and embodied practices misses the point entirely. Media and popular culture offer precisely the grounded utopias Mittelman calls for but fails to recognize or explore. See James H. Mittelman, "What Is Critical Globalization Studies?" *International Studies Perspectives* 5 (2004): 219–230.

2 Two books that offer insight into national security and cultural politics are Jutta Weldes, ed., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), and Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). These works explore how notions of security were challenged and evacuated of meaning with the end of the cold war and wrestle with inherited models in security studies.

FUTURE-WAR STORYTELLING

NATIONAL SECURITY AND POPULAR FILM

DOUG DAVIS

Popcorn and Politics

A specter is haunting America—the specter of destruction. "In the aftermath of Osama bin Laden's 9/11 assault, which awakened the world to the reality of global terrorism, it is incumbent upon serious national security analysts to think again about the unthinkable," write Graham Allison and Andrei Kokoshin in the fall 2002 issue of the *National Interest.* A decade after the end of the cold war, and following a brief respite when "the threat of nuclear weapons catastrophe faded away from most minds," the United States along with Russia once again faces the threat of nuclear attack. "Consider this hypothetical," Allison and Kokoshin continue: "A crude nuclear weapon constructed from stolen materials explodes in Red Square. A fifteen kiloton blast would instantaneously destroy the Kremlin, Saint Basil's Cathedral, the ministries of foreign affairs and defense, the Tretyakov Gallery, and tens of thousands of individual lives. In Washington, an equivalent explosion near the White House would completely destroy that building, the Old Executive Office Building and everything within a one-mile radius, including the Departments of State, Treasury, the Federal Reserve and all of their occupants—as well as damaging the Potomac-facing side of the Pentagon."[1]

As veteran U.S. and Russian security specialists respectively, Allison and Kokoshin admit that this scenario is an "unprecedented event."[2] Much as a global nuclear war fought with tens of thousands of strategic weapons has no precedent in military history, no act of terrorism anywhere near as technically complex or physically destructive as an act of nuclear terrorism exists in

the historical record. Unfortunately, the parallels between nuclear war and nuclear terrorism only begin here. As was the case with global nuclear war in the cold war, that an act of nuclear terrorism hasn't happened hardly means it can't happen. Quite the opposite. In the national security planner's world, that nuclear power technology, terrorists, and hostile nation-states exist at all means that it surely can.

Allison and Kokoshin employ the vintage language and verve of RAND strategist Herman Kahn's 1962 hair-raiser about how to fight a nuclear war, *Thinking about the Unthinkable*, to drive home their point that the prospect of nuclear terrorism, like that of nuclear war before it, is all too thinkable and must therefore be meticulously analyzed and planned for. It is a difficult and often thankless job to chart the course of catastrophic attacks and imagine responses to them. Yet the job has been done numerous times, long before 9/11, for the entertainment of millions of readers and filmgoers who have witnessed in hundreds of books and films the kinds of catastrophes that serious national security analysts are now called upon to prevent.[3] As with the threat of nuclear war, today's nuclear terrorism was yesterday's fiction.

Allison and Kokoshin invoke the precedent of narrative fiction to emphasize the strategic fact of their nuclear terrorism scenario. Analogous events have happened, albeit between the covers of techno-thrillers as dense as the global networks and military systems they portray. "Psychologically," the authors write, "such a hypothetical is as difficult to internalize as are the plot lines of a writer like Tom Clancy (whose novel *Debt of Honor* [1994] ends with terrorists crashing a jumbo jet into the U.S. Capitol on Inauguration Day, and whose *The Sum of All Fears* [1991] contemplates the very scenario we discuss—the detonation of a nuclear device in a major American metropolis by terrorists). That these kinds of scenarios are physically possible, however, is an undeniable, brute fact."[4]

That national security analysts invoke narrative fictions set in the near future to buttress today's strategic facts underscores the centrality of future-oriented and narrative ways of thinking in what historians and security specialists are already calling the second nuclear age.[5] It also presents metaphysical and ethical quandaries that once haunted the cold-war arms race: Do these threats really exist? Dare defense planners think otherwise? The United States may or may not be threatened by real weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists, either at this very moment or in the future. (If the history of surprise attacks upon U.S. soil offers us any guidance here, we

may know the truth of such claims only tragically after the fact.) However, the country certainly is threatened by *stories* of mass destruction. So far, such attacks have occurred only in expert scenarios and narrative fictions set in the future, the realm of the imaginary. Yet the mere possibility of their existence in the future, regardless of their verified reality, now determines the national security strategy of the United States, which since 9/11 has sanctioned the waging of two wars.

The nuclear terrorism scenario that Allison and Kokoshin cite from Tom Clancy's *Sum of All Fears* reached new heights of cultural prominence when Paramount released a film based on the book in May 2002. Combined with an aggressive promotional campaign—movie trailers and television commercials featuring the conspicuous nuclear destruction of a city, special premieres for U.S. senators and Bush administration officials in Washington—the timing guaranteed the film's topicality and notoriety.[6]

Production on *The Sum of All Fears* began well before 9/11.[7] It was supposed to be a mildly cautionary but mostly escapist thriller with a deliberately irrelevant plot: CIA analyst Jack Ryan is pitted against a global cabal of neo-Nazis who conspire to kill the president of the United States with a long-lost nuclear weapon. The weapon is smuggled into the United States and detonated at a Baltimore football game to set in motion a chain of events that leads to a total nuclear war between the United States and Russia, from whose ruins a new Third Reich will emerge, maybe even a Fourth Reich. That unlikely story experienced a sea change when released seven months after 9/11. "A year ago, you'd have said, 'great popcorn film,'" the film's director, Phil Alden Robinson, told CNN. "Today you say, 'that's about the world I live in.'" Bush administration officials were quick to agree. "It was genuinely scary," Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz told *Variety* following the Washington premiere. "Arguably, in the real world we are dealing with this every day."[8]

In this essay I argue that the national security strategy of the United States is predicated upon just such future-war storytelling, which occurs most visibly in Hollywood film, where the "Bush revolution" in foreign and domestic policy is writ large for a mass audience. An analysis of two films about nuclear terrorism that straddle the attacks of 9/11—Robinson's *Sum of All Fears* (Paramount Picture's most profitable film of 2002) and Mimi Leder's *Peacemaker* (released to much fanfare in 1997 as the first film from Steven Spielberg's new DreamWorks studio)—shows how fictions of nuclear terrorism help build

its political reality by representing in dramatic, technologically systematic detail those catastrophic events that the new *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (the *NSS*) promises to prevent.

Strategic Fiction and the History of the Future

Fictions of nuclear terrorism have become part of a privileged class of storytelling that represents the strategic facts of U.S. national security. Straddling fact and fiction, they are "strategic fictions," tales of catastrophic future wars whose scenarios everyday citizens and defense planners alike treat as seriously as historical fact. Strategic fictions became an intrinsic part of U.S. national security strategy during the cold war with the formulation of a policy of nuclear defense built on an imagined catastrophic future war. Imagined nuclear terrorism and other kinds of indefensible catastrophic attacks now occupy the central place in the imaginary of national defense once held by the vision of nuclear war. The events described by these stories and scenarios are not real, but they could be. For national defense planners, that is reality enough. The catastrophic near-future worlds these imaginary narratives build are, in a dramatic way, the future of our world. The threats they represent are a license to act, to arm, and to war.

To understand the technological world of threat and response that strategic fictions of nuclear terrorism help build, it is helpful to understand the storytelling tradition they come from. The high-tech storytelling in *The Sum of All Fears* and *The Peacemaker* stems from a popular literary genre that critics in the 1980s identified as the "techno-thriller" (both films are based on books: the first on Clancy's book of the same name and the second on Andrew Cockburn and Leslie Cockburn's 1997 new-journalistic exposé on "loose nukes," *One Point Safe*). The heroes of both films pit advanced technology against advanced technology. To see these fictional professionals at work is to witness acts of cybernetic wizardry. In *The Sum of All Fears*, members of the CIA and the Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Search Team defuse World War III in the nick of time by using radiological analysis to identify the U.S. components of a lost Israeli bomb rebuilt in a secret Russian lab and then exploded in Baltimore. In *The Peacemaker*, the National Security Council's Nuclear Smuggling Group teams up with Army Special Forces to stop a nuclear bomb from blowing up the UN building in New York City, calling upon the combined forces of satellite imaging, airborne radiation sniffing, and the mastery of the physics of nuclear detonators to help them do so.

