CHAPTER 12

Representations of the Gulf Crisis
as Derived from the U.S. Senate Debate

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This chapter presents the results of an analysis of the contents of the U.S. Senate debate on the Gulf crisis. The analysis consists of using the argumentation of the debate to infer the representations of the Gulf crisis that were espoused by members of each side of the debate. Moreover, the analysis makes special use of the model of images described by R. Cottam (1977), R. Herrmann (1984, 1988), and M. Cottam (1994). Specifically, the analysis assumes that the image of Iraq held by the senators played a major role in establishing their respective representations of the crisis. Furthermore, we argue that the images provide a basis for interpreting the rhetorical features of the arguments of the senators.

There are a number of reasons for analyzing the contents of the Senate debate. First, at a relatively empirical level, it is simply of interest to extract the argumentation that was employed by each side, and it is of further interest to ascertain what can be inferred from such argumentation with respect to how the Gulf crisis was mentally represented by the senators of each side. Second, determining the images that were implied by the debate contents not only provides a basis for studying representations of the Gulf crisis; it also provides a basis for interpreting the arguments stated in the debate that were at least on the surface aimed at persuasion. Finally, analysis provides the opportunity to interpret U.S. policy with respect to Iraq in particular and the Middle East in general.

The chapter contains five sections. In the first, background information is presented that is relevant to the remainder of the chapter. In the second, the method we used to analyze the debate text is briefly described. The third section presents the analysis of the argumentation of the debate and what may be inferred regarding the problem representations and images of the senators. The final two sections present some tentative conclusions and speculations and discusses image representations.
Background Information

Brief Description of the Gulf Crisis

The Gulf crisis began in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. In response, the United States sent troops to defend Saudi Arabia, and the Bush administration, in conjunction with the United Nations Security Council, organized an international embargo against Iraq. Subsequently, the Bush administration increased the military strength in Saudi Arabia, and an offensive posture was assumed. Iraq, however, did not withdraw from Kuwait, and a United Nations resolution was passed that gave Saddam Hussein until January 15 to pull out of Kuwait, with military intervention by an American-led coalition authorized on or after that date. The congressional debates were held on January 10, 11, and 12, 1991, prior to the United Nations deadline for Iraqi troop withdrawal from Kuwait. In the U.S. Senate, two resolutions were presented. The Dole-Warner resolution, advocating support of the policy of the Bush administration and the United Nations, authorized the use of military force to produce Iraqi withdrawal; the Mitchell-Nunn resolution advocated the continued use of sanctions to effect the same goal. The vote in favor of the Dole-Warner authorization of military force was 52–47, the vote being essentially known before the debate.

Problem Representation

Turning now to the theoretical basis of our analysis, the model of problem representation we employed in the present analysis was the general information-processing model of problem solving of Newell and Simon (1972), as the model has been applied to the solving of ill-structured problems (Voss, Greene, Post, and Penner 1983). Because the model is described in some depth in the second chapter of this volume, discussion of the model in this chapter is brief. In our analysis of the contents of the U.S. Senate debate, we were especially concerned about four components of the representation: the goal or goals that were stated or implied, the means advocated to accomplish those goals, the constraints that participants stated or implied, and the image of Iraq held by individuals as it related to the representation.

Image Theory

The study of the images that individuals have of another state has been primarily focused on the enemy image held by individuals in the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (e.g., Bronfenbrenner 1961; Silverstein 1989). The present world situation, however, makes it imperative
that images other than the enemy image be studied in order to develop a better understanding of how such images influence mental representations and possibly policy choices. The Cottam (1977) and Herrmann (1984, 1988) model is especially appropriate for this test because it provides a theoretical analysis of images other than that of an enemy, as demonstrated by Martha Cottam in her analysis of the dependent image of Latin America, as held by U.S. decision makers (Cottam 1994).

The Cottam-Herrmann model assumes that images are comprised of three dimensions that involve how the leaders of state A, for example, perceive state B. The dimensions include whether state B constitutes a threat or an opportunity with respect to state A, whether the capability of state B, broadly defined (military, economic, and other aspects), is perceived as superior, approximately equal, or inferior to the capability of one’s own state, and whether the culture of the other state is perceived as superior, approximately equal, or inferior to that of one’s own state. Our assumption is that these components play a major role in developing a problem representation in the context of a given situation.

In addition to the underlying dimensions, the model also delineates three indicators that help individuals to determine what image is being held by the leader of a given state. Assume that a leader of state A makes statements about state B. In order to determine what image the leader of state A holds of state B, the model states that the three indicators to be observed are what the leader says about state B’s motivation, about state B’s capability, and about state B’s decision processes.

Table 12.1 presents the indicator statements that constitute the rhetoric used by a leader of state A when describing state B. In other words, when the leader of state A makes statements such as those indicated (in an abbreviated form) in the columns of Table 12.1, they are assumed to portray one of the six respective types of image indicated in the left column of Table 12.1. (See Herrmann 1988.)

