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## **Cognitive Theory of War: Why Do Weak States Choose War against Stronger States?**

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sang Hyun Park entitled "Cognitive Theory of War: Why Do Weak States Choose War against Stronger States?." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Political Science.

Robert A. Gorman, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Mary Caprioli, Donald W. Hastings, April Morgan, Anthony J. Nownes

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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April Morgan

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Anthony J. Nownes

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Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

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Vice Chancellor and  
Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original Signatures are on file with official student records)

COGNITIVE THEORY OF WAR:  
WHY DO WEAK STATES CHOOSE WAR  
AGAINST STRONGER STATES?

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Sang-Hyun Park  
December 2004

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Jae-Cho Park for inspiring me and encouraging me to have a dream of social scientist.

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## **Abstract**

The key question to be addressed in this paper is why weaker states with a slight chance of winning do not avoid war against stronger states. Even though most war theory does offer a few insights about the conditions under which weak states choose war when there is only a slight possibility of winning, explanations based on either emphasis on rationality or ignorance of “interacting structure” of international relations leave many practical remedies unexplained. This paper explains asymmetric conflict on the combination of Prospect theory and Game theory. The interacting game structure of asymmetric conflicts can be summarized. Under the threat of massive retaliation by a strong state, a weak state is forced to choose between war (defection) and withdrawal (cooperation). In asymmetric conflicts, defection (war against a strong state with a slight chance of winning) is a risky gamble, and cooperation is safe choice. In contrast to Expected Utility theory, this paper argues that weak states in a loss frame chooses risky war (defection) against a superior adversary in the hope of recovering from their crisis.

This paper follows crisis analyses of other Prospect theorists. The nature and seriousness of the crisis of a weak state are analyzed. The rare occurrence and deviant characteristics of a weak state’s war choice make it suitable to use a qualitative structured analysis. The research hypothesis is applied to three case studies: the Gulf War between Iraq and the United States-led alliance in 1990, the Falkland/Malvinas Island war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982, and the Middle East War between Egypt and Israel in 1973. The implication of this study is that enforcing strategy based on superior capability is not a reasonable means to prevent a weak state in a loss frame from choosing war against superior adversary.

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## **Chapter I. Introduction**

The world wars of the last century tragically illustrate the devastating consequences of war. In an attempt to develop a theory of prevention, scholars have produced many studies of interstate war that focus on the question of who precipitates these brutalities and why (Blainey, 1973; Geller, 2000; Geller and Singer, 1998; Maoz, 1982 and 1993; Mayer, 1986; Rasler and Thompson, 1999; Suganami, 2002; Vasquez, 1993). Diverse theories of war have contributed to the study of interstate warfare. However, practical solutions for international peace are still lacking.

One of the reasons for this, as Levy (1989; 1998) points out, is that too much attention has been paid on conflicts between superpowers and too little attention paid to asymmetric or unequal conflicts between major and minor states. The distribution of capability between belligerent states has been a core concept in war typology literature (Levy, 1983: 51–52; 1990; Lider, 1977; Midlarsky, 1986a and 1988; Siverson and Sullivan 1983; Small and Singer, 1982: 46–52; Vasquez, 1983 and 1993; Wright, 1965) and in balance of power theory and power preponderance theory (DiCicco and Levy, 1999; Geller 1993; Gochman, 1990; Huth, Bennett, and Gelpi, 1992; Kim, 1992 and 1996; Kugler and Lemke, 1996). Various war theories such as the long cycle theory of Modelski and Thompson, the capitalist world-economy paradigm of Wallerstein (1974 a; 1974b) and Chase-Dunn (1981), the power transition theory of Organski and Kugler (1989), Gilpin's (1981) theory of hegemonic war, Doran's (1983) power cycle theory, Vayrynen's (1983) theory of economic cycles and power transition, and Midlarsky's (1978) theory of hierarchical equilibrium, are primarily focused on the military conflicts between superpowers. Even studies which present an academic interest in asymmetric

conflicts between major states and minor states are confined to wars initiated by major powers in enduring rivalries (Geller, 1993; 2000), initiated by intensive hostility irrespective of their relative military power, or in the imperial wars (or independent wars) of the nineteenth century (Vasquez, 1993:65) launched by the major states against considerably weaker states for the purpose of taking advantage of weaker (and less populous) neighbors.

Even though a considerable amount of scientific research has been conducted on the elements associated with the occurrence of international war, little is known about a weak state's war initiation against stronger states. Most theories of war rest on the assumption of rational choice, arguing that rational calculations guide the choice to enter war. Moreover, decision makers' estimation of relative power among competitors is a key to initiation of military conflicts.

In most circumstances, weaker states prefer to accept an unfavorable balance of power rather than wage war against a more powerful rival. Many empirical studies (Arquilla, 1992; Blainey, 1973; Cannizxo, 1980; Rosen, 1972; Small and Singer, 1970, 1982; Reiter and Stam, 1998; Stam, 1996; Wang and Ray, 1994; Wayman, Singer and Goertz, 1983) have emphasized the disadvantages of weak states over stronger states because states with superior capabilities tend to defeat states with inferior capabilities.

From the perspective of rational choice, weak states' (i.e., militarily and economically less powerful states) war initiation against stronger states has been regarded as historical blunder or "error term" (Gartzke, 1999), motivated not so much by the kind of cool, calm and collected calculation described by expected-utility theory (see Bueno de Mesquita, 1981) as by emotions like resentment (M. Singer, 1972), rage (Fanon, 1968),

or revolt that arises out of an inability to continue to tolerate a situation (Oglesby, 1967). Compared to other international military hostilities such as superpower conflicts and stronger states initiating war on weaker ones, a weaker state choosing warfare against a stronger one is uncommon. In seventy five interstate wars between 1816 and 1992 (listed in the COW:Correlates of War Project) there are only seventeen cases in which a weak state launched war against a superior state. After 1948, the cases are reduced to nine: the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in 1951, the Pakistan's offensive in the Second Kashmir War (1965), the Egypt and Syria's offensive against Israel in the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Cambodian military incursions against Vietnam in 1977, the Somali attack on Ethiopia (1977), the Ugandan attack on Tanzania (1978-1979), Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands (1982), and the Iraqi war against US-led Coalitions in the Gulf War (1990-1991). Low occurrence, however, does not mean that this phenomenon is unimportant. Weak state war initiation is a political phenomenon worthy of serious academic study in order to expand our understanding of states' war behaviors.

Moreover, the importance of asymmetric conflicts between the US and rogue states has gotten more attention in the Post-Cold War context (Ahrari, 2001; Chomsky, 2000; Dokhanchi, 1996; Eland and Lee, 2001; Henriksen, 2001; Herring, 2000; Klare, 1995; Litwak, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2000; Rubin, 1999; Simon, 2002; Tanter, 1998). The increase in rogue states that act irrationally and adopt high risk policies in the international arena demands international scholarship to present clearer explanations of why weak states challenge international peace.

In this research, rational approaches to war will be critically reviewed and cognitive approaches (Berejikian, 2002a; 2002b) will be suggested as an alternative to

rational choice theories. But it cannot be claimed that rational explanations are wrong. Rather, rational approaches, while valuable, provide only part of the analytical tool needed to understand key foreign policy decisions, especially those responsible for weak state war initiation against stronger states.

The key question addressed is: why do weaker states with a slight chance of winning choose to go to war against stronger states; or, why don't weak states avoid war with stronger states? The purpose of the research is to specify the "context" or the possible relationship between entities (decision makers) and their environments. In this sense, this study is not so much concerned with system structure (overall anarchic condition or in terms of the distribution of military capability) as "context as cause," which is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition, but which make certain outcomes more or less likely in combination with other factors (Braumoeller and Goertz, 2000; Goertz, 1994:Chapter 2).

Based on the studies of Paul (1994) and Small and Singer (1982), asymmetric war is defined as one both involving two states with unequal overall military and economic resources and involving more than 1,000 or more battle casualties. This study will review previous studies and analyze their frameworks. Based on this definition, this study selects three asymmetric conflicts and applies cognitive analysis frameworks to study weak states' motivations to choose war against strong states. The conflicts considered include the Gulf War between Iraq and the United States-led alliance in 1991, the Falklands war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982, and the Middle East war between Egypt and Israel (the Yom Kippur War) in 1973.

## **Chapter II. Literature Review**

The issues of relative power and war initiation are important topics in theories of war (Gochman 1990; Geller 1993; Lemke and Werner 1996; Wayman 1996; Werner and Kugler 1996). However, the precipitation of war by weak states with disadvantages in relative power has not been a major issue in war studies. Exceptions are the research done by Paul (1994) and Geller (2000; 2002). The former presents several variables that exist when for weak states to launch a war against stronger powers, and the latter verifies historically weak states' motivations to initiate against a superior rival in the time of an unstable balance of power. A major reason for the almost total academic neglect of weak states' war initiation seems to be rooted in the assumption that the advantage in the relative balance of power is a key factor in victory and defeat. Adventurous challenges by weak states have been regarded as an unimportant issue in war studies.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of rare academic attention, most war theory does offer a few insights about the conditions under which weak states choose to go to war when they have only a slight chance of winning. Based on Walt's (1959) classification of the level of analysis, critical reviews and implications of previous studies will be followed.

---

1 . Even though weak states' war initiation in asymmetric conflicts was not the main focus in international relation studies, studies on asymmetric relation have been one of fields which have long tradition. Outstanding studies are Maoz(1989), Bachrah and Baratz(1962), Dwyer and Walker(1981), Fox(1959), Habeeb(1988), Hammerstein and Parker(1982), Hart(1976), Zartman and Kremenjuk(1995), Rothstein(1977), Rubin and Zartman(1995), Singer(1972), Zartman(1974, 1997).



## **II-1. International Level of Analysis: Power Transition and Window of Opportunity**

Power Transition theory (Houweling and Siccama, 1988; 1991; 1993; Kugler and Lemk 1996; Organski, 1958; Organski & Kugler, 1989), focusing on interstate balance of power, presents the highest level of analysis about the cause of weak states' war choices. Power Transition theory assumes two kinds of states: a defender and a challenger of the status quo. The challenger is a weaker but rising power that continuously succeeds in accumulating national capability. The other is a dominant defender whose relative power is declining.

The seed of international conflict in Power Transition theory is a changing relative balance of power between a defender and challenger. The growth rate of national power is likely to decline relative to the total sum of national power; the growth rate and total sum of national power are negatively related. Late-developing countries have higher growth rates than developed states because they can maximize the advantages of late development. (Gilpin, 1987: chapter 3)

War is, Power Transition theory suggests, most likely to occur during periods when the power capabilities of a rising challenger begin to approach those of a more dominant state. This occurs during a period when the international balance of power is unstable. Because the rapid growth of a challenger's capability soon exceeds that of a dominant defender, elites of defender states are threatened and turn to the use of force when other means of securing their goals fail. So far as Power Transition theory is concerned, the war initiator is a stronger status quo defender (Organski, 1958:333). World Wars I and II, in which Germany, the weak and status quo challenger, initiated a war

against a stronger defender, were the enigmas that Organski had difficulty explaining.

Geller (2002) and Maoz (1982:160) present a theoretical possibility to explain weak states' war initiation according to the logic of Power Transition theory. These two studies note that even if changes in the balance of power are the main cause of interstate war, war initiators may be weak challengers. Geller suggested that a war initiator would be the state that feels more dissatisfied regardless of defender or challenger. The weaker but rising challenger could be more dissatisfied with the status quo, which is disproportionately favorable to the dominant power. Encouraged by fast growing national power and frustrated by an unfavorable international status quo, weak states are motivated to choose war against the dominant power in order to change the status quo.

War initiations by Germany in World War I and II can be explained by this logic. According to Geller (2002), Germany, with relatively rapid economic development, caught up with the previously industrialized European states. However, the international status quo maintained by early developed countries was not favorable for late-developed Germany. Because Germany was more unsatisfied with the status quo maintained by British power, it challenged the status quo in hope of changing it.

The Windows of Opportunity theory (Copeland 2000; Johnson 1983; Lebow, 1984) gives similar insights into the choice of weaker states to enter war. Under the assumption that the first attack is advantageous (Jervis, 1978; Quester 1977; Sagan, 1986; Snyder J., 1984; Van Evera, 1984; 1985; 1998; 1999), policymakers decide to chose wars at the time when the military balance, favorable to them, would worsen dramatically in the near future. When windows of opportunity to win a war are considered to be closing in the near future, wars are expected to be initiated by states anxious about the future. A

winnable war is chosen in order to avoid the risk of a later clash under less favorable conditions.

The modes of war in the Window of Opportunity theory could be preventive or preemptive (Levy, 1987; Reiter, 1995). A preventive war entails the use of force to eliminate any possible future attack. A preemptive attack corresponds with the use of force to mitigate an impending strike by an adversary. The clear difference between the two modes is the detection of enemy mobilization of forces to attack. Whereas the grounds for preemption lie in evidence of a credible and imminent threat, the basis for prevention rests on the suspicion of an incipient and contingent threat (Betts, 1982; 1985; 2003; Crawford 2003).

The classic case of preemptive war is the Six Day War in 1967 between Israel and the alliance of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq (Reiter, 1995). Before the preemptive Israeli attack, the tension in the Middle East reached its highest point. Egyptian president Nasser mobilized his troops and cemented military alliances. Moreover, Nasser announced his intention to blockade the Strait of Tiran, Israel's vital waterway to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and he published his goal to strike Israel first in the future. Israel was terrified by an imminent attack and launched a surprise attack on June 5 1967, when Israel's power was waning (Levy and Gochal, 2001:7; Walzer, 1977:85).

The Third Punic War between Rome and Carthage (149-146 B.C.E) is an example of a preventive strike (Kegley and Raymond, 1999:84-89; 2003:388-9). Rome worried about Carthage's recovery of economic and military strength after two defeats by Rome. Roman decision makers were threatened by Carthage's resurgence and future military challenge. Rome, with superior military power, initiated war and destroyed minor

Carthage in an unprovoked military campaign.

In the Windows of Opportunity theory, the war initiator is expected to be stronger and a defender of the status quo. Increasing military vulnerability, fear and risk are important variables of warfare in the Windows of Opportunity theory. The dominant powers with a slow growth rate of national power are anxious about being dominated by the rising powers in the near future. The declining states decide to use their superior military power to prevent the rising states from challenging them in the near future. The dominant powers strike first because time is not on their side. Declining states choose war when they still have the means to prevent a rising power's challenge and their window of opportunity is still open.

Even though the Window of Opportunity theory does not mention a weak state's war initiation, its logic can be applied to the behavior of weaker states. Facing an imminent attack by a superior power, decision makers of the weaker states may believe that if they do not attack first, the stronger power will overwhelmingly capitulate weak states soon. If decision makers believe the side to first mobilize or attack has the advantage, decision makers of weak states might launch preemptive attacks in order to prevent an opponent from making the first strike. Before the window of opportunity to strike first and prevent further disasters is closed, it is rational for the weak challenger to strike first. There are seven examples of wars initiated by a weak state for the purpose of using a window of opportunity: the 1740 War of Austrian Succession, World War I, Hitler's 1940 attack on Norway, Chinese involvement in the Korean War against the United States, and the Israeli attack in Arab-Israeli wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973 (Reiter 1995; Van Evera, 1999).

A determining factor in initiating a war in Power Transition Theory and Window of Opportunity theory is a change in the relative balance of power. These two theories identify a war initiator as the actor who is dissatisfied with the status quo and/or expects the status quo to become worse soon. Interstate war is the means to get out of this unsatisfying balance of power.

Even if these two theories discuss the change of relative balance of power between belligerents as a determining factor, they do not specify the decision making processes, how the elite of war initiators justify dangerous policies, which can end in self-destruction, as a potential method of changing the status quo. Initiating war with the goal of improving or changing the status quo is not always acceptable. In other words, all states that are not satisfied with the status quo do not initiate war. It is necessary to specify the context in which war initiation is accepted or rejected as a viable political means. It is important to review the studies that account for when and under what conditions war is regarded as a reasonable political measure.

## **II-2. Domestic Level of Analysis: Diversionary Theory**

Diversionary theory does not so much focus on international power structure as on the domestic political conditions of war initiators. At the heart of the literature on diversionary war theory is the assumption that political leaders are more likely to initiate war as their domestic political difficulty increases. Political leaders facing domestic strife, such as scandal, economic distress or displacement, or sagging approval ratings, initiate external conflict to distract the public from deteriorating political conditions at home.

Diversionary war is a theory of external use of force for internal political purposes

in an effort to bolster domestic political support and maintain political control. There are three main causal mechanisms to explain diversionary war: the scapegoat hypothesis, the in-group/out-group hypothesis, and the resurrection gambling hypothesis. The scapegoat hypothesis identifies political leaders' efforts to shift focus away from failed domestic policies and towards a foreign enemy (Russett, 1990). The hypothesis of the "in-group, out-group" from sociology (Coser, 1956; Rothbart 1993; Rothbart and Hallmark, 1988; Simmel, 1898a; 1898b; 1898c) argues that in-group cohesion increases when a state involves itself in an international crisis because of a "rallying-around-the-flag" effect (Dassel and Reinhardt, 1999; Gelpi;1997; Levy, 1988; 1989; James and Oneal, 1991; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Rosencrance 1963; Rummel 1963; Tanter 1966; Wilenfeld 1968). The hypothesis of gambling for resurrection is that leaders who expect to lose power prefer the risky gamble of war (Down and Rocke, 1994).

The classic examples of diverting domestic difficulty through international war are France in the French Revolutionary Wars and in the Crimean War, Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, Germany in World War I and II, and Argentina and Britain in the Falklands War (Lebow, 1981; 1977; Levy and Vakili, 1993; Mayer, 1969; Williams 2001).

The implication of Diversionary theory in a weak state's war initiation is that the decision maker of the weaker state with domestic crises is likely to choose war against the stronger state in order to circumvent a domestic crisis.

"Externalization" of domestic turmoil does not seem to be good explanation of why a weak state initiates war in asymmetric conflicts. A broad and extensive empirical literature calls into question the causal mechanism between domestic crisis and international conflicts, and even the very existence of diversionary war (Gelpi, 1997;

Leeds & Davis, 1997; Levy, 1989; Mansfield & Snyder, 1995; Miller, 1999; Wilkenfeld, 1968; Zinnes and Wilkenfeld, 1971).

### **II-3. Individual Level of Analysis: Rational Choice Theories**

The theory of asymmetric conflict is concerning with an individual level of analysis. Paul (1994) presents the situation that a state inferior in overall power capabilities may choose to initiate war against its stronger adversary based on rational calculations even when its leaders are fully aware of the opponent's superior power.

According to Paul (1994), weak states usually have limited goals for military action in asymmetric conflict; weak states just want to get a better negotiation advantage or to occupy a small part of strong state's territory or colony instead of conquering or invading the main territory. In this case, the weak state's war decision depends largely on four variables: whether or not the limited goal is achievable, whether or not short-term offensive capabilities are available, whether or not domestic and international support exist, and whether or not political power is controlled by militaristic decision-making groups who are ready to exploit temporary advantages. The probability of weak states initiating asymmetric war is high if the weaker state's decision makers believe in the efficacy of a limited aims strategy, the superiority -- even if short-lived -- of offensive weapons, and the reliability of foreign and domestic support.

Rational Choice theory is another theory focusing on individual choice. Rational Choice theory can be divided into two broad categories: Expected Utility theory and Game theory. These two theories share a common assumption that human choices are made by rational actors and are based on a cost-benefit analysis. Even though these two

approaches share basic assumptions, each emphasizes a different aspect of rational actors. While Expected Utility theory focuses on the well-calculated “choice” of rational actors, Game theory emphasizes the “structure” beyond the compass of a rational actor’s ability.

The most popular application of Expected Utility theory to war study is known as “war trap” theory (Bueno de Mesquita, 1981; Bueno de Mesquita & Lalman, 1992). Like other applications of Expected Utility theory, “war trap” theorists account for state action, or choice, by the maximization of its expected utility. In short, war initiation is the result of a rational actor’s utility maximization. States initiate war against other states when the expected value of war initiation is higher than any other choice and when benefits are higher than costs (or when expected utility is positive).

When applying Expected Utility theory to asymmetric conflicts, the first and foremost concern about initiating a war with a slim chance to win is whether or not the decision is based on utility maximization. The main problem is that considering all chances war is rarely best. To set aside all other variables and to consider the chance of winning the war, war initiation with a high probability of winning could be rational because the choice to go to war has the best payoff. But when a weak state chooses to go to war with a slight chance of winning, it is difficult for those who do not subscribe to Expected Utility theory to accept that weak states saw some positive value in choosing war. In this sense, weak states’ war choice against strong states is not rational under any circumstances; war is considered the least rational choice. Avoiding a war would be thought of as the most rational.

War Trap theorists tackle this question with two additional variables in their model: foreign alliance military support and decision makers’ attitude toward risk. Bueno



de Mesquita (1981) presents the possibility of a weaker state's war initiation when the decision maker is a risk-taking actor under conditions of uncertainty, and/or when military support from foreign alliances is available. The insight of "war trap" theory for weak states' precipitation of war is that a weak state is likely to initiate war against a superior military rival when decision makers of a weak state are likely to take high risks and the help of an alliance is available.

Game theory, another Rational Choice theory, discusses a state's choice under given structures which are decided by the preference orders of participants (Morrow, 1994; O'Neill, 1992). At the risk of being over simplistic, diverse classes of Game Theory applied in International Relations research are classified into six models: the proto-game theory (O'Neil, 1992), the sophisticated model of Game Theory (Brams and Kilgour, 1988), the Bayesian game of incomplete information (Powell, 1990), the repeated game model (Axelrod, 1984), the Theory of Move (Bram, 1994), and the applied model of Double-Edge Diplomacy (Evans, Jacobson and Putnam, 1993). In this dissertation, criticism of Game theory is based on the 2\*2 Proto game model because it is the basic model of Game theory; therefore, review of the proto game model could give a basic explanation about other models of Game theory.

Game theory specifies an "interactive structure" as a "game." Game models do not describe the actual play of experimental subjects. Rather they set up a pattern of constraints on the player's choices, and these constraints reward and punish the players in certain ways and induce them to behave in certain ways as they learn. In this sense, Game Theory is not descriptive, but rather normative. It states neither how actors do behave nor how they should behave in an absolute sense, but how they should behave if they wish to

achieve certain goals (Luce and Raiffa, 1957:63). The game is decided by the preference orders of participants. Game theory does not discuss how the preferences of actors are chosen, but simply assumes preference order is given (Rapoport, 1992). Game theorists also assume that actors share a “common conjecture,” or at the very least agree on the kind of game they are playing. Therefore, actors who know the kind of game use a Bayesian process to update estimates of one another’s preferences and make a choice (Morrow, 1994). Given the preference order, the actor should have to make a choice predicted by Game theory in order to maximize the actor’s utility.

For example (Figure 2-1), if two actors’ preference order is given as  $DC > CC > DD > CD$ , they are playing a Prisoner’s Dilemma game (Bram, 1975; Rapoport and Chammah, 1965). Both actors face a situation in which defection results in a more favorable outcome regardless of the choice of the other actor. In detail, if the other actor cooperates, defection is the choice for the highest value (greed); if the other defects defection is the choice to reduce losses (fear) (Ahn, et, 2001; Bonacic, Kahan, and Meeker, 1976; Komorita and Lapworth, 1982).

In the Prisoner’s Dilemma, each actor chooses defection as the most rational choice. Therefore, mutual defection (DD) is enforced by the “structure” in order to minimize cost and maximize benefits in the Prisoner’s Dilemma, because cooperation opens the possibility of being taken advantage of by the other player.

The implication of Game theory in a weak state’s war initiation is that decision makers of weak states located in a certain game structure (for example, Prisoner’s Dilemma) would choose a war with a stronger state for the purpose of maximizing its

		state A	
		C	D
state B	C	(3,3)	(1,4)
	D	(4,1)	<u>(2,2)</u>

**Figure 2-1. Prisoner's Dilemmas Game Structure**

Key: (x,y) = (payoff to Row, payoff to Column)  
 4=best; 3=second best; 2=second worst; 1=worst  
 Nash equilibrium is underscored

expected utility. In other words, assuming that the weak state is playing the Prisoner's Dilemma where there are only two choices: cooperation (capitulation) or defection (war). According to the logic of Game theory, there is no way but to choose war (defection) with strong states for the purpose of maximizing utility. The structure of the Prisoner's Dilemma pushes a weak state to choose a war that will be difficult to win.

The theory of Asymmetric Conflict and Expected Utility theory both agree that weak states' war initiation is not rational without the possibility of favorable conditions, which makes the expected utility of war initiation higher than that of any other choices and produces positive value.<sup>2</sup> According to these two theories, a foreign alliance is the common factor necessary to constitute positive expected utility. While the theory of Asymmetric Conflict focuses on war strategy and superior weapon systems, Expected Utility theory focuses on the decision maker's attitude toward risk.

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2 . Paul's study (1994) exclusively focused on the conditions, not the reason, that weak

Even though they have different emphases, all these factors merge on one important point: the probability of winning a war. Better military strategies, better weapon systems, and reliable alliance support can give the war initiator a higher chance of winning the war. Attitudes toward risk also influence the calculation of the chance of winning. The decision makers who accept risk usually calculate the chance of winning a war as higher than do risk-averse or risk-neutral actors (Morrow, 1985). Because utility is the function of value and probability, the higher probability yields the higher utility. If the weak state sees a higher utility in war initiation, the weak state will initiate war. In sum, setting aside the question of whether the calculation of the chance to win is correct or not, a weak state's war choice against a stronger adversary is rational if the choice has higher utility than other possible choices.

In spite of their useful insights into war choices, Expected Utility theory and Asymmetric Conflict theory are not sufficient to explain a weak state's war choice. The history of international war teaches us that most asymmetrical conflicts end in a loss by weak states. According to the Arreguin-Toft study, strong states won 71% of the time in asymmetric conflicts after 1800 (Arreguin-Toft, 2001). Wang and Ray's (1994) study shows that while major powers as initiators of war won 79.5% of the time against minor states, minor powers as initiators of war won just 31.3% of the time against major states. Lindley's (2003) study also confirms that weak states who initiate a war against strong states lost 63% of time. These historical facts implies that a weak state's calculations are faulty when deciding to initiate war against a strong state. The question is, where does the miscalculation come from? Expected Utility theory and Asymmetric Conflict theory do

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states initiate war against the strong states.

not answer this question. They do not explain why weak states perpetually make flawed decisions about war against strong states.

Expected Utility theory and Asymmetric Conflict theory also ignore the strategic interactions within which states interact. They regard the choice of highest utility as the best choice. The best choice, however, depends on the choice of the opponent and one's own goals (Signorino, 1999; Smith, 1998; 1999; Snyder and Diesing, 1977). One of the lessons of Game Theory is that no single state ever has complete control over the outcome; that outcome is an interaction between two states. As shown in the Prisoner's Dilemma (Figure 2-1), the choice of lower expected utility (Cooperation) can be the better choice when an opponent chooses to cooperate. The main point of Game theory is that the best choice depends on the game structure. If we know the game structure, we can make the best choice in a given game structure. In this sense, Game theory is a simple, structure-oriented explanation.