The techno-thriller, a specific U.S. kind of storytelling about fighting high-tech war, became a literary phenomenon during the Reagan administration with the publication of books such as Tom Clancy's *Hunt for Red October* (1984) and *Red Storm Rising* (1986).[9] Expressions of the Reagan administration's view of the world, according to historian Walter Hixson, techno-thrillers reasserted U.S. military and social power along with traditional values of male identity in the post-Vietnam, postfeminist era.[10] They are heroic war-fighting fantasies for an era not of heroic wars, but of nuclear brinksmanship and heroic diplomacy. Part ideology and part propaganda, they reassert the value of conventional weapons systems and conventional people by showing how both would be essential in the next grand conflict, assuming there ever was one.[11]

Techno-thriller authors during the cold war sold fantasies about fighting a nonnuclear war against the Soviet Union. Soon after the cold war they shifted to telling stories that pitted cold-war military and intelligence institutions against terrorists.[12] Changing enemies did not change the genre. The thrillers retained their technical bent and futurological vantage, telling war-on-terror stories before there was a war on terror.

The techno-thriller is a versatile reinvention of the tale of future-war fiction, a genre that was first popularized in Europe in the late nineteenth century as a response to the century's sweeping technological and scientific developments.[13] With narratives putting heavy emphasis on new weapons and tactics, the future-war tale constituted, as I. F. Clarke describes, "a new type of purposive fiction in which the whole aim was either to terrify the reader by a clear and merciless demonstration of the consequences to be expected from a country's shortcomings, or to prove the rightness of national policy by describing the course of a victorious war in the near future." In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hundreds of such tales were written by military officers, journalists, and fiction writers. A regular feature of newspapers, monthly periodicals, and serial magazines, each dramatized and opined upon "a major anxiety of the moment" felt by the West's great powers. Tales of future war were often written as propaganda for or against a specific course of action (don't build a tunnel under the English channel, invest in blimps).[14] Transported to the United States, the tale of future war sold "prophecies of doom" to the nation, first by dramatizing the weakness of the U.S. Navy and going on to perpetuate what H. Bruce Franklin calls the U.S. "cult of the superweapon" by presenting Edison-like

feats of technological wizardry that either save the nation at war or change the course of world history.[15]

Once a goad to a course of national strategy, one kind of cautionary future-war storytelling became a literal expression of national strategy after World War II: nuclear war storytelling. Nuclear war stories had been written well before the invention of the atomic bomb, most notably by H. G. Wells, whose novel *The World Set Free* (1914) depicts an atomic war. Several nuclear war stories appeared during World War II in science-fiction magazines such as *Astounding*. Yet no matter how prescient, during World War II these stories were still simply stories. They were not expressive of that war effort until the technology was invented that realized their forecasts. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in turn, made this kind of future-war storytelling took less like fiction and more like prophecy.[16]

As nuclear weapons replaced troops on the front lines of the cold war in the 1950s, nuclear war fictions acquired the epistemological status of strategic fact. They became a hybrid literary form specific to the cold war: strategic fictions. Strategic fiction is a special case of a future-war fiction that represents the unprecedented future realities that national security strategists themselves must also imagine. These fictional future-war scenarios become even more purposive and propagandistic, serving as instantiations of national security strategy itself. As such, they became especially powerful at building the political reality of the nuclear threat, because the catastrophic future war they once fantasized not only was now possible, but also had become central to the strategic imaginary of the nation's defense planners. Under the policy of deterrence, with its evolving promises of massive retaliation and mutually assured destruction, the threat of nuclear war had become the nation's defense against another world war. Yet that threat referred to a "non-event," a kind of war that had never been fought but could only be imagined.[17] The only places global nuclear war ever was fought were in the expert scenarios of pro- and antinuclear propagandists;[18] the theoretical models and war games of nuclear strategists;[19] and the film, art, and literature of the nuclear age.[20] With every telling of a nuclear war story in each of these specialized areas, global nuclear warfare was in a sense proven and the narrative world of nuclear defense strategy was built anew.

As antinuclear activist Jonathan Schell observes in *The Fate of the Earth*, without much real-life experience to draw upon, cold-war subjects were

"forced in this one case to become the historians of the future—to chronicle and commit to memory an event that we have never experienced and must never experience." Hayden White reminds us that all historians consider historical events to be "stories waiting to be told"; history as we know it is delivered to us wrapped up in a closed-plot structure.[21] The history of the future is no exception. The historical closure presented by global nuclear warfare contained a great deal of meaning for cold-war subjects, but that meaning was divisive, because the story of nuclear war necessarily represented not the success of nuclear defense policy, but its failure to prevent a nuclear war in the first place. Whether one reads about it, is threatened with it, or sees it in a movie, the future history of nuclear war as delivered in strategic fiction conveys a sense of urgency. It represents not simply a possible future but the meaning of nuclear defense policy itself. Like future war tales before it, the story of nuclear war is an admonition, an inherent lesson to its beholders on what to do in the present. Yet the meaning of its future remains intensely contradictory. First, there is the imperative meaning of nuclear deterrence itself: A nuclear war must not be fought. Antinuclear advocates and reasonable cold warriors could generally agree on this meaning, as well as on the premise behind it: This unprecedented kind of high-tech war certainly could be fought. Second, there is the ethical meaning, which presents a greater problem: What should we do now to ensure that a nuclear war is never fought? The solution to that problem depended on what kind of faith the leaders of the world's nuclear powers placed in their military technologies and in each other.[22]

Strategic fictions put a human face on an abstract act, dramatically fleshing out what the historian Thomas Hughes calls a "technological system," the "people and organizations" who work alongside the "hardware, devices, machines and processes, and the transportation, communication, and information networks that interconnect them" that together comprise the practice of nuclear warfare.[23] Thus films that let us look into the top-secret world of nuclear defense are strategic fictions, much as are films that represent World War III. Yet strategic fiction is also a representation of a machine that if used would produce a historical world catastrophe. For this reason, we find a great deal of fanfare and controversy attached to films, novels, and tracts about nuclear war. Their fictional visions can change what people think about the real-world policy of nuclear defense. Early in the cold war, the U.S. Air Force saw cinematic strategic fictions as public relations

tools that could work, much as had the air-power films of World War II, to build confidence in nuclear defense. At one star-studded premiere, Jimmy Stewart was given a citation of honor by the Air Force Association for flying a B-36 nuclear bomber in *Strategic Air Command*, Anthony Mann's lavish 1955 celebration of the U.S. Air Force's nuclear defense fleet.[24] Air Force chief of staff General Curtis LeMay personally bucked a mid-cold-war congressional ban on military-Hollywood collusion to rush Sy Bartlett's B-52-studded spectacle, *A Gathering of Eagles* (1963), to the screen ahead of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), even allowing Rock Hudson to perform in the Strategic Air Command's underground command center.[25] But Kubrick's fictional underground war room looked better, and his Strategic Air Command worked better too, a war machine so deadly that, once launched, it couldn't be stopped, even when run by buffoons. *Dr. Strangelove* was released in 1964 along with two other films adapted from best-selling novels about the threat of accidental nuclear war, *Fail-Safe* and *Seven Days in May*. All three were made without any support from the Pentagon, mainly because they demonstrated how this kind of fiction could change what people thought about the real world of nuclear defense. Their insider looks at the technological system of nuclear warmaking not only exposed a basic inhumanity (or excess of humanity) behind the policy, but also prompted the U.S. Air Force to sponsor films such as *A Gathering of Eagles* and to publicly address the potential dangers of nuclear defense.

While the public accepted the technological certainty of nuclear war, its faith in nuclear defense was insecure. The tenuousness of that faith increased over the next decades until in 1982 all the Ground Zero Group had to ask on the cover of its book *Nuclear War: What's in It for You?* was, "Why do you feel scared with 10,000 nuclear weapons protecting you?" to enlist readers to the cause of antinuclear activism.[26] A trio of films produced for television in the early 1980s—PBS's *Testament* (1983), ABC's *The Day After* (1983), and BBC's *Threads* (1984)—inspired many viewers to join the million-member antinuclear movement simply by depicting nuclear war, which in the ABC and BBC films is fought justly against a maniacal Soviet Union that sends its troops marching suicidally across Western Europe.[27] Nevertheless, the critical reception of these demonstrations of U.S. nuclear might was mixed. "Why is ABC doing Yuri Andropov's job?" the *New York Post* asked in an editorial review of the film. William F. Buckley, writing in the *National Review*, called *The Day After*'s haunting depiction of the nation's nuclear defenses in action "a massive deception." After almost forty years of cold war, the history of the future just wasn't what it used to be.[28]

The conclusion of the cold war turned future-nuclear-war storytelling back into fiction, at least temporarily. In retrospect, all strategic fictions of nuclear war can be seen to have constituted a grand U.S. narrative of strategic defense that accompanied the nation's grand strategy of containment through deterrence, a tale of future war whose telling united Americans as cold-war subjects whether they liked it or not.[29] The U.S. narrative of strategic defense seemed to vanish after the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, a surprise ending few had foreseen. The threat of nuclear war diminished to such a point that Jonathan Schell was now complaining to the *New York Times* that "the post–cold war generation knows less about nuclear danger than any generation." He was horrified to find that the young were even enjoying movies about nuclear weapons that saved humanity, such as Disney's *Armageddon* (1998), which features a nuclear weapon that destroys an asteroid before it can demolish planet Earth.[30] The strategic fact of nuclear weaponry remained, but strategic fictions seemed hopelessly dated.