The following aspects of the contents of Table 12.1 are noted. First, culture, which is also included in the Cottam-Herrmann model, is included in parentheses in the column heading because leaders of a given state may talk about the culture of another state, and the cultural statement may reflect one of the images given in Table 12.1. Second, statements of motivation map reasonably well onto the underlying threat or opportunity dimension, and capability maps well onto the underlying capability dimension. But the decision process indicator does not reflect culture in any direct way; instead, as noted in the table, the model assumes that statements about the way in which another state is governed reflect a particular image of that state. Third, the imperial image refers to the relation of a stronger state, A, to a weaker state, B. An important aspect of the imperial image, or what Martha Cottam (1994)
Table 12.1. *Images of another state and indicators of each image as found in the Cottam-Herrmann model (after R. Cottam (1977) and Herrmann (1988))*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Capability</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Decision process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemy</td>
<td>Aggressive, expansionistic, evil motives</td>
<td>Comparable, paper tiger</td>
<td>Comparable</td>
<td>Monolithic; citizens different from govt.; diabolical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursues mutually beneficial goals</td>
<td>Adequate but less than possible</td>
<td>Comparable</td>
<td>Well managed, complex; citizens support govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degenerate</td>
<td>Leaders try to keep what they have</td>
<td>Country weaker than it was, power not used</td>
<td>Declining culture; inferior</td>
<td>Confused; unclear authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td>Do not believe in help of imperial power</td>
<td>Less capable; imperial power perceived as conspiracy</td>
<td>Comparable</td>
<td>Imperial country seeks control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial (moderates)</td>
<td>Paternal leader; modernizer, nationalist, has people's interest</td>
<td>Inferior; as children who need help</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
<td>Cannot manage, need economic and military help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Radicals)</td>
<td>Fanatic, extremist</td>
<td>Inferior, agitators, terrorists</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
<td>Well organized and clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Combination of images with no extreme tendencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Gulf Crisis: U.S. Senate Debate

refers to generally as the “dependent” image, and one especially important for this chapter, is that a leader of state A perceives state B as having two groups vying for governance. One group, the “moderates,” is usually controlled to some extent by state A, or at least the “moderates” are in agreement with state A’s policies. A second group, the “radicals” or perhaps the “terrorists,” are perceived as attempting to take over state B’s government. State A then views state B’s government as weak, often needing state A’s economic, military, and political assistance. Of course, the group in B’s government may be opposed by state A, as in the case of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, where the group opposing the United States became “freedom fighters.” Fourth, the complex image refers to a situation in which a leader of state A does not hold one of the stereotypical images of state B but perceives B as having components that are complex. The leader of state A, for example, may not perceive state B as a strong threat or an opportunity.

Figure 12.1 is a diagram of the hypothesized interactive structure of a person’s image and his or her problem representation. As noted, the underlying dimensions act to form the particular image, which in turn feeds into the problem representation. The problem-representational information, however, is assumed to influence what image is held because the situation or at least the individual’s definition of the situation (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 1954; 1962) plays a role in defining and activating a particular image. Then, the image and problem-representational components jointly act to produce the rhetoric that is spoken by the individual in relation to a given state. The state’s policy choices are presumably also influenced by the integrated image representation (cf. Herrmann and Fischerkeller 1994).

Nature of an Argument

An argument minimally consists of a claim and a supporting reason (Angell 1964). In our analysis a senator’s position on a resolution was considered in relation to his basic claim, and the argumentation developed constituted his justification for supporting that claim. We examined the arguments of each senator and subsequently constructed two argument structures, each reflecting the cumulative position of the respective senators on each side of the debate. The analysis was conducted within the general framework of the Toulmin (1958) jurisprudence model of argument, although the amount of argumentation limited the model’s application.

Method

The statements of each of the ninety-eight U.S. senators participating in the debate were taken from the 1991 Congressional Record of January 10, 11,
and 12. All quotations are from this record, and the numbers in parentheses denote the quotation's page number in this record. The two senators who did not contribute were Cranston, D-Calif., and Packwood, R-Oreg. Two individuals read the texts in their entirety. The arguments were extracted for each senator. A consensual argument structure was then determined for individuals on each side of the debate. The reliability of the judgments made by the individuals extracting arguments was 85.

Results

Argumentation Findings

Individuals voting in favor of the Dole-Warner resolution – that is, those supporting authorization of the use of military force – are termed authorizers.
The Gulf Crisis: U.S. Senate Debate

Claim: Iraq must leave Kuwait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifier</th>
<th>Supporting Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>must leave immediately</td>
<td>Waiting can break up coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Waiting is in Hussein’s interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too late to support Bush policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iraq is a threat

- Economic threat
- Military threat
- Political threat

U.S. has obligation to produce the withdrawal

- Stop aggression and punish it
- Punish human rights violation
- Let what happens to Hussein set example to future “Husseins”

Figure 12.2. Representation-phase argument structure for the “authorizers.” Numbers represent number of senators (of 51) making the particular point.

and those favoring the Mitchell-Nunn resolution are termed sanctioners. The two groups were split largely along party lines, with ten Democrats voting with Republicans in favor of the Dole-Warner resolution and two Republicans voting with the Democrats in opposition to the Dole-Warner resolution.