Even though Game theory is praised for its simplicity and structure-oriented explanation, it sacrifices the idea of the dynamic development of international conflicts. Because Game theory does not discuss the source of preference and assumes it as given, it cannot account for the change of choice. It just says that the change of choice is caused by the change of the game. It cannot specify why and how the preference orders of actors are changeable. In this aspect, Game theory is very limited in the explanation of dynamic development of international conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

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3 .Game Theory has been developed beyond its original 2\*2 game. Game theorists have developed new games and applied them to explain the dynamic development of international conflict. Axelrod's "Tit for Tat" strategy, Putnam's two-level game, and the Theory of move (Bram, 1994; Mor, 1993) are good examples. In the study of bargaining processes, the dynamic development of game has been studied more intensively than any

Expected Utility theory and Game theory are rational choice theories. They are based on instrumental (or thick version of) rationality: decision makers choose a “utility-maximization” choice (Cudd, 1995; Ferejohn, 1991). As Milton Friedman (1953) pointed out, crucial to instrumental rationality is the “transitivity” of the preferences. First, the set of preferences should be well established. If the set of preferences satisfies the criteria of “transitivity,” then it can be represented by a utility function. If an agent behaves as if he seeks to maximize such utility function, and if he does so in an efficient way, his behavior is considered rational.

The criticisms of the thick-version of Rational Choice theory may be divided into three categories: the unreality of its basic assumptions, its experimental failure, and its violation of its axioms in real political phenomena (Monroe, 2001; Rosati, 2000; Taylor et al., 1994).

The most arguable assumptions of Rational Choice theory concern the abilities of decision makers and the quality of information available to decision makers (substantive rationality). Basically, Rational Choice theory assumes the unlimited capability of decision makers who can calculate the probability of winning a war, quantify the value of the outcome, and identify alternative ways to get desirable outcomes (Elster, 1986: chapter 1; Steinbruner, 1974: chapter 2). Humans have limited capability to fully comprehend political reality and to make a decision based on it. The voluminous literature on judgmental biases and errors raises doubt about the capacity of even highly

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other fields. Metagame developed simultaneous play instead of simultaneous game. Rapoport’s N-person game deals with situations involving three or more bargainers. The M\*N game and super game also discuss the dynamic development of international conflict, focusing on the shift of game structure during the international bargaining process (Snyder, 1977).

motivated professionals to perform the types of information-processing tasks that a rational actor model regularly posits, that people routinely perform (Dawes, 1998; Kahneman and Tversky, 1982; Herek et al., 1987; Hogarth and Goldstein, 1996; Holsti, 1967).

Simon (1976; 1978), who believes in the limited capability of decision makers, developed the concept of “bounded rationality” (procedural rationality) where actors do not optimize (maximize), but rather choose a satisfying alternative under limited human cognitive capability and with limited information. In other words, humans are merely satisfying the need for decision criteria without exhausting all possible options.

Rational choice theorists assert that Simon’s concept of bounded rationality is, in fact, consistent with Rational Choice theory, when considering the time and effort spent collecting better information as the cost (Riker & Ordeshook 1973:21-3). Rational choice theorists agree with Simon that unlimited ability is unrealistic. But they argue that the concept of unlimited human capability is necessary as a benchmark for both measuring deviation and for building a theory.

More severe critiques of rationality come from psychological studies. Scholarship on psychological human interaction casts fundamental doubt on principles of rationality. Psychological scholars attempt to make the explanation of political phenomenon more realistic on the basis of actual experiments. They argue that human behavior is not guided by rational calculation. Rather, psychological heuristics such as availability, representativeness, anchoring, and attribution, are better explanations of human judgment because people frequently violate the three axioms of rationality and cannot maximize utility (Kahneman and Slovic, 1982; Vertzberger, 1998:79-87).

Prospect theory (Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1993; Tversky & Slovic, 1990) criticizes the most important three axioms of rationality on which most rational judgments are assumed to be based. The three axioms are connectedness, transitivity and maximization of utility value. Connectedness infers that all available options are rank-ordered. Such preference orderings are transitive. For example, if A is preferred to B, and B is preferred to C, A is preferred to C if it is transitive. Each individual maximizes the expected value of his/her own payoff (Green & Shapiro, 1994).

Prospect theory shows that because of the “frame effect” the violation of rationality is “systematic” (Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1993; Tversky & Slovic, 1990). Prospect theory argues that risk-attitudes (risk-aversion in favorable conditions and risk-taking in unfavorable conditions) are more concrete criteria with which to understand human decisions (which will be discussed at length later). The “frame effect” of Prospect Theory implies that a preference order could be changed depending on whether the actor is located in a gain frame or a loss frame. This means that the “transitivity” assumption of rationality could be violated systematically according to the “frame effect.”

#### **II-4. Individual Level of Analysis: Misperception and By-Product Theory**

The limits of rational explanations are also criticized by studies of Misperception theory (Herman, 1988; Jervis, 1998a; 1998b; Khong, 1992; Kowet and Herman, 1997). Under the assumption of rationality, war occurs when either or both sides think that fighting will be more beneficial than any other choices, such as negotiation, arms race, and/or coercive diplomacy. If both sides choose war based on rational calculation, one or both of them must be miscalculating the payoff if war ended with/without a loser and



winner (Blainey, 1973:144-5).

Jervis's study of misperception is the first critique of why decision makers choose war when it is not the most rational choice (Jervis, 1988a; 1988b). According to Jervis's argument, asymmetric war in which weak states can easily lose is the result of miscalculation of a weak state's decision makers. This miscalculation is rooted in a lack of information or in disagreement about the relative power ratio between the states involved in the conflict. According to Jervis's theory, war initiation by weak states is due to miscalculation or misperception by the weak states' decision makers.

Even though misperception is a very important fact, it is one of the most difficult concepts used in theory building (Levy, 1983). Misperception comes from diverse sources, such as decision makers' character, organizational procedure, national emotion, previous experiences, inaccurate information, late information, diverse heuristics, etc. Since it is very difficult to identify where misperception (or miscalculation) comes from, inclusion of misconception makes theoretical models difficult or complicated. It is also easy to be a victim of retrospective explanation because most data used to verify misperceptions are only available long after the end of conflicts.

Moreover, misperception is a perennial variable; misperception always exists in every international conflict. Misperception or miscalculation could spur and block war initiation. Stein's case study (1985a) of international military conflicts between Israel and Egypt shows that Egypt's decision makers' miscalculation (overestimation or underestimation) was the cause of both the success and failure of Israel's deterrence policy. Israel's deterrence success in the spring of 1973 was based on the wrong criterion, which was based on an oversimplified, single-variable concept of deterrence. But the

same criterion caused the failure to deter Egyptian war initiation. Stein's other study (1985b) also shows that very good information does not reduce misperception or miscalculation.

If miscalculation is not random --if it is systemically skewed-- , the important question is not whether misperception exists, but under which conditions misperception has a significant meaning in the decision-making process. To identify the conditions under which choices based on miscalculation become significant is very important in understanding decision making procedures.

The By-Product theory's approach to rational explanation is less negative than any other critique. It explains weak states' war initiation by including variables such as honor or advantage in bargaining; these variables are excluded in Rational Choice theory. According to By-Product theory, weak states may choose war regardless of the military result because the war decision may give them more positive gains by strengthening bargaining positions, by attracting world attention to an otherwise moribund issue, or even by increasing domestic support for ruling elites.

All theories of war agree that war is a means to achieve political goals. By-Product theory, however, overemphasizes the role of war as a means to achieve primary political goals other than winning the war itself. Because war always produces by-products, such as national unity and international attention, By-Product theory effectively explains some causes of asymmetric conflict. Despite its effectiveness, By-Product theory is an *ex post facto* or secondary explanation. It is not easy to identify a real motive for war initiation in the initial stages of military conflict; sometimes, it is impossible. It is after the end of a war or in the middle of war that we can gain knowledge of the real

motives of war initiators. In this sense, the strong explanation of By-Product theory is based on *ex post facto* information and is also a secondary explanation. War is always such a risky choice that its high costs could nullify any primary goals.

Diverse theories of war have been reviewed critically, focusing on the implication of weak states' war initiation against stronger states. The relative balance of power was the main issue in the Power Transition theory and the Window of Opportunity theory. These two theories over-emphasize the international relative power structure and pay less attention to the decision making process that war is accepted as reasonable policy. Diversionary war theory specifies domestic situations where international war initiation could be accepted as reasonable policy. Rational choice theories focus on decision making; they neglect the interactive nature of international war. Only Game theory highlights interacting relations in terms of "game." Rational choice theories have been criticized by Psychological and Misperception theorists.

The next chapter is concerned with building a framework of analysis for weak states' war choice. Bearing in mind the previous literature, the cognitive decision making model concerning war will be discussed. This cognitive model will include advantages of previous literatures; states that are unsatisfied with status quo will initiate a war (Power Transition theory, Windows of Opportunity theory, and diversionary theory of war), the importance of decision making process (Rational Choice theory), the importance of interacting structure (Game theory), and the source of misperception (Misperception theory).

### **Chapter III. Method of Analysis**

State military action is one means of achieving national goals. Each state tries to choose the best policy to produce the best outcomes for itself. Each state's efforts to increase its national interests make international relations a strategic interaction (Jervis, 1988; Signorino, 1999; Smith, 1998; 1999; Snyder & Diesing, 1977; Stein, 1990). The motivations and actions of one side can influence the decision making process of the another side. A player's best choice depends on the strategy of the other player and that player's desired outputs. Each player's interactions create structures under which each state tries to maximize its national interests; they are the creators of, as well as components in, the structure.

While both Power Transition and Diversionary theories of war discuss structures without discussing strategic interactions in international crises, Expected Utility theory discusses intentional choice without the structure of an international crisis. Interactive structure is the main theme of Game theory. But Game theory has been criticized for the static assumption that preference orders are unchangeable during the game, which makes it difficult to explain the "irrational" (in terms of Expected Utility theory) state behaviors such as the challenge to deterrence in Chicken or international cooperation in Prisoner's Dilemma.

This study develops a cognitive model by combining Game theory and Prospect theory. While Game theory emphasizes structure, Prospect theory provides the clues to explain "irrational" (in terms of instrumental rationality) behaviors. Combining these two characteristics is expected to explain "irrational" choices by states under interacting

structures.

In order to present a cognitive model to explain a weak state's initiation of war against a stronger state, a brief summary of Prospect theory will be presented. The Game structure of asymmetric conflicts will be presented as the models that show the character of intensive military conflicts between weak and strong states. The final part of this chapter is concerned with case studies that illustrate asymmetric conflicts after World War II.

Before discussing the framework, it is necessary to discuss some basic assumptions used in this research. This study is based on Prospect theory which criticizes two axioms of instrumental rationality: "maximization" of expected values and the "transitivity" of preference. Broadly speaking, this study is based on a thin version of rationality that human choice is a purposive or goal-oriented action involving the "choice of means" for attaining an end (Weber, 1968:5).<sup>4</sup> The rule of thumb in this study is not based on the idea of instrumental rationality, but rather on the perception of risk of decision makers. The decision makers do not maximize expected value, but choose a safe choice in a gain frame and a risky choice in a loss frame. In order to avoid conceptual confusion, this paper refers to a choice based on risk attitude as a "cognitive choice." This paper focuses on what is considered a risky choice and why states make such risky choices, instead of maximizing expected value. In this sense, this study is descriptive

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4 . This concept of rationality as the "means-end relationship" is probably among the most common in social science. But this concept of rationality is tautological because everything human actors do is 'rational' in the sense of goal-oriented choice. Thin version of rationality is what Popper calls an "almost empty principle" because whatever people do is rational and then virtually no one would ever violate its definition. Therefore, this concept is "unfalsifiable," thus unscientific (Hands, 2001:286). However, because the purpose of this study is not to falsify, but to account for the behavior of states, thin

rather than normative. This study focuses on how actors behave not how they should behave in order to achieve certain goals.

In order to construct an abstract model for analysis, this research also adopts the idea of “objective” rationality, instead of “subjective” rationality. Objective rationality is the right kind of behavior, which maximizes particular values in certain situations, while subjective rationality refers to maximizing values in relation to the decision makers’ knowledge at the moment he makes the decision (Eckstein, 1991:76-77; Kiernan-Levis, 1999:72-76; Simon, 1982:112-114). In addition, this research uses “substantive” rationality for theory building. The usage of “objective” and “substantive” rationality does not mean that decision makers are free from judgment heuristics or decision making bias and make instrumentally a rational choice. Rather, the reason to use unrealistic assumptions is to compare a thick version explanation with a cognitive one. On the basis of these assumptions this study builds a hybrid model of Prospect theory and Game theory.

### **III-1. Prospect theory**

The basic logic of Prospect theory is based on two concepts which are interlinked: “risk-attitude” and “frame effect” (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981, 1992). To understand the implications of Prospect theory, imagine that someone is given a choice between two options: (A-1) a sure gain of \$ 80.00 (Expected Utility Value is \$80.00) and (A-2) an 85% probability to win \$100 (Expected Utility Value is \$85.00) and a 15% probability to win nothing. The first involves a sure gain of \$80.00, and the second involves an 85% chance

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version of rationality is enough for the purpose this study.

of winning \$100.00 with a 15% chance of winning nothing.

Laboratory experiments (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Tversky and Kahneman, 1981) demonstrate that most people who are presented with this choice prefer the sure gain (choice A-1: \$80) to the risky choice (choice A-2: \$85) in spite of the fact that choice (A-2) has a higher expected monetary value than choice (A-1). This demonstrates a widespread characteristic of human preference: risk-aversion. Most people prefer a sure gain to an even higher potential gain if it has the possibility of winning nothing. On the basis of these experimental results, Prospect theory concludes that people tend to avoid the risky choice and to prefer a safe choice between two possible gains.

Prospect theory also reveals that most people choose to accept risk in a certain context. To understand a risk-seeking choice, imagine that someone is forced to choose between (B-1) a sure loss of \$ 60.00 (Expected Utility Value is -\$60.00) and (B-2) an 85% probability of losing \$100.00 (Expected Utility Value is -\$85.00) and a 15% chance to lose nothing. Faced with this choice, a large majority prefer the gamble (choice B-2) to the sure loss (choice B-1), even if the monetary expectation of the gamble (-\$85.00) is worse than that of the sure loss (-\$60.00). On the basis of these experiments, Prospect theorists conclude that people are inclined to accept the risky choice of a possible gain when faced with two possible losses.

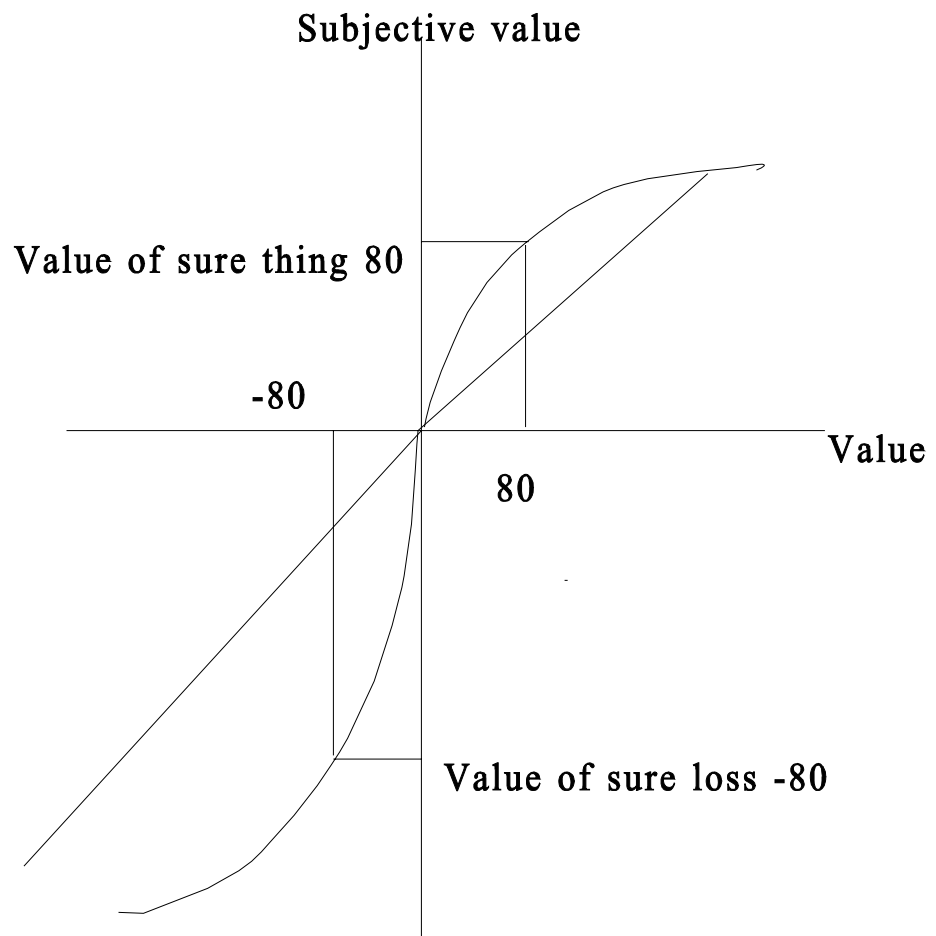
An implication of Prospect theory is that individual choice depends upon attitudes toward risk rather than on the likelihood of maximizing expected utilities. The decision maker makes a choice not because it yields maximum utility, but because it is a risk-taking or risk-averse choice. While Rational Choice theory focuses on maximizing value, Prospect theory argues that an actor makes risk-dependent choices; while Rational

Choice theory neglects the impact of context, Prospect theory relies on specific contexts (frame effects) which may have a dramatic impact on a player's choice (Heath, Larrick, and Wu, 1999; Tversky and Kahneman, 1981).

The focus on risk is very relevant to the study of international conflict because risk is both a critical and a perennial factor (Vertzberger, 1998). War Trap theory and Prospect theory agree on this point and regard decision makers' attitudes toward risk as important variables in the study of war and asymmetrical conflicts. The main difference between War Trap theory and Prospect theory is that while War Trap theory attributes risky attitudes to individual characters, Prospect theory attributes them to situational, contextual factors. This different treatment of risk attitudes yields huge differences in the research model. Because individual character is hard to change during an international military crisis, once character has been established, we can accept it as a constant. Therefore, we assume that the risk-taking actor will always prefer a risky choice. Prospect theory argues that individual attitudes toward risk are not constant but instead may vary according to the frame effects. Even a risk-averse actor is likely to take a risky choice when he/she is located in a loss frame. A risk-seeking actor is likely to avoid a risk when he/she is in a gain frame.

Showing risk attitude in terms of a graph, the utility value of Prospect theory has an S-shaped utility curve instead of the typical linear utility function of rational choice. The value function in Prospect theory can be expressed by the S-shaped function in Figure 3-1. The value function for gains is concaved downward, so that each extra dollar gained adds less to value than the preceding one. On other hand, the value function for losses is convex, so that each extra dollar adds more in value than the preceding one. In





**Figure.3-1. Utility Curve of Prospect Theory**

Source: Kahneman and Tversky, 1984.

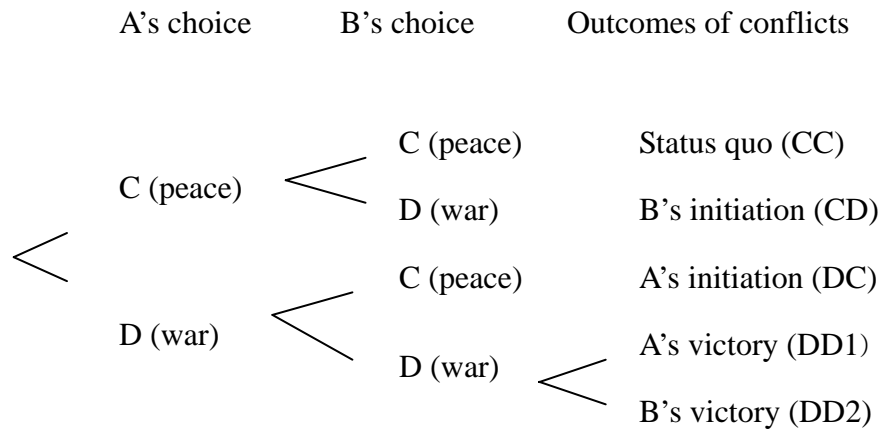
this S-shaped value function, the slope of the function for losses is steeper than that for gains. This figure implies that the deeper people are in a gain frame, the more they are likely to avoid risk. *The deeper people are in loss frame, the more they are likely to seek a risk.*

Setting aside the mathematical discussion, the frame effect implies that preference orderings may change depending on which frame the actors are in. In the gain frame, an individual prefers a safe choice over a risky one, but in a loss frame an individual prefers a risky choice over a safe choice because the risky choice has a slight chance of giving a high utility.

### **III-2. Game Structure of Asymmetric Conflict**

Asymmetric war is intensive military confrontation between weak and strong powers. Like other international conflicts, asymmetric conflict develops through several continuous stages of hostility. The change of intensive military threats is the last stage before military conflicts. In developing a theoretical framework, it is assumed that actors have only two choices: cooperation (peace) and defection (war). As shown in Figure 3-2, there are five possible outcomes in an international crisis before beginning a war. Mutual defection (DD) is divided into two outcomes: one is the case in which state A wins the war (DD1), the other is the case in which state B wins the war (DD2).

As discussed above, strong states have the power to force weak states to behave as the stronger states want. In other words, stronger states compel or deter weak states when the vital interests of strong states are challenged.



**Figure 3-2. Decision Making Tree of International Military Conflict**

In asymmetric conflict, the intention of strong states is to force weak states to cooperate. In the case of coercive diplomacy in which weak states initiate actions against the interest of stronger state, the intention of strong states is to enforce weak states to come back to the *Status Antes*. The strong state's intention of deterring the weak state not to challenge is to maintain the status quo. In this respect, DC (strong states' surprise attack when weak states intend to seek a peaceful solution) is an outcome that is not likely to happen and exists only theoretically. It is the best outcome for strong states because strong states, without paying a high cost, inflict such devastating damages that weak states will not challenge them again in the near future.

CC is the continuation of the status quo in deterrence or the weak state's peaceful withdrawal in coercive diplomacy. It is the outcome that strong states really intend in asymmetric conflict. Strong states have to pay enforcement costs (in the case of coercive

diplomacy), or maintaining costs (in the case of deterrence), or face-saving costs (in the case of negotiation). The relative costs of DC and CC depend on the cost of stronger states' surprise attack. The military capability is a major factor in determining the relative cost of DC and CC. In the theoretical phrase, the difference in relative power between two belligerents is big enough that strong states are likely to win over weak states without paying high costs in a military conflict.

DD1 (winning a war against weak states) is a more expensive choice because of human and material costs required in military conflict. But DD1 is a better choice than CD and DD2 because stronger states get what they want. CD is the case in which weak states succeed in deterring strong states. There are two cases. One is that a weak initiator takes the initial advantage in the military conflict (Argentina's occupation of the Falkland Islands in the Falklands Crisis) and keeps this advantage (Argentina's continuous occupation of the Falkland Islands in the Falklands Crisis). The other case is that weak states challenge strong states' deterrence when strong states do not prepare to punish them. DD2 and CD have the same outcome – the weak states' challenge is successful-- but DD2 is a worse outcome for strong states than CD because strong states have to pay human and material costs without achieving anything. In this sense, DD2 is a worse outcome than CD. In asymmetric conflict, because strong states have a huge advantage in the capability that is vital for the ultimate outcome in war, DD2 (strong states' military defeat) is unlikely to happen. In this sense, it is reasonable to omit the case of DD2. Finally, strong states' preference order is summarized as  $DC > CC > DD > CD$ . It is the Prisoner's dilemmas' preference order in which defection is dominant choice. The preference order of a stronger state is given as Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1. Strong state's preference order**

Preference order	Outcomes	Strong state choice	Weak state choice
Best <sup>1)</sup>	DC	Attack on weak state	Seek a peaceful solution
Second Best	CC	Seek a peaceful solution	Seek a peaceful solution
Third Best	DD1	War and victory	War, but defeat
Second Worst	CD	Seek a peaceful solution	Intention to wage a war
Worst	DD2	War, but defeat	War and victory

1 is a theoretically possible outcome.

While strong states have the preference order of the Prisoners' Dilemma, weak states have the preference order of the Chicken Game. Table 3-2 is preference order of weak states during military conflict against strong states. Weak states' preference order is summarized as  $DC > DD2 > CC > CD > DD1$ .

DC is the best outcome for weak states. It means the success of weak states' challenge with human and material costs. Weak states do not pay high costs and achieve what they want. DD2 (military victory over strong states) is the second best because weak states have to pay human and material costs for victory that would be severe. CC (mutual cooperation) is the outcome that strong states actually want. Weak states follow what strong states want, but they can gain face-saving benefit in negotiation or maintaining the status quo without paying high costs of challenging strong states in a deterrence situation. CD (strong states' attack when weak states intended to cooperate) exists only theoretically. CD is a worse outcome than CC in the sense that weak states could not get anything in negotiating (in case of coercive diplomacy). DD1 is the worst outcome because the weak states get nothing and pay the high cost of war against strong

**Table 3-2. Weak states' preference order**

Preference order	Outcomes	Weak state choice	Strong state choice
Best	DC	Initiate a war	Seeking a peaceful solution
Second Best	DD2	War and victory	War but defeat
Third Best	CC	Peaceful solution	Peaceful solution
Second Worst <sup>1)</sup>	CD	Peaceful solution	Initiate a war
Worst	DD1	War but defeat	War and victory

1) is a theoretically possible outcome.

states. As DD2 (weak states' winning a war) is difficult to achieve in reality, the preference order of weak states in asymmetric conflict is  $DC > CC > CD > DD1$ . It is the preference of order in Chicken, where weak states tend to choose cooperation.

Based on Table 3-1 and Table 3-2, the game structure of asymmetric conflict is Figure 3-3. The values are cardinal on the basis of Rapoport (1967) and Rapoport and Chammah (1965), who argue that cooperation in game structure depends on the cardinality of the relationships among the game payoffs as well as the ordinal relationships (the overall structure). Asymmetric conflicts are different from other conflicts in that the strong state has enough power to win a war. The strong state has a high probability of winning a war against the weak state. It is difficult to calculate a strong state's probability of winning a war against a weak state. The statistics of history suggest an over 60 percent likelihood of winning a war and the probability positively increases with the gap of military capability (Arreguin-Toft, 2001; Lindley, 2003; Wang and Ray, 1994).

The high probability of winning a war makes strong states prefer DD (a war with weak states) to CD (concession to weak states' threats). An asymmetric balance of power

		<b>strong state</b>	
		Peaceful Solution C	War D
<b>weak state</b>	Staying C	(-1,1)	<u>(-3,4)</u>
	Challenge D	(1,-3)	(-4,-1)

**Figure 3-3. Game structure of asymmetric conflict**

Key: (x,y) = (payoff to weak state, payoff to strong state)

Number implies cardinal value

Negative number implies negative utility

underlined is not realistic outcome

produces an asymmetric game structure in which each player has a different preference order. In this respect, Zagare's argument (1987:29-58; Zagare and Kilgour, 1993:7-9) that Chicken is not the only one to represent deterrence has a new meaning.

The superior military capability of the strong state increases both the credibility of punishment and the cost of mutual defection for the weak state's unilateral defection. In the case in which the strong state regards the conflict of interest with the weak state as something important, the strong state imposes the preference order of the Chicken Game on the weak state even if the strong state has that of the Prisoner's Dilemma. In other words, the strong state forces the weak state not to choose a defection. Strong states dominate the process of asymmetric military conflict; weak states' action is likely to be

reactive and defensive. In the case of the Gulf War between Iraq and the UN coalition forces, after Iraq's surprise invasion of Kuwait, it was the UN coalition that enforced economic sanctions and compelling threats for Iraq to withdraw. Iraq's response was reactive and defensive to the coalition's imposition of deterring (or compelling) threats.