The Way of the Worlds

Strategic fictions of nuclear attack would soon be back in the revised form of the techno-thriller. Knowing the literary and cinematic tradition of the new strategic fiction helps us understand how tales of nuclear terrorism can shape the political consciousness of national security strategy. Yet just as strategic fictions originally helped shape the consciousness of nuclear defense strategy, nuclear defense strategy also shaped the narratives of strategic fictions. Like their cold-war predecessors, strategic fictions of nuclear terrorism express a sense of national catastrophism, a certainty of impending national doom that originates in the national security strategy of the cold war.[31] Defense planners have revised that cold-war sense of national catastrophism for the war on terror. In doing so, they have once again placed the literature and film of catastrophic attack on the cultural front of a global conflict.

In the decade after the cold war, stories of nuclear war no longer spoke for grand strategy. Nevertheless, the threat of nuclear war had not gone away. The United States was in no rush to disarm; the U.S. Senate even voted against the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999 to keep the door open

for building more nuclear weapons. Other nations were seeking to develop nuclear arms, much as Pakistan had when it successfully tested a nuclear device in 1998. Yet while strategic nuclear weapons remained in the world's arsenals, the narrative of strategic defense that defined their use in the cold war—as engines of defense from themselves—was no longer as culturally or politically prominent as it once had been. Who was there left to fight a nuclear war with? The Clinton administration for its part had backed away from grand U.S. strategizing, emphasizing "progress toward political self-determination and economic integration" through international cooperation, arms-control treaties, and limited, multilateral military engagements conducted under the banner of peacekeeping.[32]

The character of the world had changed since the cold war. But so had the way of describing the character of the world, and especially the characters in it. A new narrative world order was emerging from the right wing of U.S. politics. While campaigning in 2000, George W. Bush began warning of a new kind of catastrophic threat, "the contagious spread of missile technology and weapons of mass destruction." Our world is not a world at peace or in need of peacekeepers, he claimed. It is "a world of terror and missiles and madmen." The threats of the future will come not from the world's great powers, but from "car bombers and plutonium merchants and cyber terrorists and drug cartels and unbalanced dictators."[33] The attacks of 9/11 gave credence to candidate Bush's dangerous visions. Afterward, the threat of nuclear attack was rewritten into the new U.S. grand strategy, crafted for a world once again at war. In the Bush administration's 2002 report on that strategy, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (the *NSS*), nuclear attack figures as the worst of all possible threats in a world full of malicious characters, lawless states, and weapons of mass destruction. It is precisely this world that we see in such high-profile strategic fictions as Robinson's *Sum of All Fears* and Leder's *Peacemaker.*

In the new world of national security, nuclear weapons no longer serve as engines of defense from nuclear attack. In mass culture, tales of nuclear terrorism have accordingly replaced tales of nuclear war as popular expressions of the nation's new grand narrative of national security, one not of strategic defense but of strategic defenselessness, that now accompanies the Bush administration's grand strategy of unilateral preemptive war and homeland defense. It is a tale of future catastrophic attack whose mass telling unites Americans as terrorized subjects in a war on terror. Much like its predecessor, it is a lesson to its beholders on what to do in the present: Ensure that these catastrophic attacks never happen in the future.

The future-historical threat of nuclear terrorism retains much in common with its cold-war predecessor, the story of global nuclear war. The revolution in foreign policy ascribed to the Bush doctrine proves to be more a literary revision of the cold-war narrative of strategic defense than a revolutionary departure from it. National security strategy in both eras—as exemplified by key policy documents such as National Security Council document 68 (NSC 68), *United States Objectives and Programs for National Security* (1950), the blueprint for the cold war; and the *NSS*, the blueprint for the war on terror—can be analyzed as a literary process of building a world and imagining its future: peopled with characters described by metaphor, plotted to express certain grand themes, and, above all, riven by conflict. Taken side-by-side we can see much that is similar in the world written then and the world written today. Only the characters have changed, but that revision has been enough to change the relationship of the United States to the world.

After the Soviet Union acquired nuclear weapons in 1949, President Truman asked the National Security Council (NSC) to codify the nation's global security plans, resulting in the production of the top-secret document NSC 68, the blueprint for the grand strategy of Soviet containment. "The issues that face us are momentous," NSC 68's introduction reads, "involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself." Describing the Soviet Union as a "slave state" bent on conquering the United States, the NSC urged the "rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength in the free world." In five years the Soviet Union would be ready to launch a crippling "surprise atomic attack" unless the United States "substantially increased general air, ground, and sea strength, atomic capabilities, and air and civilian defenses to deter war."[34] Following the outbreak of war in North Korea in 1950, Truman turned the advice offered in NSC 68 into a master plan for fighting the cold war.[35]

President Eisenhower made this grand strategy catastrophic. NSC 68's outline for containing the Soviet Union ship for ship and man for man was simply too expensive for him. As an economizing measure during wartime, the new president cut Truman's military budget and shifted most of the burden of Soviet containment to nuclear weapons.[36] Early in his first term, Eisenhower sent Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations headquarters in New York City to announce the

administration's new strategy of "massive retaliation." Dulles informed those present that the new administration intended to build "a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost" by reinforcing "local defenses . . . [with] the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power." From now on, the nation would "respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing" to any Soviet aggression.[37] Eisenhower's new look for U.S. military power resulted in a huge increase in the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal, from one thousand in 1953 to eighteen thousand in 1961.[38] As the Soviet Union replied to these threats by building its own atomic arsenal in the following decade, U.S. defense planners in the Johnson administration reformulated the policy of massive retaliation as a policy of assured destruction. Global nuclear catastrophism thus became one of the pillars of cold-war U.S. grand strategy.

It is important to note that the United States was the pioneer in nuclear weapons development in the first decades of the cold war. Long before any enemy nation had the bomb, the United States was arming itself with nuclear weapons against them. The United States remained committed to nuclear weapons after World War II because of its defense planners' basic assumptions about the way of the world, which we can loosely recognize as part of a "realist" view of international relations. The philosophy of international realism was articulated in the 1940s by political theorists such as Hans Morgenthau and soon applied to nuclear weapons policy by military strategists such as Bernard Brodie.[39] The realist worldview represents the world of nations as in essence a hostile place. As Morgenthau describes it in *Politics among Nations*, ours is "inherently a world of opposing interests." Defining interest "in terms of power," a realist analysis seeks to divine the rational core within all political action and thus conceives of international relations as naturally favoring behavior that "minimizes risks and maximizes benefits." One upshot of this worldview is that its adherents remain agnostic about ideology and questions of character and good- or bad will.[40] State actors will generally act in their own best interest, no matter who they are or what they think; that is the way of the world. Power, therefore, must be balanced between states if peace is to be achieved.

The U.S. decision after victory in World War II to continue building nuclear weapons as defensive weapons was the only rational course of action in a world conceived in threatening terms. U.S. defense planners extrapolated from the military successes of the recent past to imagine the threats

the nation would face in the future. The German blitzkrieg and the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor served as the most plausible models available for how nuclear weapons, which won World War II, would be used against the United States: in a swift, crippling surprise attack, most likely against U.S. cities, much as the United States had used them in Japan.[41] "So much the more reason, therefore," the pioneer nuclear strategist Bernard Brodie urged, "to take all possible steps to assure that multilateral possession of the bomb, should that prove inevitable, be attended by arrangements to make as nearly certain as possible that the aggressor who uses the bomb will have it used against him."[42] In the realist world of nuclear weapons and rational actors, only a careful balance of nations' power to unleash nuclear catastrophe can keep the world at peace. Thus the leaders of the Soviet slave state, no matter how pernicious, could be trusted—once they acquired nuclear weapons—to think rationally and be deterred by the power of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

The national security strategy produced by the Bush National Security Council reproduces many of the grand themes first articulated in NSC 68, foremost among them the sense that the world is comprised of forces opposed to the United States that are intent upon using against it nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Bush introduced the themes that would guide his new national security strategy in his 2002 commencement address at the U.S. Military Academy. While casting his new strategy as a departure from the past, Bush pitted the fate of the nation once more against "a threat with no precedent," telling the graduates that

> enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger the American people and our nation. The attacks of September 11 required a few hundred thousand dollars in the hands of a few dozen evil and deluded men. All of the chaos and suffering they caused came at much less than the cost of a single tank. . . . The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology, when that occurs even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations.

