisure time. First, Colonel Stevens, the man primarily responsible for “breaking” Abwehr agents, used empathy rather than fear to turn Abwehr spies, as in the case of Eddie Chapman, codenamed Agent Zigzag.¹⁹ After quickly pressuring Chapman to confess everything he knew about the Abwehr, Colonel Stevens blamed Chapman’s Abwehr handlers for the current predicament, pointing to his inadequate cover.²⁰ By disassociating Chapman from his handlers, Chapman could more readily accept his role as a double agent. Once Colonel Stevens had turned an Abwehr agent, the Double Cross Division employed, in addition to handlers, an entire administrative staff of security agents, housekeepers, drivers, and transmission specialists to look after the new double agent.²¹ The security agents, housekeepers, and drivers attended to the administrative duties of the agent’s “true” life as a double agent so that he could focus on his “false” life as an undercover German spy.²² Moreover, the transmission specialists sent, received, and organized wireless transmissions to and from the Abwehr so that Double Cross could maintain a double agent’s cover for years.²³ Besides administrative support, Double Cross offered financial incentives and leisure time to its agents to boost psychological well-being and as a result, also loyalty;²⁴ in fact, John Masterman, the chairman of the Twenty Committee, outlined in his sixth cardinal rule for Double Cross that “financial incentives are necessary to prevent a double agent from becoming a triple agent.”²⁵ Contrary to MI-5, the Abwehr trained its agents poorly and held handlers solely accountable to their agents, which allowed both the agents and handlers to become disloyal. The Abwehr had 33 virtually autonomous out-stations (Abwehrstellen) scattered throughout the world, which conducted intelligence operations without oversight from the Abwehr headquarters in Berlin.²⁶ These out-stations often hastily inserted agents into the field without proper training, as in the case of Operation Sealion, in which Hitler planned to invade Britain in 1940. Consequently, in the summer of 1940, MI-5 easily apprehended six agents who lacked technical knowledge, sufficient money, working instruments, and detailed identity documents.²⁷ Further, because the out-stations operated without oversight from a central authority in Berlin, each handler’s reputation became directly associated with the success or failure of his agent. Thus, handlers, who sought personal prestige, often did not disclose their agents’ failures and overlooked inconsistencies in their agents’ reports, thereby impeding the Abwehr’s ability to recognize double agents.²⁸ While MI-5’s culture and structure supported the psychological well-being and loyalty of its double agents, the Abwehr’s unsupportive culture led to exposed agents and disloyal handlers.

While MI-5’s centralized and hierarchal structure lent itself to covert and efficient operation, the Abwehr’s decentralized and disorganized structure impeded its ability to recognize double agents. To maintain secrecy, the Twenty Committee oversaw all double agent operations and acted as the final authority for all misinformation sent to the Abwehr, which allowed for carefully coordinated execution of the entire double agent network.²⁹ Additionally, the Twenty Committee shielded the Double Cross Division from MI-5 bureaucracy, allowing Double Cross, a secret division within MI-5, to operate freely and efficiently; as previously mentioned, Double Cross orchestrated their entire network of staff to ensure the cover of their agents.³⁰ To increase efficiency, the Twenty Committee broke down into sub-committees, such as the “Execution Committee”, who determined which spies should be relieved from their position. Both Masterman, the chairman of the Twenty Committee, and Thomas Robertson, the director of Double Cross, had confidence in these sub-committees; thus, the smaller sub-committees could make decisions quickly and efficiently.³¹ Conversely, the Abwehr’s disorganized structure severely limited its effectiveness. As mentioned above, the Abwehr had 33 autonomous out-stations across the world, which were independently in charge of their own agents.³² Yet, Abwehr One, the branch in charge of military espionage, only oversaw the out-stations insofar as communicating the mission directive;³³ Abwehr One did not facilitate note-sharing between out-stations or compare and review agents’ cases, thus limiting the Abwehr’s capacity to detect inconsistencies in their intelligence.³⁴ Further, Admiral Canaris, opposed to Nazism, exacerbated the ineffectiveness of the organization by hand picking his staff. First, he selected anti-Nazi officers at the heads of the Abwehr, including Major Hans Oster for the central division and Colonel Pikenbrock for Abwehr One. Second, he selected well-qualified, ardent Nazi officers for out-stations that were less crucial to Abwehr operations. Third, for those operational positions crucial to Abwehr success, Canaris selected Nazi officers, who supported the Nazi cause, but were also temperamentally unsuitable.³⁵ While MI-5’s hierarchal structure provided the scaffolding on which double agents could operate secretly, the Abwehr’s disorganized and scattered structure hindered its ability to perceive inconsistencies, which Canaris exacerbated further with his anti-Nazi conspiracy.

MI-5’s astonishing ability to recruit and covertly orchestrate a network of double agents stems from its friendly relationship with other British intelligence agencies, its supportive culture, and its centralized, hierarchal structure. Conversely, the Abwehr’s ineptitude for spotting double agents stems from its combative relationship with other German intelligence agencies, its unsupportive culture, and its decentralized, disorga-



nized structure. First, while other British intelligence agencies enhanced the effectiveness of MI-5, other German agencies undermined the Abwehr. Second, while MI-5 supported its agents to foster loyalty, the Abwehr inadequately prepared its agents and unintentionally condoned dishonest handlers. Finally, MI-5's centralized and hierarchal structure permitted covert and efficient operation, while the Abwehr's decentralized structure prevented it from recognizing inconsistencies among incoming reports. Thanks to the brilliance of MI-5 and Double Cross, and partly to the incompetency of the Abwehr, MI-5 convinced Hitler that the Normandy invasion was merely a diversion, and that the main invasion would land at Pas-de-Calais.³⁶ Consequently, Hitler provided inadequate forces to suppress the Normandy invasion, and in the process, he saved countless lives on both sides.³⁷ In the grand, culminating deception of the war, 150,000 Allied troops, who later marched onward to victory, landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6th, 1944 while sustaining merely 10,000 casualties.³⁸

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A Bullied Opportunist

Subtitle-How Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson Ostracized a Self-Serving Aaron Burr from America's Political Establishment

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Introduction

Early on the morning of Wednesday, July 11, 1804, just as the sun granted lower Manhattan the day's first rays of light, Vice President Aaron Burr departed his Richmond Hill mansion for a nearby dock on the Hudson River.¹ Shortly before 5:00 A.M., Burr and his accompaniment, William P. Van Ness, greeted a single oarsman who had been arranged to transport the duo to the Hudson Palisades, a set of cliffs across the watershed in Weehawken, New Jersey. Simultaneously, at a dock one half-mile north of Burr and Van Ness, Alexander Hamilton, his accompaniment Nathaniel Pendleton, and surgeon Dr. David Hosack boarded a similar vessel for the same location. Of notable difference was a particular item of luggage included on their craft: a dark, leather bag concealing two dueling pistols.² By 6:30 A.M., Burr and Van Ness had reached New Jersey, and at approximately 7:00 A.M., Hamilton and Pendleton joined the two at the agreed dueling site.³ Adhering strictly to the standards of code duello, the established etiquette for such "affairs of honor," Van Ness and Pendleton conferred, engaged in various formalities, and measured a distance of ten paces.⁴ Within minutes, two shots had been fired, and a .54-caliber bullet had entered four inches above Hamilton's right hip, shattering his rib cage, ricocheting into his liver, and destroying his diaphragm.⁵ "This is a mortal wound," Hamilton related to Dr. Hosack, "I am a dead man."⁶

Historian David M. Kennedy and many others have proclaimed that Burr killed not only Hamilton, but also his own career and the entirety of his public and personal life with that one fatal shot.⁷ Their oversimplified conclusion has preserved Burr's reputation as an evil, radical conspiracist. Inevitably, such perspectives, influenced by his reproduction as the prototypical villain of early American history in literature and theater, fail to consider the full scope of Burr's career and the factors contributing to his downfall after a rapid rise to power in the nation's early political scene.⁸ Instead, these accounts overemphasize the duel with Hamilton, Burr's 1807 treason trial, and his subsequent four-year hiatus in Europe. All three episodes are components of Burr's legacy, but they generate an abridged portrait of Burr that fails to fully explain the complexities of his fall from grace.

Burr's demise was not simply confined to the shot he fired on the Hudson Palisades that cool summer morning. A more thoughtful analysis reveals an ambitious Aaron Burr who clashed with two of the country's most lauded leaders: Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Throughout the span of their public interactions, Hamilton and Jefferson found in each other a

perpetual opponent.⁹ As the two men developed America's two-party political system, Machiavellian Burr found himself taking advantage of both party platforms, using connections to advance his personal standing and thirst for recognition. Even with their extreme differences, Hamilton and Jefferson, the "strangest of companions" according to John Adams's great-grandson Henry, were united in their hate for Burr's opportunism and the threat he posed to their respective visions for America.¹⁰

Burr's opportunism and deep-rooted desire for personal gain, results of an aristocratic heritage, rendered him incompatible with the nation's values and emerging two-party system. Burr's actions as vice president and in the realm of New York state politics invited hate from some of America's most prominent individuals. The poor relationships he developed with these men, specifically Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, doomed his public life, as he was ushered into infamy by the intentional plotting of his adversaries. Ultimately, Burr's taste for personal advancement initiated his own demise, while Hamilton and Jefferson made sure to complete it. Degraded by such self-serving qualities and both lofty men, Burr remains publicly incriminated as the preeminent villain of American politics.

Precocious Politician

Born into one of the most prominent families in the thirteen colonies, Aaron Burr entered the world in 1756 with aristocratic privilege and a lineage that destined him for leadership. Burr's father, Aaron Burr Sr., was Yale-educated and the president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), while Burr's maternal grandfather was Jonathan Edwards, the legendary revivalist preacher behind the First Great Awakening of the early 1700s.¹¹ Burr's proximity to the best of British North American education differentiated him from many of America's early statesmen; of the 99 men who signed either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, only eight had fathers who attended college.¹² Burr, whose father was one of only three college presidents in the colonies, thus failed to embody certain emerging American characteristics that were beginning to define the nation's leaders: Burr was not self-made or a first-generation success.¹³

The nature of Burr's impressive lineage created expectations and set standards for the young boy as he grew up. Tragically, Burr's parents and grandparents, healthy and vivacious at the time of his birth, had all passed by his third birthday.¹⁴ Without the chance to truly interact with them, Burr found himself left only

with tales of their great feats and honor; Burr's only understanding of his father must have been of his status as a respected reverend and of his "industry, integrity, strict honesty, and pure undissembled piety," a line from his eulogy.¹⁵ Such lofty praise created in Burr the self-imposed expectation that he achieve similar recognition. The seemingly endless journey required to complete this goal certainly added pressure and urgency to his quest for personal success.

The unforeseen death of his parents and grandparents uncovered Burr's incredible ambition and a ceaseless internal drive. At eleven years old, after spending two years at Elizabethtown Academy in New Jersey, Burr entertained dreams of entering Princeton.¹⁶ Angered when the college's trustees turned him away, he forced himself to independently study the curriculum at Princeton daily for "sixteen or eighteen hours of the twenty-four," teaching himself rhetoric, mechanics, Latin, and the Hebrew Bible, to name a few disciplines.¹⁷ Returning to the trustees in 1769, Burr gained admission to the sophomore class as a thirteen-year-old, four years younger than most of his classmates.¹⁸ Once a student at Princeton, Burr maintained his blistering pace, completing three years of coursework by age fifteen.¹⁹ Burr's friend Matthew Davis explained that he would skip meals, convinced that digestion was detracting from the success of his studies: "He soon discovered that he could not pursue them after dinner with the same advantage that he could before. He suspected that this was owing to his eating too abundantly. He made the experiment, and the result convinced him that his apprehensions were well founded."²⁰

The passing of his parents and grandparents also highlighted Burr's self-sufficiency, independence, and disregard for standards and rules established by others. Twice during his youth, Burr, eager to strike out and achieve personal success, ran away from Timothy Edwards, the uncle who raised him. At four, he disappeared for three days, fearlessly running off after a disagreement with Edwards. At ten, Burr, with dreams of voyaging at sea, singlehandedly found his way to a port in New York City. Boarding a vessel as a cabin boy, Burr was finally tracked down by a frustrated Timothy Edwards before the ship's departure date.²¹ Even if others were inconvenienced or disadvantaged (Edwards, guardian for several deceased siblings and friends, had twenty other children to raise), Burr was one to instinctually pursue his grand dreams.²² These episodes, trivial on the surface, reveal that Burr disregarded predetermined rules, standards, and the behavior that was expected of him. All were second to the fulfillment of his ambition and the need to prove himself.

Burr reflected a similar disregard for standards with his participation in Princeton's literary clubs, the American Whig Society and the Cliosophic Society. Princeton's college clubs encouraged camaraderie, refined young men, and founded with pre-Rev-

olutionary fervor, provided students a foundation for America's first political parties.²³ In fact, James Madison, founder of Princeton's Whigs, described the Clios as "screech owls, monkeys and baboons," an insult that resembles mudslinging between the Federalist and Democratic-Republican factions in the early 1800s.²⁴ Princetonians in the two clubs would engage in club rivalries, and each club adopted its own code of guiding standards. Being a member of both was nearly impossible; however, in what would foreshadow his fluid political ideology of the future, Burr notably claimed membership in both clubs--originally a Whig, Burr later became the Cliosophic Society president.²⁵ Burr's allegiances became malleable when he encountered an opportunity to better his personal standing.

Years later, in the summer of 1775, Aaron Burr enlisted in the Continental Army, becoming an aid de camp to General Montgomery that December.²⁶ His interest peaked by tales from the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Burr and his cousin Matthias Ogden rode to join the army in Boston, where they witnessed "a scene of idleness, confusion, and dissipation," as Burr's friend Matthew Davis wrote.²⁷ Upon his arrival in Cambridge that July, Burr carried two letters emphasizing his disposition as a distinguished gentleman volunteer for the forces. One, from the esteemed John Hancock, provided "Mr. Burr of the Jerseys" an impressive referral for General Washington to consider.²⁸ The other, from Elias Boudinot, later a justice on the New Jersey Supreme Court and another distinguished reference, made clear Burr's intentions of "improving his youth to the advantage of the country."²⁹ The image of an eager Burr rushing to a disorganized, failing army on horseback misrepresents his motivation for joining the army: instinctual patriotism did not necessarily lure Burr to the battlefield. Rather, as in many of his pursuits, Aaron Burr treated his participation in the army as an opportunity for personal advancement as opposed to an opportunity to serve the soon-to-be country.