An obvious power gap makes the cost of mutual defection (war) high enough to deter a weak state's unilateral defection (surprise attack or war initiation) because war with a strong state results in a greater disaster to weak states. Imposition of Chicken preference order by a strong state on a weak state is a characteristic unique to asymmetric conflicts. Compelling efforts in symmetric conflicts can be misunderstood as a bluff (game) because the cost of mutual defection is huge to all participants. In asymmetric conflict, however, the relative cost of mutual defection is much higher for a weak state because of the power gap. When intensive military threats are exchanged, it is nearly impossible for weak states to misunderstand the structure of the game. The costs are huge. Weak states are essentially playing the game of Chicken with a more powerful opponent with the preference order of the Prisoner's Dilemma.

In the real politics of asymmetric conflicts, strong states who have a preference order of the Prisoner's Dilemma are expected to show their willingness to punish weak states' choice of defection; their warnings are typically recognized by a weak state's decision maker. In real politics, there are some cases in which the imposition of the Chicken Game structure is not clear in the initial stages of a conflict. But, as the process of conflict intensifies, strong states' imposition of the Chicken Game preference order becomes obvious. For example, the British government did not use any clear military activity or threats to deter the Argentinean military junta from occupying the



Falklands/Malvinas Island in 1982. After Argentina's military invasion, the British resolution that maintained a previous status quo was clear; Argentina had only two options, military withdrawal (cooperation) or war with Britain (defection).

### **III-3. Weak States in a Loss Frame under the Chicken Game**

As shown in Figure 3-3, strong states have a preference order of the Prisoner's Dilemma in which defection is a dominant strategy. It infers that strong states are ready to begin a war with weak states in order to force weak states to cooperate. Strong states' readiness and willingness to pay the cost of mutual defection (DD: war) make it credible to punish a weak state's defection.

Weak states have the preference order of the Chicken Game. The rational choice in the game of Chicken (Figure 3-4) is cooperation because the choice of defection might result in the unacceptable disaster of mutual defection (DD). To use a common metaphor, when two drivers rush at each other, the huge cost of a collision makes each driver turn the wheel (CC, mutual cooperation). Because the cost of collision (DD) is larger than that of being chicken (CD), cooperation (turning the wheel) is the best choice in the game of Chicken. In game theoretical terms, cooperation is the best choice in the game of Chicken because the cost of mutual defection (DD/war/collision) is higher than that of unilateral cooperation (CD/being attacked by surprise/being chicken).

What is interesting in Game theory is that actors cannot unilaterally decide the payoffs among CC, CD, DC, and DD. Final payoffs are decided by interaction with the other actor's choice. The only choices actors could make are cooperation or defection. In

		driver A	
		C	D
driver B	C	(3,3)	(2,4)
	D	(4,2)	(1,1)

**Figure 3-4. Chicken Game Structure**

Key: (x,y) = (payoff to driver B, payoff to driver A)  
 4=best; 3=second best; 2=second worst; 1=worst

the Chicken Game, the desirable result of mutual cooperation can be attained by forcing an opponent not to choose defection. The way to maintain mutual cooperation involves a reliable commitment to punish unilateral defection (CD) and on realization of the huge cost of mutual defection (DD). The degree of deterring unilateral defection is positively related to the credibility of punishment and the cost of mutual defection. In other words, *the temptation to defect is deterred as long as both the cost of mutual defection and the credibility of punishment are high enough*. Herein lies the paradox of Chicken. In order to keep mutual cooperation (CC), the cost of mutual defection (DD) should be high enough to deter unilateral defection (CD or DC). In order to keep peace, the credibility of punishment and the cost of war should be increased as much as possible. Therefore, the actors who know the huge cost of mutual defection (DD) are reluctant to choose the strategy of defection.

This is the logic of rational deterrence (Achen and Snidal, 1989; Harvey, 1995; Huth and Russett, 1984; Nalebuff 1991). According to the logic of rational deterrence, weak states playing Chicken should take cooperation as a dominant strategy in a conflict with strong states. Cooperation in asymmetric conflict infers not challenging strong states' interests or seeking a peaceful solution.

In order to apply Prospect theory's implication, it is better to define what the risky choice is. The risky choice is operationally defined as one that has greater outcome variance of promoted values than alternative options (McDermott, 1998:39). The outcome variance depends on two variables: outcome values (desired or undesired) and the probability of outcomes (Vertzberger, 1998:22). As shown in part III-1 of this paper (pages 29-30), the choices of (A-2) and (B-2) are riskier than (A-1) and (B-1), because the latter have greater variance.

Based on this definition, weak states' choice of cooperation is safe because it has little variance. Figure 3-3 best shows this game structure. Cooperation gets the payoff of "-1" ( in the Figure 3-3). As mentioned above, CD (weak states' choice to cooperate when strong states' decide to defect) is a theoretical choice, not real. While cooperation is the safe choice in the Chicken Game, defection is the risky choice with great variance. Weak states' defection could produce two outcomes according to the response of strong states: DC (weak states' success, when strong states would not retaliate) and DD (war, when strong states retaliate). When a strong state does not retaliate, a weak state can get the highest payoff of unilateral defection (payoff "1" in Figure 3-3). But the chance for weak states to get the payoff ("4" in Figure 3-3) of DC is very low because strong states with the Prisoner's Dilemmas preference are ready to punish (defect). Even if a strong

state strikes back (DD), a weak state still has a slight chance to win the war (DD2).

However, considering the huge military power gap, this chance is much lower than that of a strong state's (DD1). Weak states' efforts to seek the DD2 payoff make them challenge strong states' deterrence and willing to wage a war against strong states. The reason for a weak state in a loss frame to seek a risky choice of defection is for the highest possible payoff of DC and DD2.

In the Chicken Game, cooperation is a dominant and safe choice for a weak state. Game theory assumes players possess perfect information. With perfect information the participants recognize what kind of game they are playing. Weak states share the knowledge that the strong are playing the Prisoner's Dilemma and are apt to defect (initiate a war). Weak states also know that the purpose of strong states is to force them to cooperate, not to begin a war. In this sense, as long as the weak state chooses to cooperate, they can avoid a war against a strong state. Moreover weak states recognize that they have better payoffs in unilateral defection; however, under the obvious threat of a superior military action, unilateral defection brings with it a high chance of strong state retaliation. The outcome of mutual defection in an asymmetric conflict is more disastrous to a weak state than to a strong state.

Prospect theory agrees with rational deterrence theory that weak states are apt to cooperate when weak states are located in a gain frame. Because weak states in a gain frame tend to choose a safe choice, cooperation is a safe and rational choice. Prospect theory reaches very different conclusions when weak states are located in a loss frame. It shows that decision makers in a loss frame are prone to prefer a gamble to a sure loss in the hope of getting huge benefits of defection. In Chicken, *cooperation is a safe choice*

*and defection is a risky choice.* The implication of a frame effect presents the possibility that *weak states in a loss frame could seek a gamble with the hope of achieving huge benefits of defection.*

#### **III-4. Cognitive Theory of Asymmetric War Initiation**

When applying Prospect theory International Relations, the issue is how to define the loss frame (Boettcher III, 2004:332-334). Whether or not the decision makers regard their situation as being in a loss frame is a psychological conception. In this sense the debate about the definition is understandable. For the purpose of this paper the loss frame will be defined as perception “of the acts, outcomes, and contingencies associated with a particular choice” (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981:453). The perception of “gain” or “loss” is relative to a “reference point.” In this sense, the identification of the reference point is the key to applying Prospect theory in real politics (Boettcher III, 1997; O’Neill, 2001:632). Prospect theorists (Health, Larreck, and Wu, 1999; Opez and Oden, 1999) agree that a reference point can be the status quo or aspiration levels reflecting a desired state of affairs. Instead of analyzing a subjective psychological process of other psychological or cognitive studies (De Rivera, 1968; Janis and Mann, 1977; Janis, 1958; Lewin 1935), Prospect theorists tackle this question with the “objective” frame focusing on changes in the status quo that should be viewed as losses by decision makers who have earlier expressed or can be assumed to possess certain goals (Berejikian, 1992; 1997; 2002b; Farnham, 1994; McDermott, 2001; McInerney, 1992; Pauly, 1993; Weyland, 1996). Some Prospect theorists (Berejikain, 1997; Farnham, 1994; McDermott, 1992; 1998; McDermott and Kugler, 2001; Weyland, 1996) favor crisis analysis, focusing on

whether or not decision makers face a certain kind of crisis, and, if they do, the depth of the crisis.<sup>5</sup>

For example, President Carter's risky decision to rescue hostages in Iran is understood as a deep political crisis caused by the hostage situation. The sharp decline of Carter's popularity jeopardized his re-election campaign. This pushed him into a loss frame. The way to recover his popularity was closely related to a positive resolution of the hostage situation. A risky operation with a low probability of success was adopted as the best way to recover from political crisis and to reduce future loss (McDermott, 2001: chapter 3).

Economics is another field to which Prospect theorists apply crisis analysis. Weyland's studies (1996) show that decision makers in a loss frame tend to choose a risky economic program and found much higher popular support as a result. Extreme neoliberal economic programs find much higher support in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Peru, which were suffering from deep economic crisis in the late 1980's, than in states with better economic prospects. Serious economic crises pushed these states into a loss frame. Because neoliberal economic reform was painful to middle- and lower-class populations, decision makers in populist countries took the risk of strong popular resistance, which jeopardized their political legitimacy. Decision makers in a loss frame took the risky choice of dramatic neoliberal economic policies. Painful economic crisis is connected with the necessity for new economic policies to recuperate large past losses

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5 "Gain or losses can be defined by objective criteria, such as public opinion polls ... congressional indicators, such as the number of overrides on vetoes; economic indicators, such as the stock market index and inflation or unemployment rates; newspaper editorials; and world public opinion as manifested through diplomatic channels." (McDermott, 1998:37-38).

and avert imminent further losses.

This analysis framework includes the implication of Power Transition theory, Window of Opportunity theory and diversionary theory of war by frame effects, saying that states that are unsatisfied with status quo (in a loss frame) will initiate a war. It also specifies decision making process by risk-concerning choice in interacting structure (Game theory). The source of misperception is also found in frame effects.

### **III-5. Scope and Method of Research**

This study may be more suitable to a small-n qualitative analysis rather than a large-n quantitative analysis (Collier, 1995; George, 1979; McKeown, 1999; Munck, 1998). The foremost reason to use a small-n qualitative analysis is the rare occurrence of weak state's war initiation in asymmetric conflict. International military confrontations can be classified into two sub-categories depending on the balance of power, such as symmetric and asymmetric conflicts. According to Wang and Ray (1994), there have only been twenty-four cases after the year 1800. In asymmetric conflicts, the major power is much more likely to initiate the dispute than the minor power by a ratio of roughly three to one. Therefore, the number of cases in which weak states use force is very limited. The limited number of cases makes it difficult to have a representative sample to utilize a large-n statistical analysis.

In terms of Rational Choice theory, a weak state's war initiation is relevant to outliers in an overall frequency of international warfare because a weak state begins a war with little chance of winning. This kind of issue also needs an intensive analysis in order to verify why it is an outlier. A large-n statistical analysis that identifies the

tendency of cases is not appropriate to intensive research on deviant cases. Because of its rare occurrence and deviant characteristics, small-n qualitative analysis is a better method to use to identify new causal relationships in deviant cases (Collier & Mahoney, 1996; Geddes, 1990).

This research limits the scope of study to post-World War II. Many scholars agree that war decisions made after World War II are quite different from decisions made before. Several studies reveal how the landscape of warfare changed dramatically after World War II (Gartner and Siverson, 1996; Rasler and Thompson, 1999). The development of weapons of mass destruction and war technology has widened the gap of power between minor and major powers. Obvious power gaps, which are regarded as the most outstanding variable in war outcome, significantly reduced the possibility of weak states' decision makers to miscalculate and increased the possibility of making more reasonable decisions. As a scientific study of war initiation, this study is based on the belief that a war decision is neither accidental nor capricious, but is intentional and careful. Technological and political developments after World War II diminish the effects of misperception and emotion on the weak state's war choice. Therefore, the scope of this study is limited to cases after World War II.

There are nine interstate wars in which a weak state initiated a war against a strong state after 1948: the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in 1951, Pakistan's offensive in the Second Kashmir War (1965), Egypt and Syria's offensive against Israel in the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Cambodian military incursions against Vietnam in 1977, the Somali attack on Ethiopia (1977), the Ugandan attack on Tanzania (1978-1979), Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands (1982), and the Iraqi war against US-led



Coalitions in the Gulf War (1990-1991).

This study asks why weak states initiate a war which is hard to win. The analysis framework is applied to cases in which weak states initiate a war that is hard to win. Military capability is not a good indicator of what convinced the decision makers of weak states not to initiate a war against strong states. If power implies victory in war, weak states should almost never win against stronger opponents. But weak states sometimes do win against strong states, with around 30 percent probability since 1800. Mack (1975) accounts for this puzzle in terms of strong states' lower interest in winning and high vulnerability. Strong states with low interests at issue do not do every means possible to win over weak states that have high interests at stake. In other words, it is not that strong states can not win the war, but they choose not to. This means that weak states who challenge an issue in which strong states have low interests are likely to win.

Many scholars (Goertz and Diehl, 1992; Holsti, 1991; Luard, 1986; Vasquez, 1993) agree that territory has been a key variable in determining whether war occurs. Territory is not the only issue in which states' interests mattered, but it is the most important because territory provides important strategic and economic benefits to nation-states (Kocs, 1995; Liberman, 1993). Therefore the cases to study are limited to cases in which territorial issues were dominant. The two cases, the Ethiopian-Somali war and the Ugandan-Tanzanian War, in which territorial issues are not at stake, are excluded.

Another factor that increases weak states' probability of winning is military strategy of the long-guerilla war (Arreguin-Toft, 2001). The Cambodian military incursion against Vietnam in 1977 which started a long-guerilla war, is also excluded. The Chinese intervention in the Korean War is not good a case for this study because a

military conflict between China and the United States-led coalition in 1951 was a superpower war, even if China was weaker than U.S-led coalition. The Six Day War was a preemptive war in which the Arab Coalition was on the brink of attacking Israel (Reiter, 1995; Walzer, 1977). In this respect, the Six Day War is not good to include in this study. The Second Kashmir War was dropped because of the difficulty of getting reliable data.

The three cases that are appropriate for this study are The Gulf War in 1991, the Falklands War in 1982, and the Yom Kippur War. Based on the COW's military capability data, these three cases were divided into three categories: preponderance, superiority, and slight superiority. Here military capability is calculated on the basis of the number of military personnel, total population, amount of energy consumption, etc. The Gulf War is the case in which a strong state had preponderance over weak Iraq. The US-led coalition had an advantage of over 22:1. In the Falklands War, Great Britain had a quantitative advantage ratio of 3:1 over Argentina. In the previous two cases, strong states had a quantitative and qualitative advantage. However, in the Yom Kippur War it was the Arab coalition that had a quantitative advantage of a ratio of 2:1, which was based on the military capability. In qualitative terms, Israel had an advantage ratio of over 2:1 (Rodman, 2001:75-76). The Israeli qualitative advantage was proven by the victory of two previous wars. Despite two previous defeats, Egypt initiated a war against the qualitatively superior Israel again.

This study focuses on a weak state's war initiation against a strong state. Especially, a weak state's cognitive choice under a given game structure will be studied. The inductive implications of Game Theory and Prospect theory are the following: first, weak states in a loss frame tend to seek a risky choice; second, weak states with a

preference order of Chicken tend to choose a defection with the hope of getting the payoff of DC or DD2. The actual meaning of weak states' seeking DC or DD2 is that weak states in a loss frame do not show any interest in a peaceful solution of international conflict and/or choose a war that is difficult to win against a superior military power.

This research is descriptive. Rather than looking at the best way to make a decision, how people actually do make decisions will be discussed on the basis of empirical evidence.

Each case study will be organized according to McDermott's (1998: chapter 1) method of analysis. According to her, there are two phases of cognitive procedure: the editing phase and the evaluating phase. Methodological overlaps exist between the Expected Utility and Prospect theory models in these two phases. Both regard individuals as the unit of analysis and offer insight into the logic of decision making. But each model emphasizes different aspects of the decision making process (McDermott and Kugler, 2001:50). These two theories disagree about which factors matter most and how they interact in international relations. The editing phase is to identify the reference point in which decision makers are presented with the options available and develop the origins of preferences. During the evaluating phase the procedure in which outcomes are not evaluated in terms of absolute outcome values, as the Expected Utility models assume, but rather are assessed in terms of gains and losses relative to the decision makers' present positions. This means that decision makers are risk-seeking in the domain of losses and risk-averse in the domain of gains. In other words, decision makers in a gain frame are likely to be cautious and in a loss frame to be willing to take tremendous risks to overcome the previous loss.

The first part of the case studies is concerned with identifying the reference points of weak states' top decision makers. Following the crisis analysis of other prospect theorists, this dissertation analyzes whether or not decision makers are located in a loss frame by evaluating on basis of literature and objective data the political situations decision makers might face. Whether or not decision makers are located in a loss frame will be analyzed by considering whether or not decision makers face a crisis, and if so, the nature and the seriousness of that crisis. The implication of the S-shaped value function is that *the deeper people are in a loss frame, the more they are likely to seek a risk*. Based on this implication, the source and seriousness of the crisis are discussed. The sources of crisis of weak states are expected to be diverse. This source of crisis is assumed to relate with weak states' diplomatic behaviors (war or peace). In this sense, this research is based on "the two-level game" of Putnam (1988).

The metaphor of the two-level game is that politics at the domestic and international levels are fundamentally interdependent, and to explain the policies of states in the international arena one must pay attention to domestic and international forces. It is the interaction between domestic politics and international politics that ultimately shape how the international game is played. (Moravcsik, 1993:1-42) In this sense, the two-level game metaphor is good for the analysis of weak states' war initiation.

The next part will be the evaluating phase. If decision makers are found to be in a loss frame, identification of decision makers' options have will be discussed. As discussed, decision makers in weak states are faced with a game of Chicken in asymmetric conflict. Facing threats of retaliation from stronger states, weak states must decide between war and a peaceful solution. In Game theoretical terms, only two kinds of

options are available to weak states' decision makers: cooperation and defection. Each weak states' option will be discussed in terms of risk and safe choice. As discussed earlier, cooperation is the safe choice and defection is the risky choice. In the context of weak states' war initiation, decision makers of a weak state are likely to cooperate when they are located in a gain frame and are likely to defect (choose a war with stronger state) when in a loss frame.

## **Chapter IV. Desert Storm**

The crisis in the Persian Gulf began with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. A cease fire agreement ended the Gulf crisis six month later, on March 3, 1991. It was the first asymmetric conflict of a minor state challenging a major state after the end of the Cold War (Finlan, 2003; Hutchison, 1995).

Coalition forces led by the United States won the war decisively. Operation Desert Storm was recorded as one of the most overwhelming victories in military history (Flanagan and Steele, 1991; Murray and Scales, 2003:Chapter 5). The result was obvious from the very beginning of the military conflict. Air strikes, begun on January 17, 1991, devastated much of Iraq's strategic military infrastructure, such as weapons of mass destruction and surface-to-surface missile-related structures. Prior to the ground campaign in February 1991, 48 percent of Iraq's artillery, 39 percent of its tanks, and 32 percent of its armored personnel carriers had been destroyed (Cigar, 1992:21). Coalition forces advanced 92 kilometers a day, the fastest move in military record. In just over 100 hours of ground war (from 24 to 27 February 1991), Coalition forces captured over 73,700 square kilometers of territory. Fifteen percent of Iraq was under Coalition control. Iraq reported, which was supposedly significantly reduced, that 20,000 had been killed and 60,000 had been wounded in the war. The New York Times (March 26 1991) reports, based on the Final Pentagon Report of CENTCOM, estimated 3847 tanks out of 4550, 2917 artillery out of 3257, and 220 combat aircraft out of 500 were destroyed or captured

by Coalition forces.<sup>6</sup> In contrast with Iraq's huge destruction, the Coalition's loss was minor. Only 240 were killed in action and 776 were wounded out of 795,000 at peak strength.

The first question in our minds may be why Iraq did not avoid these humiliating defeats. Coalition forces delivered an ultimatum twice. The first one was set by the UN resolution in early January 1991 and the other just before the ground war. During the 38 days between the two ultimatums, Iraq had a chance to choose peaceful withdrawal from Kuwait in order not to be humiliated in the military conflict with the Coalition's superior military forces. Iraq did not avoid a war it knew would be hard to win. Saddam chose the risk of war with superior powers. Even though the option of Iraq's face-saving peaceful retreat through negotiations had been open during the Coalition forces' air campaign, Iraq gambled on a war difficult to win. Why Iraq chose war instead of peaceful retreat under obvious superior Coalition forces is the main focus of this analysis.

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6 . Controversial estimates about Iraqi military deaths, see Heidenrich(1993) and Arkin et al (1993). of Iraq's 545,000 troops in the Kuwait Theater of Operations, about 100,000 are believed to have lost their lives. Of Iraq's 44 army divisions, 42 were found to be combat ineffective. By the end of the war, estimated losses of equipment were as follows:

	<b>Total Equipment</b>			
	<b>Iraqi</b>		<b>Coalition</b>	
	<b>Lost</b>	<b>On hand</b>	<b>Lost</b>	<b>On hand</b>
<b>Tanks</b>	4,000	4,230	4	3,360
<b>Artillery</b>	2,140	3,110	1	3,633
<b>Armored Personal Carriers</b>	1,856	2,870	9	4,050
<b>Helicopters</b>	7	160	17	1,959
<b>Aircraft</b>	240	800	44	2,600

#### **IV-1. Iraq in a Loss Frame**

The Iraqi war against the U.S led Coalition forces was a risky choice. The implication of prospect theory is that the risk choice was made by those who were located in a loss frame. This situation was caused by a certain kind of crisis. Now the question was which kind of crisis Iraqi decision makers might have been facing and how serious it was. In brief, before the beginning of the Gulf crisis, the Iraqi ruling regime had suffered from economic difficulties. Annexation of weak neighbors was considered an exit from this crisis. Even when Iraqi decision makers faced imminent ground attack by Coalition forces, a war with slight chances of winning was considered a reasonable way of exiting this crisis (Karsh, 1990; 1993; Tripp, 1993).

Iraq's economic crisis was rooted in the Iran-Iraq war from September, 1980 through August, 1988. Iraq's economy had been a bright picture before 8 years of war with Iran. The combined effects of the rise of oil prices and the increase of oil exports achieved an average 11.7 percent growth between 1970 and 1980. Eight years of furious fighting with its neighbor left Iraq a devastated economy (Al Jabar, 1991; Bin et al., 1998:Chapter 1; Farouk-Sluglett et. al., 1984).

In addition to human casualties of 105,000 dead and 700,000 injuries, Iraq lost a \$452.6 billion war with Iran, which included \$91.4 billion in a potential GNP loss, \$197.7 billion oil-revenue losses, \$78.8 billion losses in foreign exchange reserves, and \$80 billion in potential losses for foreign exchange reserves resulting from high military spending (Hiro 1991; 1984; Mofid, 1990; Musallam, 1996:83-88).

Iraq's economic difficulties were intensified by the structural weakness of its oil-based economy. In brief, it was structural factor hard to adjust, which made it hard for



Iraqi decision makers to exit from the loss frame. An oil-based economy is an unbalanced economy between national input and national output. The oil industry, absorbing no more than 2 or 3 percent of the labor force, occupied 95 percent of the foreign exchange earnings and 60 percent of the GDP. Iraq's oil-based economy lacked a balance between national income and national output. One structural feature of such an extremely unbalanced economy is that any domestic spending generated by the oil export is bound to exert an upward pressure on domestic prices. For stable consumer prices, necessities should be imported. In this sense the Iraqi economy had been just a mechanism that exported oil in exchange for imports. An unbalanced economy can easily fall on hard times by abnormal events such as war and foreign debt service. (Alnasrawi, 1994)

The war with Iran had drained the revenue pool which enabled substituting a lack of national output by import. Iran's bombing of Iraqi oil facilities and the closure of export ports made Iraqi oil revenue dramatically decline. Between 1979 and 1981, crude oil exports decreased 75 percent (US EIA data base Table 7.1). With the decline of oil revenues, Iraqi foreign reserves were exhausted gradually. Iraq began to depend on foreign credit and financial support from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Iraqi government's policy of "guns and butter," which sought to continue civilian levels of spending while expanding its military budget at the same time, caused deterioration in the balance of trade. As the import of military and consumer goods increased continuously, foreign trade deficits continued to enlarge (Clawson, 1993; Klare, 2003).

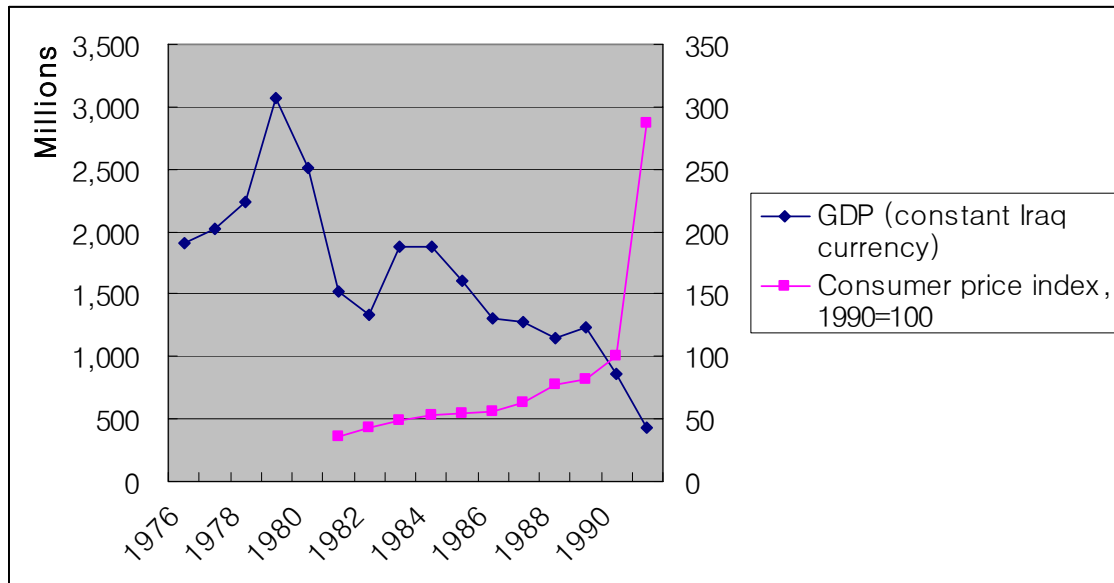
Foreign debt was the first economic problem after the war. Iraq borrowed \$40 billion from the Arab Gulf states, \$35 billion from Western banks, and \$11 billion from Communist states (Alnasrawi, 1994:109). Iraq's debt-service obligation in 1990 was

projected to be \$8 billion, 55 percent of its oil revenue in 1989 (EIU, 1990:13). The debt-service payment meant a decrease in consumer goods imports as well as a deterioration in the standard of living.

Inflation was another difficult problem in Iraq. Inflation had worsened because of war-time expenditures and peace-time military building. Inflation rates jumped to 95 percent in 1980, 139 percent in 1981, and 369 percent in 1988 with massive government military spending (Alnasrawi, 1994:95). Saddam had spent \$14.2 billion on high-technology imports from Western countries since 1984; in 1985, at the height of the war with Iran, 60 percent of Iraq's gross oil revenues were spent on military equipment and weapons-manufacturing technology. During the Iran-Iraq war, the ratios of military expenditures to the GDP had been higher: in 1975 it was 22.5, but during the war it was 66.0; it was in 1980 at its highest point and did not drop below 23.0. The increase in the ratio of military spending caused inflation (See Figure 4-1). The high inflation rate caused living standards to fall (Friedman 1993; Sweeney 1993).

