

The Rise and Decline of Rogue States

THOMAS H. HENRIKSEN

“While rogue powers have emerged throughout history, their re-appearance on the international scene was greeted with surprise in political circles in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. The Cold War’s familiar pattern of dual superpower relations left Western policymakers ill-prepared for the menacing misconduct of unpredictable regimes, which have been seemingly beyond the influence of leading states.”

Since time immemorial there have been polities that have stood outside the international community. For centuries, rogue entities have flouted the rules imposed by major states or imperial structures to attain their ends. As in modern times, they rose to assault the status quo but then fell either to defeat or to clientage of a stronger power.

In the modern context, rogue states show contempt for international norms by repressing their own populations, promoting international terrorism, seeking weapons of mass destruction and standing outside the global community. If these states approach clientage or a loose affiliation with a Great Power or even a stronger regional player, they lose one vital rogue quality and move toward a more traditional proxy relationship of a vulnerable state under a patron power.

Examining the rich historical role rogues have played throughout the ages can help advance our understanding of their contemporary counterparts. However, this does not imply that today’s rogues are exact historical analogs to their ancient cousins. Rather, they are forces that share a number of common traits and typically disrupt an established order.

Admittedly, this work covers an enormous swath of history and therefore does not presume to be an exhaustive examination of the history of rogue behavior. Nonetheless, there are important patterns of behavior rogues have exhibited over the course of history that can offer insight into current rogue states and help policymakers formulate more effective approaches toward them.

A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Even though modern rogue states covet advanced weaponry, their political conduct differs little from their historical predecessors that acted as both free agents and affiliates of larger patrons.

The Gauls, as an early example of an intractable force, wreaked havoc with imperial Rome's northern expansion. Whereas the ancient Romans imposed an imperial order on the Mediterranean world, the Gauls, and later the Germanic Visigoths and Vandals, repeatedly challenged the empire's frontiers. Foreshadowing the contemporary pattern between great powers and rogue states, the Gauls entered into an alliance with Carthage, Rome's foremost adversary. Eventually, these barbarians overran vast tracts of the empire, sacked its capital and accelerated the decline of Roman power. Most outlaw forces have enjoyed much less ascendancy before disappearing from the historical scene. However, the damage they have wrought has not been inconsequential.

At times, these rogue powers compromised their go-it-alone approach for political expediency or survival. And larger states exploited the maverick's aggression for their own purposes. The ancient Persians, for instance, backed Athens against Sparta and then vice versa, as they also turned small actors against both during the Peloponnesian war.

Northern Europe experienced the depredations of the Vikings. From their longboats, the Norsemen spread terror as they plundered the continent, the British Isles and Mediterranean communities. They compelled the weak Anglo-Saxon states to pay the Danegeld or face annihilation.¹ In time, the Viking threat dissipated and the Norse were assimilated into European populations.

¹ The Danegeld was an annual tax that was originally imposed to buy off Danish invaders in England or to maintain forces to oppose them. It was later adopted as a land tax.

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While the Mediterranean Sea had witnessed piracy since antiquity, the Islamic conquest of North Africa introduced religion into the piratical equation. In fact, the tensions in East-West relations after the start of the second millennium surpassed contemporary ones. Even before that era, Muslim bands swept over the northern littoral of Africa and across the sea into the Iberian Peninsula. A few hundred years afterward, the Ottoman Turks conquered the Balkans and even imperiled Vienna. From their seaports in the Levant, Ottoman ships sailed into the eastern Mediterranean while other Muslim entities assailed the western sector of the sea.

Cooperation between rogue regimes and great powers was also foreshadowed by earlier alliances among the North African coastal polities. During the Elizabethan era, when it became politically expedient, Protestant England allied with Barbary states against Catholic Spain. Morocco even became the supplier of last resort to hard-pressed English garrisons in Gibraltar and Minorca. The Dutch followed suit by collaborating with the Corsairs in their own freebooting operations against rival European carriers. In another twist of a leading power using rogue elements, one Flemish renegade transferred sailing techniques to the Corsairs, advancing the construction of their craft and their nautical skills against their European rivals.²

Great powers in later periods similarly used lawless entities against their adversaries. Beginning in the late 16th century maritime standoff, England, France, Holland, Portugal and Spain encouraged private ship owners to attack the vessels of other nationalities. Governments authorized military actions by a letter of marque to private companies. The governor of Jamaica, for example, commissioned "Admiral" Henry Morgan to mount operations against Panama and Porto Bello. Military raids required staging areas, and the privateers staked out bases on the islands of Guadeloupe and Hispaniola and at Port Royal in Jamaica. This blurred the distinction between legitimate commerce and hostile action, just as today the same line is crossed by rogue regimes. Non-official forces spared European states direct confrontation with an adversary, while doing it harm. The model endured. The actual forces did not.³

² E.G. Chipulina, "The Barbary Corsairs," 328, no. 1982 (December 1980) pp. 483-489.

³ Simon Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," *History Today*, 46, no. 5 (May 1996) pp. 30-33.