Regardless of his initial mindset, Burr's brave service in the army provided him with valuable connections and benefitted his public reputation. Prior to the Battle of Quebec, as Burr was preparing to trudge through 350 miles of Maine wilderness under Benedict Arnold, concerned relatives and friends implored Burr to abandon the expedition.³⁰ Family friend James Cogswell, signing his letter "your affectionate friend," gloomily forecast: "Your constitution...is very delicate, and not formed for the fatigues of the camp. You will die; I know you will die in the undertaking; it is impossible for you to endure the fatigue."³¹ Burr, committed to showcasing bravery and fearlessness and relishing the opportunity to prove himself, refused to change plans, persuading his sister he "was equal to the undertaking."³² Once Burr joined General Montgomery's forces in Quebec, Cogswell's grim warning almost proved true. Two of Montgomery's aides died, in addition to



the General himself, but Burr, in his response to their deaths, enjoyed his first taste of fame.³³ When General Montgomery fell and died, it was Burr, the “young, gay, enterprising martial genius” in the opinion of Hamilton’s friend Theodore Sedgwick, who hurried to his side, heroically returning the corpse to the American camp through a taxing December snow.³⁴ A poem and a painting remain to corroborate his valiant service. Poet Hugh Henry Brackenridge’s “The Death of General Montgomery, in Storming the City of Quebec” describes fragile Burr heaving the larger General onto his back, while John Trumbull’s “The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775” depicts a limp Montgomery dropping into the arms of his surviving aid-de-camp, Colonel Burr.³⁵

During Burr’s time in the army, he received the mistrust of America’s most revered character, George Washington, forming a precarious relationship that would highlight Burr’s inability to make friends with America’s most respected.³⁶ Burr’s interactions with Washington also hint at his future issues with Hamilton and Jefferson. After the Battle of Quebec, Washington, influenced by Ogden’s favorable recommendation of Burr, invited Colonel Burr to join his “family” of aides in Manhattan.³⁷ Burr accepted the offer, but mysteriously resigned after spending only ten days with Washington and his entourage.³⁸ A summer later, upon NJ governor William Livingston’s goading, Washington offered Burr his first commission as lieutenant colonel.³⁹ In his reply to the General, Burr coldly thanked Washington before selfishly observing, “the late date of my appointment subjects me to the command of many who were younger in the service...”⁴⁰ Burr then audaciously questioned, “I would beg to know whether it was any misconduct in me, or any extraordinary merit or services in them, which entitled the gentleman lately put over me to that preference?”⁴¹ Washington, understandably offended, did not merit Burr’s self-centered questions with a response. Instead, the next time an associate recommended Burr for an appointment (John Adams during the 1798 Quasi-War with France), ex-President Washington, now fully acquainted with Burr’s self-serving personality, immediately dismissed the possibility: “By all that I have known and heard Colonel Burr is a brave and able Officer: but the question is whether he has not equal Talents at Intrigue?”⁴² Aaron Burr’s unsteady relationship with Washington, a man dedicated to the concept of service and sacrifice, again signifies that while his skill as a soldier benefitted the army and his own public perception, Burr’s chief concern, and ultimate downfall, continued to be self-promotion.

Burr continued to improve his status throughout the next decade. By the time he entered the New York State Assembly in 1784, 28-year-old Burr had already garnered respect for his brilliant mind, family name, and set of skills as a scholar, soldier, and lawyer. In an 1815 letter to James Lloyd, John Adams remarked:

I have never known in any Country the Prejudice in favour of Birth Parentage and Descent more conspicuous than in the Instance of Colonel Burr, That Gentleman was connected by blood with many respectable Families in New England: he was the Son of one President, and the grandson of another President of Nassau Hall or Princeton University, the Idol of all the Presbyterians in New York, New England New Jersey, Pennsylvania Maryland Virginia and elsewhere. He had served in the Army and came out of it with the Character of a Knight without fear, and an able Officer. He had afterwards studied and practiced Law with Application and Success.⁴³

Following a successful foray into New York state politics, Burr skyrocketed through the state assembly, the New York attorney general’s office, and the U.S. senate.⁴⁴ With the Election of 1796, Burr added another title to his resume: presidential candidate. Receiving thirty electoral votes in a contest with thirteen candidates, Burr, also the election’s youngest candidate, placed fourth behind Adams, Jefferson, and Pinckney.⁴⁵

While some, like wise George Washington, were aware of Burr’s potent opportunistic pit, most were merely awed by the young Princetonian’s rise to prominence. After only twelve years in politics, Burr had catapulted himself into consideration for the nation’s highest office, becoming nationally significant in the process. Burr’s consideration in future presidential elections was inevitable and an eventual victory seemed likely. John Adams spoke for many when he posed, “Colonel Burr; Attorney General Burr; Senator Burr...almost President Burr...What is to be his destiny?”⁴⁶

The Election of 1800

The Election of 1800 marked the beginning of Aaron Burr’s demise. A tie vote in the Electoral College pitted Burr, the recognized vice presidential candidate of the Democratic-Republican party, against Thomas Jefferson, the understood presidential candidate on the Democratic-Republican ticket.⁴⁷ Opportunistic Burr’s refusal to renounce his chance at the presidency angered Jefferson, while Hamilton’s distaste with Burr’s fancy for personal status disturbed their relationship.

Burr’s maneuvering during the Election of 1800 began three years earlier within the arena of New York state politics. Resigning from the senate to dedicate himself to local politics, Burr returned to the New York state assembly in 1797, his focus strategically directed towards the next presidential election.⁴⁸ At the time, New York’s local political affairs dictated votes for the Electoral College during presidential elections. State



representatives would cast their votes for president on a partisan basis, voting for whichever candidate represented their party. Thus, as New York City's April assembly elections neared, both Federalists, who controlled many of the city's seats, and Republicans were aware of their impact.⁴⁹ Vice President Thomas Jefferson wrote James Madison in March, "...if the city election of N York is in favor of the Republican ticket, the issue will be republican," cognizant that a Democratic-Republican victory in New York City would translate to a subsequent Democratic-Republican victory in November.⁵⁰

Burr, too, understood the significance of April's city elections to not only the presidential election, but to his own political positioning. Shrewdly realizing the appeal a vice presidential candidate from the north would add to the Virginian Jefferson's Democratic-Republican ticket, Burr viewed the NYC elections as a platform to demonstrate his commitment to the Republican party and skill in acquiring votes. Fully embracing the spirit of electioneering, which Burr later described as a time of "fun and honor and profit," Burr set out for sidewalks and street corners, rallying support for Republican candidates.⁵¹ Headlines in the Federalist press that criticized how Burr would "stoop so low as to visit every corner in search of voters" only increased the motivation and fervor with which Burr campaigned for his colleagues.⁵² Furthermore, such articles served as proof that Federalists and Republicans alike recognized Burr's gritty work. On election day, a New York congressman reported to James Monroe, a fellow Virginian whose opinion Jefferson would surely value, "Burr is in charge, to his exertions we owe much. He attended the [polling] places within the city for 24 hours without sleeping or resting."⁵³ On May 3rd, a proud Burr, his efforts rewarded, triumphantly wrote to Jefferson, "The Victory is complete and the Manner of it highly honorable."⁵⁴ The Republicans had swept the Federalists, acquiring all twelve of the city's assembly seats.⁵⁵ Plus, all recognized that it was Burr, with his "Generalship, perseverance, Industry, and Execution," said naval officer James Nicholson, who had successfully masterminded the conversion of Hamilton's once Federalist stronghold into a new home of Republican success.⁵⁶ Within weeks, Jefferson issued Burr a formal invitation, delivered by his associate Albert Gallatin, to join his ticket as the Democratic-Republican's nominee for vice president.⁵⁷ Although they had never clashed, the relationship between Jefferson and Burr, only two acquaintances, was not cordial by nature. Privately reflecting later in life, Jefferson confirmed that his summons to Burr stemmed from obligation, not friendship: "there never had been an intimacy between us...when I destined him for a high appmt, it was out of respect for the favor he had obtained with the republican party by his extraordinary exertions and success in the N.Y. election..."⁵⁸

Burr used his distant relationship with Jefferson

to personal advantage as the Election of 1800, only the second truly contested presidential race in the young nation's history, revealed a major flaw in America's balloting process. Though electoral vote counts were not made official until mid-February of 1801, by December it had become clear that Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson both received 73 votes.⁵⁹ Electors in each state legislature typically received two votes (one for their party's presidential candidate and one for their party's vice presidential candidate), but electors unofficially expected one or two of their rank to refrain from voting for their party's vice presidential candidate, so as to avoid a tie between the presidential and vice presidential candidates. In the weeks leading up to several states' election days, Burr, driven by the acquisition of personal honor and fame that would accompany the presidency, quietly confused Democratic-Republican electors, making it unclear which electors would abstain.⁶⁰ While the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804 prevented the possibility of future such issues, in 1800, the tie presented Americans with a national crisis; if the House of Representatives could not resolve the tie, how was the country to proceed?⁶¹ In remaining silent, Burr refused to drop out of the race, angering a flabbergasted, betrayed Jefferson and prolonging the crisis.⁶² Avoiding contact with Jefferson and the city of Washington, Burr, in a late December letter to congressman Samuel Smith, privately admitted his hopes for the presidency:

"But one Gentleman (of our friends) has asked me whether if I were chosen president, I would engage to resign--The question was unnecessary, unreasonable and impertinent, and I have therefore made no reply. If I had made any I should have told that as at present advised, I should not."⁶³

Although it would take six days, 36 ballots, and an emergency session in the House, Representatives entrusted the office of presidency to its rightful recipient, Thomas Jefferson.⁶⁴ Burr's political identity sustained permanent damage; though some Federalists had tried to install Burr instead of Jefferson, both parties generally scorned his self-absorbed decision to entertain ambitions for a sneakily acquired term in office.⁶⁵

The fruition of Jefferson's distrust, meanwhile, continued to mar Burr's reputation, accelerating the downfall of his career. Burr, pushed aside by vindictive Jefferson, found himself estranged from the administration.⁶⁶ As Jefferson, the nation's first Democratic-Republican president, began replacing Federalist officeholders with partisan supporters in New York City (Burr's hub), he noticeably denied positions to any of Burr's qualified supporters, friends, or allies. His support base dwindling, Burr watched anxiously as his rival Livingstons and Clintons giddily accepted countless ap-



pointments.⁶⁷ Jefferson, in one case, preferred to leave the position of New York naval officer open until 1803 instead of appointing Burr's friend Matthew Livingston Davis.⁶⁸ Throughout his four years in the Jefferson administration, Burr appears to have been excluded from all decision-making processes, his impact limited to his constitutionally provided role as president of the Senate. From Burr's letters to son-in-law Joseph Alston during his early years as vice president, one infers that Jefferson rarely permitted Burr to interact with the administration in a professional setting; senators also seem to have acted coldly and only dutifully respectful when contacting Burr in person: "I dine with the president about once a fortnight, and now and then meet the ministers in the street...The Senate and the vice-president are content with each other, and move on with courtesy."⁶⁹ Even Burr's Georgetown residence, three miles north of the President's House, symbolized his forced detachment from the administration.⁷⁰ By 1804, Burr, having come to accept his diminished role and influence, lived alone in his Manhattan mansion of Richmond Hill.⁷¹

Aaron Burr's role in the 1800 deadlock also disturbed Alexander Hamilton, who abhorred Burr's personal ambitions of power, wealth, and status as antithetical to his own faith in the self-sacrificing behavior ethically required by assumption of public office.⁷² Unlike Jefferson, Hamilton had been an acquaintance of Burr since they first met in Elizabethtown, New Jersey as teenagers--both then served in the army, practiced law, and amassed political support in New York.⁷³ Thus, his intimate point of observation provided Hamilton with an unrivaled perspective into decades of Burr's opportunistic tendencies. Speaking with "an intimate & accurate knowledge of character," and fearing a president who would project self-serving opportunism throughout the nation, Hamilton ferociously sent out a series of letters exposing Burr's self-minded core.⁷⁴ "For heaven's sake let not the Federal party be responsible for the elevation of this Man," Hamilton wrote friend Theodore Sedgwick, who became an assistant in the drive against Burr and agreed with Hamilton's assessment of Burr's ambition: "it is a mere love of power, regardless of fame but as its instrument."⁷⁵ The next day, Hamilton expressed similar sentiments to influential Massachusetts Federalist Harrison Gray Otis: "Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself--thinks of nothing but his own aggrandisement--and will be content with nothing short of permanent power in his own hands."⁷⁶ "In a choice of Evils," Hamilton continued, "let them take the least--Jefferson is in every view less dangerous than Burr."⁷⁷ To Hamilton, although Jefferson represented the antagonist to his Federalist aims, Burr, "one of the most unprincipled men in the UStates," represented the antagonist to fundamental American principles.⁷⁸ Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, acted under the influence of the nation's lofty founding principles, while Burr

acted under the influence of his personal desire. Hamilton's persistence in spreading his belief that American leaders should prioritize public good over personal interest ultimately shifted support towards Jefferson. Federalist James Bayard of Delaware, the representative who abstained from voting (allowing for Jefferson's victory) after thirty-five rounds in the House, wrote Hamilton three weeks later, affirming his success and condemning Burr: "He will never have another chance of being President of the U. states and the little use he has made of the one which has occurred gives me but a humble opinion of the talents of an unprincipled man."⁷⁹

Burr emerged from the Election of 1800 with a tainted reputation and the disdain of both Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. Although he would assume the vice presidency, as his personal relationships with the leaders of each party continued to deteriorate, so too would Burr's own career.

