

# **Using Force to Prevent Proliferation**

**Martin B. Malin**

**Executive Director**

**Project on Managing the Atom**



**BELFER CENTER**  
for Science and International Affairs



**HARVARD Kennedy School**  
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

# Using Force to Prevent Proliferation

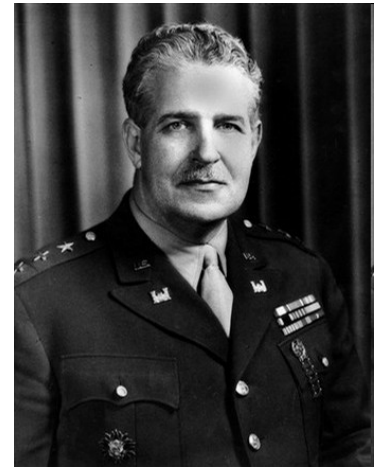
Key points:

- Doctrine of prevention is longstanding and widespread.
- Consequences of using force are highly uncertain; conditions for successful prevention are rare.
- If force is used: International cooperation is key to effective proliferation prevention.

# **Long-standing and Widespread Doctrine**

# General Leslie Groves (1946)

“if we were ruthlessly realistic, we would not permit any foreign power with which we are not firmly aligned, and in which we do not have absolute confidence, to make or possess atomic weapons. If such a country started to make atomic weapons we would destroy its capacity to make them before it had progressed enough to threaten us.”



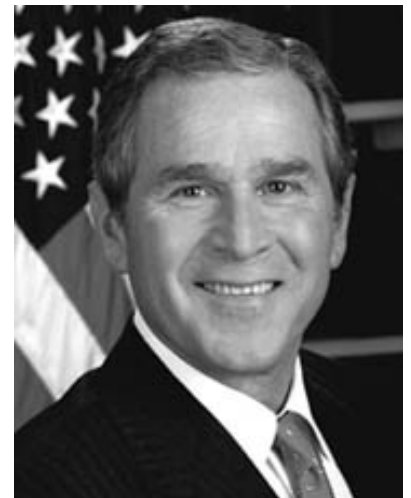
# Menachem Begin (1981)

“We chose this moment: now, not later, because later may be too late...tell anyone you meet, we shall defend our people with all the means at our disposal. We shall not allow any enemy to develop weapons of mass destruction turned against us.”



# U.S. National Security Strategy (2002)

“The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively...”



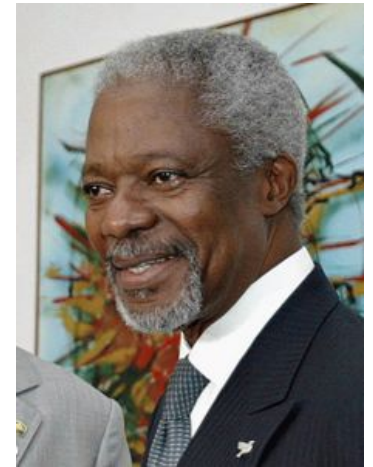
# Vladimir Putin (2003)

Russia "retains the right to launch a preemptive strike, if this practice continues to be used around the world."



# **U.N. High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004)**

“In the world of the twenty-first century, the international community does have to be concerned about nightmare scenarios combining terrorists, weapons of mass destruction and irresponsible States, and much more besides, which may conceivably justify the use of force, not just reactively but preventively and before a latent threat becomes imminent.”





# Preventive force is...

...any use of force that has the intention of substantially degrading or delaying a state's acquisition of nuclear capability.

This definition includes:

- Limited strikes
- Full-scale war to remove WMD threat
- Intra-war operations

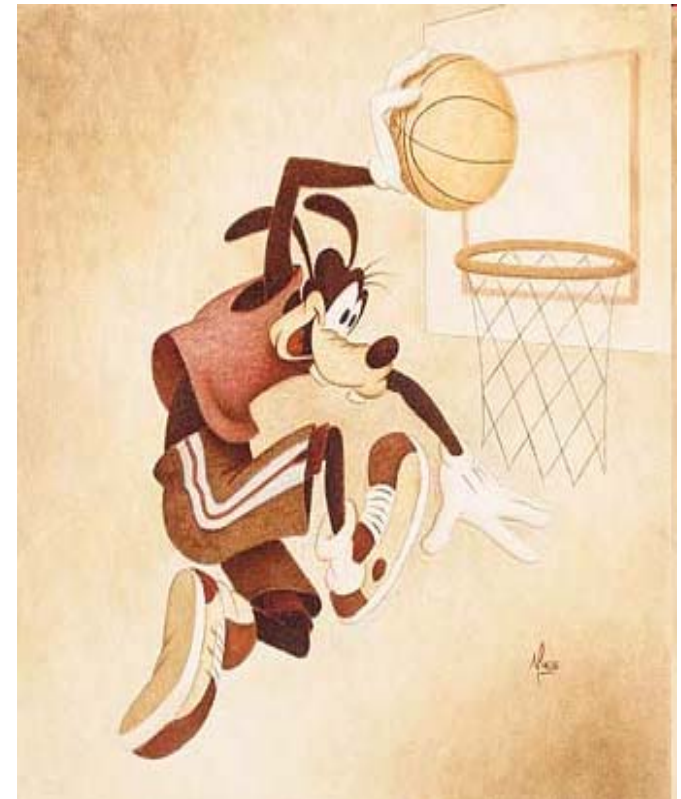
# Observations

# Cases and Tactical Assessments

| Year    | Attacker             | Target                                    | Tactical Assessment |
|---------|----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1942-44 | Allied forces        | German heavy water production             | Success             |
| 1980    | Iran                 | Iraqi reactor at Osirak                   | Failure             |
| 1981    | Israel               | Iraqi reactor at Osirak                   | Success             |
| 1984-88 | Iraq                 | Iranian reactors at Bushehr               | Success             |
| 1991    | US and allied forces | Iraqi nuclear program                     | Failure             |
| 1993    | US forces            | Iraqi nuclear facilities at al-Zaafraniya | Success             |
| 1998    | US and UK forces     | Iraqi WMD infrastructure                  | Success             |
| 2003    | US and allied forces | Iraqi nuclear program and regime          | Failure             |
| 2008    | Israel               | Syrian reactor at al-Kibar                | Success             |

# Observations (I)

- *Attacks have frequently failed to eliminate key targets due to inadequate intelligence.*
  - Germany (by US and allies, 1945)
  - Iraq (by Iran, 1980)
  - Iraq (by Israel, 1981)
  - Iran (by Iraq, 1984-1988)
  - Iraq (by US, 1991)
  - Iraq (by US, 2003)



# Observations (II)

- *The nuclear knowledge base in target countries is relatively impervious to limited force.*

– e.g., Iraq



The Iraqi scientific community was Saddam Hussein's "most valuable remaining nuclear weapons asset."

--Khidhir Hamza (1998)

# Observations (III)

- *The cost to the attacker of using preventive force varies with scale of operation.*
  - Intra-war strikes, low cost
  - Limited strikes, low cost
  - Regime change, high costs

# Observations (IV)

- *The use of force may have an adverse effect on nuclear ambitions in the target state.*

—e.g., Iraq, 1981

“Until Israel's attack, we were only dabbling...After the Israeli attack, We embarked upon it full-heartedly. Investment and resources were heavily poured into the programme over the next 10 years.”

--Imad Khadduri, 2006



# Observations (V)

- *Conditions for effective, forceful prevention of nuclear capability are rare.*
  - Syria (2007) is a possible success, but many unanswered questions and anomalies.
  - Against Iraq in the 1990s, the use of force played a role in disarmament, but international support was mobilized in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.



# **Practical Implications**

# **Strengthen the nonproliferation regime, not military capabilities**

- Prevent black market trafficking in sensitive nuclear technologies
- Tighten export control regulations
- Secure stocks of bomb-grade nuclear materials to prevent theft
- Discourage new national enrichment and reprocessing facilities
- Bolster IAEA capabilities
- Nuclear weapons states should take substantive steps to fulfill their NPT obligations

# Use force only with UNSC authorization



# **If authorization is not possible...**

...Use of force will be most effective when:

- Evidence of danger is unambiguous
- Political objectives are clear
- International support is broad
- Response is proportional to the threat
- Intervention is timely
- Assurance of cessation if compliance is forthcoming is credible

# Thank You!

## Comments and Questions Welcome

[martin\\_malin@harvard.edu](mailto:martin_malin@harvard.edu)

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