**Authorizer Position:** Figure 12.2 presents a summary of the arguments stated by the authorizers. The basic claim is that “Iraq must leave Kuwait,” the claim being qualified by thirty senators with respect to timing – that is, “Iraq must leave Kuwait immediately.” The reasons given for immediacy are provided at the top of Figure 12.2.

As shown, the claim is supported by two sets of reasons. The most extensive line of argument provided by the authorizers regarding why Iraq must leave Kuwait was that Iraq posed an economic, military, and political threat. Figure 12.2 presents the three categories and how many senators mentioned each type of threat. Figure 12.3 provides a more detailed description of the threat components. The economic threat, mentioned with relative infrequency, involved the possibility of Hussein’s influencing and possibly controlling the world economy, as exemplified by Senator Danforth, R-Mo.: “Some people have asked whether this conflict is not ‘just about’ oil. To me, that is like asking whether it is not just about oxygen. Like it or not, our country, together with the rest of the world, is utterly dependent on oil. Our economy, our jobs, our ability to defend ourselves are dependent on our
access to oil. To control the world’s supply of oil is in a real sense to control the world” (122).

A large number of authorizers referred to Iraq as a military threat, which pertained to the possibility of Hussein invading other Arab countries, attacking Israel, and potentially being a threat to the United States. Senators asserted that Hussein was a threat via terrorism, that he had biological and chemical weapons, that Iraq had or would soon have a nuclear potential, and that Iraq was working on the development of an ICBM. Senator Bryan, D-Neb., stated: “Hussein now today has under arms more men than Hitler when the German Army marched into the Rhineland . . . more tanks than when the Panzer Divisions crushed France . . . and most chilling of all, much closer to
having a nuclear weapon than Adolf Hitler ever was” (264). In addition, Senator Roth, D-Del., stated: “Hussein has demonstrated that with the Cold War fading, the real threat to freedom-loving nations is the proliferation of arms in the hands of despotic dictators. Intercontinental missiles, chemical, biological, and nuclear arms turn unstable Third World nations into first-rate military powers” (137). Senator Cohen, R-Maine, stated: “Not one of us . . . is safe from the violence currently being inflicted in Kuwait. . . . Our security is only a Pan Am 103 away at any moment” (333–334). The statement of possible direct military threat to the United States was perhaps best stated by Senator Cohen, R-Maine: “Whether he acquires them (nuclear weapons) in 6 months or 6 years, he eventually will have them; and he will have them and an intercontinental range for his ballistic missiles; and that means that the wheat fields of Kansas will fall under the same threat as the oil fields of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia” (167).

It was also frequently mentioned that Iraq posed a political threat. Coats, R-Ind., stated: “Saddam Hussein’s geopolitical designs on the Middle East are ambitious and ominous. His goals include becoming the leader of the Arab nation, the destruction of Israel, and the elimination of Western capabilities to influence events in the Middle East” (362). Senator Hatch, R-Utah, also discussed the theme of Western influence: “We have a major political interest in preventing Hussein from radicalizing the Arab world. For decades, moderates and radicals have struggled for the heart of the Arab world. If we back down from this confrontation, Hussein would become the hero of the Arab man in the street. Revolutionary forces would topple moderate governments in the pivotal countries of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Hussein’s brand of anti-Americanism would soon dominate every Arab country from Morocco to Oman” (142). Similarly, American prestige was seen to be on the line, as Senator Coats, R-Ind., stated: “In many ways we are the only remaining superpower, and our handling of this crisis will determine our international status. If we fail to achieve a satisfactory resolution to this crisis, U.S. global influence will be severely tarnished, and we will need to rethink our entire approach to foreign and defense policy . . . [O]ur involvement in a United Nations peacekeeping mission will never again carry the same weight. . . . We also risk undermining the United Nations just when this institution is becoming more relevant and effective in dealing with global instability” (362–364). And success for Hussein would encourage other threats: “If Saddam Hussein in any way gains from his aggression . . . other aggressors will be encouraged to attack their neighbors, and place peace everywhere in the world in jeopardy” (Domenici, R-N.Mex.: 325). Another set of arguments, presented at the bottom of Figure 12.2, involved the idea that the United States has a moral obligation and responsibility to stop Hussein, to punish Hussein’s unprovoked aggression, and more generally, to punish his violation
of human rights. This obligation is perceived as belonging to the world, to the United Nations, to Israel, and to the moderate Arab states. With respect to the argument that the United States must serve as the world leader to stop aggression, Senator Symms, R-Idaho, stated: "The reason it is the Americans who have to shoulder the biggest part of the responsibility is that we are the only people in the world who are capable. The history, the wealth, the military preparedness, to confront a Saddam Hussein" (378–379). Senator Rudman, R-N.H., argued, "Fundamental principles of international law cannot be permitted to be trampled with impunity . . . there is an ethical clarity to the situation which cannot but shake an often numbed international conscience. . . . To cave in to such aggression . . . would mock every value we ascribe to an enlightened foreign policy" (325).