MODERN ROGUES: EARLY 20TH CENTURY CASES

Although few seem to recognize it, the early 20th century international landscape also manifested the rogue phenomenon in rich variety and profusion. The October Revolution ushered into power the Bolsheviks, who espoused a radical domestic agenda and a firebrand “revisionist” rhetoric directed against the international status quo. To Lenin and his associates, the Western imperialist powers were colonizing and exploiting the underdeveloped countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Bolsheviks considered the seizure of power in backward Russia a prelude to revolution in other economically poor lands as well as the developed West. They wanted to wipe out private property, liquidate capitalists and trample the liberal bourgeois order. With such strident revolutionary doctrine, it is little wonder that the Bolsheviks galvanized opposition in London, Paris and Washington. The United States isolated Soviet Russia for a decade and a half because of Moscow’s radical intentions. Not until the rise of militarism in Asia and Nazism in Germany did the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt restore diplomatic relations with Moscow. At the same time, Moscow came to seek cordial relations with Washington due to Soviet apprehensions about Japan’s military penetration into China and Germany’s virulent new Nazi government.

In addition to the rise of Bolshevism, the post-World War I era witnessed the birth of another pariah state in defeated Wilhelmine Germany. Despite Germany’s acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles and the adoption of democracy, the fledgling Weimar Republic was unwelcome in the councils of Europe. Internally, Germany suffered economic and political upheavals and experienced crisis after crisis. Finally, the 20th century’s ultimate rogue, Adolph Hitler, came to power largely by a democratic process and transformed a modern, civilized nation into a military machine bent on mass murder, conquest and domination. The Allied defeat of Germany eliminated a menace but failed to erase the rogue role model. Soviet-German collaboration, as well as the fascistic militarism of Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, adumbrated present-day rogue state cooperation.

The dual ostracism of Weimar Germany and Bolshevik Russia, in fact, drove these two countries together after the armistice. Denied membership in the League of Nations, they

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cooperated covertly on military matters. Versailles forced the Germans to dismantle their arms industry; instead, the Germans maintained their technological edge and developed new weapons by secretly instructing the Bolsheviks to build war factories on Russian soil. Knowledge of this counterintuitive alliance occasionally surfaced, at first in the 1922 Rapallo Conference and then more sensationally in the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact. Their clandestine interaction spanned the inter-war period until the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union. It brought together generals, arms experts and even secret police units.

Indeed, the collaboration spawned deep historical ironies. German arms craftsmen helped develop the superior Soviet tank that eventually overwhelmed Germany during the Second World War. A more dramatic irony sprang from the act of cooperation itself. The disparate societies had little in common, one building a Marxist vanguard party and the other a Junker-inspired military state. In fact, they were joined only by their status as pariah states. The latter half of the 20th century bore witness to similar marriages of convenience.

COLD WAR NUCLEAR PARIAHS

Midway through the Cold War, the global community ostracized a handful of states by questioning their national legitimacy and by isolating them from normal diplomatic integration. Beset with anxiety about their survival, these states developed—or at least hinted at developing—nuclear weapons. As a result, the developed world branded them pariah states. Israel, South Africa, South Korea and Taiwan were lumped into this category despite their varying political and economic systems.

The four pariahs shared a fear that the nearby conventional military balances were tilted against them. American power, the mainstay of international order, appeared diminished after the Vietnam debacle. While the pariahs experienced markedly different geopolitical circumstances with leading powers, they felt marginalized internationally. Surrounded by hostile neighbors, Israel, for example, grew increasingly apprehensive by its adversaries' arms buildup and by their efforts to develop nuclear capability.

Taiwan and South Korea owed their origins to bitter Cold War divisions and keenly felt the repercussions of the US setback in southeast Asia. The Soviet Union seemed an ascending power in

Asia, as elsewhere. Both Taipei and Seoul felt compelled to resort to their own devices for self-preservation. China's emergence from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution and North Korea's continual threats added to the apprehensions. Because both were virtually dependent solely on Washington for their survival against powerful neighbors, they sought the security that only nuclear weapons can provide.⁴

South Africa is a distinct case. Although nominally part of the Western world, South Africa's domination of the African majority in the apartheid system offended world opinion. Europe and the United States economically embargoed the white South African government and then ostracized its sports teams and entertainers. Estranged from global membership, endangered by guerrilla raids across their borders and threatened by internal rebellion, South African whites sought to enhance their security through non-conventional weapons. As excluded states often do, Pretoria and Tel Aviv overtly cooperated in conventional military activities and perhaps clandestinely on nuclear matters.⁵

Over time, two of the Cold War pariahs abandoned their nuclear efforts at Washington's insistence. South Korea and Taiwan took shelter under the American nuclear and conventional arms umbrella rather than pursue their own atomic programs. South Africa voluntarily and unilaterally dropped its nuclear capability in 1993. Although Tel Aviv officially denies it, Israel is believed to have atomic weapons. This passing episode warrants mention because it serves as a prelude to the nexus between pariah regimes and the weapons of mass destruction of the post-Cold War era.