Like the bombing of Pearl Harbor before it, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 demonstrated not just how vulnerable the nation was but also how vulnerable it would remain in the future:

> For much of the last century America's defense relied on the cold-war doctrine of deterrence and containment. In some cases those strategies still apply. But new threats require new thinking. Deterrence, the promise of massive retaliation against nations, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. . . . If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited for too long.[43]

The Bush doctrine retains a fundamentally oppositional and catastrophically threatening view of the world reminiscent of the cold war. However, the character of the forces opposing the nation has changed greatly. The text of the *NSS* delivered to Congress in 2002 presents a revision of the threatening world of NSC 68. The rational superpowers of the cold war have been replaced by new kinds of international characters: irrational "rogue states" and "shadowy networks of individuals."[44] With its redefined enemy, the *NSS* betrays the influence of another philosophy of international relations, a "neoconservative" worldview. As first articulated by political theorists such as Leo Strauss and Allan Bloom and as applied to international affairs by public intellectuals (e.g., Irving Kristol and Francis Fukuyama) and Bush administration members (e.g., Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Cheney, and Zalmay Khalilzad), the neoconservative philosophy of world affairs views the free-market mode of U.S. Judeo-Christian democratic culture as the pinnacle of civilization.[45] President Bush and his advisors reduce world affairs to terms of character and intent, good and evil, and use those terms to assess the course of global policy. In the neoconservative world of the *NSS*, things such as character, ideology, and the consequent exercise of good- and bad will are far greater determining factors in international relations than is the balance of national power.

The rogue states and terrorist networks described in the *NSS* are prototypically neoconservative bad characters. They "reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands." Unlike the United States, rogue states "brutalize their own people and squander their national resources for the personal gain of the rulers"; "display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, and callously violate

international treaties to which they are party"; and are "determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, along with other advanced military technology, to be used as threats or offensively to achieve the aggressive designs of these regimes."[46]

The introduction of the concepts of irrational rogue states and terrorist networks radically changes the meaning of the nuclear weapons inherited from the cold war, turning them into technological threats against which there is no defense. The basic narrative operation of national security strategizing, on the other hand, remains the same from the cold war to the war on terror. Nuclear defense strategy in both eras is extrapolative: An attack from the past, coupled with massively destructive weapons technology and strategy, is set in a threatening world full of enemies to create a new, worse scenario set in the future. The scenarios divined through that process of extrapolation then serve as guides for U.S. global policy. In the cold war, the scenarios of nuclear war extrapolated from the experience of World War II guided the nation through permutations on the policy of nuclear defense. No more. The scenarios of catastrophic terrorism extrapolated from the attacks of 9/11 cannot be used to support any policy of nuclear defense against actors who, we are told, do not care about minimizing risks and maximizing benefits.

President Bush first announced a war on terror in a speech to a joint session of Congress on 20 September 2001. The new narrative order of the *NSS* was presaged by his rhetoric of a new world that the attacks had wrought. "Americans have known surprise attacks," he reminded the Congress, "but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day—and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack."[47] In the revised national security strategy for a war on terror, the imagination of that catastrophic attack leaves open no defensive course but that of war.

Mantra for the Second Nuclear Age

Strategic fiction adopts the extrapolative narrative form of national security strategy in both the first and second nuclear ages. Its authors and filmmakers look to the history of catastrophic threats and attacks to imagine future catastrophes the nation may face. In the strategic fiction of the cold war, the catastrophes of World War II served as models for the catastrophe of a

third world war in tales about waging and surviving the final total war. In the strategic fiction of the war on terror, the surprise attacks of 9/11 serve as the model for scenarios of catastrophic attack in techno-thriller tales about terrorism. Strategic fictions of nuclear terrorism released both before and after 9/11 are transitional films that bridge two strategic eras and two worldviews, moving viewers from the cold-war past to a new world of terror, and from a realist worldview to a neoconservative worldview. Strategic fictions of nuclear terrorism are thus primers for daily life as lived in the U.S. narrative of strategic defenselessness, a new world order where fears of nuclear attack must be met by the technological wizardry not of strategic nuclear weapons design, but of a revitalized national security apparatus.

Consider this hypothetical: A corrupt Russian general working for the Russian mafia hijacks a train carrying a decommissioned SS-18 nuclear missile, planning to sell its ten warheads on the black market. To cover up the theft, the general detonates one warhead in the Ural Mountains, destroying the train and all traces of his crime and killing more than a thousand people in the process. But his ruse doesn't work. U.S. military intelligence officers, privy to spy-satellite images of the blast, see through the deceit. Combining gutsy fieldwork with more satellite surveillance, they track the general's movements, discovering that he is transporting the warheads in a truck through Azerbaijan to the Iranian border. Green Berets intercept the general's truck and recover eight warheads. However, Serbian terrorists and a freelancing Pakistani nuclear physicist working with the general have already absconded with the plutonium detonator from the ninth warhead, turning it into a bomb small enough to fit into a backpack. The bomb is smuggled into New York in a diplomatic pouch from the failed state of Bosnia, where the Serbian terrorists plan to use it to blow up the United Nations in revenge for NATO's peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia. The U.S. security apparatus is ready. The Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New York Police Department, U.S. Customs, the National Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Army Special Forces, and the National Security Council's Nuclear Smuggling Group combine forces and, working in coordination from a command center full of computer screens and glass maps of Manhattan, sniff out the radioactive bomb with airborne radiation detectors, plant snipers up and down the East Side, comb the streets, catch the terrorist, and defuse the nuclear bomb.

This scenario never happened, but according to the investigative journalists Leslie Cockburn and Alexander Cockburn, it certainly could. The Cockburns pitched this scenario to producers at DreamWorks studio, which turned it into a script for the new studio's debut feature, *The Peacemaker*. The Cockburns had developed their plot while researching their book *One Point Safe*, a work of new journalism that popularized the threat of "loose nukes"—the prospect that NATO or more likely Russian nuclear weapons could easily be stolen or accidentally launched in the post-cold-war world. The idea of loose nukes became the basis not only of a Hollywood film in 1997 but also of two episodes of *60 Minutes*, all of which the Cockburns helped produce.[48] *The Peacemaker*, accordingly, is serious stuff. "The more I read, the more frightening it became," director Mimi Leder says of her motivation for the project. "I thought it was a very timely issue. There are a lot of loose nukes on the black market. We are a vulnerable world and we need to protect ourselves."[49] The Cockburns didn't say that there were any loose nukes on the black market in *One Point Safe*, but they recount several real-world examples of attempted nuclear thefts, lost Russian suitcase bombs, radical Islamic nuclear ambitions, and lax security at nuclear installations around the world.

As a dramatization of several of the real actors and events represented in *One Point Safe*, *The Peacemaker* is about our world. But it wasn't strategic fiction. In 1997 *The Peacemaker* still looked more like fiction than fact, and not particularly relevant fiction at that. U.S. audiences were not overly interested in it (total domestic ticket sales failed to cover the $50 million cost of the picture);[50] nor was the Pentagon. The U.S. Army refused to lend the filmmakers the three helicopters they requested for filming in Slovakia and Macedonia (although the Russian Army did rent them one hundred uniforms).[51] The White House staffers invited to the premiere laughed at it. "Not boring old nukes again," one reviewer quipped. Whether positive or negative, the reviews of 1997 are telling—but especially the negative ones—emphasizing the film's generic qualities over its political meaning. "The cineplex equivalent of the airport paperback novel," the film "resurrects an old standby—a stolen nuclear device—" and remains beholden to "nuclear-thriller clichés."[52] In 1997 a film about nuclear terrorism was still judged not by its relevance to the world but by its adherence to the formula of the techno-thriller.[53]

Preventing nuclear catastrophe was not a central national security issue in the 1990s. The job of containing the threat of loose nukes was left to small government and private operations such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative

Threat Reduction Program begun in 1991, in which the U.S. and Soviet (and later Russian) governments worked together to secure and dismantle old Soviet missiles, and the "megatons to megawatts" nonproliferation agreement entered into by the United States and Russia in 1993, for which the private company USEC Inc. contracted to purchase uranium from dismantled Russian and U.S. nuclear weapons as fuel for U.S. reactors.[54] U.S. nuclear policy in the post-cold-war decade was mostly concerned with dismantling the old nuclear war machine, not with building a new one. In 1992 President George H. Bush oversaw the standdown of the Strategic Air Command and the signing of the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Bill Clinton later cancelled the top-secret "contingency of government" program started by Ronald Reagan to preserve a small nucleus of leadership in case of a surprise nuclear attack and, after the cold war, a nuclear terrorist attack.[55] Terrorism in general before 9/11 was not a focus of national security strategy. As the Senate commission on the attacks noted in its final report: "The United States did not, before September 11, adopt as a clear strategic objective the elimination of al Qaeda"—or of any other terrorist network, for that matter.[56]

The threat of nuclear terrorism was as real then as it is now. The only thing different about that threat before 2001 is that it had not attained the status of strategic fiction. It had certainly been the stuff of fiction. From Terence Young's James Bond film *Thunderball* (1965) to James Cameron's *True Lies* (1995) to John Woo's *Broken Arrow* (1996) to *The Peacemaker*, nuclear terrorism had become an almost yearly target for Hollywood. In 2002, three films were released that had a nuclear terrorist plot or subplot: Barry Sonnenfeld's *Big Trouble*, Joel Schumacher's *Bad Company*, and Robinson's *Sum of All Fears*. Robinson's film is even obliquely based upon another filmic terrorist thriller, John Frankenheimer's *Black Sunday* (1977), in which Palestinian terrorists plot to blow up the Super Bowl with an arcane dart bomb that can kill as many people as a small atomic bomb can (in Clancy's book *The Sum of All Fears*, the terrorists are repeatedly amused by the idea that their plot to blow up the Super Bowl was first a movie).

Watching terrorists hijack nuclear weapons and, in more recent films, blow them up used to be a lot of fun, no matter who the terrorists were. Yet at the turn of the century, this scenario started to be taken more seriously than in past film seasons, which is why, when producer Mace Neufeld decided to turn Tom Clancy's book about nuclear terrorism into a movie, he made several changes to the story to make the scenario *less* representative of world

affairs. The nuclear terrorists in Clancy's book are Arabs, Native Americans, *and* Communists. Responding to a plea from the Council on American-Islamic Relations not to perpetuate any more negative stereotypes, Neufeld and director Robinson turned the terrorists into neo-Nazis.[57] The National Football League, which let a blimp crash into two of its pro teams in 1976 for the filming of *Black Sunday*, refused to sanction even a mention of the Super Bowl or the NFL in the Paramount film;[58] Robinson had to rent two Canadian Football League teams in Montreal and blow them up instead.[59] The one thing the filmmakers didn't change was the hinge of Clancy's original plot, which by 2002 had become an anachronism: Russia's relationship (still the Soviet Union, in Clancy's text) with the United States would continue to be determined by a residual cold-war competitiveness and hair-trigger suspicion (thus when terrorists try to kill the president at Clancy's Super Bowl most of his advisors think it is a Soviet sneak attack, which is precisely what the terrorists hope for).

Despite these changes and anachronisms, the film has a very authentic look to match the increasingly real threat posed by its scenario. The filmmakers used cold-war locations for their primarily Canadian shoot, setting scenes supposed to take place in the president's real-life Mount Weather Command Center, for instance, in Canada's old governmental bomb shelter, the Diefenbunker.[60] More fortunately for the producers, the armed and intelligence services all saw the film as an excellent venue for product placement and eagerly used it to sell defense—or at least the need for defense—in the new millennium. The Pentagon rented Paramount a small military force—"two B-2 bombers, two F-16 fighter jets and the National Airborne Operations Center; . . . three Marine Corps CH-53E helicopters, a UH-60 Army helicopter, four ground vehicles and more than 50 marines and Army troops; . . . [and] an aircraft carrier, too: the John Stennis, a 97,000-ton, nuclear-powered floating city with more than 80 aircraft and a crew of 5,000"—all for the price of the fuel used during filming. The Central Intelligence Agency threw its doors open to welcome a film that represented the agency as both central to U.S. defense and as intelligent, assigning a special Hollywood agent to help the film's star, Ben Affleck, practice manning a desk inside CIA headquarters. Paramount architects and landscapers toured and measured the top-secret building so as to accurately recreate it on set. Producer Mace Neufeld contracted the security company RSA to provide his actors with real "RSA SecurID® two-factor authentication device[s]" while shooting in the ersatz CIA.

The PCs in the national security apparatus and the terrorist network all run on Microsoft Windows. The film's locations are established with shots taken by the IKONOS satellite, an ultra-high-resolution imaging platform once available only to government intelligence services. According to the CIA's Hollywood agent, the results of Robinson's and Neufeld's efforts at security-state authenticity are nothing less than "extraordinarily realistic."[61]

When *The Sum of All Fears* premiering after 9/11, its realistic depiction of a nuclear terrorist attack conveyed the contradictory assurance reserved for works of strategic fiction: the certainty that such an attack can happen. Viewers started treating the film as having the power to change how people thought about national defense. Paramount promoted viewing its picture as an act of patriotism, organizing two premieres in Washington, D.C.—one for the national press corps, hosted by arms-control advocate Senator Richard G. Lugar of Nunn-Lugar fame; and the other for an audience of senators, Bush cabinet members, and Pentagon brass. Senator John Kerry praised the film on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*: "It's a provocative film that makes you ask a lot of tough questions."[62] Matt Drudge reported that President Bush hated the film and quoted "one senior Bush official" as complaining that "after what we've all been through the past year, how can Hollywood so casually roll out a movie which shows Marines pulling a bleeding president from his motorcade? . . . I mean, I was watching CNN the other day, they actually jumped from a news story on increased security around our nuclear power plants to later showing a clip from this movie which had windows being blown out by a nuclear blast. Really, how is this positive?"[63] U.S. Customs Service officials felt equally threatened, even though Robinson prescreened the movie for them to get their thoughts on it.[64] U.S. Customs Service Commissioner Robert Bonner described the detonation of a nuclear bomb in a port as "truly the sum of all fears" but told journalists that his agency was ready for that future. His brusque assurances read like dialogue from a technothriller: "We have equipment and technology that we did not have when Mr. Clancy wrote that book. . . . Any kind of nuclear weapon is going to stand out like a sore thumb."[65]

Robinson's film is a showcase for much of that technology, dramatizing in detail the networks of nuclear terror and the national security technological system arrayed against them. The film straddles two worlds, the old world of nuclear defense and the new world of nuclear terror, representing each in its own story line throughout much of the film before finally subordinating the

new world to the old. Robinson's security state is in an uneasy transition in which the shift to a new narrative of national security plays out as a clash of generations. Each generation is committed to its own mode of security production, the young to the systems of intelligence and intervention favored by the CIA and the old to the systems of power politics and massive retaliation favored by the National Security Council and the U.S. Air Force.

Robinson's CIA has been rejuvenated for the twenty-first century, as has Clancy's hero Jack Ryan (Ben Affleck), whose character has been revised from his earlier cinematic roles as a senior officer in the CIA to that of a freshman Russian analyst. Cast with attractive actors in their late twenties and early thirties, the agency is comprised of members of a new boyish generation who banter in casual tones about the sexual antics of the Soviet high command on display in their CIA spy monitors, sport hip beards and dreadlocks, and have commitment issues with their girlfriends. The only woman in the group, the motherly Mary Pat Foley (Lee Garlington), is heavily pregnant and ready to give birth to the new generation of national security agents. In contrast, Robinson cast the president, his cabinet, and everyone in Congress with veteran male actors at least a generation older than their CIA counterparts, all sporting gray hair, craggy features, reddening faces, and quick tempers, qualities found in abundance in the character of President Bob Fowler (James Cromwell).

The bridge between these two generations is the director of Central Intelligence, Bill Cabot (Morgan Freeman), the only member of the president's inner circle who understands that the way of the world is changing and national defense strategy must change with it. The CIA has responded to that change. It is a networked agency that works with other agencies such as the National Security Agency not to win wars, but to keep the peace. As Cabot tells Ryan: "We keep the back channels open in hopes of staving off disaster." The CIA is serious about safety, sending senior agents to Russia to verify that nation's compliance with START. The U.S. enemies have changed too; they use e-mail. "The world has changed," the Nazi Dressler (Alan Bates) says. "Global communications, cable TV, the Internet. Today the world is smaller." Any small group can use the new technologies to effect great change in the world, even neo-Nazis.