Hamilton's Attacks

Hamilton's crusade against Burr during the Election of 1800 substantially worsened a relationship that had been unsteady since its outset. Beginning with Burr's acceptance of a 1789 New York attorney general nomination and continuing until Burr's entertainment of New England secessionist plotting in 1804, Hamilton witnessed firsthand his rival's propensity to prioritize status and money over stable ideology and dedication to the nation. Hamilton's public attacks throughout the early 1800s, an outlet for his accumulated frustration and a desperate ploy to preserve America from the qualities in Burr which Hamilton found abhorrent, continually degraded Vice President Burr's reputation and hopes for political salvation.

Burr's adaptable political beliefs and willingness to transverse early party boundaries within New York politics first upset Hamilton. After serving as colleagues on the New York bar, both men endorsed Judge Robert Yates in the state's 1789 gubernatorial election.⁸⁰ A hard-fought contest ensued, one in which Hamilton would hone his skill in debasing opponents, publishing sixteen scorching essays in *The Daily Advertiser*.⁸¹ Despite campaigning efforts, Yates's opponent, the less moderate antifederalist and incumbent George Clinton, maintained control of the state's governorship.⁸² Clinton then stunningly nominated Burr, who had just campaigned against him, as the state's next attorney general.⁸³ Burr, leaving Hamilton betrayed and resentful, gladly accepted the nomination, switching sides to advance his own career.⁸⁴ Further damaging his relationship with Hamilton, three years later, Burr utilized Clinton's newfound support to launch a successful campaign for a U.S. senate seat. Defeating the incumbent Philip Schuyler, Hamilton's father-in-law, Burr again proved his mastery in navigating the complicated partisan alliances of his divided home state.⁸⁵

A thirst for financial profit, another one of the



eternally bankrupt Aaron Burr's shortcomings, similarly rankled Hamilton. Burr often wrote of his debt and free-spending nature, once complaining about his "penniless" existence in a private journal.⁸⁶ Known to pester friends and acquaintances for loans, Burr garnered a reputation for being eternally bankrupt.⁸⁷ William P. Van Ness, Burr's accompaniment during the duel with Hamilton, received a letter the day after the 1804 encounter, in which Burr pleaded for financial assistance, writing "Sir, I have got 210 Drs. more—so that the deficiency is now 780—Can you aid me?"⁸⁸ Greed became the fruition of such persistent economic problems.

Far before the duel with Hamilton, Burr's reputation as a debtor made it difficult for him to withdraw loans, especially from banks controlled by Federalists—as a Democratic-Republican state assemblyman in the late 1790s, Burr's two choices were the Bank of New York and the New York branch of the national bank, both institutions the brain-children of Alexander Hamilton.⁸⁹ Burr, himself a desperate New York Republican often in need of loans, understood the degree of respect that the creator of a Republican bank in New York would receive. Plus, his own financial troubles would be assuaged by the creation of a bank from which he could take out money. Passing a bank charter for the Democratic-Republicans, however, would be virtually impossible in New York's Federalist-dominated legislature.⁹⁰ Thus, when yellow fever struck New York in 1798, Burr creatively identified the epidemic as an opportunity to form a Democratic-Republican bank, an institution that would alleviate the burden of his financial issues and gain him prestige within the Republican party.⁹¹ Forming a bipartisan alliance of six key supporters, including Hamilton, a survivor of the illness, Burr approached the New York legislature with a plan to create a public company—the Manhattan Company—that would ensure the delivery of safe drinking water to New York City.⁹² Most of the state legislature, eager to prevent the return of an epidemic that killed 45 New Yorkers a day during its peak, quickly demonstrated their support for the proposed company.⁹³ On the final day of voting, assemblymen, also pleased by the bilateral support the water company seemed to receive, approved its formation without any suspicions of Burr's ulterior motives.⁹⁴ While blinding the state legislature by recruiting members of both parties to promote the company, Burr sneakily inserted an ambiguous "surplus capital" clause into the bill that allowed the "water company" to function as a financial institution.⁹⁵ Many had already returned home to their constituencies, while others weren't concerned enough to closely examine some of the bill's more detailed amendments.⁹⁶ When Federalist governor John Jay signed the company into existence in April 1799, he similarly failed to note that Burr had deleted portions about providing free water to combat fires and repair streets.⁹⁷ Given its unscrupulous beginnings, the new Republican bank claimed the freedom

to operate anywhere and raise millions for funding; by 1802, Burr himself had borrowed \$65,000 from the bank.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, convenient technical difficulties delayed the construction of pumps and pipes.⁹⁹

Blatantly deceived by a political rival, Hamilton's role in the creation of the Manhattan Company blemished his own reputation and increased his growing anger with Burr.¹⁰⁰ Federalists questioned Hamilton's initially blind support for a Republican bank that would compete with his own Bank of New York, while Democrat-Republicans cited the incident as proof of Hamilton's disappearing political skill. Hamilton would not easily forget the injustice he felt Burr had done to his own character; he despised Burr's self-serving nature and would not hesitate to make it known. When the Election of 1800 appeared to be a deadlock, he reminded his Federalist colleagues of Burr's vexing greed and deceitful maneuvers: "Yet he has lately by a trick established a Bank, a perfect monster in its principles; but a very convenient instrument of profit & influence."¹⁰¹ Writing to James A. Bayard in early 1801, Hamilton also warned that an endorsement of Burr would reflect poorly on the reputation of the Federalists, just as support of Burr's Manhattan Company reflected poorly on his repute:

"If the Federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case, abroad and at home (for so from the beginning will be taught) Mr Burr will become in fact the man of our party. And if he acts ill, we must share in the blame and disgrace."¹⁰²

By 1801, Hamilton's letter writing during the election had ignited a ferocious storm of opposition to Aaron Burr. Spurred on by Hamilton, members of both parties published pamphlets that took aim at Burr's bankruptcy, fluid political ideology, and relationship with women.¹⁰³ "From that day until the period when he was driven into exile from the land of his fathers, he was pursued with an intolerance relentless as the grave," Burr's friend Matthew L. Davis remarked.¹⁰⁴ Alexander Hamilton's onslaught began with broad criticisms of Burr's unprincipled nature. In late 1800, he wrote to Oliver Wolcott Jr., "His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandisement per fas et nefas. If he can, he will certainly disturb our institutions to secure to himself permanent power and with it wealth. He is truly the Cataline of America."¹⁰⁵ The next month, Hamilton wrote a harsh thousand-word document, "Opinions on Aaron Burr," that systematically assaulted all aspects of Burr's history, character, and private life in a list of nine points.¹⁰⁶ Referring to his rival as a "voluptuary in the extreme," a "profligate," and "the haughtiest of men," Hamilton

infused calculated menace into his attack.¹⁰⁷ Repeated frustrations, dating back to Judge Yates's candidacy in the 1789 gubernatorial election, transformed Hamilton's dissatisfaction with Burr into a purposeful takedown. Although he was not responsible for every slanderous attack, Hamilton's continued hostility inspired the crusade that would afflict Burr the rest of his life. In May 1801, a handbill entitled "Aaron Burr!" was published in New York City, gaining popularity as slanderous tales of Burr's sexual victims engrossed viewers. The handbill advertised, "a NEW TRAIT in this man's character to be unfolded to the view of an INDIGNANT PUBLIC!—His ABANDONED PROFLIGACY, and the NUMEROUS UNHAPPY WRETCHES who have fallen VICTIMS to his accomplished and but too successful DEBAUCHEE."¹⁰⁸ Having identified an opportunity for drama and profit, the sensationalist press continued to publish libelous attacks over the next few years, and according to Burr, "packets of them were sent to various parts of the Country."¹⁰⁹

Burr's conduct during New York's 1804 gubernatorial elections, specifically his interactions with New England secessionists as a means to increase electoral support, inspired Hamilton to launch a final push against Burr's career. When it became clear to Burr that Jefferson would not be including him as vice president in his bid for a second term, Burr sought political salvation in New York and began campaigning in the 1804 gubernatorial election.¹¹⁰ During the campaign, Burr met with senators Roger Griswold of Connecticut and Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts to discuss their plans for the Northern Alliance, a proposed independent nation that would compose of New England and New York.¹¹¹ By comingling with Federalist secessionists disgruntled by the potential expansion of slavery to new territory in the west, Burr intended to entice votes from extreme New York Federalists.¹¹² Such votes would provide invaluable strength to his support base, especially as no strong Federalist candidates emerged in the race.¹¹³ Although Burr never formally endorsed the movement, or general dismemberment of the Union, for that matter, Griswold, Pickering, and other New England Federalists believed their shared dinners with Burr signified his support of the Northern Alliance.¹¹⁴ Alexander Hamilton interpreted Burr's actions similarly, and his love for the sanctity of the Union initiated a campaign against Burr for the governorship.¹¹⁵

As was the case in the Election of 1800, Hamilton, not a candidate, became Burr's most fearsome opponent. In a format that mimicked the systematic attack he had employed in "Opinions on Aaron Burr," in 1801, Hamilton listed eight reasons to vote against Burr during a February 1804 speech in Albany. Hamilton, familiar with Burr's opportunism and desire for personal gain, expressed grave concern over his interactions with Griswold and Pickering, warning that "placed at the head of the state of New York no man would be

more likely to succeed" in aligning New York with the secessionist push.¹¹⁶ The fact that Burr would rather amass votes for his candidacy than preserve the solidarity of the Union, a sacred concept that encapsulated the strength of America's early institutions, seriously upset Hamilton. Burr would write his daughter Theodosia a week later, correctly observing, "Hamilton is intriguing for any candidate who can have a chance of success against A.B. He would, doubtless, become the advocate even of Dewitt Clinton if he should be the opponent."¹¹⁷ Although Hamilton did not pledge his support for Democratic-Republican hardliner Dewitt Clinton, he would endorse John Lansing, one of his earliest political rivals.¹¹⁸

Hamilton's efforts to subdue Burr's support in the gubernatorial election inspired the press to assault Burr's character from all directions, and the battered candidate lost credibility with every pamphlet dispersed.¹¹⁹ Published accusations became even more ridiculous than those included in the 1801 "Aaron Burr!" handbill. Some in the press exaggerated the nature of his financial issues—a flyer signed by "A Young German" accused Burr of robbing a Dutch baker for \$6,000 to pay off an outstanding debt.¹²⁰ Others invented tales that depicted Burr, "the disgraceful debauchee who permitted an infamous prostitute to insult and embitter the dying moments of his injured wife," as a sexual predator.¹²¹ Especially burdensome to Burr was James Cheetham, the editor of *American Citizen* who assembled a list of "upwards of twenty women of ill fame" whom Burr had supposedly enticed.¹²² Plus, in addition to shorter, sensationalist claims, Cheetham essayed three longer works that criticized Burr with more sophistication. "With the eyes of a lynx," Cheetham wrote in the 120-page *A View of the Political Conduct of Aaron Burr, Esq., Vice-President of the United States*, "he was more on the watch to convert incidental circumstances to his private advantage, to the furtherance of his immeasurably ambitious views, than to seize and appropriate them to the public weal."¹²³

Though he never explicitly colluded with Hamilton, Cheetham often referred to Hamilton's criticisms of Burr as proof for his arguments. Cheetham's claims that Hamilton opposed Burr "because HE HAD NO PRINCIPLE, either in morals or in politics," for example, incensed hatred between the two.¹²⁴ Thus, Hamilton's impact on other pamphleteers supplied a devastating blow to Burr's career. After Burr lost the April vote by an embarrassing margin of almost 10,000 votes, Charles Biddle concluded, "If General Hamilton had not opposed Colonel Burr, I have very little doubt but he would have been elected governor of New York."¹²⁵ Other frustrated Burr supporters agreed with Biddle, complaining, "General Hamilton, and all that portion of politicians over whom he had a controlling influence, opposed the election of Colonel Burr with an ardour bordering on fanaticism. The press teemed with libels of the most



atrocious character.”¹²⁶ The tension the aggrieved duo experienced in the aftermath of the election would lead to their July 1804 duel in Weehawken, New Jersey.¹²⁷

Three years of endless attacks made defenseless Burr an easy target for the nation’s hate and sorrow after Hamilton’s death. Burr’s role in the fatal duel, an “affair of honor” that became an increasingly popular means of settling disputes during the turn of the century, unleashed a subsequent onslaught of hyperbole and anger that would mar his career.¹²⁸ A frenzy of emotion followed Hamilton’s passing, and the support he garnered rivaled that of Washington after his death.¹²⁹ The New York Supreme Court doused its bench in black fabric, while many New Yorkers wore black bands in the thirty days after his death.¹³⁰ Federalist newspapers angrily announced Hamilton’s death in articles framed by a thick black stripe, disseminating explosive accounts of the duel that derided Burr as a “BASE ASSASSIN!”¹³¹ An article reprinted in the *Gazette of the United States* later that month reported “that this unfortunate gentleman [Hamilton] has fallen a victim to a wicked form of deadly hostility, planned by Mr. Burr and his friends and rigidly carried into execution.”¹³² Such inflamed accounts contributed to a charged atmosphere in New York and the surrounding area. As articles began to first be distributed, Burr wrote his son-in-law, “Thousands of absurd falsehoods are circulated with industry. The most illiberal means are practised in order to produce excitement, and, for the moment, with effect.”¹³³ Contrary to the public impression, in the early morning hours after the duel, Burr had sent Hamilton’s physician, Dr. Hosack, a letter in which he keenly inquired about Hamilton’s medical state.¹³⁴

Bitter lawmakers also succumbed to decisions influenced by their rage, as state governments joined the public and press in attempting to rationalize Hamilton’s sudden death by placing an unnecessary amount of blame on Burr. Dueling was technically illegal in the state of New York, but the state did not typically prosecute and the law was treated by most as a mere guideline—historian Joanne Freeman tallies a remarkable sixteen violent “affairs of honor” that occurred between 1795 and 1807.¹³⁵ Hamilton, in fact, had been involved in eleven duels during his life, though not all were necessarily violent.¹³⁶ Upon hearing of Hamilton’s death, however, New York’s grand jury issued a fiery arrest warrant for Burr, who they claimed had been “seduced by the Instigation of the devil.”¹³⁷ The state’s belated realization that they lacked jurisdiction—the duel had occurred in Weehawken of Bergen County, NJ—forced them to withdraw their warrant, but they encouraged the New Jersey legislature to indict Burr for murder. When New Jersey happily complied, ten Democratic-Republican senators, aware of the awkward fact that dueling was legal in New Jersey, wrote a letter of protest to Governor Joseph Bloomfield, who became similarly powerless to enforce Burr’s arrest.¹³⁸ Subsequent as-

sassination attempts and the frightening prospect of a public reveal forced Burr to remain hidden.¹³⁹ A dead Hamilton haunted Burr’s reputation.