We pause here to note the nature of the threat stated by authorizers. The authorizers emphasized the military threat, also pointing to a related political threat. The economic threat was less emphasized, although it certainly was mentioned. The perception of threat is in agreement with the enemy image. With respect to indicator usage, some of the authorizer rhetoric referred to Hussein as highly aggressive and expansionistic, with respect to moderate Arab states, to Israel, and even the United States. What is especially interesting about this mode of threat is that the greatest emphasis is upon the threat to the nations being influenced by the United States, in Senator Hatch’s terms. This fact points to the idea that if one views the Middle East as a whole, one sees a distinction of moderates and radicals, strongly suggesting that the view of the Middle East as a whole was imperial. Furthermore, there was some questionable lumping of "radicals" with Hussein; for example, Hussein was placed in the same category as Moslem fundamentalists of Egypt and Jordan. It seems that authorizers, out of conviction or in efforts to persuade, were attempting to portray Hussein and Iraq as America’s enemies, using the rhetoric of the enemy image. On the other hand, when the authorizers’ statements referring to the Middle East as a whole are considered, the image emerging is imperial. This is because Hussein was regarded as a threat to Israel, to moderate Arab states friendly to the United States, and generally to U.S. influence in the Middle East. There is, in other words, the distinction of "moderates" and "radicals" described in Table 12.1.

Turning now to the solutions proposed, we note again that the agreed upon goal was that Hussein should remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The issue at stake was how to accomplish this goal. The authorizers supported the possible use of military intervention, a position in support of the president’s position, with such action regarded as important, at least in part because of the desire for immediate withdrawal.

Figure 12.4 presents a diagram of the solution proposed by the authorizers. The basic claim is that the Senate should authorize the use of force. This
claim serves as the solution to the problem of means. One reason supporting this claim, as noted in Figure 12.4, is that the threat of the use of military force was regarded as the only way to prevent war, as Senator Simpson, R-Wyo., indicated: "Only by making him [Saddam Hussein] so absolutely certain that this has been a commitment of ours [taking whatever action is necessary to pull his taloned claw away from the slitted [sic] throat of Kuwait] and by giving it to him eyeball to eyeball in the tough, bully style that he seems to love, only then can we have any real hope of avoiding war" (392). In addition, the authorizers supported their position via reference to the 1930s, arguing that appeasement did not lead to peace then, because Hitler continued his aggression. Hussein should not be appeased, and even a delay in authorizing the use of force would constitute appeasement.

As also shown in Figure 12.4, the authorizers considered two other solutions, economic and political. Authorizers argued against the continued use of sanctions, saying they were not working. A variety of statements supported this view; for example, the CIA’s head, Webster, stated that the Iran–Iraq war
showed that Iraq could endure hardship and therefore would not yield to sanctions. It was also argued that sanctions could not be fully implemented, that they may cause suffering to the people of Iraq, and that they could pose economic problems to allied countries such as Turkey. It was also argued that other attempts at sanctions, as with Libya, have not worked. Relatively few authorizers discussed the diplomatic option, but those that did indicated that it had failed, that President Bush "had gone the extra mile," and that Iraq had indeed rejected diplomatic solutions proposed by Secretary of State Baker.

Once again, there also was a qualification of timing; in this case, military authorization was needed immediately because delay would increase the costs, would constitute appeasement, and would give Hussein a better chance to build up defenses. The counterargument, stated by authorizers to the argument that military force should not be used because of the potential cost in lives and money, was that although there might be costs now, the costs would be much greater if action was not taken immediately.

Pausing at this point, we find that the authorizer argumentation for endorsing possible military intervention appealed strongly to the idea that the threat of military action was the only thing Hussein would understand. But even more significant is the context of this argument. President Bush had already indicated that the military option was real and that he already had threatened in definite terms, via ultimatum, that it would be employed. Given this position, not supporting military action would be in direct conflict with the president's policy and would appear to be appeasing Hussein and showing a lack of will. In such a case, the pressure from the presidential office was quite substantial. Moreover, this position was in keeping with the capability perception of the enemy image; that is, one needs to be firm and stand up to the enemy so that he will back down.

As discussed in the next section, sanctioners generally took the position that although military action might be necessary, the United States should first continue to explore economic and diplomatic solutions before using military force. In a sense, this made the sanctioners' vote difficult because a vote against endorsing the president's policy could be interpreted either as being against any military intervention or being against only immediate military intervention. The authorizer argumentation was directed against both of these views, especially indicating that neither of these two avenues was feasible, that they would not work, and any delay in military action could be costly.