The film opens with a description of the new strategic situation of the post-cold-war world, showing how a nuclear weapon can be lost in the fog of war in a foreign land (in this case, the Arab-Israeli War of 1973), only to

return years later to threaten the United States. As the CIA tracks the steps of three missing Russian nuclear scientists who happen to be working on that bomb, Ryan describes the defense of the United States as a process now more akin to riddle solving than to war fighting: "What's a South African doing in the Ukraine with three Russian scientists and a crate from Israel?" Only by tracing the network laid out by these clues does the CIA realize that a nuclear attack is imminent; all responses to that attack by the president and his senior staff serve only to lead the nation closer to nuclear war.

The old national security generation represented by President Fowler is unaware that the nation faces any new threats. Following a nuclear war game held in the underground command center at Mt. Weather, Fowler confides to Cabot how outdated he feels that preparing for nuclear war is:

FOWLER: We gotta update these fire drills, Billy. I mean if the shit ever hits the fan, I'm not goin' underground. The place is a goddamn tomb down there.

CABOT: We also have to choose someone to face off against beside the Russians all the time.

FOWLER: Really? Let's see. Who else has twenty-seven thousand nukes for us to worry about?

CABOT: It's the guy with one I'm worried about.

Cabot's riposte is the mantra for the second nuclear age, but the old guard of the federal branch won't hear it. The CIA is treated hostilely by the graying members of Congress, all of whom think their old political horse sense is better than the CIA's careful character analysis of Russian leaders. For the young Jack Ryan, character matters more than do the old ways of power; he even wrote a character analysis of the new Russian president. In the film's climactic scene, as the two superpowers are less than a minute away from launching their nuclear missiles after wrongly blaming each other for the terrorist attacks against them, Ryan breaks into the hotline communication between the presidents and saves the world by telling the Russian president simply, "Sir, I know you."

Character may save the day and Cabot may be correct about the new way of the world, but *The Sum of All Fears* ultimately retains a cold-war worldview. The CIA almost catches up with the bomb, but halfway through the film the bomb explodes and the film's strategic fiction of nuclear terrorism comes to an end. The film then splits into two story lines, one following Ryan's

attempts to identify the source of the bomb and the other following Fowler's escalating path to nuclear war. Ryan's search retains the cybernetic plotting of a techno-thriller: We watch a NEST robot dig into the radioactive debris of Baltimore to identify the source of the bomb's plutonium (one conversation at this point goes: "Wow, check out that gadolinium reading." "Yeah, the mass fraction is huge"); CIA agents sitting in chairs in Langley break into the computers of an arms dealer in Damascus and identify the terrorist mastermind Dressler; Ryan saves the world by having someone type words into the hotline. Yet this new kind of warfare is set against a cold-war plot of superpower posturing that remains intact almost line for line from Clancy's 1991 text (Fowler on the Russians: "Can't afford for them to see us as weak. They've gotta know we have the guts to take it to the next level"). The film concludes as a realist story of superpower politics, ending with a treaty signing in Moscow intercut with some cold-war-style assassinations that restabilizes not a new but an old bipolar world order. In the end the CIA stands more or less an agency alone, not a party to much interagency cooperation or integrative national defense planning at all.

But despite its narrative failings to come to terms with the new world of the national security strategy of the United States, *The Sum of All Fears* did not fail to build the political reality of nuclear terrorism. It is an instantiation of the U.S. narrative of strategic defenselessness. Stripped of its narrative particulars, the film still provides a future-historical scenario of electronic networks and security apparatus into which one may plug any kind of shadowy actor to imagine a story of a United States under threat. For instance, remove a few minor variations that deliberately distanced the film from our world, and *The Sum of All Fears* plays like an almost exact remake of *The Peacemaker.*

In *The Peacemaker,* we find the U.S. narrative of strategic defenselessness expressed in its clearest, most humanized form, for the Cockburns have deliberately scripted it as a piece of post-cold-war agitprop. *The Peacemaker*'s nuclear terrorist, Dusan Gavrich (Marcel Iures), is a self-described enemy everyman of the post-cold-war United States. "I am a Serb. I'm a Croat. I'm a Muslim," he tells the world in a taped message. "I'm just like you, whether you like it or not." Dusan Gavrich is a truly bad character, a broken man driven by a sense of third-world injustice and a desire for revenge against the powers that have waged war in the Balkans. Leder and the Cockburns deploy the same network of spy satellites and the same cybernetic plotting as does Robinson to represent national defense as a techno-thriller. The action in the

film moves at the speed of technology: the time it takes for facial recognition software to identify someone, the time it takes to download a file, the time it takes a satellite to move across the sky, the time it takes to receive e-mail.

The film represents as intricate and high-tech both the international networks of nuclear smuggling and hatred, and the new U.S. institutions that protect the nation from them, especially the real-world Nuclear Smuggling Group of the Clinton White House that the film is based on. Watching the Group in action, audiences see a fantasy prototype of the Department of Homeland Defense: youthful and energetic whiz kids with stylish glasses, wavy hair, a networked office without walls, and their own airborne command post. They do not work alone but distill intelligence from other agencies and provide intelligence to Army Special Forces and any other national security agency that requires it. The group is headed by Dr. Julia Kelly (Nicole Kidman), who works alongside a Special Forces liaison, Colonel Thomas Devoe (George Clooney). They are an odd couple, but the friction between them is philosophical, not institutional or personal. They see the world differently, and they discuss those differences calmly in the time they have between gunfights and car chases.

While headed to Vienna to follow up on some intelligence, Kelly and Devoe have a telling debate over how to understand the threat of nuclear terrorism as embodied by the bad Russian general, Kodoroff, who stole the weapons. The scene is written as an argument between two Hollywood types, the brainy novice theoretical analyst Kelly and the brawny veteran field officer Devoe, but it is also a debate over how the national security apparatus should view the world: in Devoe's realist terms of power and interest, or in Kelly's neoconservative terms of character and will. The debate begins as a contest between equals over the character of the Russian general, the shot-countershot editing giving each position its fair turn.

KELLY: Would you call Langley [CIA headquarters]? We're still waiting on the psych profile on Kodoroff.

DEVOE: He's an asshole. I'll save you a trip.

KELLY: Thanks. I'll settle for the official version.

DEVOE: Okay. Officially, he's an asshole. He'll do anything for money, which is the good news 'cause it makes him fairly predictable.

KELLY: Really? I'd say he's been anything but predictable.

DEVOE: He took an order for an expensive, hard-to-find product and he intends to make good on delivery. Supply and demand. . . .

KELLY: So, it's really that simple?

DEVOE: It is to me that simple. . . . Doctor, you can run your charts and your theories all you want. In the field, this is how it works. The good guys—that's us—we chase the bad guys, and they don't wear black hats. They are, however, all alike. They demand power and respect, and they're willing to pay top dollar to get it. And that is our highly motivated buyer.

KELLY: What about other motivations?

DEVOE: Not important to me.

KELLY: Whether it's important to you or not, there are people out there who don't care about money and don't give a damn about respect, people who believe the killing of innocent men and women is justified.

At this point the rhythm of the shot-countershot editing changes to privilege Kelly's position over Devoe's. While Kelly is talking, we cut briefly to a reaction shot of Devoe, now shifting uncomfortably in his seat and not looking Kelly in the eye, before cutting back to Kelly. She is no longer speaking to Devoe but directly to the audience. The change in editing rhythm changes the way of the world.

KELLY: For them it is about rage, frustration, hatred. They feel pain and they are determined to share it with the world.

When Devoe responds, he is no longer looking at Kelly but down at his belly.

DEVOE: That does me no good. Now let's deal with the facts at hand. Twenty-three hours ago, General Aleksander Kodoroff stole ten nuclear warheads.

KELLY: He's just a delivery boy.

Devoe is silent in a reaction shot. Kelly seizes the opportunity to introduce the mantra for the second nuclear age.

KELLY: I'm not afraid of the man who wants ten nuclear weapons, Colonel. I'm terrified of the man who only wants one.

Kelly's neoconservative worldview proves to be the correct one in *The Peacemaker*'s post-cold-war world, and she soon wins Devoe over to it. Later, Devoe teaches the security expert the tactics of preemptive action as he leads a small fleet of Special Forces helicopters illegally over the Russian border to secure the loose nukes before they disappear from the sight of a spy satellite, thus effecting the union of idealism and action that would become the basis of the new national security strategy of the United States.