Ultimately, Hamilton’s desire to protect America’s early public institutions inspired him to attack Burr as a perennial nemesis. Burr’s tendency to act out of self-interest gravely concerned Hamilton, who treasured sacrifice to the nation and admired those who acted for the good of the people.¹⁴⁰ Hamilton wrote Gouverneur Morris in late 1800, “But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration,” later supplementing this core belief with a warning that self-seeking individuals would corrupt America’s system of government: “Unprincipled selfishness is more apt to seek rapid gain in disorderly practices than slow advantages from orderly systems.”¹⁴¹ Burr’s selfish opportunism contradicted Hamilton’s conception of a leader whose dedication to America’s founding principles would underscore an indestructible loyalty to the nation. Hamilton, unlike Burr, valued public service over private interest. When his friend Robert Troup encouraged him to engage in speculative schemes to alleviate a financial burden, Hamilton staunchly refused, instead replying, “...there must be some public fools who sacrifice private to public interest at the certainty of ingratitude and obloquy...I ought to be one of those fools and ought to keep myself in a situation the best calculated to render service.”¹⁴² Given this mindset, Hamilton, who concluded many of his antagonistic letters by saying, “From the elevation of such a man heaven preserve the Country,” ensured Burr would not enjoy the privilege of the presidency or governorship.¹⁴³ He ended his structured 1801 “Opinions of Aaron Burr” document with a condemnation that fully encapsulated his motives:

“From the character of his understanding and heart it is likely that any innovations which he [Burr] may effect will be such as to serve the turn of his own power, not such as will issue in establishments favourable to the permanent security and prosperity of the Nation—founded upon the principles of a strong free and regular Government.”¹⁴⁴

Jefferson’s Hatred

Thomas Jefferson, whose Democratic-Republican principles represented the antithesis to Hamilton’s Federalist vision for America, became an unexpected supporter of Hamilton’s opposition to Burr.¹⁴⁵ As with Hamilton, Jefferson’s professional relationship with Burr impelled him to lose trust in his first-term vice president, and he despised the fluid political ideology Burr championed to increase his relevancy in national politics. Angered and threatened by the sneaky oppor-



tunist, Jefferson developed a hatred of Burr and eventually executed the completion of his downfall.¹⁴⁶

Even before Burr's betrayal of Jefferson in the Election of 1800, Jefferson was aware of Burr's lack of partisan loyalty. As a senator in New York, Burr had allied himself with members of both political parties.¹⁴⁷ Burr counted Federalists such as John Jay, Jonathan Dayton, and Stephen van Rensselaer among his close friends, in addition to Democratic-Republicans such as Robert Livingston, DeWitt Clinton, and Matthew Davis.¹⁴⁸ Jefferson also surely recognized Burr's unclear political allegiance during the Election of 1796, in which they both ran as contenders for the presidency. Federalist Congressman William Loughton Smith of South Carolina reported that many Republicans expressed uneasiness over Burr's candidacy: "Burr, they think unsettled in his politics and are afraid he will go over to the other side..."¹⁴⁹ Such doubts within the Democratic-Republican party gave Jefferson grounds for initial concern over Burr's personal motives. Bitterly reflecting on Burr's influence on his administration towards the end of his first term in 1804, Jefferson claimed he had immediately identified Burr's potent ambition and his facade of artificial dedication:

"I had never seen Colo. B. till he came as a member of Senate. his conduct very soon inspired me with distrust. I habitually cautioned mr Madison against trusting him too much. I saw afterwards that under Genl. W's and mr A's admns, whenever a great military appmt or a diplomatic one was to be made, he came post to Philada to shew himself, & in fact that he was always at market, if they had wanted him."¹⁵⁰

Although Jefferson despised how Burr's opportunism conveniently shaped his political allegiances, Burr's flexible politics were not always the product of his self-serving nature. In 1799, when the New York state assembly held a vote on the legality of slavery, assemblymen largely voted along party lines.¹⁵¹ The state's Federalist majority condemned slavery, while Democratic-Republicans condoned it; however, Burr denounced his political label and voted with the Federalist bloc, embracing his abolitionist nature.¹⁵² Burr's personal convictions trounced party doctrine, whereas Jefferson's personal beliefs were synonymous with the beliefs of his party, whose members were not coincidentally called Jeffersonian Republicans.¹⁵³ Jefferson struggled to understand how one could not mesh perfectly with the ideology of a single political party.

Once he became vice president, Burr's sustained desire for personal gain upset Jefferson, who cherished the importance of public virtue. Beset by financial troubles, Burr seriously entertained the possibility of prac-

ticing law while serving as vice president of the United States. In a letter to William Eustis, Burr pondered how his title of vice president would improve his stature in law: "Shall A.B. practise Law as usual...He is a simple Citizen when out of Senate and may do as he listeth, say some—But may he go into Courts with the Weight and influence of office and thus retail out these?"¹⁵⁴ Later in Jefferson's first term, Burr disregarded his duties as vice president to campaign for the New York governorship.¹⁵⁵ In the midst of an impeachment trial for New Hampshire Judge John Pickering, Burr, whose position as vice president required him to preside over the Senate during such trials, abruptly left Washington to concern himself with the 1804 gubernatorial election.¹⁵⁶ Jefferson interpreted these self-absorbed decisions as a shameful disservice to the public office to which Burr had been elected.¹⁵⁷

By the end of his first term, Jefferson strongly felt Burr had intentionally subverted his administration's priorities. Upon assuming the presidency, Jefferson intended to repeal the Judiciary Act of 1801, which John Adams had used to drown the courts with "midnight" Federalist appointments.¹⁵⁸ When Burr, as president of the Senate, was tasked with casting a tie-breaking vote on the Judiciary Act in early 1802, Burr voted with Federalists to impede the repeal effort, transferring the contested act to another committee for further consideration as opposed to an immediate revocation.¹⁵⁹ Burr's earliest biographer claimed that some Democratic-Republican senators cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"¹⁶⁰ Republicans in Washington, including Jefferson himself, felt thwarted by the vice president. Less than a month after the tie-breaking vote, Burr attended a birthday party held in memory of the late George Washington at Stelle's Hotel.¹⁶¹ The lone Democratic-Republican among a group of loyal Federalists, Burr proposed a bipartisan toast to a "union of all honest men," solidifying suspicions about his loyalty to the president.¹⁶² Finally, four months after Hamilton's death, completing his final duty as vice president, Burr returned to Washington to preside over the impeachment trial of associate Supreme Court justice Samuel Chase.¹⁶³ Many Democratic-Republicans were traumatized by the image of Hamilton's killer returning to the Senate chamber, the Philadelphia U.S. Gazette relaying their shock that "a man, under an indictment for MURDER presided at the trial of one of the justices of the supreme court of the United States, accused of a petty misdemeanor!"¹⁶⁴ Conversely, Jefferson warmly welcomed Burr, dining with him six times throughout the trial and appointing Burr's brother-in-law Joseph Browne and Burr's friend General Wilkinson to important positions in the recently acquired Louisiana Territory.¹⁶⁵ When Burr tendered the Senate's "not guilty" ruling on all eight charges for Federalist Chase, robbing the president of a chance to appoint a Republican justice to the Supreme Court, Jefferson could not forgive his backstabbing vice presi-



dent.¹⁶⁶

Irked by Burr's nonpartisanship and opportunism, Jefferson relentlessly pursued Burr for treason in 1806 and 1807. His occasionally rash decision-making conveyed the degree to which he detested his former vice president. After delivering an inspiring farewell address in the Senate following the Chase trial, Burr journeyed west.¹⁶⁷ "In New-York I am to be disfranchised, and in New-Jersey hanged," Burr explained to his son-in-law Joseph Alston, elaborating that he would "seek another country. You will not, from this, conclude that I have become passive, or disposed to submit tamely to the machinations of a banditti. If you should you would greatly err."¹⁶⁸ Burr, loathed in New York, New Jersey, and by the Jefferson administration in DC, logically travelled to the frontier of the Louisiana Territory, a largely undiscovered portion of the country that presented Burr with the opportunity of redefining himself.¹⁶⁹ In his letter to Alston, Burr clarified that he did not intend to engage in the "machinations of a banditti," the activity of robbers, thieves, and conspirators.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, articles published in the United States Gazette in August 1805 began to question Burr's motives in the west; his political reputation almost completely destroyed, Burr was the perfect target for continued suspicion.¹⁷¹ His mysterious purchase of 400,000 acres on the Washita River in 1806 exacerbated public doubt.¹⁷²

Burr's trip west and acquisition of land in the Louisiana Territory linked him closely to General Wilkinson, an old friend of Burr's from the Revolutionary War whom Jefferson had appointed as governor of the territory.¹⁷³ The mushrooming partnership between Burr and Wilkinson concerned Kentucky United States Attorney Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, who wrote President Jefferson a series of letters in early 1806. "We have traitors among us," he told Jefferson in January 1806, later insinuating that Burr longed to become "the Saviour of this western country."¹⁷⁴ Jefferson recognized Burr's mysterious activity on the frontier as the perfect opportunity to seek his revenge, and he intended to wield his lofty pedestal to permanently tar the vice president who had foiled his Democratic-Republican agenda. General Wilkinson, fearing culpability by association and apprehending Burr's powerless disposition, purposefully altered a letter written by Burr to misconstrue his objectives as treasonous and punishable. Forwarding the letter to Jefferson in October 1806, Wilkinson betrayed his "old friend" and provoked Jefferson's attack of Burr.¹⁷⁵ In early 1807, President Jefferson delivered a "Special Message on the Burr Conspiracy" to Congress.¹⁷⁶ Jefferson vilified Burr in the address, claiming he had "seduced good and well-meaning citizens."¹⁷⁷ On the contrary, Wilkinson was lauded with "the honor of a soldier and fidelity of a good citizen."¹⁷⁸ Blinded by his abhorrence of Burr, Jefferson placed full trust in the word of General Wilkinson, whose character was in fact

perhaps more questionable than Burr's.¹⁷⁹ Immoral and criminal, Wilkinson had been involved in the Conway Cabal, an attempt to remove George Washington from command of the Continental Army. Moreover, his superior knowledge of Mexico and the Louisiana Territory made him a more conspicuous culprit for treason than Burr.¹⁸⁰ Jefferson wholly ignored such hints, and his unscrupulous support of Wilkinson, who was later discovered to have been a paid spy for the Spanish government, demonstrated that Jefferson's judgment was clouded by his animosity towards Burr.¹⁸¹

Intending to deface Burr's reputation, Thomas Jefferson subsequently called for Burr's arrest and demanded a federal treason trial. Ignoring the fact that a state court in Kentucky had acquitted Burr on two consecutive occasions, federal agents, assisted by General Wilkinson, arrested Burr in February 1807.¹⁸² Announcing Burr's arrest to his nephew, James Clapp revealed that Burr had been ignored due process, reporting that "the Grand Jury found no bill, but the court refusing to discharge him, the Col. absconded, the Gov of that territory offered a reward of 2000 Dollrs for him..."¹⁸³ Jefferson ignored the Constitution in pursuit of Burr, and the subsequent treason trial uncovered what historian Leonard Levy described as a "darker side" of the revered statesman.¹⁸⁴ Chief Justice John Marshall presided over Burr's high-profile trial, covered by a young Washington Irving, in the spring of 1807.¹⁸⁵ Although Jefferson sent pamphlets throughout the Louisiana Territory requesting "every good citizen to step forward, and communicate to the government any information he may possess," John Marshall ruled that the presented evidence did not sufficiently incriminate Burr.¹⁸⁶ Jefferson fumed, complaining that "it now appears we have no law but the will of the judge," and calling on his lawyers to initiate impeachment proceedings for Marshall.¹⁸⁷

Although Jefferson failed to imprison Burr for treason, he succeeded in irreversibly disgracing Burr. Placing their faith in Jefferson's impassioned pursuit of Burr, the public deemed Aaron Burr an evil rogue. A popular dinner toast during Burr's trial proclaimed, "Aaron Burr—may his treachery to his country exhalt him to the scaffold, and hemp be his escort to the republic of Dust and ashes."¹⁸⁸ As with Hamilton, Jefferson's love of the country's early institutions made him fear Burr's nonpartisanship. Jefferson worried that Burr would not hesitate to ignore the plight of the nation if presented with an opportunity for personal advancement.

Even though he had been acquitted three times, once at the hands of America's most respected Supreme Court Justice, the force of Jefferson's attack had ruined Burr.¹⁸⁹ Universally hated in America, Burr fled to Europe, his demise complete.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion



Aaron Burr, academically gifted and ambitious, began his career as one of the young nation's most promising politicians, but his auspicious rise contrasts sharply with his popular legacy as a murderous conspiracist. His tremendous demise was multi-faceted, owing to both personal qualities and to the attacks of his adversaries. Burr's opportunism and aspiration for personal gain provoked some of America's most applauded statesmen, specifically Hamilton and Jefferson, to oppose the advancement of his political career. Alexander Hamilton, who suspected Burr would use "the worst part of the community as a ladder to climb to perman[en]t power," relentlessly attacked Burr during the Election of 1800 and New York's 1804 gubernatorial election, inciting others to follow suit.¹⁹¹ Adding similar damage to Burr's reputation, Jefferson, who considered Burr "a crooked gun or other perverted machine whose aim or stroke you could never be sure of," pursued Burr for high treason, ignoring due process and his lack of evidence to solidify Burr's downfall in American politics.¹⁹² Burr represented the realization of one of Hamilton and Jefferson's worst fears: government figures prioritizing individual success, recognition, and standing over the plight of the young nation.