The Iraqi population experienced a significant reduction in their standard of living, which was at a much lower level than at the beginning of the war in 1980. The Iraqi population suffered daily food shortages and high inflation. The government adopted austerity measures in the public sector in 1989 after having continuous negative GDP growth rates (Clawson, 1993:71-73). The reduction in the standard of living weakened political support for the ruling Baath Party and put Iraqi decision makers in a loss frame.

The seriousness of these economic difficulties might cause domestic political instability. Saddam's strong political base was the public-sector employees which consisted of approximately 30 percent of the civilian population and 50 percent of the



**Figure 4-1. GDP and Consumer Price Index of Iraq, 1978-1991.**

Source: United Nations. 2003. UNSD Common Database for GDP data.

The World Bank. 2001. World Development Indicators, CD-ROM version for Consumer price index.

Note: Left Y axis indicates GDP; right Y axis indicates consumer price index

total population, if the armed services were included. In the economic hard times, government departments were ordered to cut the size of their staffs by 50 percent. This weakened Saddam's political base and began to threaten the survival of the regime (Bengio, 1992).

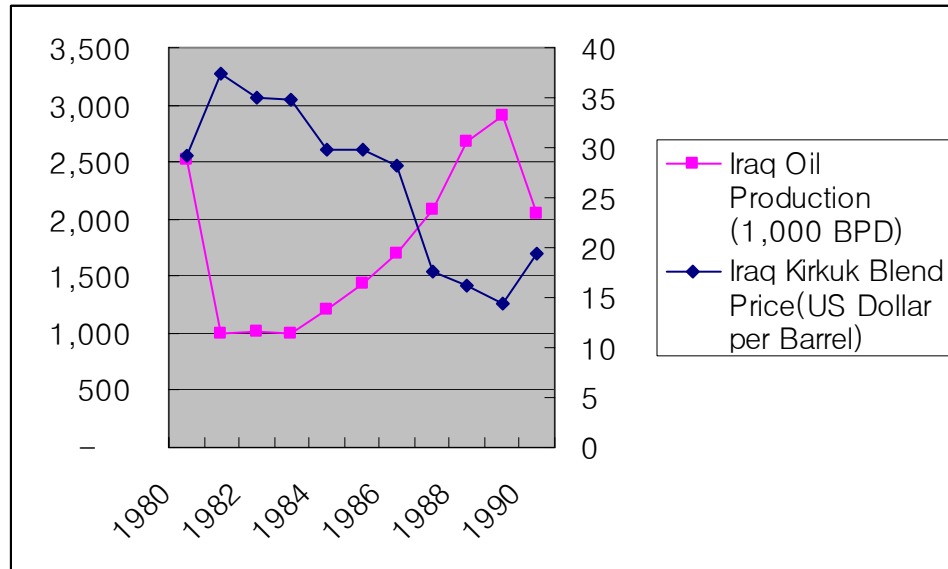
After ending its eight year war, Iraq introduced such massive and dramatic economic liberalization and privatization programs that it could be recognized as the most wide-ranging privatization programs in developing countries (El-Naggar, 1989). But these reforms could not get what Iraqi decision makers wanted. According to Chaudhry (1991), the main reasons for the Iraqi economic failure to privatize were the economic liberalization without political liberalization and the shortage of foreign currency.

Without any kind of political liberalization, the private sector distrusted the government's long-term goals and hesitated to invest in domestic industry. The failure of economic reform plunged the Iraqi economy into such chaos that domestic political stability was threatened. Moreover, debt payments, military spending and termination of foreign credits sources dried up foreign exchange to expand domestic production. Again, oil was recognized as the only available source for foreign exchange.

A reasonable exit from the crisis caused by economic difficulty would have been to earn enough money to pay international debts, reconstruction costs and daily living costs. When the war ended, the estimated reconstruction cost was as high as \$60 billion. The only available source for Iraq, oil, did not work as the key to solve all its economic problems. The international oil market was not favorable to Iraq. The average international oil price of the Iraqi Kirkuk blend was \$17.6 in 1987, \$16.0 in 1988, and \$14.4 in 1989 (Figure 4-2).

These prices are lower than the \$18.00, the reference price agreed on by OPEC. The selling price of oil had sunk to \$12 per barrel, the lowest after the war with Iran. By the end of 1988, it had recovered to up to \$14.4 per barrel and then risen to \$19.45 per barrel in January 1990 at its highest price. After this, Kuwait and other producers increased their output and made the price fall to \$14.02 per barrel by June 1990. Iraq's full output capacity was around 3.0 million barrels a day in 1989 when Iraq produced its highest output after the war with Iran. On the basis of the 1989 average oil price of 14.4 per barrel, Iraqi oil export revenue was around \$15 billion a year.

According to the calculations of Terzian (1991), Iraq needed at least \$27 billion a year to meet military expenditures (\$9 billion), debt service charge payoffs (\$4 billion),



**Figure 4-2. Iraqi Oil Indicators, 1980-1991.**

Source: US EIA data base table 7.1 selected crude oil price 1980-2002 and Table 4.1a World Crude Oil Production, 1970-2002 <http://www.eia.doe.gov/>

food and other civilian items imported (\$12 billion) and economic recovery costs (\$2 billion). To make this amount of revenue, the international oil price would have to be stable, around \$25 per barrel.

International oil prices were beyond Iraqi control. After oil shocks in the 1970s, profound changes in oil demand pattern and overproduction of oil-exporting countries continuously dropped the oil price. Total OECD oil consumption reached its highest point at 44 million barrels a day in 1979 and gradually declined to 37 million barrels a day in 1985. It recovered and stabilized at around 40 million barrels a day. World oil demand also declined gradually. It was 65 million barrels a day in 1979 and reached its lowest demand in 1983, 58.7 million barrel a day (US EIA data base Table 4.6 World Oil Demand, 1970-2002). The alternative energy source development dropped the demand and the exploitation of new reservoirs increased the supply. The future of the

international market did not seem to be favorable to Iraq (US EIA data base Table 11.2. Petroleum Consumption in OECD Countries).

The OPEC system worked against Iraq's hope. OPEC was created in 1960, and decisions over price and output were decided by a highly inter-linked members' collective. After 1986 the oil price collapsed, OPEC agreed on a quota system and the official reference price of \$18 per barrel, because it was deemed to fulfill all members' needs for their social and economic development. The agreed price means that the non-complying country expands its share of the market at the expense of fellow producers.

OPEC members could be divided into two groups (Griffin, 1985; Sayigh, 1975; Terzian, 1985). One is "out-put maximizers" Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Another group is the "price maximizers" : Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, and Venezuela. The former had small populations, a considerable amount of accumulated financial investments, and a large oil reserve. These countries had considerable investments in Western economies. They believed that low oil prices would contribute to a general price stability and protect the value of their assets. The latter had smaller oil reserves but larger populations. They wanted as much income as possible. Output maximizers expanded their output over the quota whenever the market price was above \$18 per barrel. One of these examples was the lower prices in June 1989. When the price reached \$19.98 per barrel on January 1989 from \$12 per barrel on October 1988, output maximizers increased their production and fell to \$14.02 by June 1989.

In sum, Iraqi reference point, as an aspiration levels reflecting a desired state of affairs, was high oil price enough to vitalize Iraqi economy. After the war with Iran, Iraq had serious economic problems, such as high inflation, negative growth, and foreign

debts. All these problems began to challenge the legitimacy of the Baath Regime. A reasonable exit from economic difficulties was to earn enough money to import materials which could be substituted for the lack of domestic output. Iraq's hope that the price of oil would rise to \$25 per barrel was blocked by OPEC. Iraq was not in a position to increase output because its export outlets were still severely damaged and limited after the war with Iran. When Iraq needed revenues from oil more than the ever before, OPEC did not help. Low oil prices caused by OPEC and Kuwaiti violation pushed Saddam to a loss frame. Iraq was in a loss frame as the country's economic crisis continued to deepen, and it was hard to find an exit from the existing system. Iraq was in deep economic troubles. There was a high chance that Saddam's legitimacy would decline, but this did not mean that Saddam's regime faced imminent danger of being overthrown. Even if difficult economics began to cast doubt on its legitimacy, there were not organized protests to against the government. In terms of stability, his authoritarian regime had enough power to control Iraqi society. In conclusion, Iraq was in a loss frame, even if not in a desperate situation, in which decision makers tend to take a risky choice.

#### **IV-2. The Kuwait Card**

Under this very difficult economic situation, the option of invading Kuwait was very tempting. Kuwait had several reasons that attracted Saddam's risky adventure (Ahmed 1991; Baram, 1993). Regardless of the justness of the Iraqi argument, Saddam justified its invasion by following his reasons and used them to mobilize what national and international support he could.

Kuwait had been a main obstacle to Iraqi efforts to increase oil price by diplomatic

channels (Feiler 1993). Iraq proposed raising the price of oil up to the level of \$21 per barrel in OPEC meetings. Kuwait was one of the OPEC countries to oppose this Iraqi suggestion. Kuwait was also the main target of blame for not observing the quota required by OPEC. Kuwait did not follow the discipline required by OPEC for balancing supply and demand and for stabilizing the price of crude oil. Kuwait exceeded its OPEC quota by 0.2 MBPD (Million Barrels Per Day) in 1988; by 0.3 in 1989; 0.45 in 1990. Kuwait's violation caused overproduction in the world market and decreased the price of oil (Terzian, 1991).

Iraq expressed its dissatisfaction with Kuwait's violation. In early May, the Al-Thawra, the Baath party organ, accused Kuwait of overproduction. Saddam Hussein made aggressive statements at the Arab Emergency Summit Conference in Baghdad that a drop in price of \$1 per barrel meant a loss of \$1 billion in oil revenue per year to Iraq. In this sense, Kuwaiti overproduction was regarded as an economic war against Iraq. The Iraqi government continued to express its displeasure concerning Kuwait over production and began diplomatic threatening that unsatisfying oil prices pushed Iraq to choose an extreme way to solve the problem (Khadduri and Ghareeb, 1997:86-88).

In mid-June Saddam declared: "War is also conducted by economic means. The current oil price situation is in fact a kind of war against Iraq. ... We have reached a point where we can no longer withstand pressure." (Bin, Hill and Jones, 1998:19) On 17 July, Saddam Hussein escalated the verbal debate by threatening to use force against "certain Arab countries" if they did not cut back their oil production (Bin, Hill and Jones, 1998:19).

Kuwait also had been blamed for stealing Iraqi oil. Iraq argued that Kuwait



allegedly stole oil by slantwise drilling at the southern tip of the Rumaila oil field which was located in Iraq's territory (Akins, 1991:18-20).

An other issue listed among Iraqi grievances against Kuwait was on debates about whether the financial support during the war with Iran was debt or assistance (Khadidi, 1991:8-12). While Kuwait maintained that those funds were loans, Iraq insisted that they were grants. From Iraq's perspective, such assistance should be written off for several reasons. First, Iraq fought for defending the Arab world from the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. If the war with Iran was done for the rest of Arab countries, Kuwait, Iraq argued, had an obligation to share the burdens on the shoulders of Iraqi people. Secondly, Kuwait benefited from a high oil price after the Iran-Iraq war when Iraq oil production was destroyed and was in limited production. The debt negotiation with Kuwait was not satisfying to Saddam. At the time of the invasion, he was intensely angry at Kuwait's rulers because they would not forgive his wartime debt of \$10 billion (Aziz, 1991; Cooley, 1991).

On July 16, 1990, Saddam sent a memorandum to Kuwait demanding \$2.4 billion in compensation for oil that Kuwait had pumped from the Rumaila oil field; \$12 billion in compensation for the depressed oil price brought about by Kuwaiti overproduction; forgiveness of Iraq's war debt of \$10 billion; and a lease on the island of Bubiyan (Stein, 1992:150).

Kuwait presented several temptations to Iraqi decision makers, who were in a difficult situation to consider military attacks. Iraqi decision makers had good excuses to mobilize national support and justify their actions.

### **IV-3. Imposition of Chicken Game by Coalition Forces**

Western countries had supported Iraq in the war with Iran (Klare, 2003), but the invasion of Kuwait dramatically changed Western attitudes on Iraq in other directions (Davis 1993). Because the Gulf area was of vital interest in Western countries, the recognition of Kuwait as Iraqi new territory had not been an acceptable option on the side of the Coalition forces (Ajami 1992). Two vital western interests involved in the Gulf crisis were Saddam's challenges to the New International Order suggested by The United States after the end of Cold War (Bresheeth, 1991) and the world's largest oil reservoir on which Western countries depended heavily (S. Glavanis, 1991; Matthews, 1993:194-204).

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the balance of power in the world. The United States emerged as the one surviving superpower in the competition between the two opposing ideological camps. The surviving United States suggested a New International Order as the way that world peace and development should be done. Saddam Hussein took advantage of an unstable balance of power in the Middle East and tested The United States intention to preserve world order by means of changing the Middle East's territorial map (Amirahmadi 1993; Rezun 1992; Rezun 1992; Tucker 1992). In this sense, fast and strong US responses could be predicted.

In order to maintain peace in the Gulf after the collapse of the Communist countries, the United States had to handle Saddam's challenge effectively enough to show its willingness to keep the world peace after the Cold War. Even though the liberalization of Kuwait was the effort of twenty six members of the UN,<sup>7</sup> the United States was the most

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7. The military Coalition consisted of :Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Honduras, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand,

active and dominant country. The United States served as the military leader of the Coalition and provided some 90 percent of the forces. It also took upon itself the task of forging various concerns of its Coalition partners into a coherent strategy. The United States policy was a little ambiguous toward Iraq prior to 2 August 1990 (Mazarr ets, 1993: Chapter 2; Yousif, 1991). The United States had no intervention strategy on bilateral issues concerning Iraq and Kuwait. As long as the free flow of oil from the Gulf was ensured, The United States supported the sovereignty and the integrity of the Gulf states (Hybel, 1993; Johnson, 1983; Kuniholm, 1993a; 1993b; Long, 1975; Rubin, 1993; Side, 2003). But by the Iraqi invasion, US vital interests were challenged in the Gulf Area. When The United States vital interests were at stake, its reaction was rapid and strict (Blackwell, 1993; Palmer 1992; Rezun 1992; Schloesser 1992; Yetive, 1997:Chapter 3). Ignoring the Iraqi invasion was not a viable option for The United States government because Saddam's risky challenge could trigger other violent territorial disputes (Chomsky, 1991; Herrmann 1994; Wayne 1993).

Oil was another key issue in the crisis (Aarts 1992; Feiler 1993; Pelletiere, 2001; Roberts, 1991). The Gulf accounted for 63 percent of the identified world oil reserves, and had been a vital zone to the Western economies because of extraction and exportation of oil. Having experienced "oil shock" twice, the Western countries were well assured of the negative effects of "the weapon of oil". The Western countries had suffered by the reduction of GNP and the unemployment increase. For example, the second oil shock that

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Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Korea, Spain, Syria Turkey, The United Arab Emirates, The United Kingdom, and the United States. The war also was financed by countries that were unable to send in troops. More than billion dollars were pledged and received. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were the largest donors. Switzerland also contributed to the allies, this after being neutral during

started in 1979 caused a 5 percent reduction in 1980 and an 8 percent of GNP loss in 1981 of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Unemployment in the OECD rose from 19 million in 1979 to 29 million in 1982 (Al-Chalabi, 1980; Alnasrawi, 1985; Rustow, 1982; Rustow and Mugno, 1976).

The negative economic “oil shocks” were rooted in dramatic increases in oil prices by OPEC countries motivated by Arab nationalism, rather than the shortage of oil production (Citino, 2002). After oil shocks struck the Western twice, the importance of the Arabian Gulf became more significant area for Western economic stability (Griffin and Teece, 1982). Moreover, after the Iran-Iraq War, Western dependence on Middle East oil had increased because of its good prices. The Iraq invasion of Kuwait came at the highest point of Western oil dependence (Bin ets, 1998:5; Freeman, 1991). The Iraqi annexation of Kuwait was difficult to accept because the occupation by a country hostile to the Western countries could cause another dramatic price increase.

In this the context, Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was not an acceptable option for Coalition forces. The best outcome for Coalition forces was a peaceful Iraqi retreat from Kuwaiti territory. Economic solutions such as trade sanctions and blockades were taken first by following UN Resolution 661 on 6 August 1990 (Matthews 1993; Mazarr ets, 1993:Chapter 3; Sciolino, 1991:Chapter 11). On 16 August, US warships in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea were ordered to enforce the U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq. Economic sanctions were reinforced on August 25 and permitted the Coalition to use limited naval force to enforce the sanctions (Resolution 665). A month later it was

intensified by a prohibition on air traffic (Resolution 670).<sup>8</sup>

A blockade had badly hurt the Iraqi economy (Clawson, 1993:73-80; Ellitt, 1993). Saddam Hussein was obliged to adopt exceptional measures, such as food rationing, gasoline, and motor oil supplies. The Iraqi legislation to make hoarding of foodstuffs for commercial purposes a crime by punishing through death showed the difficulties for Iraqis to handle economic difficulties. But the impact of an economic sanction would move too slowly. Sanctions would take at least a year or possibly longer to make Saddam comply with the UN resolution. The Iraqis seemed to be able to survive the blockade for a considerable period (DeAtkine, 1993). According to Willet (1990:33) and Mark (1991), a realistic assessment of the impact of the economic sanctions could not be made until March 1991, when conditions for military action would be deteriorating.

Even though enforced recovery of Kuwait through military action had been considered as a useful option since the inception of the crisis, it was at the end of October that military operations were discussed as the most useful measure to liberate Kuwait (Bark, 1993; Bechter, 1993; Chomsky, 1991; Peters, 1992).

The Coalition's increase in military pressure took place in several steps. In each step, the degree of the Coalition forces' threat escalated.<sup>9</sup> Between 20 August 1990 and 16 January 1991, the Coalition increased its military power dramatically (Anderson, 1992). It rose around six times in personnel, more than 10 times in tanks, nine times in

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8 . These two UN resolutions were passed by 15/2. Cuba and Republic Yemen abstained.

9 . Prior to the air strike on 17 January 1991, the Coalition's military build-up could be divided into four interconnected phases (Posen 1991). The first period, 7-20 August, produced a defensive 'deterrence' to block Iraqi expansion to Saudi Arabia. The second period, 21 August-30 September, established offensive capability in the air. The third period, 1 October-7 November, prepared a ground offensive capability. The fourth period, 8 November-16 January, explicitly aimed at the development of an offensive option with

rocket launchers, and 2.5 times in air power. The increase in military power was the physical warning that war would end in favor of the Coalition. In addition to the military build-up, the Coalition delivered a verbal ultimatum, which showed the willingness to recover the Kuwaiti territory by military force. After President Bush's announcement on 8 November, which declared no compromise with any kind of international crimes, the United States doubled the size of The United States military to some 43,000 and began to prepare an offensive military action. On 29 November 1990, the UN Security Council Resolution 678 authorized any necessary means to enforce full Iraqi compliance with all relevant UN resolutions by midnight on or before 15 January 1991.<sup>10</sup> The United States Congress approved a resolution on 12 January 1991 to authorize the use of United States' Military forces.

At the final stage of conflict, the Coalition forces imposed the Chicken Game preference on Iraq. The message of coercive diplomacy was to force Iraq to choose either retreat from Kuwait or unacceptable suffering by war with superior military forces (Halliday, 1991; Stein, 1993)<sup>11</sup>.

The purpose of coercive diplomacy was to get mutual cooperation, Iraqi peaceful withdrawal from occupied Kuwait. The key issue in the military conflict characterized was the credibility to punish the defector and the imposer's willingness to take its own cost of mutual defection in the case of the opponent taking a defection strategy. In order

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doubling the number of US forces in the Persian Gulf.

10. UN Resolution 678 was passed with 12 in-favor, 2 against (Cuba, Republic of Yemen), and 1 abstaining (China).

11 . While Halliday (136) concludes nothing other than the use of force could have persuaded the Iraqis to remove their forces from Kuwait, Menos (1992) and Chomsky (1991) blame US policy for not pursuing a negotiated settlement and for not allowing economic sanctions sufficient time to work.

to ensure the Iraqi cost of choosing defection and to show willingness to pay the cost of mutual defection, US-led Coalition forces used their superior military capability to increase the Iraqi cost of defection (Epstein 1987; McNaugher 1985; Record, 1981; Ross 1981).

After the declaration of the UN resolution and The United States Congress's decision to use military power, President Bush sent Secretary of State Baker to Iraq and delivered The United States resolution about military action. It was a clear declaration of war against Iraq (Cigar, 1992:3).

Coalition forces developed credible military threats through building up military capability in order to compel Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait. They delivered a clear and simple message: withdraw or be withdrawn (Mazarr el., 1993:78-80). The strategy of the Coalition was coercive, intended to convince Saddam that if he did not comply or withdraw from Kuwait, he would suffer an overwhelming defeat by superior military powers. Considering the huge military gap between Iraq and the Coalition forces, it was obvious that a refusal to withdraw could cause serious military and political costs to Iraq. Facing these threats, Saddam Hussein responded with war against a superior military enemy. War with superior military powers is not a rational choice that rational leaders are expected to make. Iraq denied the efficacy of the threats of the Coalition Forces and attempted to undermine the Coalition's ability to carry them out.

#### **IV-4. Game Structure in Desert Storm**

In the final stage of the Gulf crisis, the United States-led Coalition forces offered only two choices to Saddam: war or peaceful retreat. The preference order of the

**Table 4-1. Coalition Forces' preference order in Desert Storm**

Preference order	Outcomes	Coalition's choice	Iraqi choice
Best <sup>1)</sup>	DC	Attack on Iraq	Decision to leave from Kuwait
Second Best	CC	Seek a peaceful solution	Decision to leave from Kuwait
Third Best	DD1	Military victory for recover Kuwait	Withdrawal after military defeat
Second Worst	CD	Seek a peaceful solution	Determined to stay in Kuwait
Worst	DD2	War, but failure to recover Kuwait	Stay in Kuwait with military victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome.

Coalition in the final stage of the Gulf Crisis is summarized in Table 4-1. Theoretically, there were five possible outcomes for Coalition forces imposing the Chicken Game on Iraq in the final stage of Desert Storm. The best outcome for Coalition forces was a surprise attack on Iraqi forces that were not ready to fight and did not have any intention of military confrontation. By surprise attack, the Coalition could do decisive damage to Iraqi forces and it would take Iraq a long time to recover enough military power to threaten the stability of the Middle East. But this option existed only in theoretical terms, not in reality, because the purpose of the Coalitions' coercive diplomacy was focused on enforcing mutual cooperation (CC: Iraqi peaceful withdrawal from Kuwait without war).

The second best outcome was Iraqi peaceful withdrawal from Kuwait territory (CC). It is the choice that the Coalition actually intended by imposing the Chicken Game on Iraq. Through peaceful negotiation, Coalition forces would pay some face-saving benefits to Iraq. But this was considered smaller than the cost of military ejection of Iraq from Kuwaiti territory. The worst outcome was the Coalition's military defeat and Iraqi



annexation of Kuwait (DD2). In this case, the Coalition would have to pay human, economic, and military costs without achieving anything. But that was a case that was unlikely to happen because of the Coalition's superior military power. The second worst choice for Coalition forces was CD (Coalition's seeking a peaceful solution when Iraq determined to stay in Kuwaiti territory by deterring or building its military powers). It was the continuation of status quo (CD). Iraq would continue occupying Kuwait and the Coalition would have confronted Iraq without any military action. It was the worst outcome to happen in reality.

The third best choice was to force Iraq to retreat through military conflict, which might exact a human cost, which was estimated from 16,000 to 50,000 (Mazarr, 1933:86-87), and economic damages for the Coalition. Comparing the cost that Iraq might pay in the war, that of the Coalition was minor, but it was a more expensive choice than Iraqi peaceful withdrawal (CC). According to several studies (Freeman, 1991; Korb, 1993; Seager, 1991), the military victory over Iraq might cost more than \$100 billion directly and indirectly over the following five years.

In sum, the preference order of the Coalition can be summarized as  $DC > CC > DD1 > CD > DD2$ . As mentioned, the huge military gap between the Coalition and Iraq made DD2 (an Iraqi military victory) almost impossible. In this sense, it seems to be reasonable to omit DD2 (Coalition's military defeat) outcome. Therefore for coalition forces DD (war with Iraq) was better than continuation of the status quo (CD) and worse than Iraqi peaceful withdrawal (CC). DC (Attack on Iraqi forces when Iraq decides to leave Kuwait peacefully) was a theoretical outcome, not reality. The Coalition had a preference order of Prisoner's Dilemma ( $DC > CC > DD > CD$ ) in which, the dominant

strategy was a defection (a war with Iraq). The meaning that the Coalition played in the Prisoner's Dilemma was that the Coalition was ready to punish in the case that Iraq would not comply. The Coalition's readiness to defect was shown through the fast dispatches and increased military build-ups of forces and the delivery of the ultimatum.

Under the ultimatum from the United States-led Coalition forces, Saddam had two choices: war or peaceful retreat. While staying in Kuwait involved risking military conflict with a superior power, retreat was a safe choice in avoiding the military conflict that Iraq would find difficult to win.

Even though The United States-led Coalition gave Saddam credible threats, Saddam Hussein was not sure that the Coalition would launch a war against him (Herrmann, 1994:248). With the uncertainty of the Coalition's real intention, Saddam's preference order can be summarized in Table 4-2.

Theoretically, there were five possible outcomes in the final stage of the Gulf Crisis. The best outcome for Iraq was annexation of Kuwait by military victory (DD2). This outcome, however, was not likely to happen because of the huge gap in military capability. The second best outcome was to maintain the status quo and continue to stay in Kuwait (DC). Iraq did not have to pay any human and economic cost, but could gain new territory. The third best was peaceful withdrawal (CC). It was the choice to give up Kuwait, but could get some benefits of peaceful withdrawal. This choice did not require any cost of war with a superior foe. The worst choice was withdrawal after military defeat in the war against Coalition (DD1). Considering the huge military gap, there was a high chance this would happen in the case of military conflict with Coalition. CD

**Table 4-2. Iraqi preference order in Desert Storm**

Preference order	outcomes	Iraqi choice	Coalition's choice
Best	DD2	War and victory	War and defeat
Second Best	DC	Staying in Kuwait	Seeking peaceful solution
Third Best	CC	Withdrawal from Kuwait	Seeking peaceful solution
Second Worst <sup>1)</sup>	CD	Decision to withdraw from Kuwait	Determined to attack Iraq
Worst	DD1	War and defeat	War and victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome

(seeking peaceful withdrawal when Coalition decides to attack Iraqi forces) was between CC and DD1. CD (unilateral withdrawal) was worse than the CC (peaceful withdrawal by face-saving negotiation) in the sense that Iraq lost the chance to get the benefits of negotiation. But it was better than DD1 (retreat after military defeat) in the sense that Iraq could avoid a humiliating military defeat. In sum, the Iraqi preference order was  $DC > CC > CD > DD$ . This is the Chicken Game in which the dominant strategy was cooperation (a peaceful solution). While Coalition forces had the Prisoner's Dilemma preference and forced coercive diplomacy, Iraq had the Chicken Game preference in which cooperation (peaceful withdrawal) was safe and defection (war) was risky. Because Iraq was in a loss frame, Saddam sought a risky choice (defection) in order to recover from domestic crisis.