COLD WAR PROXIES

Washington and Moscow fought the Cold War in political, economic and diplomatic arenas. In addition to the nuclear standoff, each employed blocs and proxies to hamstring its opponent. The United States took the lead in organizing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in order to counter Soviet advances into Central Europe. In addition, Washington formed an

⁴ For more on the four states and nuclear weapons, see Robert E. Harkavy, "The Pariah
ORBIS: A Journal of World Affairs, 21, no. 3 (Fall 1977) pp. 623-649.

⁵ J. W. de Villiers, Roger Jardine and Mitchell Reiss, "Why South Africa Gave Up the
Foreign Affairs, 72, no. 5 (November/December 1993) pp. 99-109.

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alliance with its former enemy Japan and bolstered anti-communist governments around the globe.

For its part, Moscow established the Warsaw Treaty Organization to array its satellites against NATO. The Soviet Union also backed political groups or liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America when such groups fought Western-supported governments. These movements expanded Soviet influence and authority in the Third World, while simultaneously weakening the West. Often little more than guerrilla bands espousing a mix of nationalism and Marxism, they received Soviet instruction, equipment, financing and intelligence designed to challenge and destroy pro-Western rulers.

National liberation movements racked up a string of victories. The years between 1974 and 1979 saw eleven countries fall within the Soviet orbit. By promoting proxy forces, Moscow was able to engineer or bolster pro-Soviet regimes in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, South Yemen, Grenada and Nicaragua. Using a strategy that was at once low cost and low risk and offered a high payoff, Moscow took advantage of social discontent in target countries by enlisting others to achieve its aims. The East Germans, Bulgarians and Czechs supplied munitions and trained the revolutionaries. But it was Cuba that became Moscow's archetype proxy state, instigating or supporting insurgencies in Africa and Central and South America. Havana first sent Ernesto "Che" Guevara to lead a failed rural insurgency in the Congo and then to his fatal effort in Bolivia. It dispatched arms and instructors to Ethiopia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It even deployed thousands of ground troops in Angola during the mid-1970s to take part in the Soviet-sponsored military intervention.

The Soviet Union also turned to Third World states to sponsor or practice terrorism against Western states or interests. Not all of these states had embraced Marxism, as Cuba and North Korea had. Instead, this second group of proxies included outright dictatorships like Iraq, Libya and Syria. As such, their strongmen had little affinity for Marxist doctrine. Their game was power, antipathy to the United States and hatred of Israel. Moscow's willingness to supply arms and aid served Soviet strategic goals.

Post-Shah Iran also took an anti-American and anti-Israeli posture. After the revolutionary overthrow of the Shah, Iran's role was transformed from that of US regional policeman to American adversary. But its government differed from other rogue states.

Iran, which holds elections, falls into a category of near-theocracy, although with some democratic trappings. While Iran later received nuclear technology from Russia and missile know-how from North Korea, the Ayatollah's government never became a bona fide Soviet proxy. History and religion caused Teheran to preserve its distance from Moscow's influence. Iran had long resisted Russian encroachments on its territory, and the country's Islamic clerics were repelled by Moscow espousal of godless communism. But Iran's sponsorship of terrorism and strident anti-Americanism paralleled Moscovite designs. Thus, Iran's passage to rogue statehood differed from others. It is this independence from Moscow that tempted the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations to seek a rapprochement with the Iranians, though with few concrete results.

The Soviet Union operated on the principle of "my enemy's enemy is my friend," or at least "is my useful proxy against the arch-enemy," the United States. Retrograde dictatorships, like those of Iraq or Syria, received massive armaments so long as they caused difficulties for the U S or its allies in the Middle East. Iraq, Iran, Libya and Syria, in turn, sponsored their own terrorists groups.¹

In time, the US State Department placed eight nations on an official terrorist list and imposed sanctions on each to combat their state-directed violence. Established as part of the Export Administration Act of 1979, the list currently includes Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Sudan and South Yemen.² Sudan

¹ The incidence of terrorism has steadily increased from the late 1950s and has involved kidnapping, bombings, assassinations, and the hijacking of airplanes and ships. Terror tactics have encompassed a wide spectrum of causes and governments. Terrorists targeted American officials, military personnel, and noncombatants around the globe. There is a vast and growing literature on terrorism. The subject lies outside the scope of this paper, except insofar as it relates to the evolution of rogue states. Muammar Qaddafi, for example, underwrote vigorous terrorist exploits soon after he ousted the Libyan monarchy in 1969. Libya's deadly subversion reached such proportions that by the 1980s Qaddafi had become viewed by Reagan administration as "as the center of global terrorism." George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993) pp. 678-679. For a few of the recent studies on terrorism, see Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

² In order to comply with this legislation, the State Department provides the US Congress with a list of state-sponsoring countries. This listing is a subset of a larger enumeration of Foreign Terrorist Organizations that the State Department annually compiles. For more information, see the US Department of State's web site.