With respect to the representation employed, the authorizers showed a further tendency to portray Iraq in terms of the enemy image by noting that the United States should avoid harming the Iraqi citizens, thus employing the enemy-image rhetoric concerning decision processes; that is, Iraq had a government that suppressed its people, who disliked the government.
Sanctioner Position: The sanctioners agreed with the claim (Figure 12.1) that “Iraq must leave Kuwait.” They also agreed that the United States had a sense of responsibility in stopping Hussein, as indicated by Senator Sanford’s (D-N.C.) comment: “All of us share a common understanding, and have from the beginning, that we cannot let Saddam Hussein have any of the fruits of his aggression” (276). Similarly, Senator Wellstone, D-Minn., stated: “It is a bedrock principle of world order that no country has the right to go in and swallow up another country” (107). As previously mentioned, the sanctioners differed from authorizers in the means by which Hussein’s withdrawal from Kuwait should be accomplished.

With respect to the three types of threats indicated in Figure 12.2, the sanctioners, while acknowledging Hussein’s aggression, did not describe Hussein as a military threat to the United States. Senator Biden, D-Del., for example, in arguing that America had no vital interests in the region that merited going to war, stated: “Yes, we have interests in the Middle East. We wish to support the free flow of oil. We wish to promote stability, including the securing of Israel. But we have heard not one cogent argument that any vital American interest is at stake in a way that impels us to war” (337). Senator Biden also pointed out that President Bush had stated that the United States would not attack Iraq if the Iraqi troops were withdrawn from Kuwait, “notwithstanding the prospect of an Iraqi nuclear capability” (340). From the president’s assertion, Biden was then able to argue that Iraq’s military potential, and especially its nuclear potential, was not regarded as a substantial threat to U.S. security, because if it were, President Bush could not have made the foregoing statement. Also, with respect to capability, Senator Moynihan, D-N.Y., stated: “The Iraqis do not (even) have the technology to print their own paper money” (110).

Some sanctioners did, however, tend to see Iraq as an economic threat. Senator Inouye, D-Hawaii, stated:

The threat posed by the Iraqi invasion extends far beyond the Middle East. Hussein’s attempt to control a major portion of the region’s oil supply continues to have a detrimental effect on the global economy. The price of basic commodities, food, fuel, and shelter has risen at an alarming rate, cutting deeply into the incomes of poor Americans and plunging the Nation into its worst recession in a decade. (365)

Figure 12.5 presents arguments used by sanctioners in support of the economic and diplomatic alternatives, and Figure 12.6 presents arguments stated in opposition to the use of military force. One claim is that the sanctions should be continued. As an example of this position, Senator Lautenberg, D-N.J., stated: “Historical analysis of the use of economic sanctions suggests that they can be effective over time in forcing the withdrawal of Iraqi troops
from Kuwait. The prospects for the success of sanctions against Iraq are considerably higher than in previous international efforts because of the unprecedented coverage of sanctions which cover virtually all of Iraq's trade and finance, and the strong commitment to these sanctions by the global community. Sanctions have rarely been applied in such a comprehensive manner, even in wartime. . . . Iraq is unusually vulnerable to economic coercion like this because crude oil represents 90% of its total exports. It is easily monitored and easily interdicted” (246).

A relatively large number of sanctioners indicated that in addition to economic sanctions, a diplomatic solution should be pursued.

Prayerfully there are diplomatic operations taking place, but they are not coming from this country. . . . Our diplomacy consisted of sending the secretary of state to meet with the Foreign Minister; not to negotiate, but to deliver a message. I do not consider that negotiation, but that is the way this executive wanted to conduct his business. . . . He puts us in the position of giving up on diplomacy and having to vote for economic sanctions or for war. (Adams, D-Wash.: 138)

Figure 12.6 presents the sanctioner counterargument to the authorizers' claim that use of military force should be authorized. One set of reasons maintained that the action was unwarranted and inappropriate. Such a position was justified by statements indicating that, as stated before, no vital U.S. interests were at stake, that Hussein's increased control of oil was not as much of a critical threat as argued, that a defensive posture would prohibit
further invasion by Iraq, that the crisis was artificially created by President Bush, and that the United States is arbitrary in its actions, not responding, for example, to Soviet aggression in Lithuania. It was also argued that the United States was not pursuing a “New World Order” but perpetuating the “Old Order” or developing a “New World Disorder.” Senator Bradley, D-N.J., stated:

What they have told us, however, . . . is that there is something far deeper than our national interest in the situation that compels us to take this impatient, belligerent, risky stance. It is the new world order, with America
offering a new paradigm for leadership. But if this first crisis in the post-
cold-war is to be resolved simply by a blind rush to the use of force, what
is so new about the new world order? ... [If] America truly hopes to lead
the world in a new way ... we will lead by the power of our example, not
just by the firepower of our military. (136)