The preferences of Iraq and the Coalition made the game structure of Figure 4-3. What is interesting is that participants in the game could not decide final outcome of the game. Saddam had to choose between two choices: cooperation or defection. The Coalition imposed this game structure in the hope of achieving CC (Iraqi peaceful withdrawal). Superior military power could impose the coercive game structure shown in Figure 4-3 and influence Iraq to choose CC, the desirable outcome. But the final outcome was

		Coalition	
		Peaceful Solution	War
Iraq	Withdrawal	$(-1, 1)$	<b><math>(-3, 4)</math></b>
	Staying	$(1, -3)$	$(-4, -1)$

**Figure 4-3. Game structure of Desert Storm**

Key:  $(x,y)$  = (payoff to Iraq, payoff to Coalition)

Number implies cardinal value

Negative number implies negative utility

Bold number indicates non realistic choice.

decided by Iraqi responses. Saddam Hussein had a choice between staying in Kuwait or war with the superior Coalition forces. In conclusion, the choice of war with the Coalition was a risky choice of victory that had a huge benefit with a slim chance and a huge loss with a high probability; retreat from Kuwait was a safe choice with a sure loss.

#### **IV-5. Iraqi Risk Calculations.**

##### **IV-5-1. Benefits of Successful Annexation**

Keeping Kuwaiti territory was the best and most desirable outcome for Iraq. First of all, a successful takeover of Kuwaiti oil would give great economic advantages to Iraq, and with the successful annexation of Kuwait, Iraq could produce 4.3 million barrels of oil per day (MBPD), which was almost as much as Saudi Arabia (5.3 MBPD): Iraq would

then have the second largest identified oil reserves in the world (over 22 percent of the world's identified oil reserves). The increased oil producing capability and reserves could enable Iraq to achieve a prominent influence in OPEC (Bin et, 1998:5; Mylroie 1993).

Successful annexation of Kuwait would also improve Iraqi access to the Persian Gulf. Iraqi oil exports have been historically affected by a very short coast line in the Persian Gulf. An Iraqi outlet to the sea through the Shatt Al-Arab waterway had made Iraq vulnerable to its neighbors' sabotage, blockages and high transit fees through the pipeline. Occupying the islands of Warba and Bubiyan, which had been one of the hot issues in the Iraq-Kuwait territorial dispute (Rahman 1993; 1997), could give Iraq stable and a safe oil outlet to the sea.

Saddam Hussein was notorious in his role as a pan-Arab leader. A successful resistance or annexation of Kuwait would have provided Saddam Hussein with an opportunity to enhance his prestige among fellow Iraqis and supporters of the pan-Arab movement (Bulloch and Morris, 1991; Taylor, 1993). Moreover, annexation of Kuwait would undermine the existing regional balance and replace it with a new status quo in which Baghdad was dominant (Cigar, 1992:2)

Annexation of Kuwait meant recovering lost territory which had been divided by Western colonialism after the 1913 British-Ottoman "Draft Convention on the Persian Gulf Area." Since its inception as an independent state, Iraq's political leaders persistently had argued sovereignty over Kuwaiti territory (Bishku, 1991; Khadduri, 1990; Nufal, 1991; Schofield, 1991). Annexation of Kuwait could be an achievement of historical importance which Baghdad's political leaders, such as Abd al-Karim Qassem, had consistently pursued.

Successful annexation had huge economic, diplomatic and territorial benefits. Its benefits were enough to overcome the domestic crisis and enhance the status of Iraq in the Arab and world society.

#### **IV-5-2. Deterring Coalitions**

In order to get DC (continuation of the status quo without military confrontation) Iraq had to succeed either in deterring military activity of the Coalition forces (DC) or DD2 (in winning the war) in order to get these huge benefits instead of enormous costs. If Iraq succeeded in deterring military activity of the Coalition forces, the unstable military confrontation could be continued (Mack, 1975). It was best for Saddam's Iraq. Iraq made every effort to deter Coalition forces from selecting the military option. The Iraqi deterrence strategy was based on exacerbating the prospective war's stresses and strains on the Coalition's political cohesion (Freedman and Karsh, 1991:15). In other words, the higher the cost imposed, the more reluctant Coalition forces would be to use military power and the more likely they would have been to prepare to accept peace on terms unobtainable prior to hostilities (Whicker, 1993).

The Vietnam Syndrome was the best example that Iraq used to reduce the willingness of the Coalition forces to wage war against Iraq (Birch, 1993). The Vietnam War taught Saddam how to keep a hold on the Coalition forces. Because the United States, as the leader of the Coalition, had suffered a long war with high casualties in the Vietnam, Saddam was sure no American leader would dare to choose war, which could be long and cause serious casualties. A long-term and high-causality-rate war could

irritate domestic opinions of the Coalition, and then an anti-war mode could give Iraq a chance to get a better position during war or post-war negotiations. Saddam Hussein fully exploited the Vietnam Syndrome.<sup>12</sup> Iraq threatened that the war would be long and have high casualties. If the usage of the Vietnam Syndrome had succeeded, Saddam could hold the Coalition forces off for some time and at best for even a final victory.

Threatening to use weapons of mass destruction was Saddam's main strategy to make sure the war would be costlier than Coalition forces expected. Iraq had long been suspected by Western countries of developing nuclear weapons and bio-chemical weapons. On 2 April 1990, Saddam Hussein declared Iraq could produce bio-chemical weapons. Suspicious chemical weapons and potential effects of ballistic missiles worked as a deterrent. All these threats were used to warn Coalition forces that the war would be long and costly (Albright and Hibbs, 1991; Bundy, 1991; Davis, 1992; McCausland, 1993).<sup>13</sup>

Iraqi deterrence strategy based on the Vietnam Syndrome was fundamentally misled (Freedman, 1993:277-8; McKnight, 1992a; 1992b). There were no obvious similarities between Vietnam and the situations in the Gulf with respect to political causes, geographic conditions, historical contexts, or military circumstances. Most of all, the Coalition forces had good intentions in rescuing Kuwait, which were supported

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12 . Saddam told April Glaspie, the American Ambassador to Baghdad, shortly before the invasion of Kuwait "yours is a society which cannot accept 10,000 dead in one battle"(Bulloch and Morris, 1991:11)

13 . Iraqi deterrence strategy worked and bothered President Gorge Bush's decision on war against Iraq. An US opinion poll survey conducted by Washington Post-ABC in early January showed support for war at 63 percent, but this declined to 44 percent in favor of war and 53 percent opposed on the assumption of 1,000 American troops killed and further dropped to only 35 percent in favor and 61 percent opposed if 10,000 troops were to be killed (reported in the Washington Post, 8 January 1991; recited in Freedman

world-wide. Doing nothing would be worse than doing something. High casualties were a sensitive issue. But the Vietnam Syndrome could not prevent a military operation by Coalition forces. The acceptable casualty level in a war undertaken for moral motivation such as Desert Storm was higher than that of the Vietnam War.

In sum, the chance for Iraq to have DC (status quo) by deterring the Coalitions was low because Iraqi usage of Vietnam Syndrome was misconceived.

#### **IV-5-3. Slim, but Still Remaining Chance to Win over Coalition**

Another way to keep Kuwait territory was winning a war with the Coalition forces (DD2). Iraq's chances of winning the war were very slim. The most important factor in the final outcomes of war is the military power of the opponents. Iraq was far inferior to Coalition forces in military power.

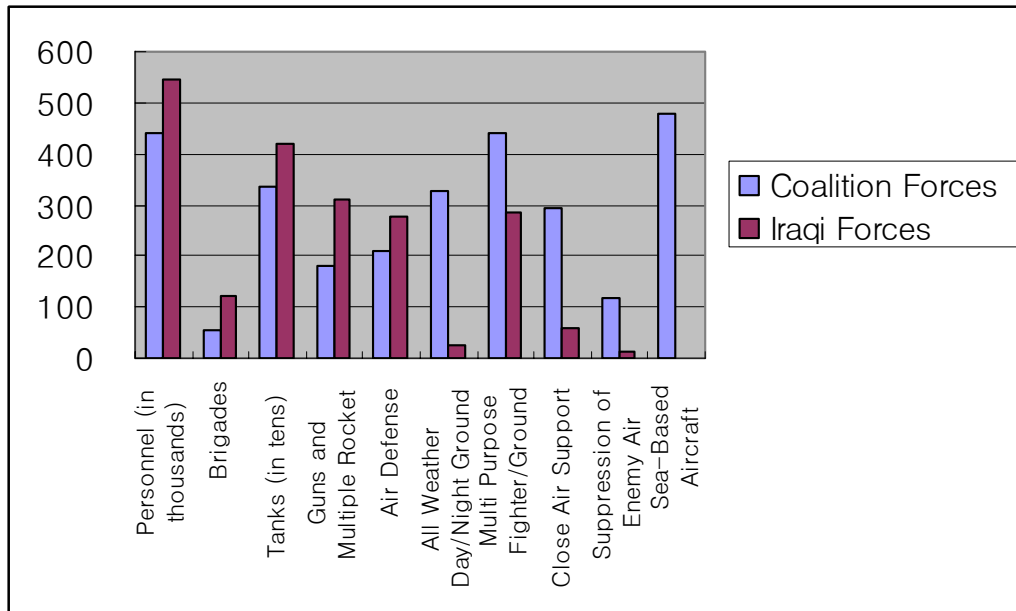
As Figure 4-4 shows, Iraq had superiority in the number of soldiers, tanks, and brigades, cannons, and air defense. The Iraqi advantage existed in conventional warfare. In modern warfare, the numbers do not show everything concerning the military balance between Iraq and Coalition forces. Iraq had disadvantages in air power and precision-guided weapons, which are very important in modern warfare (Freedman, 1991: 281; Luttwak 1994).

Iraq also had geopolitical disadvantages. As Iraq was surrounded by hostile states, Iraq could not concentrate its defending forces along the lines of the Coalition forces. Of all Iraq's neighbors, Iran was generally unsympathetic even if remaining issues from the Iran-Iraqi war were settled in its favor (Backhash, 1993; Poya, 1991). Turkey was hostile

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1991:285). President Bush was very cautious in order not to replicate 'another Vietnam.'





**Figure 4-4. Comparison of Coalition Forces and Iraqi Forces**

Source: Posen (1991).

to Iraq. It cut off Iraq's oil pipeline, which passed through its territory, and moreover it permitted the Coalition forces to use its air bases (Kushner, 1993; Navaro, 1991). Iraq would have to deploy significant forces all along the Iranian, Turkish, and Syrian lines to protect its own territory. In addition, Iraq would also have to leave enough forces to protect the Baath Regime in Baghdad. Because of a shortage of troops to put along the wide front, the border defenses were manned by less capable troops.

According to rational choice theory, foreign or alliance support is a very important variable that weak state's war in asymmetric conflicts. In Desert Storm, Iraq had a very large disadvantage in foreign support. No country gave Iraq significant military or material support (Sayigh, 1991; Ticktin, 1991). Of all Iraq's neighbors, only the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Jordan showed sympathy to Iraq (Ehteshami, 1994).

In spite of Saddam Hussein's efforts to link the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait with the Israeli withdrawal from Arab Territory, Palestine was in no position to give any material support (Freedman, 1991:101).

Winning the war with the Coalition could have given huge benefits to Iraqi decision makers. The benefits would overcome the domestic crisis caused by economic difficulties. But it was a risky choice because the chance to keep Kuwait through war was very low. The chance to win a war was very slim, but there was still a chance to win. Baghdad's overall net assessment was based on the Iraqi Army's combat experience, strong defensive position, and numerical superiority (Freedman, 1993:chapter 3).

Recent combat experience weighed on Iraq's favor because of the recent eight-year war with Iran. In contrast, the Coalition forces did not have such war experiences. The United States had not been engaged in combat operations since the Vietnam War, apart from limited military actions in Panama and Grenada. The UK also had not been involved in a major war since the Falklands war with Argentina in 1980.

Geographic familiarity was another Iraqi advantage. Having experienced war in a desert would give the Iraqis a better defensive position. Harsh desert condition such as dust, clouds and smoke from the battlefield might nullify the advantage of advanced high technology weapons. Even though Coalition airpower had technological superiority, air campaigns limited damage to Iraqi forces by Iraq's numerous air defense assets and by the dust and smoke of the desert. Based on the Vietnam assessment, even extensive bombing and command of the skies were insufficient to get a final victory. Final victory or a decisive result could come from close fighting and being ready to sacrifice their lives. Frequent close-in fighting in the desert would also neutralize advantages in fire support

as well as electronic systems. Having experienced war with Iran, what was decisive in close-fighting in the desert was experience and the readiness to sacrifice, which is where Iraq had the advantage. (Cigar, 1992:15)

The experience of war with Iran gave a possibility that fighting would be restricted to the confines of a narrow battlefield as The United States had in Korea and Vietnam. A confining narrow battle field could cause a long, high-casualty war. If a Vietnam-type war could be repeated, the final result would be to Iraq's advantage. Countries that are very sensitive to high casualties would find it difficult to win decisively in that type of war (Cigar, 1992:17; Freedman, 1994; Gazit, 1992).

The massive destruction of oil facilities also could work to weaken the Coalition's willingness to fight a prolonged war. This destruction could cause a decline in the world oil market supply. Even though other oil-producing countries would produce to compensate for the reduced oil supply, it could increase oil prices. If the oil price were high enough, the world economy could not cope with it. An economic downturn would trigger significant popular discontent and weaken fighting will. An anti-war movement in Western countries would be on Iraq's side. An anti-war movement would deter the Coalition from attacking or from executing a prolonged war. (Cigar, 1992:8)

In conventional terms of military power, Iraq had advantages over the Coalition. But Iraqi inferiority in air power and high-technology weapons could not give Iraq victory over the Coalition. High oil prices could be a decisive factor, bringing Iraq success in deterrence. Oil producing countries, however, were ready to produce to compensate for lost production. Terrorist support and anti-war movements were not good reasons to wage war in Desert Storm. "Morality" was not on the Iraqi side. The

expectation of a narrowly-confined war was not realistic for superior military powers. Desert conditions did not seem to hinder the Coalition's high-technology weapons either. Highly technical weapon systems had already been tested several times in the Middle East through several other small military conflicts, such as Israel (Mueller, 1994). As with other asymmetric conflicts, the superior power's prevailing in war is not just a possibility but a matter of time. In sum, Iraq had a chance to deter or win over the Coalition. But it was very slim.

#### **IV-5-4. Peaceful Retreat from Kuwait Territory**

Peaceful retreat was Saddam's other option (CC: withdrawal with face-saving negotiation or CD: unilateral withdrawal). Many international mediators proposed to Saddam Hussein peaceful and honorable solutions to the crisis. Retreat was a safe choice with a sure loss (loss of Kuwait territory), but it was a choice that consolidated the benefits of face-saving negotiation. Most of the proposals satisfied the terms outlined by Saddam himself, such as favorable solutions to the islands of Bubiyan and Warbah, the Rumaila oil field, new Kuwaiti government by Kuwaiti people, and linkage to the Palestine problem. Saddam, who was located in a loss frame did not take any of these proposals seriously and rejected any negotiations (Hermanr, 1994:250-252; Stein, 1992:170-173). Saddam gambled a war with Coalition forces.

As Hermanr (1994) argues, if he had taken one of these opportunities, the willingness of the Coalition to use force would have fractured and it would have been difficult to maintain Coalition forces in Arab territories.

A military conflict with Western powers already gave Saddam a clue in solving

his domestic crisis. Military threats from outside would nullify the inside crisis. Saddam could buy time and gain patriotic support to solve the domestic crisis caused by economic difficulties. They would also give Saddam a good chance to handle the domestic crisis in his favor. The Iraqi economy would have a better chance to recover when he ordered it to retreat than when the economy was hit by a devastating defeat. Kuwait showed strong intentions to solve the debt negotiation in favor of Iraq before the crisis. In this aspect, Iraq had a high possibility to get a strong negotiation advantage after the retreat. Whether Iraq could get a desirable outcome would depend on negotiation skill instead of military power. If Saddam had a very good deal in the negotiation, the Iraqi economy and oil exports could support the Iraqi economy and help solve the economic crisis.

When control over Kuwait would no longer be possible, honorable withdrawal could allow him to emerge as a “new Nassar” who fought and survived against imperialism. As Nassar did, Saddam could present himself as an Arab leader who had stood up and shown his toughness against the United States and who was presumably ready to lead a united Arab front against Israel. During the Gulf Crisis, there were spontaneous demonstrations by people who supported Iraq and Saddam Hussein, or were protesting against Western intervention in Algeria, Jordan, and Palestine. In short, Saddam Hussein – like Gamal Abdul Nassar – would be perceived as a hero who was in line with the vision and discourse of Arabism and a leader of resistance to Western aggression (Hassan, 1999:159-164; Khalidi, 1991:20).

The acceptance of a withdrawal with face-saving negotiation earlier could have secured Saddam a better deal and avoided a humiliating defeat against stronger military opponents. In this sense, the choice of a peaceful withdrawal was the one to secure this

achievement after the Kuwaiti invasion.

#### **IV-6. Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the puzzle of Saddam Hussein's war choice against the Coalition by using Prospect Theory. According to Prospect theory, decision makers who are located in a loss frame tend to take risky choices.

Iraq's reference point was high oil price to re-vitalize its economy. Iraq had suffered serious economic problems after its 8-year war with Iran. Invasion of Kuwait was seen as an exit from economic difficulties. Its economic difficulties had been worsened by UN economic sanctions after the Kuwaiti invasion. It means Iraq was dropped to the far darker side after the invasion. Iraq was in a far more difficult situation (Karsh and Rautsi, 1991: chapter 9). Since the beginning of the Gulf Crisis, superior Coalition forces presented Saddam only two choices: withdrawal or war.

Peaceful retreat was the safe choice for Saddam Hussein with less variance in outcomes, which could give a sure loss; war was a risky choice which had huge benefits of its low chance to recover from the economic and the domestic crisis, but also had an enormous cost of high probability. Even though withdrawal by concessions was safe to Saddam, but its benefits were inferior to those that might be obtained as a result of victory.

War was a risky choice with greater variance. As Prospect theory expects, Saddam, who was located in a loss frame, took a risky choice to engage in war with superior powers instead of a safe choice of withdrawing peacefully from Kuwait. For Saddam Hussein, who was trapped in the game of Chicken, cooperation (unconditional

withdrawal or face-saving compromise) was not an acceptable choice. Cooperation was safe choice but it did not solve the fundamental predicament underlying the invasion of Kuwait. War against superior Coalition forces was the choice to save the regime in the face of economic difficulties.

In contrast to huge benefits of successful annexation by means of deterring (DC) or winning a war (DD2), the failure of annexation by losing a war with Coalition forces (DD1) would burden Saddam's regime with a huge monetary loss. If his country were destroyed, national security would be gone and national power would become a distant dream. Losing a war would cause an incalculable economic loss. The defeat by Coalition forces could be a devastating blow to Iraq's economic difficulties, which had begun after the war with Iran and were significantly aggravated after the Kuwaiti invasion. Economic reconstruction of Iraq would be further from reality. The aggravated economic difficulty would hinge on the political survival of the Baath Party. If Saddam wanted to remain an Arab hero to fight Western imperialism, just the fact that confronting, not winning the war, was enough to have this reputation. Losing this war could leave Saddam himself, in all probability, a refugee, a prisoner or a corpse. Regardless of the accuracy of Iraqi calculation (Baram, 1994; Post, 1993; Renshon, 1993), they caught the slim chance of resisting a superpower's military advantages. In this sense, Saddam's choice to stay in Kuwait was a risky choice with huge benefits with slim chances of winning and an enormous cost with high chances of losing. It was a gamble in the sense that the war could endanger the risk of security in hopes of huge benefit with success with very small chances (White, 1991:299).

Prospect theory focuses on the fact that however slim the chance was to win the war,

there was still a chance to win. Studies on human cognitive biases emphasize a decision tendency to see what we want to see. It makes the decision makers overestimate or underestimate the chance to get it and hinders calculating reasonable chances (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Saddam overestimated the chance to deter or win the war. He also believed that he might withstand a Coalition attack, even though he could not win the war (Kincade, 1992).

The implication that Saddam was located in a loss frame does not mean that he was in a desperate situation that only by winning the war against the Coalition could have saved the regime. Under the difficult economic situation and the imposed Chicken Game, Saddam chose to gamble with war with the Coalition in hopes that his game might give Iraq enough benefits to help solve its political and economic problems.



## **Chapter V. The Falklands War**

The Falkland/Malvinas Islands consist of two large islands and hundreds of small islands. Until 1 April 1982, the islands had been administered as a British colony. The population of two thousands were of British origin and followed the British model in their education and constitution. Argentine forces landed on and occupied the Falklands on 2 April 1982 after a brief battle. Within a matter of days Britain dispatched a large Task Force and began its largest military operation since World War II. It was seventy-four days later that Argentine forces surrendered and the islands returned to British rule following an intensive sea, air and land battle (Kreslins, 1982; Middlebrook, 1985; 1989).

The Falklands war was an asymmetric conflict in which a minor power challenged a major nuclear power. The final outcome of military conflict was clear from the beginning. The military potential of the Great Britain considerably exceeded that of Argentina in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Based on 1981 statistics, total military spending in Argentina was approximately 10 billion dollars (64% of GNP), compared to Britain's more than 24 billion dollars (12% of GNP). In manpower, the number of British armed forces (327,600) was double that of Argentine forces (180,500) (IISS, 1982/3).

Argentina paid a huge cost for choosing to go to war with Britain. According to an Argentine account of war casualties, Argentina lost 500-700 soldiers killed or missing, 800-1000 injured and 11,400 as prisoners of war. Argentina lost 72 aircraft out of 102 that were directly involved in the military conflict. In sea battle, Argentina lost one cruiser and two surface ships. Five surface warships out of a total of 11 battleships were

damaged. The British had 255 killed or missing, 777 injured and 80 prisoners of war. Ten British aircraft were downed (Goldblat and Millan 1983; Moro, 1985; Secretary of State for Defense, 1982; Tilford, 1984). At the end of war, the Argentine military junta was so disgraced that the Falklands war could set the stage for a return to democracy.

The main question to be addressed here is why the Argentine junta did not avoid war with Great Britain, which had superior military power. Between the surprise occupation of the Argentine forces and the inauguration of actual military fighting, Argentina had a chance to avoid a war which would be hard to win. What is interesting is that Argentina did not show any enthusiasm for negotiating a peaceful retreat from the Falklands.

### **V-1. Argentina in a Loss Frame**

The reference point of Argentina's junta was the recovery of legitimacy. The main causes of the Argentine junta's legitimacy loss were the growing political opposition to military rule and the continuous failure of economic policies. The military junta was losing legitimacy gradually and was located in a loss frame.

The Argentine military junta overthrew Isabel Peron's civilian government and seized power in a bloodless coup on 24 March 1976. The Argentina civilian government in the mid-1970s led by Isabel Peron confronted serious social and economic problems: high inflation, widespread working class strikes, and an IMF austerity program (di Tella, 1983; 1989). The civilian government did not appear to be able to deal with the myriad social and economic problems that Argentina confronted. The military coup was supported by industrialists, large landowners, and financiers who refused to accept Isabel

Peron's distributional projects and a middle class who were alienated by the chaos and disorder of previous years and hoped to have a restoration of law and order (Pion-Berlin, 1985:57; Cavarozzi, 1986:41-3; O'Donnell, 1978; 1978-1979). The military government promised to restore Argentina's greatness by economic development and political stability (Hodges, 1976; Martin 1983a:58-61). Before the Argentine invasion of Falkland Islands the Argentine military government did not keep promises of economic development and political stability and was losing its legitimacy. As discussed, its legitimacy crisis, which was not temporal but structural, required a dramatic achievement in order to recover the declining legitimacy. A successful invasion and annexation of the Falklands Island was considered one way to recover its declining legitimacy. The Argentine decision makers in a loss frame took a risky choice that had a high chance to lose and huge benefit to succeed.

### **V-1-1. Economic Crisis**

Economic crisis was one factor that pushed Argentine juntas in a loss frame and to take a risky choice of war with the superior United Kingdom. General Galtieri took the presidency in December 1981 when the Argentine economy was in ruins, owing to a series of major bankruptcies in 1980. Financial panic ensued. The economic task facing Galtieri's economic team took on serious economic difficulties: the GNP fell a record 11.4 percent in the final quarter of 1981, industrial production declined nearly 23 percent, and real wages declined by almost 20 percent. Foreign debt remained around \$8.5 billion during the early years of the military government, but by March 1981 it had jumped to approximately \$25 billion. The debt rate compared to the GDP increased from 14 percent

to over 40 percent (Pang, 2002:40; Ramos, 1986:42-43). The military junta was hard to find the way to exit from these economic crises.

These economic crises were structural in the sense that they were results of the military government's neo-liberal economic policies. After the coup, economic recovery was one of the urgent tasks of the military government. The military junta set out to achieve a dramatic transformation of the Argentine economic system through neo-liberal economic policies such as stabilization and liberalization on the principle of efficiency and comparative advantage in the international market (Di Tella and Rodriguez Braun, 1990; Rock, 1989:321-326).

Inflation control was a principal economic task for the military junta. Neo-liberal economic policy, such as a restrictive monetary policy (Arnaudo and Biartolomei, 1978; de Pablo, 1988; Munck, 1985; Stiles, 1987; Tylor, 1994), anticipated fixed devaluation rate policy (*tablita*) (Arnaudo and Bartolemei, 1978; Berlinkski, 1982; Calvo, 1989; Rodriguez, 1982) and tariff barrier removal (Ferenadez, 1985; Krueger, 1981), were adopted as principal instruments.

In brief, the Argentine junta's economic efforts to control high inflation did not work. As shown in Table 5-1, the annual inflation rate had been over 100% during the military government's rule. Domestic demand dropped with the decrease in real income (Beccaria and Carciofi, 1982; Mathieson, 1982). Fixed devaluation rate policy led to a deficit in the balance of trade (Porzecanski, 1975; 1977; 1978) and substantial capital flight (Bonilla and Schamis, 1999:9-12; di Tella, 1987; Peralta-Ramos, 1987:47-57).

The financial reform, which began in June 1977, was a radical departure from previous banking practices in Argentina. Financial reform gave all Argentine financial

**Table 5-1. Argentina's Economic Indicators, 1976-1983**

Economic indicator\years	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	443.97	176.00	175.51	159.51	100.76	104.48	164.78	343.81
Deposit interest rate (%)	..	115.43	131.72	117.29	79.61	157.07	126.24	281.31
Overall budget deficit, including grants (% of GDP)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-2.60	-6.69	-5.03	-7.95
Gross international reserves (includes gold, current US\$ billion)	1.98	3.84	5.93	11.63	9.30	5.01	4.50	2.84
Total debt service (% of GNI)	3.16	3.28	5.74	3.29	5.48	7.02	6.15	6.94
Unemployment (% of total labor force)	..	..	..	..	2.30	4.50	4.80	4.20
Terms of trade adjustment (constant LCU, 10 million\$)	-9.74	-9.91	-10.89	-1.92	14.99	21.68	-1.19	0.01
Genuine domestic savings (% of GDP)	23.88	22.72	20.34	11.87	8.46	6.74	9.58	11.20
Real wage index	74.7	73.6	72.3	83	92.8	83	71.1	90.8

Source: The World Bank. 2001. World Development Indicators, CD-ROM version.

Note: inflation rate is based on consumer prices.

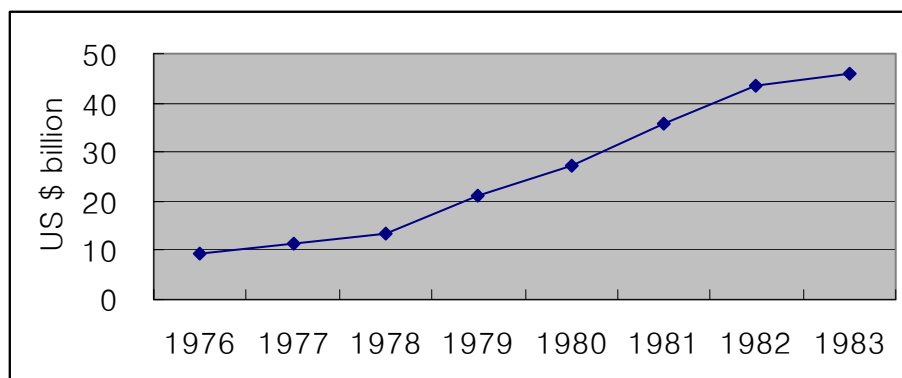
terms of trade is based on constant local currency.