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was the last country so designated in 1993. South Yemen, whose seaport was the scene of the bombing of the USS Cole, had been removed in 1990 after it unified with the northern Yemen Arab Republic.⁸ States breeding terrorism during the Cold War invariably became synonymous with rogue states in the post-Cold War period. States sponsoring and engaging in terrorism allowed their territory to be used for training or as a haven for agents fleeing prosecution. Such states also cooperated with each other and aided terrorist cells.⁹

POST - COLD WAR ROGUE STATES

The immediate post-Cold War era witnessed the first official application of the term “rogue state” to unsavory regimes (now dubbed “states of concern” by the US State Department), when President Clinton spoke in Brussels about the “clear and present danger” missiles from “rogue states such as Iran and Libya” posed for Europe.¹⁰ This designation evoked an image of a rogue elephant and was meant to accentuate the states’ vicious and out of control nature. While outlaw nations have emerged throughout history, their re-appearance on the international scene was greeted with surprise in political circles in the aftermath of the Soviet demise. The Cold War’s familiar pattern of dual superpower relations left western policymakers ill prepared for the misconduct of unpredictable regimes seemingly beyond the influence of leading states.

Their presence, in any event, confounded hopes for a harmonious world based on economic integration, political interdependence and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Rogue rulers rejected international norms, sponsored terrorism, pursued the acquisition of megadeath weapons and threatened the peace. They brazenly challenged the newfound consensus

Foreign Terrorist Organizations that the State Department annually compiles. For more information, see the US Department of State’s web site.

⁸ For a listing of the dates and types of sanctions, see Erin Day, “Economic Sanctions Imposed by the United States Against Specific Countries: 1979 through 1992,” *Congressional Research Service Report to Congress* (10 August 1992).

⁹ Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981).

¹⁰ Bill Clinton, “Remarks to Future Leaders of Europe in Brussels, January 9, 1994,” *Public Papers of the Presidents, William J. Clinton, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994) p. 11.

that economics mattered more than military force in the new international order.

Rebels Unhinged

Post-Cold War rogues—particularly North Korea and Iraq—acted unpredictably and criminally in the absence of great power patrons. Their threat to liberal capitalist democracy, in the eyes of most observers, sprang from nihilistic rage not rational policy. The assumption that rogues were simply irrational actors gained widespread currency.¹¹

Early observers assumed that rogues operated as lone wolves, conducting menacing agendas with little, if any, assistance from a foreign pillar such as the Soviet Union. By the new millennium, however, these initial assumptions had fallen by the wayside, modified in part by their rulers' more subdued public pose. Responding to the Clinton administration's engagement efforts and to their own dire circumstances, North Korea and Libya abandoned their insularity and, at least on the surface, adopted more moderate policies over the course of the 1990s. While rogues still possessed the capacity for mischief, their actions seemed grounded in a rational self-interest that was amenable to negotiation. Their international isolation, moreover, had decreased substantially.

The 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union cast its former client states adrift. In Central Europe, the Red Army unexpectedly withdrew rather than defend the embattled satellite regimes. From the Baltic city of Stettin to the Adriatic seaport of Trieste, the once-formidable Iron Curtain came down as popular movements peacefully swept aside the puppet communist rulers. Marxist governments also lost power in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Mongolia. Most Leninist parties retaining power transformed themselves into nationalist governments, jockeying for aid to transform their economies. While these outwardly transformed governments struggled to find their footing in a globalizing world economy, a few of Moscow's former Third World clients stayed wedded to the past, with new twists. Cuba and North Korea became communist anachronisms left behind in the rush toward

¹¹ For a good analysis of movements of rage, see Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley, CA: 1992) pp. 275-77.

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democratizing governments, liberalized trade, market economies and the free flow of information.

Unmoored from their chief patron, the holdouts followed different foreign agendas. Some, in fact, became more quiescent. Deprived of Soviet largesse, Libya, Cuba and Syria became less extroverted in their practice of terrorism. All three still offered their territory to terrorist cells as sanctuary, and Libya and Syria continued to pursue the development of weapons of mass destruction and missile systems. Cuba kept up its anti-US rhetoric and facilitated the shipment of narcotics onto American shores.

CUBA AND LIBYA: RATIONAL SURVIVALISTS

Like North Korea, Cuba found itself high and dry without the Soviet Union. But unlike North Korea, it did not attempt to build nuclear weapons or export rockets. However, it did imitate its Asian counterpart by looking to China for selective support. Fidel Castro dropped his formerly anti-China rhetoric, and Beijing stepped in the political vacuum left by Moscow. During the early 1990s, Castro and President Jiang Zemin exchanged visits and Chinese defense minister Chi Haotian headed a military delegation to Cuba in 1997. While European and Canadian business dealings and tourism eased the American economic embargo, China furnished military equipment and defense technology along with economic aid and selective investment. Beijing, in return, gained an eavesdropping post near the United States through its financing of the Terrena Caribe Satellite Tracking Base and other facilities.¹²

After decades as a hotbed of terrorism, Libya attempted to court favorable international opinion. In 1999, Qaddafi turned over two suspects in the 1988 downing of Pan American Flight 103 for trial in the Netherlands. Additionally, Qaddafi financially compensated the families of the French victims killed when their airliner was blown up over Africa in 1989. Libya also agreed to pay a \$1 million ransom for each of the twelve foreign hostages held by Muslim rebels in the southern Philippines in mid-2000. These and other actions spawned press accounts of how Qaddafi craved respectability and hungered for acceptance from former foes.¹³

¹² Jaime Suchlicki, "Those Men In Havana Are Now Chinese," *The Wall Street Journal* (30 July 1999) p. A22.