Given the fervor with which Hamilton and Jefferson sought to subdue him, Burr was undoubtedly a significant presence in America's early years.¹⁹³ His faults, indeed, rendered him a presence in much of the country's early drama, but his few positive contributions go wholly unrecognized. In his later years, after the deaths of both Hamilton and Jefferson, Burr privately confided, "the men who knew their falsity are dead, and the generation who now read them may take them for truths, being uncontradicted."¹⁹⁴ Compared to Hamilton and Jefferson, who left behind a wealth of well-organized records, Burr's lack of historical documentation condemns his beneficial impact to the abyss of history.¹⁹⁵ Burr, who wore an amulet of Mary Wollstonecraft for most of his life and committed himself to the "cultivation" of his daughter Theodosia's mind, was dedicated to a primitive form of feminism and believed in equal educational opportunities for boys and girls.¹⁹⁶ Also a supporter of the abolitionist cause, Burr introduced a bill for the complete emancipation of slaves in New York while a representative on the state legislature in 1789, ten years before a bill for partial emancipation would pass.¹⁹⁷ Finally, Burr's conduct as vice president during some of America's earliest impeachment trials demonstrated the honorable benefits of his nonpartisanship. His refusal to blindly follow party agenda invited hate from the polarized duo of Hamilton and Jefferson, but set an important precedent for future interpretations of impeachment.¹⁹⁸

Hamilton and Jefferson's most successful assault on Burr was the besmirching of his historical legacy. Considering the influence of these two awed individuals, Dr. Allan Hamilton, the first psychiatrist who exam-

ined Burr, eloquently concluded, "It is only natural that the shadows [of Burr] have been overblackened."¹⁹⁹

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Shattered Like a Crystal Glass

Subtitle-How George W. Bush's Rational Implementation of De-Ba'athification and Military Disbandment Condemned the U.S. Reconstruction of Iraq to Failure

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Section-Research Papers

Part I: Introduction

On October 10, 2002, by a vote of 296 to 133, the United States Congress enacted House Joint Resolution 114, authorizing military action against Iraq and Saddam Hussein.¹ Responding to Iraq's presumed possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and its repeated noncompliance with UN inspections, the U.S. military entered Iraq in March 2003, swiftly toppled Saddam's regime, and assumed occupational control.² On May 1, 2003, following this successful invasion, President George W. Bush triumphantly proclaimed in his Mission Accomplished Address, "The tyrant has fallen and Iraq is free."³ Contrary to such confident celebrations, however, the Iraq War, characterized by a failed reconstruction and a protracted occupation, had just begun.

Concerned with the prospect of reconstructing a post-Saddam Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell warned the Bush Administration, "When you hit [Iraq], it's like a crystal glass. It's going to shatter. There will be no government. There will be civil disorder. You'll have 25 million Iraqis standing around looking at each other."⁴ Confirming these apprehensions, violence and political strife increased dramatically in Iraq in the months following Bush's victory speech.⁵ Eight years later, when American forces were at last withdrawn, approximately 500,000 Iraqis and 4,500 US soldiers had died in conflict related incidents.⁶ Both living conditions in Iraq and the overall stability of the country had declined drastically, prompting one Iraqi fruit vendor to explain, "Every day will be worse than the one before. Saddam used to fight us . . . but who replaced him was worse."⁷

Although discussion of the Iraq War fiasco often centers on the initial decision to engage militarily, the principal controversy in fact resides in the U.S. policies of reconstruction, specifically the disbanding of the Iraqi military and de-Ba'athification – the removal of members of Saddam's Ba'ath party from positions of authority in the Iraqi government. Due to unforeseen consequences and misconceptions regarding Iraqi society, these policies resulted in a disillusioned Iraqi public, a Sunni insurgency, and a sectarian civil war. The decision to disband the Iraqi military and pursue de-Ba'athification was, nevertheless, neither irrational nor the result of a lack of preparation. Conversely, the decision was a result of the institutional constraints placed on the Bush administration, from international humanitarian pressure to political expediency, compelling Bush to adopt the Department of Defense's rapid

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policy plan rather than the State Department's more nuanced, long-term proposal. Thus, in attempting to create a free, democratic Iraq while minimizing the length of U.S. occupation, Bush ultimately accomplished neither objective, failing as a result of the rational implementation of the flawed policies of De-Ba'athification and military disbandment.

Part II: Pre-War Conditions in Iraq

The Sunni-Shia Divide:

From political strife to economic turbulence, the pre-war conditions of Iraqi society are critical to understanding the reconstruction policy choices made by the Bush Administration and the ultimate consequences of these actions. An ancient sectarian divide, for example, created a complex political and social landscape in Iraq. Founded in differing beliefs as to the proper line of succession for Muhammad, Sunni and Shia Muslims, since the beginning of the Islamic traditions, had often existed in opposition to one another, creating the largest and oldest division in Islam.⁸ Consisting of 60% Shiites and 15-20% Arab Sunnis,⁹ 20th century Iraq experienced nearly constant sectarian competition.¹⁰ Although representing a minority in Iraq, Sunnis generally dominated positions in the military, comprising 80% of the officer corps and only 20% of the rank-and-file.¹¹ Using these positions in the military as a means of political ascendancy, Sunnis similarly dominated Iraqi politics.¹²

Accruing power throughout the 1970s in this manner in the Ba'ath party, Saddam initially assured Shiites that they "could expect to enjoy his favor."¹³ The Shia-led Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, however, prompted widespread Shia unrest throughout Iraq.¹⁴ Fearing a similar revolution, Saddam promptly outlawed the Shia Dawa Party, executing its leader, Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir Sadr.¹⁵ He then restricted Shia religious practices, exiling, torturing, or executing thousands of Shiites who did not cooperate.¹⁶ Thus, from the outside, Iraq in 2003 appeared irreparably divided between the disenfranchised Shiites, concentrated in the lowest socioeconomic classes, and the ruling Sunni minority. Saddam's Brutality and Destruction of Political Opposition:

Although sectarian divisions were pervasive throughout Saddam's regime, his administration's use of violence was not limited to the persecution of Shiites, but rather formed merely one part of a broader policy of eradicating political opposition and dissent.¹⁷ Upon coming into power in 1979, Saddam immediately sought

to solidify his position, creating a one-party state and a cult of personality.¹⁸ Torture, executions, and banishment were deliberately utilized as a means of discouraging dissent.¹⁹ A Revolutionary Command Council decree on December 21, 1992, legalized these methods, granting immunity to members of the Ba'ath party who "cause damage to property, bodily harm and even death when pursuing enemies of the regime."²⁰ In fact, the official policy of response to political demonstrations was "to kill 95% of [demonstrators], and to leave 5% for interrogation."²¹ Any Iraqi accused of dissent could be arrested and held in prison for indefinite periods of time, where beatings, rape, starvation, and summary execution were frequent practices of the corrupt guards.²²

Although almost all portions of society suffered from this brutality, women especially struggled under Saddam's regime.²³ The Iraq Research and Documentation Project from Harvard University, for example, found that a 1990 decree had legalized honor killings of women and certain government officials were explicitly tasked with the "violation of women's honour."²⁴ Furthermore, Saddam's regime was not unfamiliar with the use of chemical weapons, murdering 100,000 Kurds in the Anfal Campaign of the 1980s by various means, including chemical warfare.²⁵ Thus, to many U.S. policy makers, Iraqis in 2003 appeared not only divided, but also brutalized and eager for revenge against the Ba'athist oppressors, creating a delicate political and social landscape in Iraq that the U.S. would have to address during occupation.

Part III: Choosing a Reconstruction Plan

Two Competing Proposals for Reconstruction:

In the beginning of 2002, as Iraq's noncompliance with UN resolutions continued, the Bush Administration began preparations for war, requiring both a strategy for initial invasion and subsequent occupation, which would necessarily entail addressing the complex social and political landscape in Iraq.²⁶ Expecting only minor resistance from a significantly inferior Iraqi military, the generals and policy makers involved quickly constructed the invasion strategy known as Operation Iraqi Freedom.²⁷ Determining a policy for reconstruction, however, proved more difficult. Following a successful invasion, an occupying force would be necessary to search for the supposed existence of WMD, maintain order, and dissolve Saddam's oppressive regime. Opinions on the extent and length of U.S. involvement in post-invasion reconstruction efforts, however, varied greatly.²⁸ Ultimately, two potential proposals emerged – one championed by the State Department and the other by the Department of Defense.²⁹

Under the direction of Secretary of State Colin Powell, the State Department set forth a detailed and long-term proposal that ultimately amounted to nation building. Having been informed of plans to invade

Iraq, the State Department in early 2002 organized the Future of Iraq Project (FIP) to combine the knowledge of State Department officials, members of various U.S. federal departments and agencies, and over 200 leading Iraqis, from lawyers and doctors to engineers and business people.³⁰ This eclectic group was tasked with addressing "serious planning gaps for post-conflict public security and humanitarian assistance" in order to avoid "serious human rights abuses which could undermine an otherwise successful military campaign, and [U.S.] reputation internationally."³¹ Accordingly, the FIP constructed and presented to the Bush Administration a 1,200 page, 13-volume report addressing the complexities of Iraqi society and what they believed effective occupation would entail.³²

Importantly, the FIP directly warned against the disbanding of the Iraqi military and de-Ba'athification.³³ Instead, it proposed the removal of only the very top officials in the Ba'ath party, while also "restructuring the Iraqi armed forces into playing a depoliticized, positive and unifying role to share in rebuilding Iraqi society."³⁴ Additionally, the FIP recommended that the U.S. work to improve, among other components of the Iraqi state, infrastructure, public health, defense, education, and justice.³⁵ The State Department, thus, proposed a reconstruction plan that would require significant and long-term U.S. involvement in Iraqi affairs, advising the Bush administration that, in order to ensure successful reconstruction, "The [US Government] needs to prepare for a stay of five to ten years [in Iraq]."³⁶

On the other hand, the Department of Defense, directed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, proposed a more minimalist approach to reconstruction. Due to instability in the Middle East in the 1990s, the Department of Defense had already constructed an invasion and reconstruction plan in 1999 known as Desert Crossing in the case of Iraqi state collapse.³⁷ Calling for an occupying force of between 380,000 and 400,000 U.S. soldiers, this contingency plan still garnered much support within the Pentagon in 2002, including from the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Eric Shinseki.³⁸ Rumsfeld, however, with the support of Vice President Cheney, dismissed this proposal, instead aligning himself with the growing neoconservative political movement in Washington.³⁹ Like their liberal counterparts, neoconservatives supported regime change initiatives that granted to all people "good governments," believing in the superiority of democracy; however, unlike liberals, and even traditional conservatives, neoconservatives supported the use of the military to bring about rapid democratization.⁴⁰ Furthermore, they opposed extensive nation building and extended occupations, believing that it had created a "culture of dependence" in the Balkans in the 1990s.⁴¹

In accordance with these neoconservative beliefs, Rumsfeld and the Department of Defense proposed that only a small occupying force remain in



Iraq following the invasion, arguing that a larger troop presence would be unnecessary to secure American interests and promote democracy.⁴² This occupying force, working with a temporary administrative organization established by the U.S., would then destroy any remnants of Saddam's regime through methods such as de-Ba'athification and the disbanding of the military.⁴³ After the completion of this first phase of reconstruction, the U.S. occupying forces would rapidly withdraw. Rumsfeld and the Department of Defense argued that Iraqis, once liberated from Saddam's regime and supported by the nation's supposed oil wealth, would naturally embrace democracy and form a popular government on their own, rendering nation-building plans and efforts by the U.S. unnecessary.⁴⁴ The Department of Defense, thus, proposed a reconstruction plan that, unlike that of the State Department, would theoretically require neither extensive U.S. involvement in Iraqi affairs nor an extended occupation, instead relying on the Iraqis to reconstruct the government after the U.S. eliminated Saddam and his influence in the country.

Thus presented with two very different proposals for reconstruction, President Bush ultimately opted for the Department of Defense's short-term strategy as a result of institutional constraints placed upon his administration, principally by the American public. Although his approval ratings soared to 90% following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, polls conducted in 2002 revealed drastic decreases, with his popularity falling to 62% by October.⁴⁵ With minimal success, though continued troop involvement, in Afghanistan in 2002, the Bush Administration desperately needed rapid and tangible successes in Iraq in order to reverse or halt Bush's rapidly declining popularity.⁴⁶ Advocating the complete dismantling of the Saddam-era institutions, Rumsfeld's proposal all but guaranteed immediate and visible evidence of the U.S. efforts in Iraq. Advocating gradual change over a five to ten year period, however, the State Department's plan may not have yielded results for months. The Department of Defense's proposal was, therefore, clearly the more politically expedient option for a Bush Administration attempting to garner public approval, impelling Bush to pursue it as the official policy of reconstruction.

In addition to offering greater change in a shorter period of time, the Department of Defense's proposal also avoided the dangers of nation building. A tremendously expensive and lengthy endeavor, nation building involves the construction of infrastructure and other long-term programs necessary to create a functioning society and, as a result, frequently requires protracted occupations.⁴⁷ Advocating careful improvement of Iraqi institutions and infrastructure, the State Department's proposal fully embraced this role for the U.S. in Iraq.⁴⁸ Still averse to the dedication of large numbers of troops and extended occupations, the American public, fearing another Vietnam-like quagmire, would

have undoubtedly opposed both the length and extent of U.S. involvement that the State Department's reconstruction plan necessitated. Rumsfeld's proposal, however, theoretically avoided these problems altogether.

Adopting the State Department's nation building proposals would present additional problems to the Bush Administration, which in the 2000 campaign explicitly condemned the practice. During the first debate on October 3, 2000, Bush, then the Republican presidential nominee, explained:

"[Al Gore] believes in nation building. I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war and therefore prevent war from happening in the first place. I believe we're overextended in too many places."⁴⁹

Adopting the State Department's nation-building proposal would, thus, have entailed both contradicting previous campaign assertions and committing the U.S. to a lengthy occupation. Accordingly, Bush recognized that pursuing the long-term reconstruction plan would have been politically disastrous, even if the policy did not actually create "another Vietnam." As a result, Rumsfeld's proposal was once again the politically expedient option.