Blank means no data available

institutions a great degree of freedom in the determination of interest rates. Through the liberalization of interest rates, commercial bankers could recover their central position in Argentina's economic system. Moreover, through the liberalization of capital flow, Argentine banks could access short-term capital markets, which then enabled domestic companies to satisfy their financial needs (Clavo, 1983; Mathieson, 1982; Munk, 1985:58-60). The ratio of total short-term foreign debt to total external debt increased 10% in 1976 to 33% in 1979 (The World Bank, 2001).

The failure of financial liberalization and inflation control paved the way to huge foreign debts (Figure 5-1) (Dornbusch, 1989; Dornbusch and de Pablo, 1989:41-46; Sjaastad, 1989). The liberalization of interest rates sent interest rates to a record-high level (Table 5-1). Inasmuch as foreign credit was cheaper than domestic credit, the foreign capital market was an attractive financial source for public and private enterprise. Moreover, high interest rates in the domestic market stimulated the inflow of foreign capital to the domestic financial market and persuaded domestic enterprise to borrow in the international market (Cavallo and Petrei, 1983).

In addition to policy failure, morale hazards and capital flight were other factors that contributed to Argentine indebtedness (Crystal, 1994; Lessard and Williamson, 1987:52-53). The loans that had been given to Argentine businesses and individuals were re-exported to the international market. Capital flight, which began because of the devaluation policy, was accelerated by the 1980 financial crisis in 1980. The private sectors preferred to keep their assets in dollars because continuous devaluations had reduced the total amount of assets. They substituted domestic assets for foreign assets.



**Figure 5-1. Argentina's total external debt, 1976-1983**

Source: Source:The World Bank. 2001. World Development Indicators, CD-ROM version.

With debt stress and the increase of real dollar interest rates (LIBOR), the military junta broke its own neo-liberal economic principles and ordered the Central Bank to intervene in the affairs of three major private banks, which were involved in illegal operations. One of them was *Banco de Intercambio Regional Fiscal*, Argentina's largest private domestic bank. On Friday, 28 March 1980, the Central Bank ended up bailing out most depositors and increased deposit insurance to 100 %. The Central Bank had to guarantee deposits of two billion dollars. This appears to have broken the Martinez de Hoz mystique in the eyes of the public. A run against banks was prevented, but a general air of distrust was inevitably cast on the viability of this type of policy. In September 1980, the Central Bank decided to devalue the peso further. After that, capital flight out of Argentina increased tremendously. In January 1981, *Sasetru*, an industrial conglomerate and Argentina's largest agricultural exporter, collapsed and left over a billion dollars in debt (Frieden, 1991:215).

Foreign debt stood at \$27 billion at the end of 1980. By the end of 1981, it had

jumped to \$35 billion and continued to increase rapidly. The Central Bank lost one-half of its reserves during the same period. Capital flight continued. At the beginning of 1981, massive capital flight had reduced foreign exchange reserves by more than \$2 billion. Interest rates had risen to annual rates of more than 200 percent. The public sector deficit soared out of control (The World Bank, 2001).

One of the economic effects of indebtedness was a violent transfer of income from the rest of society to the financial sectors (Foxley, 1981; Garuda, 2000; Mann, 1984; Vreeland, 2002). As Argentine financial sectors accumulated their capital, the people became poorer. Between 1976 and 1982 (Table 5-1), the annual inflation rate was over 100 percent while the real wage of an industrial worker decreased 37 percent (The World Bank, 2001).

Income redistribution went with political power change in Argentine society. While laborers became poor and lost political power, business sector gained wealth and political power. The economic and political oppression against the labor movements not only achieved a sizable reduction in the wage level but also managed to eliminate working class militancy from the political scene. Because of repression, the government had succeeded in drastically altering the relationship prevailing between capital and labor. In this sense, a military junta was just a “guarantor of the bourgeoisie” as the dominant class (O’Donnell, 1988:2). Resistance of other social classes was begun against the junta’s economic policy and decreased the government’s legitimacy.

The military junta’s economic reforms produced an overwhelming increase in the external debt, a profound concentration of capital in the hands of a small group of national corporations (GEN), and the impoverishment of the working class. Real wages



declined sharply and unemployment doubled in only six months from the beginning of the military rule. With high inflation, enormous foreign debt, and widespread dissatisfaction of the working and middle classes, the junta's "New Political Economy" had finally collapsed in early 1981. The promise of recovering Argentina economy was broken and social sectors supporting in the beginning of military government began to oppose the junta.

After five years of disastrous economic policies by the military government, Galtieri had to launch two difficult and contrasting policies. One was to introduce an economic austerity program recommended by the IMF in order to revitalize the Argentine economy. The other policy was to consolidate military rule. Economic austerity was a necessary step to cut inflation, boost exports, and invite foreign investment. But it also created high unemployment in the short term. The policy of Robert Alemann, Minister of Economy under the Galtieri government, emphasized deflation, deregulation and denationalization. Alemann's plan was based on freezing state employees' wages, which accounted for approximately 50 percent of government expenditures. He also raised taxes and public sector prices. The objective was to compress domestic demands and radically cut public spending to reduce inflation and further open up the economy to the international market (Ahluwalia and Lysy, 1981; Smith, 1989:245).

In a country in which people had already been suffering from economic failure, an austerity policy could weaken popular support of the military junta. In order to attract popular support, General Galtieri tried to gain popularity outside economic areas, such as territorial dispute with Chile in foreign policy and limited liberalization in the domestic political arena. Foreign policy was one of the areas where Galtieri began to play more

assiduously. In this context, the territorial issue of the Falkland Islands emerged as important one to recover the declining legitimacy of military junta.

### **V-1-2. Political Difficulty**

Political stability was another promise made by the military junta to justify its government. With the continuous failure of its economic policy, the Argentine military junta lost social support and confronted social opposition against brutal oppression. Moreover, the Argentine junta was losing political support from some sectors of private business because of its policy that favored the financial sector. Loss of social support from business and growing opposition against military brutality forced the military junta to a loss frame.

In order to give Argentina's "greatness" back, political and economic stability was a necessary step. In a country in which labor militancy and urban guerilla activity always had been strong, extensive use or abuse of power was unavoidable in order to control militant labor activities. With complete impunity due to a monopoly of power and control over the apparatus of state, the armed forces annihilated people regarded as enemies of "Western Christian civilization." In a systematic and planned fashion, the most elementary human rights were violated (Hodges, 1976; Huser, 2002:chapter 2 and 3; Rock, 1993).

Extensive use of state terror was linked with the military government's economic goals to stop social protests against liberal economic policies and to dismantle organized labor. To modernize the economy, the military junta needed to attract foreign capital by offering the prospect of stable and high profit returns in the country. Organized labor had

become a major obstacle. Since high profits were likely to be blocked by frequent labor strikes and the incessant struggle for higher wages, it was nearly impossible to invite foreign capital without controlling labor militancy. In this sense, the extensive use of state terror was highly connected to the military's liberal economic reforms (Peralta-Ramos, 1991:70-83; Pion-Berlin, 1989; Pozzi, 1988:114; Wynia 1986:55-58).

Argentine laborers had maintained one of the most active organizations in Latin America since 1940. Argentina also had the two largest, best-organized, and best-financed urban guerrilla groups, the *Ejercito Revolucionario* (ERP) and the *Monteberos*. Urban guerilla activity had been fomented by a highly politicized and militant labor movement (Buchanan, 1985; di Tella, 1981; Epstein, 1975; 1979; Gillespie, 1982). In a nation in which labor militancy had been strong, state terror was regarded as a necessity to achieve economic goals. The junta that monopolized juridical and executive power forbade the activity of labor unions (Buchanan, 1987).

Extreme state terror began with the "Dirty War." The military doctrine of the "Dirty War" was developed by the heads of the three armed services in September 1975. The military agreed to launch full-scale anti-subversive warfare against the urban guerilla movement. Although initially authorized and limited to the elimination of Argentina's guerrilla organizations, anti-subversive activities extended to unarmed subversive organizations suspected as roots or potential sympathizers of guerilla activity (Potash, 1996). State terror spread to the factory floor, universities, political parties, and the rest of Argentine society.<sup>14</sup> Politicians, journalists, workers, trade unionists, intellectuals,

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14 . In October 1981 General Roberto E. Viola set forth the military's political solution : "Our task will not be over on eradicating subversion, but also aims at removing all those factors that since 1930 have prevented our political life from taking place within the

students, nuns, and priests as well as members of the urban guerrillas were kidnapped, tortured, and assassinated. The obsession with rooting out subversion accounted for thousands who vanished (*desaparecidos*:the ‘disappeareds’); most of them would be considered innocent by any criteria other than those used by the military in power. The margin of error of the reported number of disappearances is unimaginable. According to official reports compiled by The Argentine National Commission of the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP,1986), 8,960 *desaperados* were documented. But the list did not include the unreported and did not take into account survivors’ wish for anonymity. The principal human rights groups and organizations of the Left estimated a number more than three times higher, around 30,000. The military junta aimed at intimidating the entire Argentine people and controlled Argentina with terrorism (Anderson, 1993; Hodges, 1991; Hunter, 1999; Pion-Derlin, 1989:chapter 4&5).

As terrorist threats decreased, the legitimacy of the extensive use of terror weakened. The claim that the terrorists continued to threaten the nation was clearly wearing thin by 1980, and calls for a return to democracy grew both inside and outside the junta. The ruthless use of state power damaged the junta’s legitimacy and initiated popular discontent (Pion-Berlin, 1985).

On 30 April 1977, a group of mothers of the *desaparecidos* went to the *Plaza de Mayo* to demand information about the fates of their lost family members. They formed a group called *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo); they marched every Thursday, asking for information about their vanished family members. *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* became a pillar in the struggle for human rights and challenged the

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channels of stability” (Hodges 1991:13).

political legitimacy of the military government (Brysk, 1994; Loveman, 1998:512-515).

Military political legitimacy was also weakened by the innate nature of authoritarianism. The Argentine military government was a coalition of military and economic elites. It had a built-in destabilizing tendency because it excluded many societal interests. The representation problem was the Achilles' heel of authoritarianism controlled by corporatism. The inclusion of opposing societal interests could weaken internal cohesion; their exclusion might generate subversion. In this sense, Argentine authoritarianism was unstable (Fontana, 1986; Munk, 1998:32-37; Przeworski, 1986:56; Ricci and Fitch, 1990:63-66).

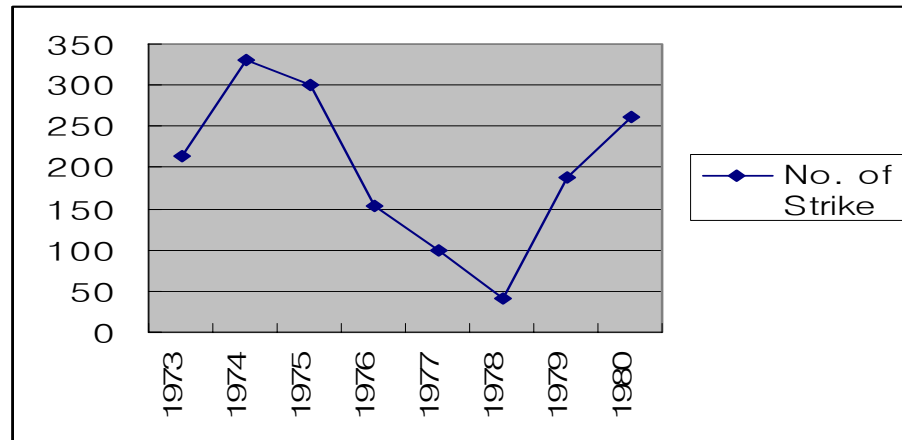
From the beginning of military rule, the junta was split about the appropriate way to extend military political support. During the first three years of military rule, the military was torn between a hard-liner who brooked no compromise with societal forces and a soft-liner who tried to conduct dialogue aimed at broadening military support (Calvert, 1982:49-51; O'Donnell, 1978; Rouquie, 1987:303-4).

Internal conflicts within the military junta were shown in presidential succession (Smith, 1980). There were divisions within the armed forces between soft-liners and hard-liners, primarily over the issue of demilitarizing the political process. Viola's nine-month presidency and a palace coup led by Galtieri showed the intense conflict inside the military junta. Viola had developed close links with trade union leaders. He also opposed liberal economic programs. In political areas, Viola adopted the soft-line position, favoring a political opening. Galtieri represented the interests of the hard-line sector. Galtieri argued for the continuity of the neo-liberal economic program. He was steadfastly against a political opening. The inauguration of the Viola government meant

that soft-liners in the military junta gained power. Viola's nine-month reign witnessed the reemergence of political discontent and the open expression of unrest from the popular sectors. Viola also confronted the evermore strident demands of the industrial and rural entrepreneurs. Viola expressed an interest in reaching a consensus with civilian opposition through "political opening." Viola radically changed Videla's economic policy and started a political dialogue with the main political parties despite warnings from liberals who had become a majority through promotion by the end of 1981 (Smith 1991: 251-55; Tedesco 1999:48-9).

Outside the military junta, labor and political parties challenged the military regime. Labor unions were mostly suppressed by the military junta (Drake, 1996:157-173; Epstein 1989). But intensive suppression did not mean the total silence of labor during military rule. Despite the prohibition of trade union activities, labor strikes were not discontinued. Labor demonstrated against reductions in real wages and the kidnapping of union leaders. A strike in the motor industry in September 1976, a series of strikes by the electrical workers in October 1976, a national rail strike in October 1977, and a strike of the *Alpargata* textile industry in October 1977 are examples of labor protests. Strike activity escalated in 1979. In 1979, the number of strikes rose dramatically (Figure 5-2) and the first national strike was 27 April 1979.

Although all trade union leaders were imprisoned, the strike nonetheless occurred and enjoyed total support of the industrial sector. In July 1981, under the short-lived Viola government, there was a second national strike called by the banned CGT (Confederacion General de Trabajo: General Labor Confederation) against the military



**Figure 5-2 . Annual number of strikes in Argentina, 1973-1980**

Source: Epstein, Edward C. 1989: 26-27.

dictatorship. Even though the leaders were imprisoned again, this strike enjoyed popular support. This labor union activity showed that workers could still organize themselves and demonstrate against the military dictatorship despite ruthless suppression. Ruthless state terrorism and economic dismantling could not completely demobilize the unions (Pozzi, 1988).

Political parties also began to become active again in June 1981. The five largest parties, led by the Peronists and the Radicals, formed the *Multipartidaria* (Common Front) and demanded a new electoral law that would permit open party activity and competition (Pion-Berlin, 1985:64-68).

The military junta received explicit support from the business sector and in turn created favorable business conditions. However, military-business relations did not last long since the economic policies produced splits within several business sectors. The first split came between the agricultural and industrial sectors. Until 1976, the industrial sector was the beneficiary of the high tariffs and special subsidies under ISI (Import

Substitution Industrialization). But liberalization of the economy changed the previous situation. Because the Argentine agricultural industry had a comparative advantage in the international market, a liberalization policy was beneficial for them. But the industrial sectors had to confront new competition with foreign products in the domestic market after removing the high tariff. Domestic industrial sectors lost their benefits due to high competition in the domestic market. The loss of benefits was worse in middle and small industries. Mid-sized agricultural companies were also damaged by a credit price increase after the financial reform because they lacked property ties in financial sectors (Petrei and de Melo, 1985; Taylor, 1998).

Financial sectors benefited the most after the June 1977 reform. Decentralization of bank deposits and the freeing of interest rates invited a massive influx of foreign capital seeking a high interest rate in Argentina. This led to overexpansion of the financial system and a high capital concentration in the financial market. By concentrating their financial capital, a small core of large commercial banks gained most of the benefits, while small-sized financial sectors had to compete with each other for survival (Cavallo and Petrei, 1983; Petrei and Tybout, 1985).

As economic liberalization advanced, the military gradually lost its strong political support in the business sectors because of the different levels of international competitiveness. The important business sectors with weak competitiveness had begun to drift away from their early support for the military government in late 1978. They started to question Martinez de Hoz's economic program and brutal policy against labor union. They insisted on reestablishing the old union leadership. The government progressively became more isolated from the whole business sector and found only open support in the



most highly concentrated sectors with access to the international financial market (Nogues, 1985:39-45; Pion-Berlin, 1985:58-60).

Capital flight was business opposition against the junta's financial sector oriented policy. As business lost its confidence in the junta's economic policies, business began a massive outflow of foreign capital. These outflows impacted the balance of payments and the official exchange policy (Lessard and Williamson, 1987). The government's response to business strikes was foreign borrowing through state companies and intervening in the *Banco de Intercambio Regional*. These responses were clear a sign that the military government would not change its policy to placate big financial business. Business frustrations increased after Galtieri's palace coup (Pion-Berlin, 1985:60-62).

In sum, the military junta's experiment in economic liberty brought about hyperinflation, a decrease in real income, huge foreign debt and higher competition in the domestic market. Liberal policies ruined large and small businesses by making them compete in an open market dominated by cheap imported goods. The junta became isolated from the social sectors that supported them from the beginning. Moreover, social opposition had grown and built new connections against the military junta. Organized labor and the Peronist party came to recover their conjunction with other social forces and compelled the military to abdicate.

The defensive alliance between labor and business was an example of growing social oppositions. The UIA (*Union Industrial Argentina*), representing the internationally oriented businessmen's interests, called for greater attempts to reactivate the economy. By July 1981, the defensive alliance between the CGE (*General Confederation of Economy*), representing national business interests, and the CGT

(*General Confederation of Workers*) was openly announced at a general strike called by the CGT.

The Argentine junta had alienated almost all of its earlier supporters by the spring of 1982. The military government, faced with a narrowing base of public support, had little choice other than acquiescing to the pressures for democracy or clamping down through further repression (Kaufman, 1986:93; Vacs, 1987:18). Still, the military leaders seemed to find other ways to mobilize support for the government's legitimacy, ways outside politics. For example, Argentina hosted the soccer World Cup in 1980, for which many public works were commissioned. Then, the Argentine soccer team's success brought the government new support as feelings of patriotism and euphoria swept the country. The Chilean border dispute was another of the military junta's methods of recovering legitimacy. The successful renegotiation was welcomed and soothed a difficult domestic situation.

The junta's territorial venture in the Falkland Islands also could be understood in this context. The reference points of Argentina's junta was the recovery of declining legitimacy. There was growing social opposition to military rule. The Galtieri government was facing challenges inside and outside the authoritarian coalition. The continuous failure of economic policies and popular dissent pushed the Galtieri government into a loss frame. The Argentine military junta did not keep the promise of economic development and political stability. Finding an exit from crisis was difficult because the crisis was not temporal, but structural, rooted in systematic economic and political failure. The Military junta was losing legitimacy gradually and was located in a loss frame. It, however, is difficult to say that Argentine junta was in a desperate

situation where there was no other way but military conflict in order to exit. As several studies (Pion-Berline, 1985:68-71; Rouquie, 1986:121; 1987:386-389; Stepan, 1986b:76-77) pointed out, there were no imminent threats strong enough to overthrow the military regime. Extreme suppression of previous governments had weakened rival social forces such as urban guerilla movements and labor union solidarity, even if they were recovering. All crises seemed to be controllable because the military government had at least monopolized the material power to control any challenges from inside or outside. Because the dissent business was not threatening, the loss of business confidence could be recovered in the way of economic policy, not by military one. Even in the situation that political liberalization was inevitable, the military could control the liberalization process in a way that served its own political interests. The junta could establish sympathetic political parties and use elections to put its own political allies in power. The military junta faced a legitimacy challenge, which pushed it into a loss frame. But it was not so desperate a situation that the junta needed to take highly risky choices in order to resolve it.

## **V-2. Argentina's Falklands Card**

Galtieri, in a severe economic and political difficulties, began to look for other sources of legitimacy. Territorial gain was one possible way to recover fading legitimacy. The Argentine military government challenged the ownership of Beagle Channel against Chile and succeeded in making this an international issue for negotiation. The territorial challenge inspired Argentine nationalism and gave legitimacy to the junta in a crisis (Garrett, 1985). After successfully challenging Chilean territory, Galtieri took on a

territorial dispute with Great Britain. The issue of the Falkland Islands' ownership was significant enough that it could give more than a temporary opportunity for the Argentine junta in the midst of a crisis because Argentina had become very sensitive on territorial issues.

Most the Argentines felt that Argentina lost territory after the colonial age, even though Argentina was one country that had gained territory after the colonial era. The myth of the "huge loss" was based on the historical fact that Buenos Aires, the capital of the Argentine state, was formerly the capital of the colonial state of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate that administrated the current territory of Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. Taken in this historical context, Argentines claimed that their country was the rightful heir to the entire Viceroyalty. Argentina has argued that all those countries that were once a part of the Viceroyalty --Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay-- are Argentine territory (Escude, 1988:153).

That claim is a myth, because after independence from Spanish rule Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay developed as national states. That the Argentine perception was reasonable or not is not a major issue in this study; more important was the fact that the myth of the "huge loss" did exist at the time of the legitimacy crisis of the military junta. The Argentine rulers found a way to exit by taking advantage of the Argentine syndrome of territorial loss. This territorial loss myth had been reinforced by the educational system and the mass media that it took on a self-perpetuating life. The Gallup Institute of Argentina showed in March 1985 that as much as 73.6 percent of the total sample believed that Argentina had lost territories, while only 6.4 percent thought that Argentina had actually gained land (Escude, 1988:157). The perception of having huge territorial

losses rose steadily with the level of education and made Argentines extremely sensitive to territorial disputes. The increasing national frustration and recurrent economic crises after World War II made the territorial issue increase national dignity. Whenever territorial issues mattered, the importance of the perception of territorial losses increased and came the center of the political arena.

The ownership of the Falkland Islands had two very important meanings in Argentine politics. First, the Falkland Islands was land where a foreign power, Great Britain, forcefully ousted the Argentines. Its recovery could compensate for this disgrace. Secondly, recovery of the Falkland Islands could step up anti-British nationalism in Argentina.

Anti-British nationalism loomed large in Argentine politics (Calvert, 1982b; LAB, 1982). Britain invaded Buenos Aires twice in the colonial era. On both occasions Argentina had been beaten soundly. In addition to military conflict, economic experience intensified anti-British nationalism. Before the Great Depression, Argentina depended upon the British to an extraordinary degree (Ford, 1975; Gravit, 1975; Goodwin, 1981). The United Kingdom provided more than 55 percent of total foreign capital. Since 1930 when ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization) began with the collapse of the international trade system, new social forces, such as the bourgeoisie and industrial proletariat who preferred the protectionist development model, emerged in Argentine politics. The Peron government represented a new social force that wanted to protect their market from competitive British goods. These military and economic facts explain why Argentina was sympathetic to the Axis in World War II. When World War II erupted, the Argentines welcomed it as heralding the end of British domination in Argentina (Fodor,

1989; MacDonald, 1986:184-191). Serious Argentine pressure on the islands was coincidental with the emergence of Peron's ruling and rhetorical use of nationalism. In 1955, economic and political nationalism were close to becoming one through mass propaganda. Since then, the Falklands had become a major reference point of national pride (Collier, 1983:101; Destefani, 1982; Little 1984:303; Markin, 1983b; Welch, 1997:487-491). This is the reason the Falklands issue was so salient in Argentine politics.

By the time General Galtieri came to power by an internal coup in December 1981, the Falklands were a high priority on the junta's foreign policy agenda. In order to recover popularity among his countrymen, Galtieri, in a loss frame, began to play with the myth of a "huge territorial loss". After successful efforts in the Beagle Channel dispute with Chile, which almost led to war in 1978 between the two countries, the military junta was encouraged to use territorial gains as a means of both unifying and legitimizing the junta's ruling (Garrett, 1985).

Argentine efforts to acquire the Falkland Islands through a diplomatic solution had a long and futile history. The issue of the ownership of the Falkland Islands was a long, drawn-out, highly contentious one. The East and West Falklands were sighted by the English navigator John Davis in 1592. The East Falklands were settled by the French in 1764, and the West Falklands by British in 1765. But soon after, they were both abandoned. Argentina colonized them in 1820. But they were forced to leave by the British in 1832-33. Since 1834, Argentina had consistently protested its sovereignty claim until the 1960s. In 1965, Argentina registered with UN its desire to negotiate a transfer of sovereignty. After a bilateral meeting in January 1966, the United Kingdom published, even if undocumented, that it had no strategic, political, or economic interest in the

Falkland Islands and that the only question left was the timing and method of return of sovereignty. After then, both sides were instructed to negotiate, and the negotiations had lasted for 17 years (Goebel, 1982:1-46; HMSO, 1982; Metford, 1968).

In the latter half of the 1970s the Argentine government stepped up the intensity of its claim by embarking on a vigorous diplomatic campaign. That campaign was buttressed by the doctrine of an expansive territorial sea. The critical issue was the conflict between the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. While Britain argued that the residents' wishes were paramount, Argentina maintained that people in the Falklands were a temporary population of illegal origin whose interests alone should not be taken into account. The British principle on negotiation in December 1968 made it clear that the transfer of sovereignty without the islanders' consent was not negotiable. Whenever new approaches were discussed, such as a thirty-year freeze, condominium, and lease-back, the wishes of the islanders had been the main obstacle in sovereignty negotiation (Calvert, 1983; Hoffman and Hoffman, 1982; Gravelle, 1985).

Diplomatic negotiations with the United Kingdom had not been advancing before the Argentine 1982 invasion. Before the spring of 1982, the junta's vulnerability on the Falkland question was obvious. When the Argentine junta suffered from the political vulnerability caused by its poor performance on a range of important political and economic issues, to ignore domestic pressure was more difficult. Carlos Cavandoli, the Argentine negotiator, had pleaded for some concessions that would demonstrate progress on sovereignty in the Summer of 1981. (Frank, 1983; Lebow, 1983:5-12; Levy and Vakili, 1993:131-133) But there was no progress under increasing pressure at home to achieve that elusive but immensely popular goal. The Argentine junta became convinced of the

impossibility of obtaining sovereignty over the Falklands through diplomacy (Calvert, 1982:56; Dunnett, 1983; Feldman, 1985; Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse, 1990:296; Hastings and Jenkins, 1983:46-47; Lebow 97-9).

### **V-3. Imposition of Coercive Diplomacy by Great Britain**

The Falklands were an area of rich potential in oil exploitation, naval resources, and fisheries. But, before the Argentine invasion, it was potential and no more. The Falkland Islands were not a vital economic interest to the United Kingdom. Until March 1982, because of a decrease in the export price and depopulation, the internal economy of the Falklands was in grave danger of collapsing in five years without continued support from the outside (Beck, 1983b).

Prior to 2 April 1982 the British government showed a diminution of interest and a dilution of commitment (Beck, 1982; 1983a; Gibran, 1998:Chapter 1; Freedman, 1982). It was not willing to offer either a compromise to Argentina or a credible long-term commitment to the Falkland Islands. The affairs of the Falklands ranked number 242 on the Foreign Office list of priorities (Little 1984:297). No careers were going to be made by becoming an expert on them and the conduct of talks could safely be left to junior ministers (Hopple, 1984).