¹³ Douglas Jehl, "Libya's Maverick Leader, 30 Years in Power, Makes a Bid for *New York Times*, 6 September 1999, p.10; and Lawrence F. Kaplan,

Qaddafi's reversal, in part, derived from Libya's need to have sanctions lifted in order to revive its depressed economy and export its oil reserves for hard currency. Nevertheless, the change in outward appearance was dramatic.

NORTH KOREA: FROM ROGUE TO TAME PARTNER?

During the 1990s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) loomed as the quintessential rogue state. A rusting relic of the Stalin period, North Korea preached its own brand of Marxist doctrine, or *juche*, which called upon the people to practice self-reliance and detachment from the outside world. But in reality, North Korea had depended greatly on Soviet subsidies since the partition of the Korean peninsula at the end of the Second World War. Left with little foreign assistance after the demise of the Soviet Union, the North stood at the brink of calamity by the mid-1990s. Subsequent events established North Korea as a lone-wolf, since no state, not even China, claimed any influence over Pyongyang's leadership.

The DPRK's rise to maverick status first became apparent in late 1992, when satellite images confirmed earlier fears that it was cheating on the nonproliferation treaty. The Clinton administration chose negotiation over deterrence and entered into an elaborate agreement with North Korea. Under the Agreed Framework, Pyongyang promised to halt construction of two large Soviet-designed nuclear reactors, suspend the refueling of its out-of-date graphite reactor and hold its spent fuel rods in cooling ponds for IAEA inspection. In the *quid pro quo*, Washington, Seoul and Tokyo promised to build two light water reactors on North Korean soil, with most of the funding coming from South Korea and Japan. The United States agreed to provide 500,000 metric tons of fuel oil to generate electrical power until the new nuclear reactors came online. The White House touted the Agreed Framework agreement as creative conflict resolution; critics greeted it with skepticism, and their doubts were shortly confirmed.

In early 1998, US satellites detected the excavation of a large underground complex 35 kilometers north of the country's nuclear facilities at Yongbyon. This deepened anxiety in the region and in

"Engagement Ring: The Quiet Coalition to Rehabilitate Qaddafi," *The New Republic* (24 July 2000) pp. 18-21.

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Washington. Pyongyang later opened the site for controlled inspections, which uncovered no weapons lab.

On 31 August 1998, a much more riveting event took place. Pyongyang test-fired a long-range, multi-staged Taepo Dong 1 missile that traveled over northern Japan before plunging into the Pacific. Although North Korean officials claimed that the solid-fuel missile had been fired in an attempt to place a satellite in orbit, observers in Japan, South Korea and even the United States concluded that the DPRK was on the road to building ICBMs capable of hitting the American continent. Pyongyang announced a suspension in missile launches in return for continued foreign aid from Japan, South Korea and the United States.

In 2000, after a series of meetings with former US Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, as well as the historic June summit between the North and South Korean leaders, Washington lifted most of its economic sanctions against the DPRK. The summit heralded a peaceful turning point in intra-peninsula relations. Other conciliatory steps followed, including family visits, joint economic enterprises and new North-South communications links. Like Libya, North Korea also turned a softer face to the outside world.

Despite an apparent thaw on the peninsula, however, the DPRK has persisted in bandit-state antics. North Korean diplomatic officers stationed abroad, for example, reportedly earn as much as \$1 billion annually for counterfeiting US currency and selling narcotics.¹⁴ US officials uncovered evidence of heroin and methamphetamine production north of the demilitarized zone (DMZ). North Korea also sold conventional arms to a Philippines-based terrorist party, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.¹⁵ Most worrisome, though, was its trafficking in rockets, similar to Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Syria. The DPRK is the chief *entrepot* for missile technology shipments to other rogue states. Arms sales raised much-needed hard currency for a state with few commercial goods. This trade has become a distinguishing feature of the post-Soviet world and inter-rogue cooperation.

China's influence on North Korea's pariah posture became a topic of interest along with Pyongyang's kinder and gentler image.

-standing denials, outsiders held that China's voice influenced the DPRK's behavior more than any other state's.

¹⁴ Paul Bedard, "Washington Whispers," *US News & World Report* (13 November 2000).

¹⁵ Paolo Romero, "MILF Buying Arms from North Korea," *The Philippine Star* (June 21, 2000).

After all, China had spent blood and treasure to repel the US intervention into the North during the Korean War. In the postwar period, Beijing provided foodstuffs, sold Pyongyang cut-rate “friendship price” oil, trained North Koreans in Chinese universities and cooperated in transportation and electrical power generation. The two neighbors consistently trade with each other across their common border, and China exports goods through the North’s ports to third countries.¹⁶ After the 1997 return of Hong Kong to Chinese authority, Pyongyang opened a consulate in the former British crown colony, where it has access to off-the-shelf electronics for weapons and missile development. For years, North Korean officials had consulted with their counterparts in Pyongyang and in China but still Beijing professed a lack of influence over its difficult neighbor, despite Kim Il Jong’s visit to the Chinese capital just before the landmark North-South meeting in mid-2000.