The Peacemaker concludes with a fantasy that the Bush revolution in foreign and domestic policy has yet to realize: the smooth integration of the institutions of the national security state in a continual, limited, flexible war against terror at home and abroad. In the world of strategic fiction, it takes the strategic fact of a terrorist headed for the United States with a nuclear weapon to achieve that result. In the real world, all we have are strategic fictions to organize the nation's national security priorities, and the results have been anything but limited. The nation has not been able to muster a flexible, precision response to match the techno-thriller threats it foresees.

The U.S. government's calls to war in Afghanistan and Iraq conform to the narrative structure of the 2002 *NSS*. When read within the new U.S. narrative of strategic defenselessness, the signs of Iraqi armament, denial, and deceit cited by Bush throughout 2002 and 2003 translated into an imminent catastrophe. Congress's joint resolution authorizing the war against Iraq waxed strategically fictional when it listed primary justifications for war: "Iraq's demonstrated capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction, the risk that the current Iraqi regime will either employ those weapons to launch a surprise attack against the United States or its Armed Forces or provide them to international terrorists who would do so, and the extreme magnitude of harm that would result to the United States and its citizens from such an attack, combine to justify action by the United States to defend itself."[66] In his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush based his case for the Iraq war not on the strategic fact of an attack that had happened or definitely would happen, but on the strategic fiction of an attack that might have happened on 9/11. "Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained," he reminded the nation before shifting its attention to the new world order of the U.S. narrative of strategic defenselessness. "But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those nineteen hijackers with other weapons and other plans—this time armed by Saddam

Hussein. It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known."[67] A techno-thriller imaginary organizes U.S. global policy in the twenty-first century. Strategic fictions have returned from the cold war, and the United States has once again started a grand fight against its own worst enemy—its future.

NOTES

1 Graham Allison and Andrei Kokoshin, "The New Containment: An Alliance against Nuclear Terrorism," *National Interest* 69 (fall 2002): 35.

2 Ibid., 36.

3 Herman Kahn, *Thinking about the Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962). As Mick Broderick shows in *Nuclear Movies: A Critical Analysis and Filmography of International Feature Length Films Dealing with Experimentation, Aliens, Terrorism, Holocaust, and Other Disaster Scenarios, 1914–1989* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1991), the theme of nuclear terrorism has been a part of cinematic storytelling since the 1920s; variations on the scenario are as common as tales of nuclear war. See also Timothy L. Sanz's two survey articles, "Nuclear Terrorism: Selected Research Materials," *Low Intensity Conflict and Enforcement* 1, 3 (winter 1992): 337–345, and "Nuclear Terrorism: Published Literature since 1992," *Military Review* 77 (July/August 1997): 139–148, for a comprehensive listing of how national security specialists treated the scenario of nuclear terrorism prior to the 9/11 attacks.

4 Allison and Kokoshin, "The New Containment," 35.

5 While published in 1991, Tom Clancy's *Sum of All Fears* is set "a few . . . years" before the millennium (*Three Complete Novels* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994], 1010); its successor in the series, *Debt of Honor*, opens two years later. Soon after the cold war ended, historians and security analysts began a serious discussion of how nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction would pose new threats. For a sense of such discussions, see Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power in the Second Nuclear Age* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999); Keith B. Payne, *Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Colin S. Gray, *The Second Nuclear Age* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Graham Allison, Owen R. Coté, Jr., Richard A. Falkenrath, and Steven E. Miller, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996); Andrew Cockburn and Leslie Cockburn, *One Point Safe* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997); and Fred Charles Iklé, "The Second Coming of the Nuclear Age," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (January/February 1996): 119–128.

6 Christian Toto, "'All Fears' Limited to Film Screen," *Washington Times*, 27 May 2002; Dana Calvo and Robert W. Welkos, "Hollywood Shakes Off Fear of Terror Images," *LA Times on the Web*, 20 May 2002, www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-052002fears.story (accessed 10 August 2004); Anita Chabria, "Hollywood Calls on Military Ties as It Releases Disaster-Themed Films," *PR Week*, 3 June 2002, 7.

7 Leo Rice-Barker, "Taurus 7 Produces Musical MOWs for VH1, MTV," *Playback*, 19 December 2000, 18.

8 Robinson quoted in Paula Zahn, Mike Galanos, and Gail O'Neill, "Profiles of Mike Tyson, Jewel, Morgan Freeman," *CNN People in the News*, 1 June 2002,

LexisNexis Academic (accessed 10 August 2004). Wolfowitz quoted in Bill Higgins and Pamela McClintock, "'Fears' Factor," *Variety*, 3–9 June 2002, 55.

9 J. William Gibson, "Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s," *Cultural Critique* 19 (fall 1991): 180.

10 Walter L. Hixson, "Red Storm Rising: Tom Clancy Novels and the Cult of National Security," *Diplomatic History* 17 (fall 1993): 605; Gibson, "Redeeming Vietnam," 182–183.

11 Gibson, "Redeeming Vietnam," 188. Some politicians took techno-thrillers seriously in the 1980s. Senator Dan Quayle once displayed a copy of Clancy's *Red Storm Rising* to the Senate while arguing his case for the government to fund an antisatellite (ASAT) system. "Have you read this book?" he asked his assembled colleagues. "ASAT technology is what wins the war!" Quoted in Hixson, "*Red Storm Rising*," 613.

12 William F. Ryan, "The Genesis of the Techno-Thriller," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 68 (winter 1993): 34.

13 On the genre as reinvention, Gibson, "Redeeming Vietnam," 185; on its nineteenth-century popularization, I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763–3749* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3, 40; H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 19.

14 Clarke, *Voices*, 33, 58, 98.

15 Franklin, *War Stars*, 21, 22, 48.

16 Albert Berger, "The Triumph of Prophecy: Science Fiction and Nuclear Power in the Post-Hiroshima Period," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976): 143–150.

17 Jacques Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now," *Diacritics* 14 (summer 1984): 23.

18 The step-by-step description of a nuclear attack is a familiar literary tactic in cold-war propaganda. Dubbed "the bombing run" by the Physicians for Social Responsibility (Hugh Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996], 199), it is a prominent feature of antinuclear literature such as John Hersey, *Hiroshima*, rev. ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), 3–23; Helen Caldicott, *Missile Envy: The Arms Race and Nuclear War*, rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 9; and Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Knopf, 1982), 132. It is also a prominent feature of civil defense literature and patriotic mass-distribution magazines from earlier in the cold war, as in *Collier's* special issue, "Preview of the War We Do Not Want," 27 October 1951, a future-historical chronicle of U.S. resolve to fight and win a nuclear war, written by many of the leading lights of the U.S. press. As we have seen, the bombing run has been revised for the war on terror to raise consciousness about the threat of nuclear terrorism. Once again the vivid depiction of nuclear attack can be mustered to support the interests of global disarmament advocates (David Krieger, "Preventing a Terrorist Mushroom Cloud," *Humanist* 62 [January/February 2002]: 4) and of hawks eager to wage preemptive war against "demented and venomous regime[s]" such as those of North Korea and Iran before they lay waste to U.S. cities (Gabriel Schoenfeld, "The Terror Ahead," *Commentary* 116 [November 2003]: 21).

19 The history of nuclear strategy and war gaming is reviewed in Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), and Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

20 Comprehensive surveys of nuclear war storytelling across genres and media include Broderick, *Nuclear Fear*, 56–191; Spencer R. Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Martha A. Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* (New York: Greenwood, 1988); and Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

21 Schell, *Fate of the Earth*, 21; Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (fall 1980): 10, 24.

22 No world power has disarmed after building a nuclear arsenal, and South Africa is the only nation that has voluntarily dismantled its nuclear weapons after acquiring the means to build them on its own. Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus acquired Soviet weapons after the cold war but returned them to Russia in 1991. See "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," Arms Control Association, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat.asp (accessed 10 August 2004).

23 Thomas Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm* (New York: Penguin, 1989), 3.

24 Bosley Crowther, review of *Strategic Air Command*, *New York Times*, 21 April 1955.

25 Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory: Great American War Movies* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 170.

26 Ground Zero Group, *Nuclear War: What's in It for You?* (New York: Pocket Books, 1982).

27 Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites*, 201.

28 Quoted in James W. Harper, "Images of Armageddon: Nuclear War in Three Mass Audience Films," in Ulrich Roebel and Otto Nelson, eds., *War and Peace: Perspectives in the Nuclear Age* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1988), 31.