After Argentina's territorial challenge, British interest in the Falkland Islands increased dramatically. The Argentine invasion produced British humiliation and loss of national pride (Gibran, 1998: Chapter 3; Nora, 2000).

The British decision to fight for restoration of a piece of distant and disputed real estate might be understood in this context. British efforts to restore lost territory by



authoritarian government had more to do with strong feelings of national honor and pride than with budgetary constraints or domestic economic pressures. The United Kingdom should regain the Falklands in order to recover national dignity at the time of its own economic difficulties at home. The recapture of the lost territory from a totalitarian government achieved urgent priority (Bluth, 1987; Martin, 1992:151; Paul, 1997:64-100; Welch, 1993:155-185).

Quick action in dispatching the Task Force not only underlined the gravity of the situation but also demonstrated the government's decisiveness and willingness to stand up to Argentine aggression. Three days after invasion, the British task force departed for the Falklands. These Task Forces were two-thirds of the Royal Navy. The dispatch of the largest force since World War II was a clear indication that the United Kingdom had the will to act decisively. The Task Forces' dispatch indicated an unequivocal readiness for war against the Argentine invasion. Britain gave only two options: withdrawal from the Falklands or to be withdrawn by force. Argentina faced a superior military power with nuclear weapons.

#### **V-4. Game Structure of the Falklands War**

The preference order of the British Task Forces in the final stage of the Falklands crisis is summarized in Table 5-2. Argentina's continuous presence in the Falklands was not an acceptable outcome for the British. Argentina had to be out of the Falklands. The best outcome for the United Kingdom was a surprise attack on Argentine forces that were not ready to fight and did not have any intention of engaging in military confrontation. By surprise attack, the United Kingdom could strike decisive damage to

**Table 5-2. British preference order in the Falklands War**

Preference order	Outcomes	British choice	Argentina choice
Best <sup>1)</sup>	DC	Attack on Iraq	Decision to leave from Falkands
Second Best	CC	Seek a peaceful solution	Decision to leave from Falklands
Third Best	DD1	Military victory for recover Falklands	Withdrawal after military defeat
Second Worst	CD	Seek a peaceful solution	Determined to stay in Falklands
Worst	DD2	War, but failure to recover Falklands	Stay in Falklands with military victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome

Argentine forces in the Falklands. But this option existed only in theoretical terms, not in reality, because the purpose of the British Task forces was to force mutual cooperation (CC: Argentine peaceful withdrawal from the Falklands without war).

The second best outcome was Argentine withdrawal peacefully from the Falklands (CC). It is the choice that Great Britain actually intended by imposing coercive diplomacy. Through peaceful negotiation, the United Kingdom would pay some face-saving benefits to the Argentine military junta. But that was smaller than the cost of military ejection of Argentine forces from the Falklands. The worst outcome was the British military defeat and Argentine annexation of the Falklands (DD2). In this case, the United Kingdom would have to pay human, economic, and military costs without achieving anything. But that outcome was not likely to happen because the United Kingdom was not going to lose a war with inferior Argentina. The second worst choice for British forces was CD (British seeking a peaceful solution when Argentina determined to stay in the Falklands by deterring or building its military powers). That would have been continuation of the

status quo (CD). Argentina would have continued occupying the Falklands and the British Task Forces would have confronted Argentina without any military action. It was the worst outcome for the United Kingdom.

The third best choice was to enforce Argentina to retreat by military conflict, which might incur human cost and economic damages for the United Kingdom. Comparing the cost that Argentina might pay in the war, that of the United Kingdom would be minor, but it was a more expensive choice than Argentine peaceful withdrawal (CC).

In sum, the preference order of the United Kingdom can be summarized as the Prisoner's Dilemma ( $DC > CC > DD > CD$ ). As mentioned, the huge military gap between the United Kingdom and Argentina made DD2 (Argentine military victory) virtually impossible. Therefore DD (war with Argentina) was better than continuation of the status quo (CD: Argentine occupation without war) and worse than Argentine peaceful withdrawal (CC). DC (Attack on Argentine forces when Argentina decides to leave the Falklands peacefully) was a theoretical possibility, not a reality.

The United Kingdom was ready to punish (defect) when Argentina would not comply by withdrawing from the Falklands. Britain's readiness to defect was made clear by credible threats to use its superior military capability to recover the lost territory.

Before the invasion, Argentina had several clues that Britain would not respond militarily to an invasion. The British decisions to withdraw the HMS Endurance from South Atlantic and a national bill that deprived many Kelpers (British residents in Falklands) of full British citizenship could have been misread in Buenos Areas as a signal of British reluctance to stand by the Falklands. Argentine occupation could have been a reasonable strategy had the Thatcher government severed diplomatic relations and

imposed trade and economic sanctions but refrained from military action (Paul 1995:710). But the Task Forces' dispatch was an obvious signal hard to misunderstand: the British were ready to pay a high cost to recover lost territory and national pride. The British gave Galtieri two options: withdraw or be withdrawn by force.

Even though the British dispatch of Task Forces gave credible threats, the Argentine military junta was not sure that the United Kingdom would launch a war to regain the Falklands. Under this uncertainty, the Argentine preference order can be summarized in Table 5-3.

Theoretically, there were four possible outcomes in the final stage of the Falklands crisis. The best outcome for Argentina was staying in the Falklands by military victory (DD2). This outcome, however, had low probability of happening because of the huge gap in military capability. The second best was to keep the status quo and continue to stay in the Falklands (DC). Argentina would not have to pay any human and economic cost, but could gain new territory. The third best was peaceful withdrawal (CC). It was the choice to give up the Falklands, but could get some of the benefits of peaceful withdrawal. This choice did not require any cost of war with a superior foe. The worst choice was

**Table 5-3. Argentine preference order in the Falklands Crisis**

Preference order	outcomes	Argentine choice	British choice
Best	DD2	War and victory	War and defeat
Second Best	DC	Staying in Falklands	Seeking peaceful solution
Third Best	CC	Withdrawal from Falklands	Seeking peaceful solution
Second Worst <sup>1)</sup>	CD	Decision to withdraw from Falklands	Determined to attack Argentina
Worst	DD1	War and defeat	War and victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome

withdrawal after military defeat in the war against the British Task Forces (DD1).

Considering the huge military gap, there was high chance of this happening in the case of military conflict with the United Kingdom. CD (seeking peaceful withdrawal when the United Kingdom decides to attack Argentine forces in the Falklands) was between CC and DD1. CD (unilateral withdrawal) was worse than the CC (peaceful withdrawal by face-saving negotiation) because Argentina would lose the chance to get the benefits of negotiation. But it was better than DD1 (retreat after military defeat) in the sense that Argentina could avoid a humiliating military defeat. In sum, the Argentine preference order was summarized as  $DC > CC > CD > DD$ . It was the Chicken Game

		The U.K.	
		Peaceful Solution	War
Argentina	Withdrawal	(-2,1)	<b>(-3,4)</b>
	Staying	(1,-3)	<b>(-4,-1)</b>

**Figure 5-3. Game Structure of the Falklands Crisis**

Key: (x,y) = (payoff to Argentina, payoff to the United Kingdom)  
 Number implies cardinal value  
 Negative number implies negative utility  
 Bold is not realistic outcome

preference. While the British forces had the Prisoner's Dilemma preference and forced coercive diplomacy, Argentina had the Chicken Game preference in which cooperation (peaceful withdrawal) was safe and defection (war) was risk. . The dominant strategy of the Chicken Game was cooperation. Because the Argentina junta was in a loss frame, the risky choice of defection was sought to recover its losing legitimacy. It meant that the Argentina junta in a loss frame did not show interest in peaceful negotiation (cooperation) and sought a gamble to war against the superior United Kingdom.

The game structure of the Falklands crisis is summarized in Figure 5-3. Neither Argentina nor the United Kingdom alone could decide the final outcome of game in the strategic interaction. The United Kingdom imposed a coercive game structure in the hope of achieving CC (Argentine peaceful withdrawal) and influenced Argentina to choose to cooperate. But the final outcome was decided by Argentine responses. The Argentine military junta had to choose between staying in the Falklands and the war with the superior the British Task Forces. In conclusion, Argentina's choice of war (defection) with the United Kingdom was a risky choice that had a huge benefit with a slim chance of success and a huge loss with a high probability of defeat; retreat (cooperation) from the Falklands was a safe choice with sure loss.

## **V-5. Argentina's Risky Calculations**

### **V-5-1. Safe Choice of Peaceful Withdrawal from the Falklands**

Galtieri had a good opportunity to take advantage of international mediation to resolve the crisis without war. Before the war started, there were major diplomatic efforts to mediate the Falklands dispute by American Secretary of State Alexander Haig,

President Belaunde-Terry of Peru, and UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Three basic elements in various mediations were the mutual withdrawal of troops, establishment of some interim administration on a trilateral or third party basis, and agreement to negotiate a settlement in the fairly near future (Gordon, 1987; Little 1984:306).

With the British Task Forces on the way, a peaceful withdrawal through international mediation would have been the safe choice. Mutual cooperation, meaning Argentine withdrawal from the Falklands and retreat of the British Task Forces, would have been beneficial for Argentina. It was the safe choice with a sure loss (withdrawal from the Falklands), but it was also the choice to consolidate the benefits from negotiation.

The first benefit of a peaceful retreat for Argentina would have been a new British attitude toward negotiation. Argentine military occupation made the Falkland issue an international one. It was enough to force Great Britain to return to the negotiation table with a more serious-minded approach to Argentina's claim and bring about dramatic change to the course of the ongoing talks. The invasion refreshed the importance of the Falklands sovereignty issue. Increased British interests could have changed the British negotiation strategy and broken the negotiation stalemate, especially after the passage of UN resolution 502: if Argentina had complied and peacefully withdrawn its forces, Britain would have had no option but to negotiate on the sovereignty issue. A short period of invasion and peaceful withdrawal would have been enough to persuade the British government to be serious at the negotiation table (Lebow, 1983:14).

The second benefit of peaceful withdrawal would have been a logistical

advantage. If negotiating or conceding sovereignty failed, Argentine reoccupation would not only be possible, but might have been more acceptable internationally. But Britain had a very different situation. It would have been difficult to keep the Task Forces in the South Atlantic without doing anything. Once withdrawn, it would have been extremely costly to repeat the exercise.

Third, even if invasion was not enough to recover the total legitimacy of the military government, invasion itself was enough to give the Argentine junta some needed breathing space because of deep trouble at home. The economic and social problems that the Galtieri government confronted were not so serious that the regime itself could not be overthrown in the near future. The Argentine military regime was in crisis but the crisis was controllable. Even if there were vast popular resistance and a demand for democracy, there was no imminent threat to overthrow the military government. Territorial adventure in the Falklands had already produced a consensus and unity among all Argentines. The junta was receiving the broadest support from all social levels and every corner of Argentina. It was the single most potent force that could bring about cohesion and galvanize support for the junta. It also produced responsive cords of patriotism and loyalty among the masses. As *The Economist* (10 April 1982) pointed out, “the invasion was launched just as the popularity of Argentina’s military rulers had tumbled to its lowest points since the coup of 1976.” In this sense, peaceful withdrawal from the Falklands was a safe choice.

With the British Task Forces on the way, unsuccessful diplomacy would lead to war. It would have been the rational choice for Argentina to avoid a war (cooperate) that would be hard to win. Most of those involved in attempts to mediate expected that



outright war could be avoided. But in contrast to all expectations, Argentina did not give up the demand for guaranteed return of sovereignty at a near (fixed) future date (Kenney 1985:88-89). Moreover, Argentine diplomacy held little room for concession, instead taking an all-or-nothing approach. The Prospect Theory's (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981; 1992) expectation that decision makers who are located in a loss frame take risky choices in the hope of getting huge benefits is a good explanation for the Argentine junta's reluctance to cooperate.

#### **V-5-2. Costs and Benefits of Staying in the Falklands.**

War with the United Kingdom was a risky choice with enormous potential benefits despite the small chance of winning and huge costs. The foremost benefit of winning the war would have been total recovery of the junta's lost legitimacy. Galtieri could have been a hero who recovered lost territory from the British and the commander of Army who beat British forces for the first time in Argentine history. The Galtieri government, in the mid-crisis, could have had its power legitimated by success on the issue. The recovery of domestic legitimacy could have given to the Galtieri government strong popular support. Social demands for democracy would have overlapped with new territory. In addition to domestic support, winning a war against the British would have bolstered Argentina's bargaining position in the Beagle Channel dispute with Chile, where the Argentine junta had demonstrated a "gunboat policy" and forced the Chileans to resubmit the case for arbitration with the Vatican (Gamba, 1987:131; LAB, 1982; Moneta, 1984).

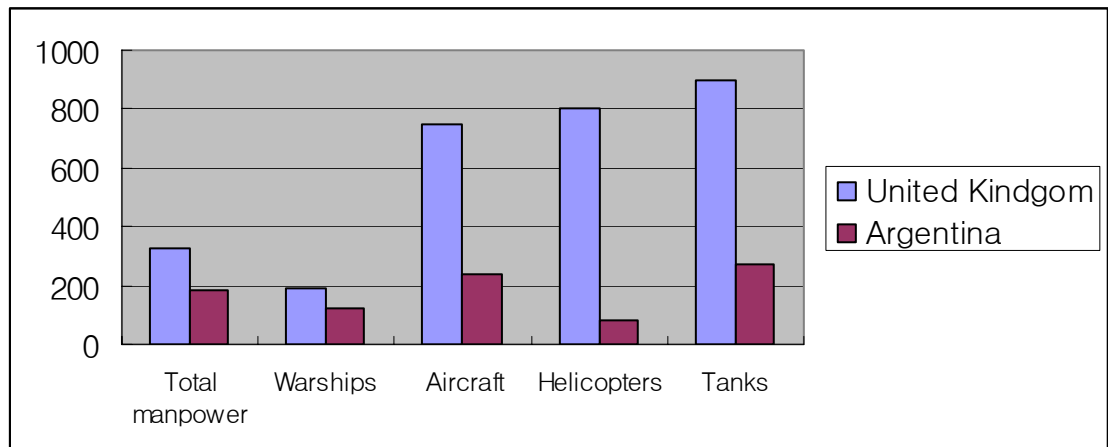
In contrast to the huge potential benefits of winning the war, losing the war could

have fatal costs for the military junta. Defeat in a war would have deepened the legitimacy crisis because it could have been seen as evidence of the military regime's inefficiency. Demands for democracy could then become stronger. It could have even threatened the political survival of those who had been involved in the "Dirty War" and brutal political oppressions.

Defeat might have also made the sovereignty of the Falklands a more remote dream because Britain would not give up its sovereignty over the Falklands which it paid human and economic costs to secure. Argentina would find it difficult to get a good position at the negotiation table after being defeated militarily.

### **VI-3. Slim, but Still Remaining Chance to Win Over the Great Britain**

Argentina's chance of winning the war over the United Kingdom was slim. Argentina had good reason to expect a non-nuclear, limited war because it was logical to assume that Britain would not use nuclear weapons to protect a far-away island group with little direct economic or strategic value. Moreover, the Argentine action did not directly challenge the survival of the British islands themselves in any sense (Paul 1995:709). However, aside from the issue of Britain's nuclear capability, the conventional military balance also was not in favor of Argentina (Figure 5-4). The United Kingdom was superior in every aspect of military balance. If military power was a relevant criterion in estimating the final war outcome, the Argentina's choice of war against British forces was a big gamble in the sense that Argentina had a significant disadvantage in conventional power balance.



**Figure 5-4 . Military Capability comparison between UK and Argentina as of April 1982**

Source: Goldblat and Millan. 1983:475 table 16.1 and 16.2.

Note: Total manpower unit is 1,000 persons.

Total Active military manpower of U.K. includes some 10,000 recruited outside the U.K. Total Active Military Manpower of Argentina includes 118,000 conscripts.

Warships include submarines, aircraft, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, landing ships, minehunters, minesweepers, maintenance boats, troop transporter, and auxiliary ships.

Aircraft includes combat aircrafts of naval and air forces.

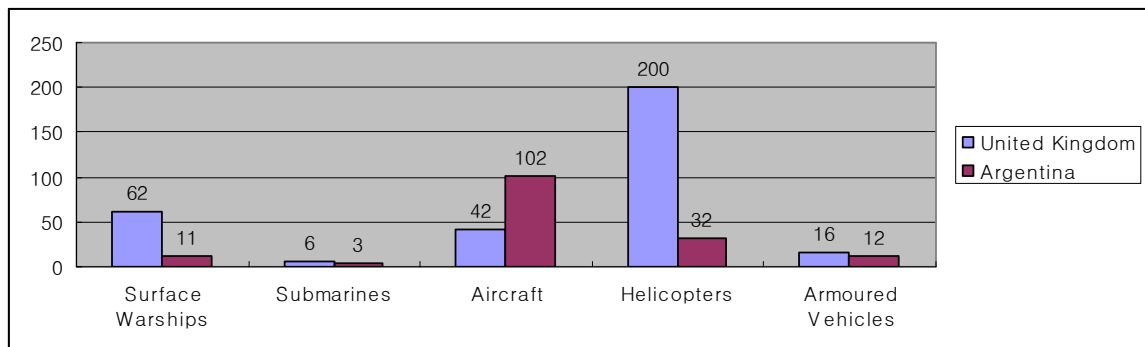
Helicopters include combat and transport helicopters.

Tanks are mainly battle tanks.

In quantitative terms based on major armaments directly involved in military operations of the Falklands War, the British outnumbered Argentina in all but air power (Figure 5-5). The reason that Argentina air forces outweighed the British Task Forces was that the operation area was so close to Argentina that Argentina could utilize all the potential of its air power. The British disadvantage in logistics was the main reason that the Argentine air power outweighed the United Kingdom in the Falklands crisis. But if the British potential to replace loss or damage in combat had been considered, the Argentine quantitative superiority in air power was temporary.

In qualitative terms, the Britain forces directly involved in military operation were far superior to those of Argentina. In terms of manpower, Britain was superior in leadership, training and night-fighting. All British troops were professional. Britain's professional army was highly trained as a component of NATO and could rely upon various commando and mercenary forces, such as the Gurkhas, including those recruited outside the United Kingdom. But the Argentine troops were poorly trained conscripts. The Argentine armed forces mainly focused on domestic security and had not had any operational experience for generations (Summers, 1994).

In Naval forces, the Argentine navy was older and equipped with less modern armaments than was the British. Only two destroyers out of eight, three frigates, and two submarines out of four were built after World War II (George, 1984). As far as submarines, Britain enjoyed numerical qualitative superiority. While Argentina did not have any defense systems against British nuclear submarines, British anti-submarine equipment made its fleet practically immune to a possible attack from Argentine submarines (Ruhe, 1984).



**Figure 5-5 . Major armaments comparison directly involved in the Falklands War**

Source: Goldblat and Millan. 1983:476 table 16.3

Note: Surface warships of U.K. include aircraft carriers, assault ships, destroyers, frigates, one offshore patrol ship, countermine ships, one ice patrol ship, survey ships, one marring and salvage vessel, one tug, tankers, replenishment ships, one store support ship, one helicopter support ship, and landing ships.

Surface warships of Argentina include one aircraft carrier, one cruiser, destroyer, frigates, patrol ships, landing and transport ships

Five of Submarines of the U.K. are nuclear-powered.

Two Argentine submarines were built in Germany, one US-built.

Aircraft of the U.K. include RN Sea Harriers and RAF Harriers but no other types.

Aircraft of Argentina includes Douglas Skyhawks, Dassault Mirages, Dagger/Nesher Mirages, Canberras, Super Etendards and Pucarás. Aermacchi MB-339s are not included in this figure.

Helicopters of U.K. include Sea King, Wessex, Lynx, Gazelle, Wasp, Scout and Chinook.

Helicopters of Argentina include Hughes 500-c. Sikorski-61, Bell-212, Augusta-109, Chnook, Alouette and Puma.

Armored Vehicles of U.K. include Scorpion-light tank armed with 76-mm gun and Scimitar-armored car with 30-mm gun.

Armored Vehicles of Argentina include French-built armored personnel carriers.

In air power, British superiority lay in better equipment than the Argentine Air Forces. Despite numerical inferiority directly involved in the Falklands War, British naval and air forces had some of the finest weaponry available and well trained pilots. Armed with 4 AIM-9L heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles which enabled British pilots to fire at all angle, British Harriers were the best-equipped and advanced aircraft in spite of their low speed.

Argentina's primary attack aircrafts were sixty-eight A-4 Skyhawks of single-engine jet crafts. They had been built in the 1960s and bought as surplus from The United States Navy in 1972. Twenty-six Israeli-built Daggers-- copies of Dassault-Breguet Mirage IIIs and twenty-one French-built Mirage IIIs were advanced air fighter-bombers with a high speed were over mach 2. But, the airfield at Port Stanley -- the only hard-surface airfield in the Falklands-- was fairly short for them. Its short runway could not support the operation of jet aircrafts. Only two aerial refueling aircraft (KC-130) dramatically limited the operation of Argentine Mirages with huge fuel consumption to provide fighter cover. Actually Argentina's Mirages flew at the absolute limit of their range to reach the British fleet and stayed no more than five minutes over the target area (Curum, 2002:66).

One of the most serious disadvantages of Argentine air forces was the shortage of modern long-range reconnaissance assets and navigation avionics. Without accurate and timely intelligence, the long distances between takeoff and targets were a significant disadvantage of the Argentine aircraft's operation. An Argentine air attack would be limited in daylight and visual meteorological conditions. Moreover, Argentine pilots would have to fly just above the waves for fairly long distances in order not to be

detected by the British advanced electronic defense system. By low aviation, Argentine Mirages and Skyhawks lost the advantage of speed that they would have had at highest altitudes. Actually one-third of all Argentine aircraft sent to strike the British returned home without making any contact (Corum, 2002:68)

In all aspects of military power, Argentine forces were inferior to those of Great Britain. Foreign military support could strengthen or compensate for the weakness of a minor state's military capability. In diplomatic support Argentina was far behind that of Britain. The United Nations was not on the Argentine side. The United Nations passed Resolution 502 with ten for, one against and four abstentions, demanding an immediate Argentine withdrawal. The U.K. was supported by EEC members, who agreed unanimously upon economic sanctions against Argentina. Britain clearly required the goodwill of the United States. The use of Ascension Island, located halfway between Britain and the Falkland Islands, gave logistical support for the British military forces. The Americans also announced they would provide the United Kingdom with material support amounting to roughly \$100 million. The British also capitalized heavily upon the distrust of Latin American states such as Chile and Brazil toward Argentina (Edwards, 1996; Martin, 1992).

Support for Argentina from Latin America was low and mixed. Mexico remained neutral. Venezuela and Guatemala were vigorous supporters of Argentina's military use of force to repossess its lost territory, even though neither was willing to make tangible commitments in terms of troop deployment and other material support to Argentina. The Caribbean Commonwealth, including Guyana and Belize, strongly supported Britain. Chile criticized Argentina's use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

Argentina challenged the world's third largest power backed by the world's greatest without significant foreign support (Collier, 1983:463).

Considering military and diplomatic capability, Argentina was very unlikely to win over British Task Forces in the Falklands crisis. In terms of rational calculation, it is rational not to wage a war that is very hard to win. In this sense avoiding a military conflict with the United Kingdom (cooperation in term of Game Theory) was a safe choice. But Prospect Theory explains Argentina's risky choice of war against the British Task Forces. Even though Argentina was in a weak position in terms of military power and foreign support, there was still a small chance to win over British Task forces. Argentina's junta with the Chicken game preference order in a loss frame took a big gamble to seek a slim chance to win in the hope of getting huge benefits.

Before the war, Argentina had its highest point of military strength. By the time General Galtieri came to power, Argentina had developed an impressive capability in conventional weapons with the aid of United States, and all major European suppliers, including Britain. It grew to be the second largest armed force in Latin America. Argentina spent 35 percent of its national spending in military. As Arquilla and Rasmussen (2001:755-757) argue, the Argentine junta did not war with the whole power of Great Britain but just British Task Forces stationed near Falklands, even if the United Kingdom had the capability to replace its damage. If Argentina had done a decisive damage on British Task Forces, it would not have been easy for the Thatcher government to replace the damage. In other words, giving up the remote territory could be considered cheaper than paying more human and material costs in the war.

Aside from the military capability, Argentine forces had a chance – even if it was



not high—to damage decisively the British Task Forces. The Argentine forces were highly motivated by the conviction that they were fighting a just war to recover a lost territory. Morally spirited pilots tend to take highly risky operations and fight bravely (Tilford, 1983:39). Moreover, the substantial numerical edge of the Argentines in fixed wing attack aircraft could offset the British advantage in high technology weapons in submarines, warships, and other aircrafts. One luckily undetected surprise attack on the Task Forces could decisively damage and discourage the British to recharge Task Forces that were located 8,000 miles away from main base in the United Kingdom. In retrospect, the Argentine military strategy was partly right. Most of the damages to the Task Forces were caused by Argentine air attacks by highly motivated Argentine pilots. Argentine pilots earned the respect of their enemies and most of the world with their bravery (Curum, 2002:72; Tilford, 1983:38). But spiritually high motivation could not overcome physical inferiority in the war for the Falklands.

It is not rational to seek luck in a war which could give a devastating blow to its political survival. While according to the rational explanation it is hard to explain Argentina's choice to go to war, Prospect theory accounts for the Argentine junta's choice: Argentina's junta was in a loss frame and had the Chicken game preference order; withdrawal was a safe choice and war was a risky choice. The tendency for decision makers in a loss frame to take a risky choice accounts for Argentina's war choice.

## **V-6. Conclusion**

The reference point of Argentine junta was the recovery of declining legitimacy. Before the invasion of the Falklands, Galtieri, the President of Argentina, was in a loss

frame, caused by economic failures and popular demands for democracy. Even though the military junta could control the legitimacy crisis, the Argentine military junta was located in a loss frame in which Galtieri found it easier to make a risky choice to recover its legitimacy. Territorial adventure in Falklands was exit from legitimacy crisis.

After the invasion of the Falklands, the United Kingdom, with the preference ordering of the Prisoner's Dilemma, showed credible threat on Argentina's defection (rejection of withdrawing from the Falklands). The Argentine junta had the Chicken Game preference order imposed by Great Britain. Under the Chicken Game preference order, the safe choice with a sure loss was cooperation, withdrawal from the Falklands through international mediation. The benefits of Argentina's safe choice could be summarized as following three: a new British attitude toward the Falklands sovereignty issue, the easiness to invade in the case of negotiation failure, and breathing space from deep domestic difficulties.

Once British Task Forces were under way, Galtieri in a loss frame did not show any interest in peaceful withdrawal through international mediation. In other words, he sought a gamble (defection). The war with Great Britain was a risky choice with a huge possible benefit with a small chance to win and with huge costs with a high chance to lose. Galtieri in a loss frame preferred the gamble of war with British to the sure loss of peaceful withdrawal.

## **Chapter VI. The Middle East War in 1973**

The Arab-Israeli War in October 1973 (called the “Yom Kippur War” by the Israelis and the “Ramadan War” by the Arabs) began on 6 October 1973 and ended on 25 October 1973. It lasted for some 18 days. Egypt began a surprise attack on Israel with the coordinated military assistance of Syria and Jordan. To all military experts’ surprise, the Egyptian army succeeded in crossing the Suez Canal and established bridge heads to a depth of twelve to fifteen kilometers over four days. After 14 October, 1973, Israeli forces began a massive counterattack. All attacking Egyptian units were in full retreat back to their bridgeheads by the end of that day. The Israeli army crossed the Suez Canal on 15 October, 1973 and encircled the Egyptian third army in Suez City. Intensive international diplomatic efforts were held and were successful in bringing about a cease-fire on 25 October, 1973 (Aker 1985; Dupuy 1978; Herzog 1982; Sobel 1974).