Most outside observers drew the conclusion by the late 1990s that the North Korean leadership was intent on regime survival rather than nuclear war with the United States. Its once-risky activities were thus interpreted as calculating but entirely rational. With great diplomatic astuteness, Pyongyang managed to insinuate itself into the American consciousness through nuclear blackmail. Breaking out of the US-imposed containment that had been in place since the Korean War, it circumvented South Korean objections and achieved direct contact with Washington. The North Korean stratagem resulted in US shipments of food through the UN’s World Food Program, and finally an end to most economic sanctions. North Korea’s leadership played a weak hand with commensurate skill.

IRAQ: FROM ROGUE TO BROTHER STATE

Iraq’s trajectory from extreme rogue to leader of the “Arab street” and to being embraced by three members of the UN Security Council—China, France, and Russia—shares parallels with North Korea. Rather than licking its wounds in the wake of the Persian Gulf War, Baghdad redoubled its exertions to develop weapons of mass destruction. Without Soviet patronage, Iraq’s reputation as a free-lance rogue solidified. At the close of hostilities, Iraq stood

¹⁶ Chae-jin Lee, *China and Korea: Dynamic Relations* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1996) pp. 134-137.

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internationally isolated not only from the West but also from much of the Muslim world. In fact, the thirty-nation anti-Iraq wartime coalition included Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and even Syria.

After the conflict, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq, dispatched weapons inspection teams, pressed for reparations for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and authorized no-fly zones in the north and the south. Iraq dug in its heels, nonetheless, and even plotted to assassinate former President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait. Washington stepped up its policy to increase Iraq's isolation. It rotated warships in the Gulf, stationed troops in Gulf regions and retaliated with cruise missiles for the plot on Bush's life. Later, after the four-day bombing operation called Desert Fox in December 1998, Washington continued airstrikes on Iraqi anti-aircraft sites. This no-war, no-peace formula persists today. But with time, major cracks occurred in the anti-Hussein coalition as former enemies traded with and traveled to Iraq.

Reacting to Baghdad's obstruction of international weapons inspections, the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) concluded in mid-1998 that further efforts were futile. The withdrawal of UNSCOM left Saddam Hussein free to develop weapons of mass destruction without risk of public exposure. International attention shifted from weapons violations to sympathy for the plight of Iraq's suffering civilian population. Non-governmental organizations claimed that UN sanctions denied food and medicines to ordinary Iraqis. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein lavished oil revenues on palaces and resorts for his family and cronies. The NGOs' graphic depictions of destitute Iraqis, nevertheless, undermined the legitimacy of the containment policy.

The renewal of Israeli-Palestinian fighting in late 2000 also lessened Iraq's isolation. The heightened anti-Americanism throughout the Muslim world played into the hands of Baghdad, which embraced the Palestinian cause. For the first time since the Gulf war, the Arab League invited Iraq to attend the October summit. The United Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar resumed diplomatic relations with the Iraqis. With unaccustomed Machiavellian expediency, Saddam Hussein maneuvered to ease the disharmony with Israel in late 2000 by transferring \$30 million into a United Nations claims fund earmarked for

compensation to Israeli citizens and companies for damages during the Gulf War.¹⁷

Branded rogues like Iraq and North Korea nabbed the most attention in the 1990s, but the early post-Cold War period saw other marginal, brutal, and dictatorial regimes come to power. While they may have eschewed weapons of mass destruction, they did nurture the spread of terrorism and murdered large numbers of their own countrymen. These governments escaped a branding as rogue states, partly because they did not cross the diplomatic line demarcating internal criminality from acquiring nuclear or biological weapons and exporting terror.

THE UNDECLARED ROGUES

Afghanistan enjoys a somewhat anomalous status among rogues. The US Department of State has avoided listing it as a terrorist state. Yet Washington diplomatically isolated and embargoed the Taliban regime for harboring America's most-wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden, for his alleged role in US embassy bombings in East Africa. Under Taliban rule, Afghanistan has become a breeding ground for extremists and terrorist groups, who are funded by bin Laden and by the largest sales of opium in the world.

Geography and history predispose Afghanistan toward insularity, but Islam connects the mountainous country to its neighbors. The fundamentalist Muslim regime of the Taliban rulers has received recruits and resources from its chief patron Pakistan and from Saudi Arabia. The two countries underwrite Afghanistan's aim to propagate militant Sunni Islam northward into Central Asia and the Russian Caucasus and southward into south Asia, including the Philippines. As such, Afghanistan serves as a springboard for the infiltration of fighters and terrorists into Chechnya and Uzbekistan. Islamic militants operating from Afghan soil also slip into Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to displace the secular governments with fundamentalist rulers. Even China has felt the sting of Muslim guerrilla attacks in its northwestern Xinjiang province.

It may well be that Central Asian regimes will emerge as the next nest of anti-US states in the not-too-distant future. Currently, Islamic militants, who fight to replace secular rulers with

¹⁷ Associated Press, *Jerusalem Post* (22 November 2000).