Attempting to maintain public support and avoid a politically disastrous outcome in Iraq, Bush chose the Department of Defense's proposal as the official reconstruction plan.⁵⁰ Acting within the constraints of the Executive Office, he recognized that public approval was critical to the success of his domestic agenda, foreign policy, and chances in the 2004 election. As a result, he made a rational decision to pursue a more conservative and expedient reconstruction plan, instead of one that endangered him politically and America abroad. Although the flaws in Rumsfeld's proposal were eventually obvious, the State Department and Department of Defense proposals in 2002, with continuing uncertainty on the ground in Iraq and each with significant support, appeared to be equally credible routes to creating a democratic, independent, and stable Iraq as Bush intended. In choosing the Department of Defense's plan, Bush, therefore, believed that he had selected a reconstruction policy that would protect him politically, secure American interests in Iraq, and result in the establishment of a democracy that would benefit the majority of Iraqis.

Bush Re-emphasizes and Reforms the Reconstruction Plan:

Granted the lead in reconstruction, the Department of Defense on March 19, 2003, created the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) in order to implement on the ground in Iraq the short-term reconstruction proposal approved by the Bush Administration.⁵¹ With Jay Garner, the head of



humanitarian affairs in Iraq since 1991, as director, the ORHA immediately began the process of implementing the strategy outlined by the Department of Defense.⁵² Although adopted as a more rapid alternative to nation building, the Department of Defense's reconstruction process nevertheless began as a cautious and systematic effort to reform the security apparatus and government structure in Iraq.

According to Rumsfeld's instructions, the ORHA in March 2003 began a process of "gentle de-Ba'athification," gradually removing Ba'ath party members from positions of authority in Iraq.⁵³ Garner and the ORHA then intended to reconstitute, with the exception of ardent Saddamists and corrupt officials, "as much of the old Iraqi administration as they could by recalling people to their posts, setting up temporary offices, and guaranteeing salaries."⁵⁴ This process was critical to their overall objective of rapidly returning power to Iraqis and Iraqi institutions, pursuing a rapid withdrawal of the U.S. occupying force. Accordingly, U.S. officials were deployed to various provinces across Iraq to assist in the construction of local councils, often through democratic elections, to support the central government and thereby expedite the return of power.⁵⁵

Initially, the Department of Defense's reconstruction plan also sought to reform the Iraqi military, as Garner and the ORHA began to gradually disband it. Similar to their efforts to reconstitute the government, ORHA officials, under the instruction of the Department of Defense, implemented a program for the "retraining, management, and orderly disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration" of the dismissed military personnel.⁵⁶ In addition to providing security, this new Iraqi army would be screened to "identify capable, experienced managers [to be] assigned to augment deficient areas of the government services."⁵⁷ As a result, military officials expected "to rapidly hand over [to Iraqi military personnel] public services restoration, infrastructure reconstruction planning and coordination, and managing relationships with newly-formed local councils throughout Iraq."⁵⁸ Thus, the Department of Defense reconstruction plan once again intended to return power and responsibility to Iraqis as soon as possible, minimizing U.S. involvement while also implementing the necessary reforms.

By May 2003, however, the Department of Defense's reconstruction plan had yielded only minimal results. U.S. officials were still chiefly responsible for managing Iraqi affairs and no signs of troop withdrawal existed.⁵⁹ President Bush's celebratory Mission Accomplished Address on May 3, 2003 had been devastatingly premature.⁶⁰ Accordingly, his approval ratings continued to decline, falling to 58% by March 2003.⁶¹ Although only a 4% decrease from October 2002, the trend concerned the Bush Administration, especially as disapproval similarly increased abroad.⁶² A Pew research poll of 19 countries in 2003, for example, revealed an aver-

age approval rating for President Bush of 34%, a 20% decrease from 2002.⁶³ Although pervasive opposition to the initial invasion of Iraq likely contributed to both of these trends, U.S. failure to minimize involvement, return power to Iraqis quickly, and rapidly withdraw troops as intended garnered much criticism and as a result promoted growing disapproval of the Bush Administration.

Growing uncertainty on the ground in Iraq placed further pressure upon President Bush in May 2003. Nearly three months after the initial invasion, U.S. forces still could not present any concrete evidence concerning the existence of WMD in Iraq.⁶⁴ Moreover, Saddam Hussein had yet to be captured.⁶⁵ With the two primary objectives of the invasion thus incomplete, criticism of Bush's decision to invade in the first place mounted both domestically and abroad.⁶⁶ Combined with growing instability and chaos in Iraq, this uncertainty, more importantly, precipitated a surge of international pressure for the U.S. to either bring the occupation to a rapid resolution or improve the conditions in Iraq.

For example, a United Nations Security Council Resolution issued in May 2003 warned the U.S., "The situation in Iraq, although improved, continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security."⁶⁷ It went on to remind the Bush Administration of "the right of the Iraqi people freely to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources."⁶⁸ Finally, the Resolution called upon the U.S. to "respond immediately to the humanitarian appeals of the United Nations and other international organizations for Iraq."⁶⁹ Pressure from international and domestic sources to reform the reconstruction policies in Iraq was, thus, high and increasing in May 2003.

The United Nations, other international organizations, and the American public, however, were not the only sources placing pressure on the Bush Administration. As the situation in Iraq deteriorated, many Iraqis in early 2003 similarly began to speak out. For example, Samir Mahmood, who would eventually become the Minister of Interior, reported that the situation in the Anbar Province (the largest governorate by area) "is very unsatisfactory. People are very resentful and fearful. Anger is mounting giving real opportunities to the remnants of the old regime to regroup and cause serious problems."⁷⁰ Thus, discontent with the so far unsuccessful U.S. occupation was also growing from within Iraq.

With the viability of the Department of Defense's reconstruction plan in question and as criticism and pressure mounted, the Bush Administration in May 2003 was forced to revisit its methods of reconstruction and reconsider its intentions in Iraq.⁷¹ The urgency of regaining public approval before the 2004 election, however, once again constrained President Bush in his ability to adjust to the given circumstances, compelling



him to seek an even more politically expedient alternative to the Department of Defense's initial proposal. Ultimately, the Bush Administration came to the conclusion that discontent in Iraq stemmed from a fear of Ba'ath resurgence, that disapproval in the U.S. stemmed from a desire for a more rapid withdrawal of forces, and that concerns from international sources stemmed from the lack of tangible progress. Accordingly, President Bush, seeking to effect even greater change in an even shorter period of time, abandoned the initially more gradual reconstruction strategy for a new policy of unqualified de-Ba'athification and complete military disbandment.⁷² The Bush Administration believed this new policy, still under the direction of the Department of Defense, would reaffirm its commitment to a brief occupation and the creation of a democratic Iraq and, thereby, conciliate all parties involved. Although a therefore rational decision, the new more stringent reconstruction plan would ultimately have devastating consequences.

Part IV: The U.S. Implementation of De-Ba'athification and Military Disbandment

The New Reconstruction Strategy:

On May 6th, 2003, President Bush dissolved the ORHA and dismissed Jay Garner, officially ending the implementation of the first reconstruction strategy.⁷³ In order to implement the new policy of complete de-Ba'athification and military disbandment, Bush then instructed Secretary Rumsfeld to create the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to function as the new U.S. administrative organization in Iraq.⁷⁴ Seeking to calm the American public, the Iraqi public, and the international community, the Bush Administration additionally announced that the CPA and its effective control of Iraq would be dissolved by June 30, 2004.⁷⁵ Although implementing a new reconstruction strategy, the overall objective of the US in Iraq remained the same – limit the stay of U.S. force while also creating a “prosperous and free” Iraq.⁷⁶

Attempting to quell the uncertainty and chaos in Iraq that impeded this objective, Bush appointed L. Paul Bremer as the director of the CPA, instructing him to show a firmer and more certain American hand in the implementation of the reconstruction policies.⁷⁷ Accordingly, in a letter to Bremer officially designating him director, Rumsfeld wrote, “You shall be responsible for the temporary governance of Iraq . . . to oversee, direct, and coordinate all executive, legislative, and judicial functions necessary to carry out this responsibility.”⁷⁸ Although well intentioned, the granting of such plenary powers to Bremer became an immensely controversial decision and, concomitantly, resulted in a pervasive “blame-game” directed at him for the ultimate consequences of the policies.⁷⁹ As Charles Ferguson, a leading scholar on the Iraq War, notes in *No End in Sight*, Bremer appears to have lacked the proper

qualifications for such a position:

[Bremer] had never served in the military, had never worked in the Middle East, had never worked on Persian Gulf issues, spoke no Arabic, had never worked in any postwar occupation or reconstruction effort, had no experience with the oil industry, and had never managed any large budget or organization.⁸⁰

Despite Bremer's apparent lack of experience, the accusations of his fault for the eventual destabilization of Iraq are misplaced. Although the policies of De-Ba'athification and military disbandment were ill-conceived, the ultimate failure was not due to any singular person's decisions. Conversely, it was the result of a series of fatally flawed assumptions and misconceptions concerning Iraqi society that were made by the Bush Administration, again constrained by public opinion. De-Ba'athification - Implementation, Intentions, and Misconceptions:

On May 16, 2003, Bremer, with authorization from Secretary Rumsfeld to begin the new reconstruction strategy, announced CPA Order 1, disestablishing the Ba'ath Party by “eliminating the party's structures and removing its leadership from positions of authority and responsibility in Iraqi society.”⁸¹ The order immediately dismissed the top four layers of the Ba'ath party and the top three layers of each ministry, affecting approximately 100,000 people.⁸² Attempting to demonstrate to the international community the beginning of the transition of power back to Iraq, the CPA also created a commission of Iraqis to assist in the de-Ba'athification process.⁸³ Instructed to “investigate and gather information . . . [on] the identity and whereabouts of Iraqi Ba'ath Party Officials and members,” this council, chaired by Ahmed Chalabi, a Shiite exiled by Saddam, could research and present officials of presumed Ba'ath party affiliation to the CPA for dismissal.⁸⁴

Although Chalabi and Bremer could grant exceptions to this policy of exclusion from the government, such pardons were rarely made, as the Bush Administration's new policy encouraged complete and unqualified de-Ba'athification.⁸⁵ President Bush understood that, in order to withdraw occupying forces from Iraq as desired, the U.S. would first have to punish government officials for previous crimes, deprive them of the power to commit further abuses, and assure Iraqis that the Ba'ath party and its oppression would not return.⁸⁶ Although policy makers recognized that not all members of the Ba'ath party were directly involved in Saddam's atrocities, Bremer and others argued that they were intrinsically “loyalists who, by virtue of their positions of power in the regime, had been active instruments of Saddam's repression,” and who were, thus, complicit in his crimes, at the very least.⁸⁷ Assuming that these officials were therefore delegitimized,



the Bush administration believed that the Iraqi people would not accept any remnants of the Ba'ath party.⁸⁸ For this reason, many argued that establishing a legitimate democratic government, and thereby providing for U.S. withdrawal, required the creation of an entirely new party system, necessitating complete de-Ba'athification.⁸⁹

This was, however, a fatal miscalculation. Using extremely violent techniques, Saddam while in power completely eradicated political opposition.⁹⁰ Membership in the Ba'ath party, therefore, became a tool of survival in Iraqi society, where membership was often a prerequisite for acquiring jobs, forcing ambitious Iraqis to interact with the party and follow their orders.⁹¹ For example, only high-ranking Ba'ath officials, with their salaries determined and positions approved by the party, were given manager positions in hospitals.⁹² Membership in the party, thus, did not automatically correlate to an ideological affinity with the Saddam and his loyalists. One Iraqi, for example, explained, "All of Iraq is Ba'athist . . . but not all of them are criminals. There are those that are innocent."⁹³ This understanding was, in fact, nearly ubiquitous in Iraq.⁹⁴ A poll conducted by the International Center for Transitional Justice in 2004 found that the Iraqi public, with merely a few exceptions, differentiated between the party leadership and members in general.⁹⁵ The Bush Administration, however, failed to recognize and make this distinction, dismissing thousands of officials, including 40,000 educators, who were in the party merely out of necessity.⁹⁶

In addition to mischaracterizing membership in the Ba'ath party, the Bush Administration also underestimated the functional capacity of the government following the invasion. 13 years of UN sanctions had effectively crushed the Iraqi economy, as what money remained was frequently siphoned off in embezzlement schemes.⁹⁷ Additionally, a lack of political opposition had created a stagnant and inefficient bureaucracy.⁹⁸ The invasion further destroyed the government, as communication between provincial governments and Baghdad was lost and subsequent looting destroyed 17 of the 23 ministries.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, as Barbara Bodine, a US-appointed coordinator for central Iraq, explained, "[Government officials] were showing up to work anyway. They were continuing to keep the city functioning."¹⁰⁰ A foundation of cooperation, thus, existed upon which the CPA could have built; however, the perceived necessities of a Ba'ath party purge, for both the benefit of Iraqis and Americans seeking troop withdrawal, prevented the U.S. occupiers from capitalizing on this opportunity.

Disbanding of the Military - Implementation, Intentions, and Misconceptions:

Shortly following De-Ba'athification, Bremer and the CPA, again with Department of Defense authorization, began to disband the Iraqi military. Having already terminated all communications with the Army

leadership, Bremer, on May 23, 2003, announced the implementation of CPA Order 2.¹⁰¹ Entitled the "Dissolution of Entities," this order formally abolished all ministries and agencies related to security, including the Ministry of Defense, Iraqi Intelligence Service, and the National Security Bureau.¹⁰² Additionally, the order dissolved all security and military entities, including the armed forces (i.e., Army, Air Force, Navy, etc.) and any special security units or militias, such as the Republican Guard and Saddam Fedayeen.¹⁰³ In total, the order dismissed approximately 500,000 Iraqis, most of whom, despite promises from CPA officials, did not receive any form of severance payment or pension.^{104,105}

Attempting to once again demonstrate the involvement of Iraqis in the reconstruction effort, the CPA did exempt from dissolution the Iraqi Police (IP), comprised of approximately 285,000 officers.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, in order to replace the dissolved Iraq military, the CPA established a plan to create the New Iraq Army. Headed by General Paul Eaton, a small contingent of instructors would train 40,000 Iraqi volunteers over two years.¹⁰⁷ This New Army, however, could not include any former Ba'athists and members of the old army could only join after an extensive, and frequently ambiguous, screening process.¹⁰⁸

Such extensive military disbandment was implemented with a similar intent to de-Ba'athification, as the Bush Administration assumed that, like the government, the military forces were generally feared and delegitimized.¹⁰⁹ As a result, the Bush Administration once again believed that, in order to withdraw troops and fully return power to Iraqis as desired, it would be necessary to sufficiently punish corrupt and abusive military officials, ensure that atrocities did not continue, and allow for the establishment of a trusted security complex.¹¹⁰ Many argued that only complete dissolution could achieve these objectives. This, however, was another fatal miscalculation.