A second set of arguments stated that the costs of war in lives and money
would be too high. "When a nation goes off to war and conducts it essentially
itself, in terms of the cost in lives and dollars, it is even in a weaker position
to deal with its fundamental economic problems here at home. We are way
overdue in that respect. It is time to start investing in America and in our

A third set of arguments suggested that a possible war had already pro-
duced a divided United States and that with increasing casualties the division
would be like that involving Vietnam. In addition, it was argued that war is
uncertain and often unstoppable. It was suggested that a war would also be
inappropriate for the political goals of the United States, as Senator de-
Concini, D-Ariz., stated:

We must ask ourselves before we commit to war, where will war lead us?
What kind of regional order will result through the premature and massive
use of force? I am not willing today to ask men and women to risk their
lives for an action which in the end could further destabilize the region,
increase the threat of terrorism and Moslem fundamentalist radicalism, and
necessitate a prolonged military presence perhaps requiring even further
military action ... The complex problems of the Gulf region do not lend
themselves to simple solutions. We must find a course which will enable
our Arab allies to find their own way to peace in the region. (283)

In addition, it was argued that a war could lead to the breakdown of the
coalition and also to the possible overthrow of President Mubarak of Egypt
and King Hussein of Jordan, thereby producing increased instability in the
Middle East. Furthermore, it was argued that a substantial decrease in Iraqi
strength might enable Syria or Iran to increase its stature and strength in the
Middle East.

Sanctioners also presented counterarguments to particular arguments pre-
sented by the authorizers. For example, to the arguments that the 1930s
should not be repeated, Senator Bradley, D-N.J., argued:

If Hitler's earliest aggression -- against the Rhineland -- or Japan's earliest
aggression -- against Manchuria -- or Mussolini's earliest aggression
against Ethiopia -- had been met with strong deterrent measures, including
precautionary international military preparations and strong economic repre-
sals, the Allies might never have had to face the awful choice of war or
The Gulf Crisis: U.S. Senate Debate

appeasement. That’s the lesson of the 1930’s, and it is directly applicable to the Gulf. (136)

In terms of the images portrayed, it is clear that the sanctioners employed less enemy image rhetoric than did the authorizers. As Senator Biden’s comment indicated, sanctioners tended to see the invasion of Iraq as a matter less vital to the United States than did the authorizers, and the image conveyed by the sanctioners’ position was thus more complex than that maintained by the authorizers. At the same time, sanctioners did speak of the importance of U.S. influence in the Middle East and its goals of stability for Israel and for the Middle East in general. Indeed, it is interesting that the sanctioners argued that use of military force by the United States could produce an overthrow of the Egyptian and Jordanian governments, thus suggesting war was a threat to Middle East stability. The sanctioner position thus portrayed Iraq as less of an enemy, in terms of an enemy image, while viewing Iraq as a threat to the stability of the Middle East. This view may thus be regarded as both imperial and also more complex than the authorizer image.

Summary: The debate largely turned on the question of the use of sanctions and diplomacy to get Hussein to leave Kuwait versus the use of military force. Sanctioners indicated sanctions and diplomacy were working or had not been sufficiently pursued, whereas authorizers argued that both had been tried and they had not worked. Relatedly, the sanctioners argued that the potential costs and uncertainties of war suggested that military action should not be rushed into, and that sanctions should be given a chance; the authorizers argued that authorizing and thereby threatening use of military force was the only way to make Hussein withdraw the troops, and failing that, military action should be used. Furthermore, the authorizers had the cogent argument that failure to provide congressional authorization would essentially conflict with the president’s position, and that a majority vote against authorization would make it look as if there was a split with the president and a lack of congressional and possibly popular support. We turn now to the discussion and speculation section.

Discussion and Speculation: Representational Issues

With respect to the issue of what caused the crisis, examination of the argumentation portrays a substantial difference between the two sides. The authorizer position held that the primary cause of the crisis was the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. This action was attributed to one person, Hussein, who was said to be interested in power, in military strength, in becoming “the” Arab leader, in conquering other states, and in controlling the world’s oil supply.
To accomplish these goals, it was argued, Hussein had created a powerful military machine designed to include poisonous gas, bacteriological warfare, nuclear weapons, and intercontinental missiles. The focus on Hussein as the primary cause of the crisis is underscored in another chapter, involving the use of metaphor in the Senate debate (Voss, Kennet, Wiley, and Engstler-Schoeller 1992). The sanctioners used more metaphors than the authorizers in all of the categories of metaphor that were defined, except one—that of metaphors about Hussein himself. Hussein was not regarded as diabolical but as "crafty" and "guileful," as well as a "butcher," "glutton," "dog," "snake," "godfather," and other less-than-flattering terms (Voss et al. 1992).