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fundamentalist regimes, besiege these newly sovereign states. If they succeed, the *jihadi* could be emboldened to spread terror still further afield. Such a development could continue to foster American-Russian cooperation against a common threat and blunt the nearly exclusive focus on the rogues of the previous decade. In former Soviet Central Asia, Washington struggles to arrest the expansion of terrorism against American targets and to protect the laying of oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Basin energy-producing states. Moscow faces a rising tide of Islamic militancy on its southern flank. In a rare convergence of interests, both are working together to stem the flow of arms into Afghanistan.

Slobodan Milošević's Serbia (1987-2000) also possessed some but not all of the characteristics associated with a rogue regime.

citizens. But unlike full-fledged rogues, he did not export terrorism to neighboring states. Nor did he endanger others by building weapons of mass destruction. His pursuit of "ethnic cleansing" in the cause of a Greater Serbia, however, sparked widespread murder, savaged other ethnic groups and destabilized the Balkan re

can be likened to the practices of fellow rogue leaders like Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il. With nearly 200,000 deaths and about two million refugees, Western nations worried that the Serbian assaults against Croats and Muslims would spill over as the former Yugoslavia fragmented. By the mid-1990s, Washington and European capitals believed that the Bosnian war could drag in Greece, Turkey and perhaps Russia.

Following the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the fighting in Bosnia, tensions escalated in the Serbian province of Kosovo. The Kosovo Albanian majority chafed under Serbian rule and fought back with guerrilla warfare tactics. Serb reprisals and Muslim counterattacks triggered a NATO bombing campaign that

ROGUE COLLUSION

Because of their disparity in ideological, political and economic makeup, rogues were classified as *sui generis* and treated on a case-by-case basis. The logic for this policy was and remains sound. There is a galaxy of difference between North Korea and Iraq. But this strategy must not blind policymakers to the fact that rogue states cooperate with one another. Nor should the rogues'

differing circumstances obscure the fact that they have increasingly reconnected to either former parent states or other major powers for material and diplomatic support. This collusion demonstrates all the signs of a strengthening bulwark against the spread of Western influence, globalization and democratic values.

Anthony Lake, then assistant for national security affairs to President Clinton, wrote in 1994 that “backlash states... do not function effectively in alliances.” Lake noted, however, that the “ties between them are growing” and called attention to the “limited cooperation between Baghdad and Tehran.”¹⁸ Since Lake’s assessment, inter-rogué linkages have multiplied.

Rogues increasingly collude despite their cultural cleavages. They share China’s animosity to “hegemonism” a code word for America’s sole superpower status. There may not be honor among thieves but rogues have been ramping up missile and arms transfers as well as intelligence exchanges over the past five years. In short, they practice a form of gangster fraternization that erases the erroneous notion that these mavericks operate alone or are bereft of great-power patronage.

Even implacable enemies collaborated with each other. In spite of a bloody war between Iran and Iraq during the 1980s and continued animosity between them, the two have since cooperated. Iraq’s oil smuggling, abetted by Iran’s complicity, brought substantial profits to Iraq, which channeled the funds into arms coffers. Baghdad dispatched officials to help Serbia weather the Kosovo bombing campaign. According to press accounts, Serbia even permitted North Koreans to observe the NATO bombing in order to prepare their country for a potentially similar conflict. China assists Sudan’s oil exploitation and deploys security personnel to protect the oil-carrying pipelines. Iran, arguably the most independent of rogué states, has entered into *realpolitik* cooperation with Russia, even though they share little besides common foes. Despite official denials, Middle East rogues receive missile components and technological know-how from North Korea.

North Korea serves as a staging area for the export of missiles to a host of unsavory regimes, primarily in the Middle East. According to the Center of Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, the DPRK possesses

¹⁸ Anthony Lake, “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 73, No.2 (March/April 1994) pp. 45-46.

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the largest ballistic missile concentration among developing countries. It estimated that North Korea's force comprised some 70 missiles and 36 launchers.¹⁹ The size of this armory gives North Korea the expertise and inventory to sell delivery systems to Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan and Syria.

China and Russia now sponsor rogues for commercial and geopolitical reasons rather than ideological objectives. They pursue arms sales for cash and reactivate old Cold War relationships for diplomatic leverage to counter American influence. Western governments ought to be wary of more than just the big-state competition these ties engender; indeed, these linkages point to massive proliferation of missile and nuclear-weapons capability from advanced industrial economies to renegade Third World regimes. The scale, pace and destination of these transfers portend a dangerous world in the near future. Unlike the neat symmetry of the Cold War nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, today's security environment is a crazy quilt of "proliferators" and weapons-amassing states, which include not only rogues but also India and Pakistan.

Due to its longtime Soviet patronage, North Korea's missile engineering is considered by many experts to be less than entirely homegrown. According to one interpretation, Pyongyang's launchers, in reality, are just Russian knockoffs made possible by the flight of errant and unemployed Russian technicians to North Korea after the fall of the Soviet Union.²⁰ Additionally, similarities between Chinese and North Korean missiles also cast doubt on Pyongyang's claims to rocket innovation. Both China's CSS-3 booster stage rocket and the DPRK's Taepo Dong-1 (fired over Japan on 31 August 1998) used liquid hydrogen-nitrogen mixed fuel. After the US bombing of the Chinese embassy during the Kosovo air campaign, Beijing reportedly stepped up the export of high-technology components from state-controlled companies to Pyongyang. China contravened its pledge to adhere to the Missile

¹⁹ Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies, cited in Barbara Slavin, "Missile Program Holds Key To N. Korea's Foreign Relations," *USA Today* (6 November 2000).