Although Saddam did use military infrastructure to suppress political dissent, persecute opposition, and terrorize the Iraqi public, the general military services were, in fact, rarely involved in these atrocities.¹¹¹ Instead, the principal culprits were ad-hoc units lead by Saddam's most trusted allies; highly specialized military groups, such as the Republican Guard; and loyal paramilitary organizations, such as the Saddam Fedayeen.¹¹² The Army, however, a symbol of national pride, was so respected by the public as a "heterogeneous and independent" entity that Saddam did not trust it.¹¹³ Nevertheless, U.S. policy makers once again failed to account for this complex characterization, unnecessarily dismissing thousands of military officials. Moreover, the Iraqi Police, the only force left in tact, was not only more feared than the military, but also far more inefficient.¹¹⁴ As one CPA official later admitted, "We believed that the Iraqi police were a corrupt, but generally efficient police force. It turns out they were both corrupt



and not particularly efficient.”¹¹⁵ Intending to create a sustainable security complex, the CPA, thus, dismissed the wrong armed forces.

The Bush Administration similarly mischaracterized the sectarian divisions within the army. Recognizing that Shiites were concentrated in the rank-and-file and were serving a majority Sunni officer corps, the Bush Administration assumed that the army was built upon angry Shiite conscription, and maintaining this army would necessarily preserve these sectarian divisions that were the result of Saddam’s regime.¹¹⁶ Bremer later explained, “[There was an agreement] that recalling the army would be a political disaster because to the vast majority of Iraqis it was a symbol of the old Baathist-led Sunni ascendancy.”¹¹⁷ Although military positions were frequently used to gain political power, as was case with Saddam himself, Ba’ath party members were in fact a minority in the military until the rank of Major General and thus represented a much smaller portion of the armed forces than was initially assumed.¹¹⁸

Growing uncertainty on the ground in Iraq, however, compounded these misconceptions. By May 2003, much infrastructure had been destroyed and the military had in large part disbanded.¹¹⁹ The uncertainty as to the location of military units and leaders constrained the Bush Administration. Explaining the situation, Bremer recalled, “[It was understood that] the disappearance of Saddam Hussein’s old army rendered irrelevant any prewar plans to use that army.”¹²⁰ Similarly, it was believed that, even if the military leaders could be found and contacted, Shiites would not respond to a recall by their primarily Sunni former commanders.¹²¹

This was, however, similarly inaccurate. By May 2003, there were 137,000 applicants attempting to return to service.¹²² Moreover, 29,000 officers had organized into the Independent Military Gathering to collectively bargain with U.S. officials, pleading, “All we want to do is make sure our soldiers are taken care of.”¹²³ There was not only a therefore pervasive desire to return to the military, but also significant camaraderie and cooperation between the officer corps and the rank-and-file. As a result, there was clearly a way in which the old Iraqi army could have been reconstituted. Similarly to de-Ba’athification, however, the erroneously perceived necessity of complete military disbandment in order to protect Iraqis, create a democratic Iraq, and ensure an expedited U.S. exit compelled the Bush Administration to discard the possibility of reconstituting the army as impractical. Although therefore rational, this decision, combined with de-Ba’athification, would ultimately have devastating consequences.

Part V: The Unintended Consequences of De-Ba’athification and Military Disbandment

U.S. Policies Cause State Collapse and Disillusionment:

Acting upon a flawed understanding of Iraqi society and constrained by the American public and the international community, the Bush administration and the CPA implemented the policies of De-Ba’athification and military disbandment to an extent that was far more drastic than necessary. The combined effects of these CPA orders and the way in which they were implemented ultimately disrupted the very foundations of Iraqi society. As a result, the policies, instead of creating a democratic government and allowing for U.S. withdrawal as intended, severely destabilized the country, alienated its people, and caused the Iraqi state to almost entirely cease to function, forcing the U.S. into a decade-long occupation.¹²⁴

Institutionally, the policies created immediate deficiencies in Iraq’s governing capabilities. Most significantly, de-Ba’athification destroyed Iraqi institutional memory by quickly depleting the nation of qualified personnel who were eligible for office.¹²⁵ As party membership was frequently a prerequisite for employment, the order eliminated the leadership of organizations concerning transportation, justice, universities, defense, and many other vital elements of society, crippling the nation’s entire government and civic capacity.¹²⁶ For example, the order permanently excluded from office greater than one third of the Health Ministry, including eight of the top 12 officials.¹²⁷ The suppressive nature of Saddam’s dictatorship compounded the effects of this devastating loss of leadership. For 35 years, Saddam’s administration systematically suppressed political opposition.¹²⁸ Iraqis with the abilities and legitimacy necessary to lead joined the Ba’ath party or were exiled, killed, or forced into hiding.¹²⁹ Consequently, in 2003, it was nearly impossible to discover individuals with the qualifications, experience, and willingness to replace those who were explicitly forbidden from office by the CPA Orders.¹³⁰ The policy of De-Ba’athification, thus, rendered any attempts to establish a respected and efficient democracy impracticable.

The combination of this destruction of institutional memory by De-Ba’athification and the scarcity of unaffected, qualified individuals precipitated state collapse in Iraq.¹³¹ With neither qualified personnel nor the respect of the public, the Iraqi government lost all coercive and administrative authority, as law and order crumbled.¹³² The loss of day-to-day services followed, including sanitation, electricity, and water.¹³³ In 2003, 50% of water treatment plants and 100% of sewage treatment plants no longer functioned.¹³⁴ By 2004, nearly all conventional channels for the means of survival and subsistence had ceased to exist.

Exacerbating the effects of the state collapse, the disbandment of the military created a security vacuum.¹³⁵ Dissolving nearly the entire security complex, CPA Order 2 destroyed Iraq’s peacekeeping and



crime prevention capabilities.¹³⁶ A reluctant, inadequately sized U.S. occupying force and an inefficient, corrupt, and mistrusted Ministry of the Interior was all that remained to protect the public.¹³⁷ As a result, crime increased drastically. Killings and burglaries were so frequent that they were no longer reported.¹³⁸ Destroying infrastructure, criminals, furthermore, impeded the restoration of a functional government. Most dangerously, however, was the availability of arms, from assault rifles to rocket propelled grenades, with a constant supply from the looting of munitions depots.¹³⁹ Without a security complex to prevent crime or prosecute criminals and without a government to direct the restoration of order, Iraq increasingly descended into chaos and violence.

The economic effects of the two orders were similarly devastating. Combined, De-Ba'athification and the disbandment of the military directly resulted in the unemployment of approximately one million Iraqis (equivalent to over 12 million Americans).¹⁴⁰ In 2003, 40% of the nation was already unemployed.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the government accounted for 60% of jobs.¹⁴² For a Ba'ath party member now excluded from the government, discovering sufficient employment was impossible. Furthermore, the individuals affected by this loss of income were frequently the sole source of money for large, extended families.¹⁴³ Without pensions or substantial severance packages, these providers could no longer support their families. Poverty inevitably followed. With rates as high as 49% in some provinces, many Iraqis began to blame the U.S. for their economic difficulties.^{144,145}

Defeated, expelled, and unemployed at the hands of the CPA, many Iraqis felt humiliated and, as a result, became increasingly disillusioned with the American occupiers. What symbols of national pride and unity existed were consistently destroyed by the CPA orders.¹⁴⁶ Contrary to the Bush Administration's beliefs, for example, the military formed "an integral part of the identity of the state of Iraq," generating significant pride and respect.¹⁴⁷ It was "[exceedingly difficult] even for the Shi'a to accept a wholesale dissolution."¹⁴⁸ As one U.S. Army colonel explained, "When they disbanded the military, and announced we were occupiers -- that was it. Every moderate, every person that had leaned toward us, was furious."¹⁴⁹

Thus angry and disillusioned with the CPA, Iraqis similarly grew suspicious of U.S. intentions. Although promised a rapid return of sovereignty, they increasingly experienced the growth of an extended occupation.¹⁵⁰ The CPA used councils such as the one involved in de-Ba'athification to demonstrate the supposed transition of power; however, the Iraqi officials occupying these positions were universally rejected as puppets of the U.S.¹⁵¹ Moreover, many, such as Ahmed Chalabi, were formerly exiled Shiites who used their positions to take revenge on Sunnis and eliminate political opposition.¹⁵²

Eventually, these officials became symbols of oppression and sectarian division.¹⁵³ De-Ba'athification and military disbandment, thus, had precipitated "a broadening social discontent [that occurred] as the economic situation was deteriorating, as people's personal security was becoming weaker, and as resentment of the American occupation was growing."¹⁵⁴ As a result, support for the CPA disappeared and America increasingly became the enemy.

State Collapse Creates a Sunni Insurgency, Shiite Militias, and Sectarian Civil War:

Without government supply of services, without sufficient assurance of protection, without a source of national unity or pride, and without income, Iraqis inevitably sought informal channels for the necessities of survival and economic subsistence.¹⁵⁵ Capitalizing upon this instability, a new ruling class ultimately emerged in Iraq.¹⁵⁶ Operating outside of the government, this elite became a structure in provinces and cities through which individuals could find protection, resources, stability, and identity.¹⁵⁷ Controlling large portions of critical national resources (e.g. water), this elite, however, solidified their power and wealth with the violent exploitation of societal divisions.¹⁵⁸ As a result, survival in Iraq became dependent upon the "militant deployment of ethnic [and] sectarian identity."¹⁵⁹

For Sunnis, this materialized in a growing insurgency.¹⁶⁰ Explaining his motivation to U.S. officials, one captured insurgent remarked:

You've called us Ba'athists and cowards and my men have come to me and said you are not to be trusted. You've dishonored us. We cannot trust the Americans. We must fight them to regain our honor, and that's why we're out here fighting you.¹⁶¹

Angry and humiliated, many Sunnis joined the insurgency just to feed their family and to regain their pride.¹⁶² Others felt attacked by the U.S., as De-Ba'athification became de-Sunnification, merely placing Shiites in formerly Sunni positions.¹⁶³ As a result, the insurgency increasingly became associated with Sunni nationalism and ultimately Salafism, an ultraconservative Sunni reform movement to return to the conventions of the devout ancestors.¹⁶⁴ As it became more radical, the insurgency also grew, and by 2005 deployed 50,000 full time soldiers, and as many as 200,000 part time fighters, targeting infrastructure, police, Shiites, and foreigners.¹⁶⁵

Similarly, Shiites sought refuge in already well-developed, militias, such as the Badr Brigade, Kurdistan Democratic Party, and the Jaish al-Mahdi.¹⁶⁶ Although many Shiites joined once again for subsistence, others sought protection from the Sunni insurgents. As a result, these militias also turned to radical ideas, enforcing Shiite fundamentalism.¹⁶⁷ Vying for control of limited resources and fundamentally opposed



to each other, the Sunni insurgency and the Shiite militias inevitably clashed and sectarian violence erupted as a result.¹⁶⁸ Thus began a nationwide civil war, which by the end of 2006 had resulted in approximately 34,400 civilian deaths with a homicide rate of 33 deaths per day.¹⁶⁹

Lacking the support of a disillusioned public and a corrupt government, the CPA completely lost control of Iraq, as militias and insurgencies became emboldened by U.S. failure. According to one study from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health published in *The Lancet*, an estimated 655,000 more Iraqis had died by 2006 than if the U.S. had not invaded at all.¹⁷⁰ One Iraqi explained, “The paths to death are numerous nowadays. [It] has become trivial.”¹⁷¹ As a cycle of violence and retaliation engulfed the nation, it became clear that the fundamental right of life was “[now far] more precarious” and Iraq “now far more dangerous than it [had been] under Saddam Hussein” as a result of the U.S. policies of de-Ba’athification and military disbandment.¹⁷² Thus, in his rational quest for a politically expedient reconstruction, Bush ultimately failed to achieve both of his primary objectives, as the prospect of a respected, democratic Iraq faded and the opportunity for the rapid withdrawal of American troops vanished with it.¹⁷³

Part VI: Conclusion

In early 2002, committed to toppling Saddam Hussein’s oppressive regime, the State Department and Department of Defense presented President Bush with two proposals for the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq – one advocating a short-term occupation and the other a longer, more extensive effort.¹⁷⁴ Constrained by American public opinion, the correct choice of policy appeared obvious. Attempting to avoid an extended occupation while also providing for the creation of a new, democratic Iraq, President Bush rationally favored the Department of Defense’s minimalist and more politically expedient approach. When implemented, however, this initial policy failed to yield visible change in the desired period of time.¹⁷⁵ As domestic and international pressure for withdrawal mounted in 2003 and as Iraqis increasingly rallied for autonomy, the Bush administration revisited its strategy. With political concerns again a priority, Bush settled upon a new policy in May 2003: sweeping de-Ba’athification of Iraqi institutions and an unabridged disbandment of the Iraqi military.¹⁷⁶

This new policy, however, rested on a fatally flawed understanding of Iraqi society. When implemented, it generated immediate and devastating consequences: the Iraqi state collapsed, the security apparatus disappeared, and sectarian violence filled the void. Despite the pressure for radical reform, it is possible that a more controlled version of the instituted policies of reconstruction could have prevented these disastrous consequences. The State Department, for example,

suggested a gentle form of de-Ba’athification, removing only the very top officials in the Ba’ath party.¹⁷⁷ If combined with other efforts of transitional justice, such as criminal trials and reparations, this more cautious approach could have satisfied the demands of the Shiites, without precipitating ethnic clashes. Additionally, a more measured approach to military disbandment that involved systematically re-employing the dismissed soldiers in strategic roles could have avoided both the security vacuum and the ensuing discontent, while also sufficiently reforming and stabilizing the security apparatus. Finally, a more robust program of economic relief, involving improvement for infrastructure, education, and public health, could have deterred Iraqi citizens from pursuing violent routes of survival and subsistence, such as insurgencies or militias that ultimately promoted devastating ethnic conflict and corruption.