On the other hand, Senator Specter, R-Pa., stated: "I had an opportunity to visit with Saddam Hussein. I found him poorly informed. However, he was certainly no madman, he must have some other calculation... involving Israel in a war to destroy the coalition by forcing the Arabs to fight the Israelis" (115). Similarly, Senator Murkowski, R-Alaska, described Hussein as "cunning and he has a clear objective" (288); these characterizations are appropriate to the enemy image. In other words, Hussein generally was viewed by authorizers especially as a ruthless Hitler-type, motivated by power and expansionism. Indeed, the Dole-Warner resolution included the expression "threat to world peace" about Iraq, whereas the Mitchell-Nunn resolution did not. Given the perception of Hussein as the cause of the crisis, forcing withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait was a necessity, and given what had transpired by January 10, a threat to U.S. prestige also became a critical factor. Additional goals were the destruction of Iraq's military potential and the removal of Hussein from his position, by death or by a coup d'état, although as previously noted, withdrawal from Kuwait would have been sufficient to avoid military attack.

The solution of authorizing military action was primarily justified by two reasons. First, it was the only action Hussein would understand, and if Hussein would not withdraw, then a military attack would certainly force withdrawal. Second, a quick victory was anticipated because, as opposed to the military constraints of Vietnam, a full force strike would be used. The certainty that military action would involve costs was met with the argument that delay would increase costs.

With respect to sanctioners, although they also had the goal of withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, their causal analysis of the crisis was different from that of the authorizers in at least two ways. First, the sanctioners believed that the United States contributed substantially to the crisis, primarily via its "flawed policy" toward Iraq. This policy, as Senator Bradley noted, involved the support of Iraq in its war with Iran, including the furnishing of Iraq with weapons, the failure of the Bush administration to condemn Hussein's use of gas on Iraq's Kurdish population, and the American ambassa-
The Gulf Crisis: U.S. Senate Debate

dor’s statement to Hussein that Iraqi border issues were not an American concern. Second, sanctioners and authorizers had different perceptions with respect to the Iraqi position in the Middle East. Whereas authorizers regarded Hussein as a threat to moderate Arab states and to Israel, as well as a potential threat to the United States, sanctioners considered Hussein, while a threat primarily to moderate Arab states and Israel, to be only one player in a complex Middle East situation. Forcing Hussein’s withdrawal by military action, they argued, could have undesirable repercussions, such as a gain in power by Syria and Iran, the overthrow of leaders of moderate states, and an increase in anti-American sentiment among Arabs. Yet the sanctioners were aware of the way in which the status of the crisis at the time of the debate constrained the possible actions. Indeed, Senator Nunn, D-Ga., argued that the “die was cast” (189) when President Bush placed 400,000 soldiers in the Middle East with no plans for rotation. The Bush offensive posture, in other words, acted to constrain subsequent American actions because the troops could not be kept in the Middle East indefinitely without rotation; attempting to resolve the conflict via military means was then, to Nunn, virtually inevitable.

Image Representations

The following interpretation is offered in the context of the Cottam-Herrmann model. With respect to authorizers, the decision to take military action required that Iraq be portrayed as an enemy; that is, arguments by authorizers consciously or unconsciously had to emphasize Iraq as a threat, or military action would have had questionable justification. Thus, Hussein was described, in the rhetoric of the enemy image, as ruthless, expansionistic, and aggressive. But not only was the rhetoric involving motivation that of the enemy image; so also was that involving capability. The authorizers in particular spoke of the strength of Iraq’s army and the various weapons that Hussein had, thus emphasizing military capability. Iraq’s economic capability was not spoken of much at all by the authorizers, but the potential for economic capability and control was mentioned in relation to Iraq’s possibly gaining greater control of oil. Hussein was also regarded as a political threat, primarily to the moderate Middle East states, especially if he became the “Arab leader.” Hence, authorizers characterized Hussein as a threat “to world peace,” portraying Iraq as a possible nuclear threat to the United States, as an economic threat with respect to the control of oil, and as a political threat to U.S. influence in the Middle East.

The image portrayed by the sanctioners leads to the conclusion that the sanctioners perceived Iraq in a more complex way than did the authorizers. Some sanctioners held Iraq not to be a direct threat to the United States but
possibly a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East. They also spoke less of Iraq’s expansionistic tendencies and regarded Iraq’s military as less awesome than described by the authorizers. Both authorizers and sanctioners, however, viewed Iraq’s decision process in a manner consistent with the enemy image, separating the government from the people, regarding Hussein quite negatively but not viewing the citizens of Iraq in a similar way.

An alternative image to that of Iraq as an enemy is that of Iraq as a “child,” a child who in this case needed a lesson. Moreover, from the perspective of the model, this interpretation makes particular sense if the Gulf crisis is viewed in the context of the Middle East as a whole, including considerations of the Arab states, Iran, and Israel. Considered in this way, the Middle East is assumed to be an opportunity with respect to the interests of the United States, especially in relation to oil and in relation to achieving stability. Moreover, of particular importance is the fact that U.S. policy in the Middle East until shortly before the Gulf crisis had been oriented in relation to the Soviet Union (the competitive power), with states such as Syria, supported by the Soviet Union, also viewed as “radical.” Thus, consistent with the “child” image, within the region there were two groups of states, those such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, characterized by “enlightened” supporters of U.S. policy, and other states such as Iran, which were “radical.”