29 In identifying nuclear defense policy as a narrative formation reproduced across culture, I am extending a method of analysis begun in U.S. studies of cold-war culture. In *American Fiction in the Cold War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Thomas Hill Schaub identifies a liberal narrative of cold-war leftist disenchantment that structured many great works of postwar literature. Alan Nadel identifies an even more wide-ranging narrative formation in his collection of essays *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), which equates such cultural themes as domesticity, sexuality, and industrialization with the politics of communist containment. The anthropologist Hugh Gusterson reads the cold-war conflict in toto as a postmodern narrative. Describing the "cold-war worldview" as a particularly self-referential kind of narrativizing, Gusterson argues that, given "its penchant for simulation . . . the postmodern character of the American cold-war narrative may enable it to survive the death of its villain in a way that would be difficult for a more 'realist' narrative" ("Endless Escalation: The Cold War as Postmodern Narrative," *Tikkun* 6 [September/October 1991]: 44–45). Gusterson's provocative insight proved to be more correct than he could know, for the cold-war narrative of national security has indeed been revised in a way that pits cold-war institutions against a new postmodern kind of villain, the terrorist network.

30 Schell quoted in Christina del Sesto, "Champion of Human Survival Tries to Awaken Academics to a Nuclear Menace," *New York Times*, 18 November 2000.

31 Before the cold war, the term "catastrophism" was primarily associated with scientific theories of geological catastrophism long-discarded by geologists. In the latter years of the cold war, however, the threat of nuclear war made the idea of global catastrophe plausible again. Geologists consequently imported the idea of catastrophism back into their discipline, using nuclear explosions and the threat of nuclear war as metaphors to explain how catastrophic impacts could cause both large geological features and mass extinctions, in the process launching a new catastrophist paradigm of planetary science. For a detailed study of the institutional and theoretical ties between nuclear and geological catastrophism, see Doug Davis, "'One Hundred Million Hydrogen Bombs': Total War in the Fossil Record," *Configurations* 9 (2001): 461–508.

32 The quote is from John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 77; see also Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 12–14.

33 Bush quoted in Jonathan Schell, "The Unthinkable," *The Nation*, 8 November 1999, 7.

34 Quoted in Ernest R. May, ed., *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (New York: Bedford Books, 1993), 26, 61, 76.

35 Ibid., 16.

36 Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1896*, vol. 2. of *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1994), 541.

37 John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," *Department of State Bulletin*, 25 January 1954, 108.

38 David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945–1960," *International Security* 7 (spring 1983): 133.

39 Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites*, 252.

40 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3rd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1960), 4, 6, 8, 10.

41 Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 34.

42 Bernard Brodie, "Bernard Brodie on the Absolute Weapon, 1946," in Philip L. Cantelon, Richard G. Hewlett, and Robert C. Williams, eds., *The American Atom: A Documentary History of Nuclear Policies from the Discovery of Fission to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 197.

43 George W. Bush, "West Point Commencement Address," 1 June 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html (accessed 10 August 2004).

44 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, 17 September 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html, 13, preface (accessed 9 August 2004).

45 James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004), 27–28.

46 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy*, 13–14.

47 George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," 20 September 2001, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html (accessed 10 August 2004).

48 Bruce G. Blair, "Loose Cannon," *National Interest* 52 (summer 1998): 92.

49 "George Clooney/The Peacemaker," *Hollywood Reporter*, 24 September 1997, LexisNexis Academic (accessed 10 August 2004).

50 Nick Madigan, "Frosh Dream Team Finds Film Legs," *Variety*, 12 January 1997, 33.

51 Tom Friend, "When an Unofficial Military Presence Is Welcome," *New York Times*, 21 September 1997.

52 Jeffrey Smith, "A Woman with Throw-Weight," *Washington Post*, 27 September 1997; Tom Shone, "Let's All Make a Bomb," *Sunday Times* (UK), 26 October 1997; Duane Byrge, review of *The Peacemaker*, *Hollywood Reporter*, 25 September 1997, 5; Dolores Barclay, "At the Movies: *The Peacemaker*," Associated Press, 25 September 1997, LexisNexis Academic (accessed 10 August 2004); Desson Howe, "*Peacemaker*: Bombs Away," *Washington Post*, 26 September 1997.

53 One review that demonstrates how much the meaning of the fictional scenario of nuclear terrorism has changed over the past decade describes Leder's nuclear destruction of two square miles of Manhattan in a way few would dare in the years since the 9/11 attacks: "I like the smallness of the conceit. They're not 'saving the world' or even the United States. They're not even saving the city, only a couple of its better delis and coffee shops, including the one where Jerry, Elaine and George hang out. The weapon is one of those little bitty bomblets, part of a larger package originally designed to deploy from space from among a nesting of nine more of its brothers and do specific hard-target damage. It would melt, say, most of midtown and part of Queens but probably leave the Bronx intact. Long Island? No problemo. You'd be safe out there, and you'd pick up a really fine tan without having to spend much time at the beach. Stephen Hunter, "*The Peacemaker*: Right on Target," *Washington Post*, 26 September 1997.

54 See www.usec.com (accessed 10 August 2004).

55 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 144.

56 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2004), 108.

57 Jonathan V. Last, "War? What War? Hollywood Ignores Today's Biggest Story Line," *Wall Street Journal*, 10 October 2003; "Paramount Film's Super Bowl Villains Changed to Neo-Nazis; Islamic Group CAIR Had Concerns about Stereotyping in *The Sum of All Fears*," *PR Newswire*, 26 January 2001, LexisNexis Academic (accessed 10 August 2004).

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59 Tom FitzGerald, "Action Didn't Make the Cut," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 May 2002.

60 S.D., "Captain America Returns—but without the Geritol," *Maclean's*, 10 June 2002, 62.

61 On the rented military force, Katherine Q. Seelye, "When Hollywood's Big Guns Come Right from the Source," *New York Times*, 10 June 2002; on the CIA building, Paul Bedard, Suzi Parker, David E. Kaplan, and Linda Fasulo, "CIA Says Clancy Spun It Right in *Sum of All Fears*," *U.S. News and World Report*, 13 May 2002, 4; on RSA, "RSA Security Featured in *The Sum of All Fears;* Company Consults with Paramount Pictures on Authentication Technologies for Fourth Tom Clancy Film," RSA Security Press Release Archive, 30 May 2002, www.rsasecurity.com/press_release.asp?doc_id=1308 (accessed 10 August 2004); on satellite imaging,

"*The Sum of All Fears* Uses High-Resolution IKONOS Satellite Imagery to Create Hollywood Magic; Space Imaging Product Provides Realism to Key Movie Scenes," *PR Newswire*, 31 May 2002, LexisNexis Academic (accessed 10 August 2004); on security-state authenticity, Bedard et al., "CIA Says," 4.

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63 Matt Drudge, "Bush Official Questions Release of Paramount's Nuke-Scare 'Fears,'" *Drudge Report*, 26 May 2002, www.drudgereport.com/mattsf.htm (accessed 10 August 2004).

64 Donna Leinwand, "Officials Try to Ease 'Sum' Fears," *U.S.A Today*, 3 June 2002.

65 First Bonner quote in Susan Reda, "Container Security: The Sum of All Fears," *Stores: The Bulletin of the N.R.D.G.A.* 84 (October 2002): 30; second Bonner quote in Julia Malone, "Customs Chief: Have No 'Fears'; Unlike Movie, Today's Gear Would Detect Nuclear Bomb," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 June 2002.

66 *Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq*, Public Law 107–243, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 2 October 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021002-2.html (accessed 10 August 2004).

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Visions of Security

Impermeable Borders, Impassable Walls, Impossible Home/Lands?

MARY N. LAYOUN

In his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association in mid-October 2001, entitled "Faith and Knowledge—An Opening," Jürgen Habermas cautions that when "current events become so overwhelming that they rip the choice of topic out of our own hands, so to speak, the John Waynes among us intellectuals are of course greatly tempted to compete instead as to who can be the quickest to shoot from the hip." Habermas heeds his own caution with a sustained and almost poignant reflection on "the still-unresolved dialectic inherent in our own western process of secularization" between "religion and secular society," or the "faith and knowledge" of his title, insisting on a "hope for a return of the political in another form . . . as a world-wide, civilizing power of formation."[1]

Habermas's specific reference to overwhelming current events is, of course, a reference to what we elliptically refer as 9/11. In this essay, I, too, address a succession of events in the months and years since 11 September 2001.[2] Yet given my disciplinary predilection for comparative languages, literatures, and cultures, I focus on two terms ("terrorism" and "security"), two terribly instructive instances that deploy those terms (the USA PATRIOT Act and Israel's "security wall"), and two literary texts that offer a perspective on those terms and on their deployment.[3]

There is a model of sorts for this comparative configuration in the example of reading nationalisms.[4] If the rhetoric and the grammar of national formations are in fraught and sometimes productive tension with one another,