²⁰ For more on this argument, see Jim Mann, "N. Korean Missiles Have Russian Roots, Explosive Theory Suggests," *Los Angeles Times* (6 September 2000).

Technology Control Regime without signing this arms control measure.²¹

How much technological know-how was native to North Korea, Russia or China may never be known. As a perceived rogue, the DPRK is the state held accountable in world opinion. But the deeper issue of how to deal with the problem of missile proliferation lies, in part, beyond the Korean peninsula. The transfers have spawned indigenous research, development, manufacture and testing elsewhere. The North Koreans, by the same token, benefited from the interchange because their expertise matured by observing missile launches in Iran and Pakistan, where they sold rocketry. In addition, Iran benefits from Russian technology for development of its Shahab generation of long-range missiles.

For its part, North Korea markets rocket components and scientific expertise to Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, and Syria to gain hard currency, raise its international profile and up the ante for the United States to buy off the threat. Such practices forestall the need to reform a decrepit economy and authoritarian rule.

THE NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

China, India, Russia and even the European Union aspire to play major roles on the international stage. Even though their unilateral influence is well short of American power, their competition generates political currents that will draw smaller states to their side. As the outcast states and major powers re-establish loose affiliations, the anomaly of solitary rogues so widely proclaimed in the previous decade is fading.

Down through the centuries, rogues have played on the international stage. The re-emergence of client-patron relationships and inter-rogue collaboration have helped restore more customary political alignments. A return to age-old patterns signals a failure for Washington's policy to isolate Iraq as well as its attempt at the "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran. In fact, the Clinton Administration abandoned its hands-off policy toward Iran in hopes of rapprochement.

²¹ Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and CIA intelligence cited by Bill Gertz, "Chinese Companies Sent Missile Parts to N. Korea," *Washington Times* (20 July 1999) p.A1.

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Washington's engagement of reclusive states like Iran, North Korea and Libya was predicated on modifying and pacifying them. Yet their de-isolation has not produced genuine changes in any regime. Thus, the capacity and propensity for state-directed terrorism is still in place. Moreover, US efforts to engage rogues provided "cover" for other states to do the same. As a result, Moscow can claim legitimacy in dealing with Iran and Iraq.

The return of rogues to parent-state orbits carries inconvenient implications for US defense doctrine based on waging limited military engagements against sealed-off pariahs. Combat operations take on greater complexity against unpopular states if they have friends. As one illustration, the Kosovo air campaign damaged Western relations with Moscow and Beijing, for both were lending diplomatic support to Serbia. During the Vietnam War, to offer an historical analogy, the United States feared an all-out assault on the North would drag in Hanoi's Soviet and Chinese backers.

US POLICY OPTIONS

Global chess envisions a return to great power tactics that compel concessions without head-on confrontation with the world's most powerful state. China and Russia, for example, can export advanced ballistic missile or nuclear technology to North Korea, Iran or Iraq. These transfers threaten US interests and friends in their respective regions. These actions fall short of a direct challenge to Washington but do put it on notice. The Kremlin can even the political score for the US bombing of its ally Serbia during the Kosovo air campaign or for NATO expansion eastward. China, in another example, can exact a price for US interference over its claim to Taiwan.

What options does this leave US policy makers? First and foremost, the United States must recalibrate its policies to take account of the changing realities of rogue states. Since nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the single most pressing foreign policy issue, a new administration must acknowledge that arms control treaties will not be effective against big-power supplied rogues, which ignore international legal codes.

Second, rogue and patron proliferation sustains the debate on the need for an American national missile defense and for smaller theater systems to protect US forces in the field or safeguard allies.

Third, the United States must redouble its diplomatic exertions to halt the patronage of rogue dictators when dealing with Russia and China. It is not enough merely to engage Moscow and Beijing commercially in hopes that over time this will nudge them toward peaceful pursuits.

Finally, Washington must pursue astute diplomacy that divides patrons from rogue regimes, as well as rogues from one another. Since circumstances differ with each rogue, the steps taken to neutralize them can vary from covert actions for toppling a dictator to forms of economic and diplomatic engagement. But whatever the course of action, it must be sustained.

The term “rogue” may slip from the diplomatic lexicon not because of a Department of State decree but rather because circumstances have changed. Rogues and their patrons have altered their behavior. Present-day rogues are also less isolated than in the immediate years of the post-Cold War era. Individual rogue states have historically proven to be an anomaly. Their ties to leading powers constitute a more permanent feature of world politics. The animosity of these rogues fuels a backlash against the development of the global economy and the spread of Western culture. A possible narco-Marxist Colombia or terrorist-prone Pakistan Central Asian regimes will search for stronger collaborators just as their predecessors have. What seems unlikely is that small pariahs will for long ignore the safety and material benefits that powerful patrons provide.

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