With respect to motivation, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait constituted a move by a “radical,” with Iraq then also constituting a threat to other “enlightened” Arab states and to Israel. With respect to capability, Iraq in fact was known to be quite poor economically compared to the United States and also relatively poor militarily, but relative to the other states of the Middle East (other than Israel), Iraq was regarded as a military power. Iraq was, in other words, an “agitator” that could provide a serious threat to the “enlightened.” With respect to the decision-process indicator, viewing the Arab and Moslem Middle East states as a whole, the “enlightened” states were perceived as needing U.S. support in preserving their status, as shown, for example, by sending troops to Saudi Arabia as a defensive measure, while an “agitator” state, Iraq, needed to be “taught a lesson,” the lesson being not to attack an “enlightened” state. Furthermore, such a “lesson,” it was argued in the debate, could then be passed on to other would-be dictators who may think of attacking smaller, relatively unprotected countries. This idea was referred to as part of a “New World Order.”

Turning to the issue of culture, the “child”—“imperial” interpretation made U.S. leaders view Iraq as culturally inferior to the United States. One would not expect such comments to be overt, but the direct or indirect statements that were made in the debate about culture were consistent with this interpretation. Senator Hatch was quoted earlier in reference to America’s “moral commitment” to Israel and moderate Arab states, and his labeling of
countries had been one of viewing most countries in relation to a "dependent" image. In such an image, the dependent country usually relies on the dominating country for economic, political, and military strength. When a threat is perceived, then there may be elements of the enemy image that emerge. In the Middle East, the situation is not dissimilar. As hypothesized, the United States has interests, with the image generated being the imperial. Similarly, Martha Cottam, in Chapter 6, deals with the question of the U.S. image that helped shape policy decisions in Somalia.

Conclusions

We have endeavored to summarize the argumentation of the Gulf crisis debate and an interpretation thereof. Our analysis suggests that the argumentation, while itself of interest, requires interpretation within some type of theoretical framework or model in order to develop an understanding of the factors underlying the debate; it is not enough to simply show what claims were stated and how they were justified. In the current case, the argument at face value turned on the interpretation of sanction effectiveness and the willingness to initiate military action with its differentially perceived costs and benefits. But at a deeper level, the argumentation was a function or product of the nature of the underlying representations that senators held about the Gulf crisis, and most importantly, of the model that U.S. leaders held of the Middle Eastern Arab states: that they constituted an opportunity and that they had less capability and an inferior culture compared with the United States.

As noted by R. Cottam (1977), R. Herrmann (1984, 1988), and M. Cottam (1994), holding a particular extreme image essentially involves use of a stereotype, a stereotype that produces simplification of the given situation. This is an important idea because it seems that one aspect of post-Cold War images is a tendency to simplify via attributing fault to an individual rather than a situation, what in social psychology is termed the fundamental attribution error (Nisbett and Ross 1980). It is easier to think that the difficulties of a problem situation are a function of the actions or ideology of one person, as Hussein or Noriega, than to analyze in depth the overall situation and the complexity of the causal relations. (See Cottam and McCoy, Chapter 6 in this volume, regarding this point.)

One other point is that the present analysis, including argumentation, problem representation, and images to interpret the Gulf debate, is not the only approach available. Boynton (1991), for example, in the context of a Senate committee decision, has shown that developing an acceptable narrative from available information may also be a fruitful means to analyze and interpret particular text. Such an analysis could conceivably be used in a debate context, although some qualification would likely be necessary. Similarly, Wal-
The Gulf Crisis: U.S. Senate Debate

lace, Suedfeld, and Thachuk (1993), using the cognitive or integrative complexity measure of text analysis demonstrated that integrative complexity was more simple in "hawks" than "doves" and that a lower amount of interpretation could also serve as a signal for possible action. Finally, we note that Renshon (1992), in his analysis of good judgment, has noted the importance of framing decisions, that is, decisions that frame an issue such that they influence future decisions. In the present account, the point is made that the image held by individuals of a given country influences the development of the problem representation and that the representation acts to constrain the policy choices as well as the rhetoric employed by the individual. This view, however, is not necessarily in conflict with Renshon's. For example, as pointed out by Nunn, Bush's decision to send a relatively large number of troops to the Middle East without a rotation plan constrained what could be done. To Renshon, the Bush decision would probably be a framing decision, whereas we would suggest that the decision was a function of Bush's mental representation of the problem.

A final note on this U.S. Senate debate on the Gulf War crisis is that the vote was essentially known beforehand. Individuals were not likely to change their minds, and the speeches made simply permitted each senator to "stand up and be counted," something relevant to the colleagues, the president, and especially to the senator's constituents. The debate apparently had virtually no effect on the vote, but it allowed individuals to express their positions on an extremely important issue, to make their constituencies aware of their positions, and to be able to look back at their positions afterward.

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References

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