Budgetary constraints, insufficient time, and, most importantly, public opinion, however, prevented the Bush Administration from pursuing this extensive and potentially more successful strategy of reconstruction. Pulled between his desire to create a functional democratic Iraq and the imperative of minimizing U.S. occupation, Bush attempted to achieve both objectives. In doing so, however, he implemented a policy that ultimately accomplished neither. Instead, radical de-Ba’athification and rapid military disbandment resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, destroyed the nation’s self-sufficiency, trapped the American military in a protracted and exorbitantly expensive occupation, and, ultimately, destabilized Iraq and the surrounding region to a far greater extent than Bush or his advisors could ever have imagined.

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Trump's First 100 Days

Author-Matthew Smith '19
Section-Data Analysis

Polling Conducted
April 2017
149 Responses

On April 29th of this year, President Donald Trump completed his 100th day in the White House. During these first 100 days, Trump and his administration enacted several executive orders, many of which stirred up fierce debate nationwide. At the same time, the Republican-controlled 115th Congress brought equally controversial legislature to the floor. Curious how the opinions of the Belmont Hill School stacked up with the rest of the United States, the Podium staff sought the community's opinion on how the current executive and legislative branches have handled their jobs thus far.

An eight-question survey was distributed to all members of Belmont Hill, starting April 29, 2017. Participation in the poll was voluntary, meaning more opinionated individuals may be disproportionately represented in the collected data set. Overall, the data revealed that the Belmont Hill community largely disapproves of the actions of the current administration. 63.8% of respondents disapprove of the way in which Trump is handling the presidency. Similarly, 67.1% of respondents disapprove of the so-called Muslim ban and 65.8% oppose a border wall with Mexico. In contrast, only 51% of respondents disapprove of the way Trump is handling the economy and 54.4% disapprove of the way he is handling national security. A wide array of questions pertaining both to general approval of Trump and approval of more specific aspects of his presidency were deliberately presented so that the root cause of approval or disapproval for Trump could be pinpointed. The data suggests that Trump's stance on immigration has the largest impact on his disapproval.

Of interest was the penultimate question of the poll: Do you think that it was the right decision or the wrong decision for the U.S. to bomb a Syrian air force base in response to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons? Though the majority of respondents in all the prior questions, including those

relating to national security, disapprove of Trump's conduct, 61.7% of respondents believed that it was the right decision for the U.S. to bomb a Syrian air force base in response to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons. These results seem to convey common belief in heavy-handed justice in response to human atrocities, although more data would be needed to confidently assert such a claim.

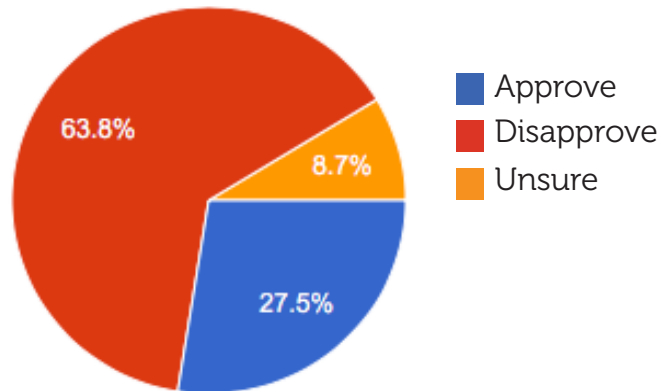
The comparison of data from this poll with data collected by similar questions in nationwide surveys yields interesting results. In some questions, the data from the Podium survey matched national statistics. In a question asked by the Quinnipiac University, "Do you think that it was the right decision or the wrong decision for the U.S. to bomb a Syrian air force base in response to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons?", for example, 61% of respondents approved of the decision, matching results from the BH community. Themes of patriotism and justice often receive more universal support. In other questions, Belmont Hill data differed from results from larger surveys. Most notably, in another question asked by the Quinnipiac University, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?", a large minority of 40% of respondents approved, providing a stark contrast with a meager 27.5% approval rating for Trump among the Belmont Hill community. Many factors, including Massachusetts' history as a blue state and the high average income of Belmont Hill families, may play a part in this divergence from national sentiment.

Ultimately, while the data collected in this survey serves as interesting insight into the political workings of the Belmont Hill community, it would yield much more significant data if repeated. As a longitudinal study, this survey would allow for the Podium to more easily track and understand the reasons for changes in political opinions at Belmont Hill.

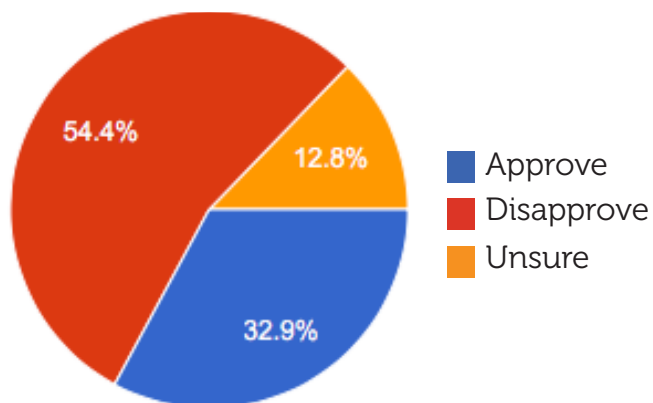


Data

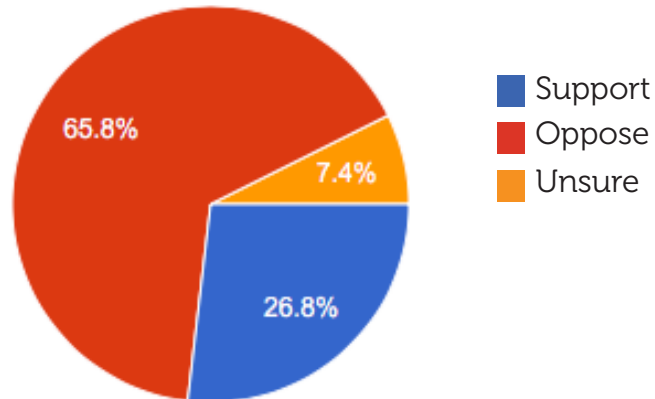
A Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?



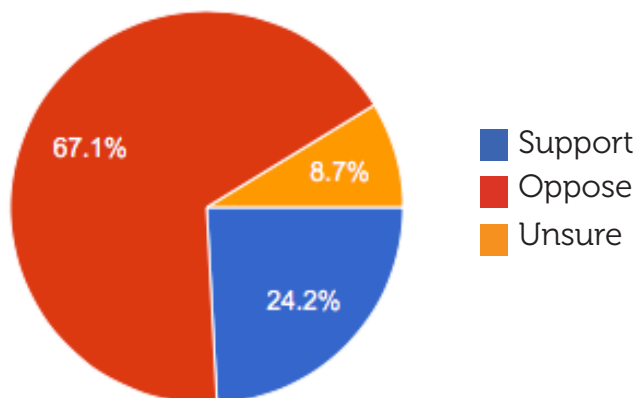
B Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling national security?



C Do you support or oppose building a wall along the border with Mexico?



D As you may know, Donald Trump has issued a revised executive order that temporarily bans people from entering the U.S. who are from countries of Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Do you support or oppose this action?



The North Korean Crisis

Authors-Jack Weldon '20 and Jeffrey Segel '20

Section-Data Analysis

Polling Conducted

May 2017

103 Responses

As the topic of North Korea's aggression against the United States continues to remain a prominent public discussion point, we decided to poll the students of Belmont Hill and gauge their reactions to US-North Korean relations. When asked what the greatest threat to US national security was, the majority of the 103 recipients answered ISIS, then Russia, then North Korea, with China in a far fourth place.

More than half of those polled consider North Korea as a legitimate threat to the United States, and the majority did not approve of the way the current administration is dealing with this issue. In fact, 37.9% of students believe Obama handled the situation better than Trump is currently handling it, whereas 27.2% believe the opposite. Despite the majority of recipients considering North Korea as a legitimate threat, only 30.1% of those polled believe North Korea has the capability to strike the United States with a nuclear weapon.

Additionally, 73.8% do not believe that United Nations-placed sanctions on North Korea will deter them from running missile tests. In terms of military action, a vast majority of those polled believe that the United States has a right to military intervention and that such an action is likely during the Trump administration's term. Despite this, most do not believe that military action would lead to peace, but that it would instead lead to greater conflict.

Although the majority of recipients stated that they believe North Korea is a legitimate threat, a minority of recipients believed that the dictatorship actually has the ability to strike the United States. This is likely a result of dictator Kim Jong Un's repeated threats of nuclear strikes on the United States without any actual attack.

Interestingly, the majority of those polled believe that within the Trump administration, that is, between the current date

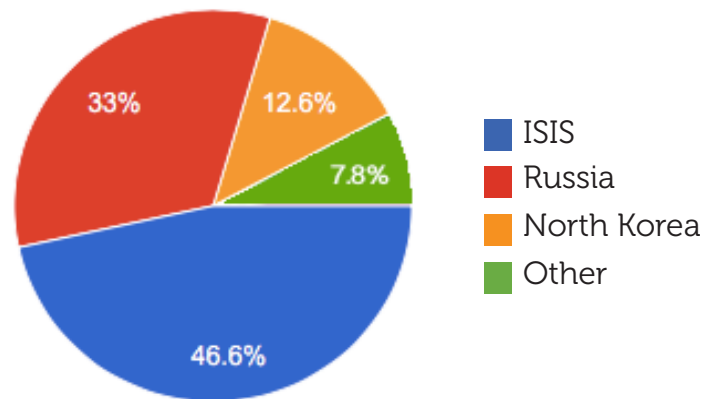
and January, 2021, the US will engage in a war with North Korea. The majority of those polled believe that although the US has a right to attack North Korea, this action will only lead to greater conflict instead of a resolution.

Despite the majority prediction that the Trump administration will go to war against North Korea, the majority of recipients did not hold North Korea as the greatest threat to US national security. In the eyes of the majority of Belmont Hill students, ISIS is the most prominent threat to the United States, followed by Russia.

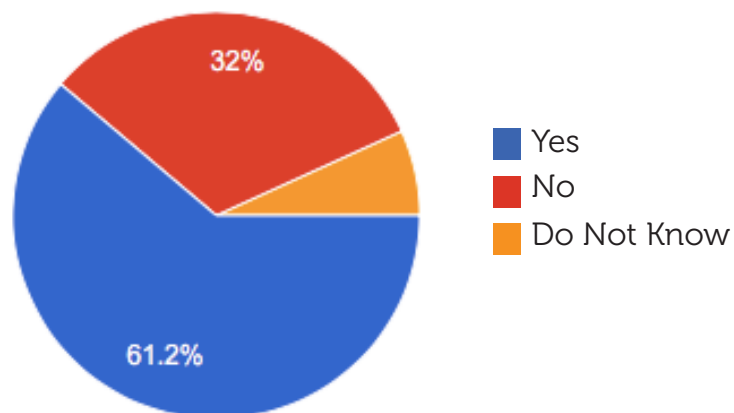
In conclusion, the majority of Belmont Hill students believe that North Korea is a threat and that the US has a right to retaliate, but do not believe that such retaliation will lead to a settlement of the current crisis.

Data

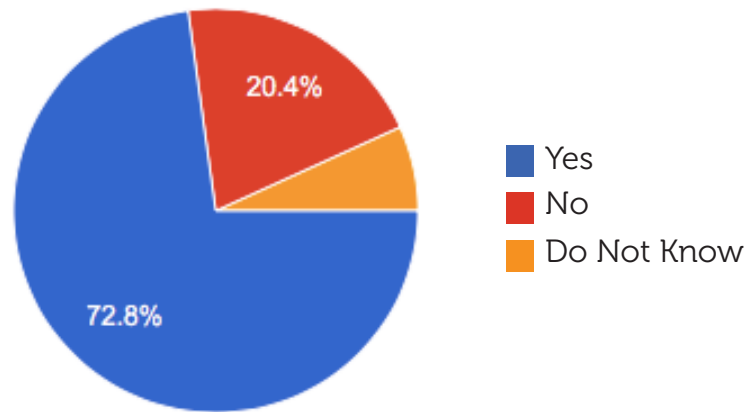
A Who do you see as the biggest threat to US national security?



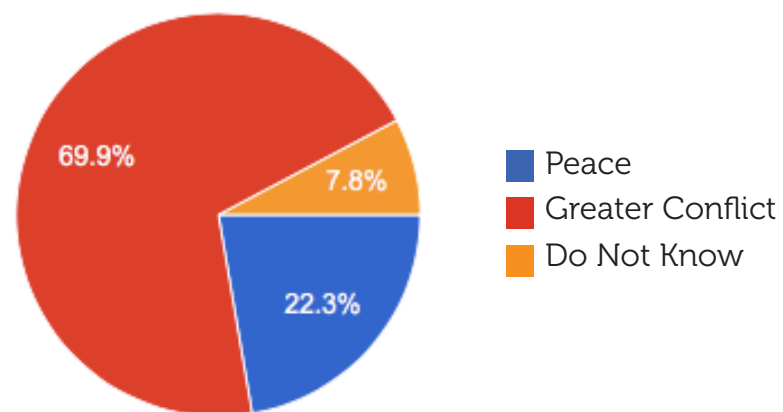
B Do you see North Korea as a legitimate threat to US national security?



C Do you think that the US has a right to take military action against North Korea?



D Do you believe that military action by the US would lead to peace or greater conflict?





History | Current Events