It was an asymmetric conflict because weak Egypt initiated a limited war against a superior Israel that possessed nuclear weapons. Unlike the other two cases in this study, the strong state, Israel, had slight capability advantages against weak initiators. The fact that the initiator, Egypt, formed an Arab Coalition with Syria and Jordan made the ratio of the strong state’s military power lower. Despite these factors, Israel had a military advantage over the weak initiator (this will be discussed later).

Unlike the first two case studies in this research it is very difficult to tell who the winner was. On the battlefield Israel won the war. But it was not decisive. Israel suffered the highest casualties since its independence: over 2,800 were killed, at least 8,800 were wounded, and over 500 were captured as prisoners of war or went missing in action. This Israeli human loss was equivalent relatively speaking, to the 200,000 Americans killed in

the Vietnam War, considering the October War lasted a little less than three weeks. As well as human casualties, Israel suffered heavy losses of military equipment. Israel lost 840 tanks and 102 airplanes (one-fourth of its entire arsenal). Arab losses were also heavy: Egypt had 5,000 soldiers killed and 12,000 wounded; Syria suffered over 3,000 dead and 6,000 wounded. Egypt lost 1,000 tanks and Syria lost 1,200 tanks. Egypt lost 223 flight planes, and Syria lost 118 planes (Dypuy 1984:609; O'Balance 1978:301; SIPRI. 1974b:149-153).

The high casualties and losses on both sides entitled both sides to claim their own versions of victory. Even if Egypt had more human and material loss, Egypt defeated the Israeli army which had seemed invincible against the Arab nations for the first time in modern history. Moreover, Egypt escaped a humiliating military defeat and retained the capability to launch a limited offensive battle. The unexpected number of casualties and cost hit Israel after the end of the war. The war ended the careers of a number of senior Israeli officers and helped bring down the government. Five and a half years later, Egypt and Israel finally signed a peace treaty officially ending the state of belligerence between them, and the Sinai was returned to the Egyptians (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1993).

Regardless of the final results of the 1973 October War, it was a risky choice for Egyptian decision makers to initiate a war that would be hard to win against superior Israel. The puzzle this chapter addresses is why the Egyptian President Sadat chose to go to war when the probability that Egypt would win was low.

## **VI-1. Egypt in a Loss Frame**

The reference point of Sadat was the recovery of the Sinai that Egypt had lost in the Six Day War. Before the initiation of the Ramadan War, Sadat, the Egyptian President, was racked by two major issues: stalemated negotiations to recover lost territory and a depressed economy. Even if they were not serious enough to threaten to over-turn his regime, these factors pushed Sadat to a loss frame (Stein, 1999:2). Strong popular discontent pushed Sadat into a deep loss frame. Sadat in crisis chose the gamble: war against a superior Israel in hopes of exiting the crisis successfully.

### **VI-1-1. The Delayed Recovery of Lost Territory**

The reference point of Sadat was the recovery of the lost territory after the Six Day War in 1967. The delayed recovery of the Sinai was the foremost factor that pushed Sadat to a loss frame. In the Six Day War, Egyptian forces, joined by Jordan and Syria, were humiliated by the Israel Defense Forces. In addition to losing all fighter planes, about 80 percent of Egyptian military equipment, and 20,000 soldiers, Egypt also lost the Sinai that had been Egyptian territory since 1831. Israel, emerging as the regional superpower invincible against any Arab coalition, constructed a strong defensive military line –the Bar-Lev line– along the Suez Canal for the purpose of consolidating newly acquired territory. It was a strong sign that Israel would not give up the occupied territory (Oren, 2002).

Egypt had made diplomatic and military efforts to regain the Sinai. The War of Attrition (1967-1970) was the military version of a recovery effort. The goal of the War of Attrition was to assure Israeli decision makers that the costs of occupation were too

high to pay. However, in contrast to Egyptian hopes, it was Egypt, not Israel, that paid more. The war cost Israel over 700 dead and 2700 wounded, but Arab losses were three to five times greater. The Israeli counter-bombing of the Suez Cities and deep penetration air strikes caused a death toll that exceeded the Six Day War. The destruction of the Canal cities caused a massive exodus to Cairo, bringing in the homeless and destitute, and causing high unemployment in the nation's capital. Egypt paid more than it could afford to wage this limited war (Bar-Sian-Tov, 1980; Dupuy, 1978:361-169).

The experience of the War of Attrition taught Egyptian decision makers that Israel was too strong to beat in military operations and that even a very limited military action like the War of Attrition could not produce desirable outcomes. A diplomatic solution was therefore the logical alternative to military operations. Sadat's speech to the People's Assembly in February 1971 opened the way to diplomatic solutions as a means of recovering lost territory. Even if Sadat's diplomatic proposal had conditional agreements, such as a full withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967, this was a dramatic departure from Egypt's past bellicose practice. However, even though Egypt's leaders were serious about using diplomacy as an alternative to military confrontation, both sides were unable to agree to terms throughout most of 1971 (Heikal, 1973:118-133; Sadat, 1978:279-280).

Diplomatic efforts did not produce productive results for Egypt before the 1973 war. Two factors brought negotiations to a stalemate: Israel's status quo policy and the international community's détente mode.

Israel was not dissatisfied with the status quo resulting from the Six Day War. In strategic terms, all Israel's major population centers were out of Arabic artillery range, the new borders were shorter and more defensible, and Israel had acquired a new

defensive depth. Economically, the Sinai provided Israel with over half of its oil needs and control of the Golan Heights enabled Israel to channel more water from the Jordan River into Lake Galilee, creating 12,000 acres of arable lands (Gawrych, 2000:98). As Kissinger (1982) noted, the Israeli military position seemed impregnable and therefore created no need to change its policy towards the Arab states. Israel was located in a game frame where decision makers tend to avoid any risky choices and focus on preserving favorable territorial status quo. Continuation of the status quo looked more attractive than any compromise with the Arab countries (Handel, 1977:498-499).

The United States and the USSR were so seriously experimenting with détente in 1972 that neither side wanted to jeopardize détente by being involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The superpowers' aloofness became evident to Sadat when Nixon visited Moscow on 20 May 1972. A joint statement from the summit meeting underscored a lack of urgency in addressing the Arab-Israel conflict (Aronson, 1978:154-155).

When residual hopes of diplomatic progress had disappeared by the beginning in May 1973, Egyptian decision makers came to believe that Israel and the United States would not take the Egyptian demands seriously and became afraid that the Israeli Sinai occupation would be a *fait accompli*. President Sadat's 1973 May Day speech acknowledged that a diplomatic solution with United States intervention had failed and concluded that Egypt would not receive help from any others unless it took dramatic enough action to break the deadlock (Aronson, 1978; Bickerton and Klausner, 1991:167-170; Kissinger, 1979:1293; Sadat, 1977:232-233; O'Neill, 1974:28).

## **VI-1-2. Economic Difficulties**

Another factor that Sadat faced before the October War in 1973 was socio-economic difficulties. Economic development could give the ruler legitimacy because such development could increase the welfare of the population. Moreover, it might give hope that Egypt might have the potential to recover its lost territory by catching up to the economic level of its adversary, which was critical to the outcome on the battlefield. But it was difficult to achieve an economic development in the near future sufficient to strengthen legitimacy because of scarce financial resources adequate to boost the domestic economy and to prepare for war. This dark economic prospect kept Sadat in a loss frame. Sadat's risky war choice can also be understood in this economic context.

The Egyptian economy was in terrible shape before October 1973 (Stein, 1999:11). Egypt was a country with few natural resources. Agriculture had dominated the economy. Cotton exports had been the main source of foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, the Egyptian economy had trouble in accessing sufficient revenue for sustainable industrial development. Access to investment funds had been the major challenge in Egypt's development (Bush, 1999:Chapter 2).

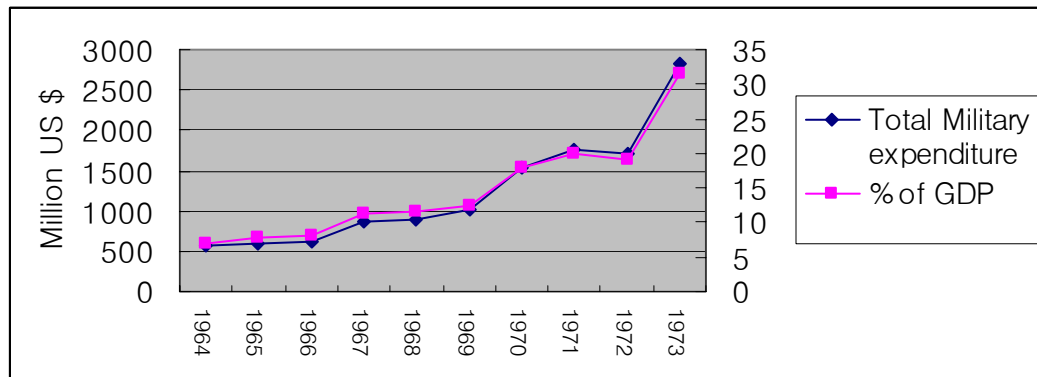
With limited financial sources, the Egyptian industrial development plan had been based on attracting domestic and foreign capital. It was not easy to attract domestic and international investment. This difficulty was intensified by the Egyptian socialist development strategy. Egyptian industrialization begun since War World II has been characterized as "etatism" with the motto of "socialism without socialists" after the publication of socialist law in 1961. Egypt adopted a State-Led Industrialization (SLI) policy, which was characterized as strong state intervention in the economy and private



sector activity control. The state controlled finance, industry, commerce, and foreign trade with a populist distributional policy (Hinnebusch, 1985; Wahba, 1994).

To achieve industrialization, the government needed to keep up high investment levels. Public companies, agents of industrialization and providers of welfare in Egyptian economy could not deliver good financial resources because of inefficiency. The next available financial resource was private capital. The private sector was reluctant to invest because of the socialist expansion of public companies through nationalization (Waterbury 1983: chapter five). Searching for alternative financial sources to bolster the domestic economy was not an easy task for Egyptian decision makers when the economy was already experiencing slow development because of a lack of investment.

The lack of financial resources was compounded by heavy military expenditures. War preparation had been the destiny of the Egyptian state (Barnett, 1992:81). Egypt had experienced a long and delayed development caused by war preparation. In order to build a competitive military power to compete with Israel, Egypt embarked on a course of action designed to mobilize its society for war and built a formidable military establishment. War preparation and economic development were related negatively in Egypt. Every forward step taken by the Egyptian army was matched by a step backward by the Egyptian economy. The burden of preparing for coming wars led to the suspension of all economic development efforts and was intensified by the humiliating defeat of the Six Day War, in which Egypt lost nearly 80 percent of its military equipment -- a total of \$400-500 million worth (Efrat, 1981:152).



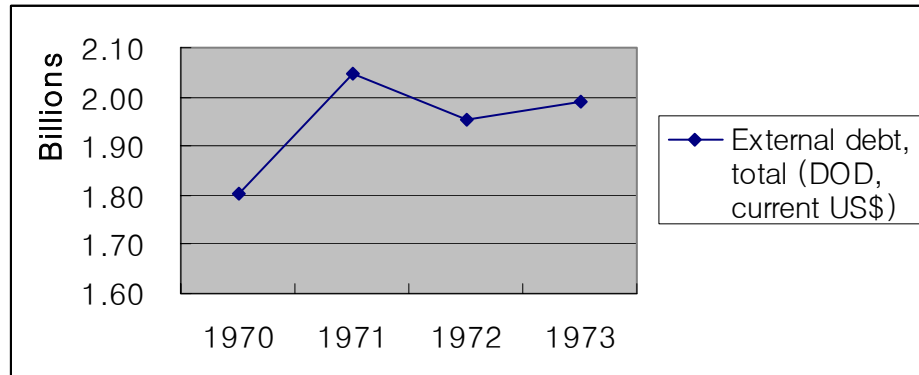
**Figure 6-1. Trend of Egyptian military expenditure in 1964-1973.**

Source: Source: SIPRI, 1977:229. Table 7A.13. and 228. Table 7A.11.

Note: Left Y axis indicates Egyptian total military expenditure on constant price; right Y axis refers % of Egyptian military expenditure to GDP

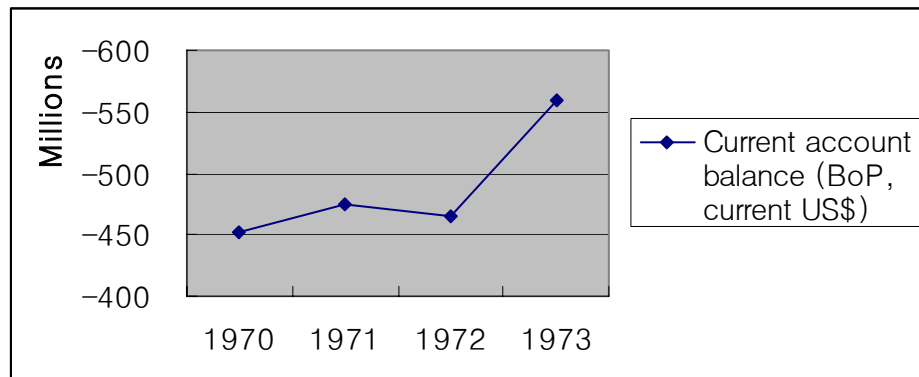
As shown in Figure 6-1, the war economy continued after Sadat's inauguration. Actually the Egyptian economy was more biased toward military expenditure than at any other time. A high defense expenditure which covered more than 18% of the Egyptian GDP since 1970 led to a decrease in the amount of capital available to the economic sector. War preparation consumed and dried up financial resources that could have supported social and economic development (Barnett, 1992:224). The government mobilized these precious resources, diverting them from developmental possibilities, toward war preparation. To make matters worse, even if the Egyptian economy was close to a dire situation, military power in Egypt was not strong enough to confront Israel (Kanovsky, 1970:303-6).

The balance of the payment deficit and foreign debt was affected by the intensive war preparation (See Figures 6-2 and 6-3). A greater percentage of the budget was no longer self-financed but instead derived from foreign assistance. Under a situation in which domestic source extraction was limited, domestic deficits were financed with



**Figure 6-2. Egypt's external debt**

Source: World Bank. 2002.



**Figure 6-3. Egypt's current account balance**

Source: World Bank. 2002.

foreign and domestic borrowing. According to Ikram, whereas around 22 percent of the 1966 budget was funded by borrowing, in 1973 the figure jumped to 40 percent. The Egyptian state's budget had become more dependent on foreign largess. Egypt's debt burden had increased dramatically to finance a growing budget deficit (Ikram, 1980:361).

Egypt's war mobilization was undergoing tremendous strains and stagnation. By 1973 the economy was devastated from years of subordinating its needs to those of the

government's war preparation objective. The masses had already demonstrated real signs of discontent. It became clear that any further measures in the name of a "coming" war with Israel would likely expose Sadat to tremendous societal turbulence. In sum, because of the economic and security crises, the government was unwilling to impose a domestic solution necessary to relieve the pressures on either one. This implied imposing tremendous burdens on society which could threaten the regime's survival.

### **VI-1-3. Popular Discontents**

After independence Egypt was an "authoritarian-modernizing state" (Hinnebusch, 1985:1) in which decision making was centralized in the President. Sadat, Nasser's successor because of his sudden death by a heart attack in September 1970, lacked a stable political power base inside or outside Egypt. Even though he was a member of the Free Officers who initiated a military coup on 23 July 1952, Sadat had served his political career in ceremonial positions, such as the Speaker of Parliament and Vice President. He was regarded as a transitional figure until someone more astute emerged to take the reins of government. It was after removing Ali Sabri, Sadat's main rival for Nasser's mantle, with the help of Sadiq's military loyalty, that Sadat could consolidate his domestic political base (Beattie, 2002:chapter 2).

Even if Sadat consolidated his power base after removing his political rivals, his legitimacy was not yet get on solid ground. The Sadat regime lacked strong civilian support. With weak popular support, Sadat found it very difficult to ignore or change the popular desire to recover lost territory. Sadat's first public address at the Third Session of the National Assembly on November 19, 1970 emphasized the coming battle with Israel:

“ The tasks of the coming stage can be defined as ... the battle first, second, and last.”

Sadat's 1971 declaration as “the year of decision” to regain the Sinai shows he could not ignore the popular desire to regain the Sinai.

As with other regimes with weak popular support, a leader's failure to keep a promise could cause his popularity to decline, which could then significantly weaken his legitimacy (Hinnebusch, 1985). Sadat failed to deliver on his promise to liberate the Sinai in 1971. It was after Sadat's 1971 “year of decision” ended that the costs of four years of war preparation without any military activity on the Arab-Israel front could hurt his political stability dramatically (Heikal, 1973:20; Rubenstein, 1977:180).

After failing to take military action in 1971, internal protest was slowly spreading and began to challenge Sadat's regime. It pushed Sadat into an even deeper loss frame. A student anti-government movement had begun to complain in October 1969 that the never-ending conscription policy made it difficult to graduate from secondary schools and enter college (Rubenstein, 1977: 72). A more significant student challenge began on January 15, 1972. Cairo University students began to demonstrate against Sadat's personal incompetence in dealing with foreign and home affairs (Meital, 1997:106). The protest quickly spread to other universities. Sadat ordered the army to break the protest and close the university. Numerous arrests ended the demonstrations on January 26. But the protests resumed in October and gravely challenged the authorities (Beattie, 2000:93-102).

A so-called “writers' petition”, in which Egyptian intellectuals asked the government to take decisive military action in January 1973, marked the climax of the public protest against Sadat's legitimacy. No less than with the student protest, the

petition movement showed that the conflict with Israel stood at the center of Egyptian intellectuals' concerns.

Delayed recovery of lost territory also increased dissatisfaction among the military rank-and-file. Although Sadat was successful in thwarting a coup attempt, internal pressure from Egyptian "hawks" bothered him throughout his presidency. An army officer led some of his troops into a mosque in central Cairo on October 12, 1972 and demanded immediate war with Israel (Shazli, 1980:192-195). The participation of young officers in the 1972 street demonstration was an indication that the dissatisfaction was spreading to the armed forces (Paul, 1994:142). Military demonstrations to demand immediate actions were another serious signal for Sadat, who was sensitive to the possibility of a coup because his legitimacy was declining even among military rank-and-file.

In addition to domestic social pressures, Sadat received pressure from other Arab countries. The Arab oil states helped Egypt with its financial difficulties after the Six-Day War. They agreed to compensate Egypt to the tune of \$266 million a year for revenue lost due to the closure of the Suez Canal, the drop in tourism, and the capture of the Sinai oil fields. Although Egypt was still viewed as the nominal Arab leader, Sadat's continued postponement of military action against Israel weakened his regional standing. Moreover, the Arab oil states threatened to refuse to continue to bail out Egypt unless Egypt abandoned its ambivalent diplomatic stance toward Israel and went to war.

Sadat faced an unacceptable status quo with Israel that was creating an even greater discontent among an impatient public. While the economy would not recover in the near future and diplomatic efforts were fruitless, domestic and foreign opposition was

rising. Sadat became aware of the rising costs of inaction. Military action began to be conceived as one method to attract superpower attention and to break up Israel's status quo. It was a difficult dilemma to solve: even if successful military action was the best way to break up stalemated negotiations and to attract superpowers' attention for regaining lost territory, the chance to make an impressive enough victory to break the stalemated negotiation was not high because Egypt had to fight against a seemingly invincible foe, Israel.

In conclusion, Sadat was in a loss frame in which decision makers tend to take a gamble in order to recover legitimacy. But Egyptian deterrence policy and bitter experience in "the War of Attrition" made Sadat's dilemma difficult to solve.

## **VI-2. Israeli Deterrence and Sadat's Dilemma**

Ever since its independence on November 29, 1947, Israel's neighbors questioned its sovereignty. War was not Israel's goal, but survival as a nation state was a supreme priority. The decisive victory of the Six-Day War gave the Israelis a feeling of superiority over their Arab neighbors in every respect. Their 1967 victory was so decisive that Israelis viewed their military power as invincible and their Arab foes as inferior and incapable (Monroe and Farrah-Hockley, 1975:11).

But military victory did not give Israel permanent security. Israel adopted a credible deterrence policy by resolving to punish counter-attacks when national survival was at stake. In other words, Israel imposed the Chicken Game structure in its relationship with Egypt. Israeli leaders believed that an opponent would go to war only if it had the necessary military superiority to achieve its objectives. Israel's confidence in

the success of deterrence was rooted in the historical experience of the 1964 war, which was so decisive that it would act as a sufficient deterrent against any offensive by Arab countries (Buckwalter, 2002:120; Herzog, 1975:43; Perlmutter, 1975).

Militarily, the Bar-Lev Line symbolized Israeli deterrence on Egypt (Herzog, 1982:230). The Bar-Lev Line was constructed along the Suez Canal and fortified natural obstacles. To get to the Bar-Lev line, the Egyptians had to overcome first the obstacle of the canal. The Suez Canal itself, 188 to 220 meters in width and 16 to 20 meters in depth with vertical ramparts that rose at an angle of forty-five to sixty five degree with heights of 20 to 25 meters, was the best antitank ditch in the world. Israel constructed 20 concrete forts at seven to ten kilometer intervals which provided shelter from bombing. The formidable Bar-Lev Line could deter any attempt to cross the Suez Canal and a dash to the strategic pass in the Sinai. The Bar-Lev Line could give precious time to the Israelis: at least twenty-four, if not forty-eight, hours to break through, marshal regular forces and mobilize reserves. Israel expected the Bar-Lev Line would serve as a “stop line” (Dupuy, 1978:396-398). Israeli fortification on the Sinai side, its superiority in mobile armored combat, and its mighty Air Force made crossing nearly impossible.

Diplomatically, secure and reliable the United States’ support strengthened Israel’s deterrence. After the Six-Day War, the United States replaced France as Israel’s closest ally and guardian. The United States’ economic assistance financed nearly 20 percent of Israel’s import surplus between 1949 and 1970. The United States’ military aid increased dramatically from \$25 million in 1970 to \$545 million in 1971 (Laufer, 1987:127). Despite the absence of an explicit security commitment, Israeli leaders were sure they could count on the United States for security support as long as Israel could



convince the United States of Israel's strategic value, its ability to act in accordance with the United States' interests in the region and play a stabilizing role in the Middle East. The United States seemed committed to funding Israel's expanding security needs and defending Israel's existence. This secure and financial alliance with United States tilted the military balance with Egypt in Israel's favor (Mott IV, 2002:176-194).

Israel's deterrence policy looked successful before the 1973 October War broke out. Like other rational decision makers, Sadat was unwilling in his early presidency to risk war if defeat was inevitable. "We cannot go to war unless victory is guaranteed. The country cannot take another defeat" (Sadat, 1978:237). The success of Israeli deterrence caused a serious dilemma for Egyptian decision makers to solve: Egypt could neither accept the status quo nor sustain a general military challenge (Stein, 1985:45).

Continuation of the status quo might jeopardize regime legitimacy, but war against a superior military power had a high probability of producing a devastating defeat, which could also seriously threaten survival of the regime.

Since the end of the Six-Day War, military confrontation with Israel was Egypt's most important national goal. Before the Six-Day War, the public attitude was rather passive. Humiliating defeat, however, changed Egyptian public attitude about military conflict with Israel. As Meital pointed out, defeat in the 1968 war became a source of Egyptian national humiliation and shame. It also made the Israeli issue come alive and necessitated active involvement. The dispute with Israel became a matter of national and personal security as well as territorial integrity. War preparation characterized Egyptian life. In addition to widespread societal agreement on the necessity to confront Israel, the Egyptian public cooperated and identified more closely with the army (Meital, 1997:15).

Societal demands to continue confronting Israel actually led government policy. One example was the student movement's demand to ask for a timetable for government military action. In this sense, after the Six Days War, the survival and prestige of the Egyptian ruler depended on his ability to confront Israel. Egypt's problem was that Israel was perceived to be too strong to beat in military operations. Popular demands for military operation, however, were increasing. The Egyptian dilemma was that the delayed military action continuously undermined the legitimacy of government, but waging a war against Israel also could do devastating damage to its legitimacy.

The War of Attrition (1967-1970) was Nasser's solution to the Egyptian dilemma. Because Egypt could not win a decisive victory against Israel, limited war was an alternative option. Egyptian leaders assumed that unless the heartland of Israel, such as Tel Aviv, was attacked, Israel would not respond with massive retaliation. Nasser attempted to force Israel to recognize that its continued occupation of the Sinai Peninsula was not in its best interests. Nasser strongly believed that Israel's low tolerance for casualties and the negative economic effects of hostilities would compel Israel to withdraw its armed forces behind its pre-1967 borders (Laffin, 1982:4; Morris, 2001:348; Shlaim, 2001:289).

Thousands of Egypt's artillery shells struck Israeli positions on the Bar-Lev Line, but even as Israeli casualties mounted, no general cry for an end to the war went up in Israel. Israel's willingness to fight was higher than Nasser expected (Bolia, 2004; Shlaim, 2001:296-295). While the conflict's cost never became a hot political issue in Israel, Israel's deep-penetration bombing had escalated beyond Nasser's expectations and imposed huge social and military costs. The experience of the War of Attrition taught

Sadat that limited military operations against Israel were risky and came with a low probability of success. As demonstrated in 1970, limited war itself threatened to escalate the conflict beyond the capabilities of Egyptian forces.

Sadat was sure that an unsuccessful military action would badly damage his legitimacy. After the failure of Nasser's plan in the War of Attrition, the Egyptian dilemma was more difficult to solve because the military gap was not likely to narrow in the near future. Sadat's inability to effectively address this dilemma reflected badly on his leadership. While popular discontent for delayed recovery of the Sinai put Sadat in a loss frame, Israeli deterrence policy left him only two choices: inaction (cooperation) or war with Israel (defection). In other words, Sadat had to choose between two "losses": loss of legitimacy in continuation of the status quo or loss of defeat in war with Israel.

Sadat was located thus in a loss frame under the Chicken Game. Israel's deterrence gave Sadat only two choices: loss by continuation or loss by challenge. As shown in Chapter 3, decision makers who are located in a loss frame are more apt to take the risky choice of defection instead of the safe choice of cooperation. In relations with Israel, Egypt, the weaker state, challenged Israeli deterrence policy and initiated a war against a superior military power.

### **VI-3. Game Structure before the 1973 October War**

Israel's deterrence policy imposed the Chicken Game in relations with Egypt. Israel's preference order is shown in Table 6-1. There are five possible outcomes: CC, DC, CD, DD1, and DD2. Among the five possible outcomes DC (Israeli surprise attack on Egypt) is only a theoretical one because Israel's intention to impose deterrence was not to

**Table 6-1. Israel's preference order**

Preference order	Outcomes	Israeli choice	Egyptian choice
Best <sup>1)</sup>	DC	Attack on Egypt	No intention to challenge
Second Best	CC	Keep status quo	No intention to challenge
Third Best	DD1	War and victory	War and defeat
Second Worst	CD	Keep status quo	Challenge status quo
Worst	DD2	War and defeat	War and victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome

initiate a war with weak Egypt but to maintain the status quo. As in the other cases, what is important is that participants cannot decide the game's ultimate end, only their own choices: cooperation or defection. In order to get the most desirable collective outcome CC (mutual cooperation or maintaining the status quo), Israeli decision makers sought to coerce other actors to choose cooperation. In order for another to cooperate, Egyptian defection policy should be punished by mutual defection (DD). According to this deterrence logic, Israel sought to assure retaliation against Egypt's defection choice and increased the Egyptian defection cost enough to force Egypt to choose cooperation. In other words, Israel wanted to maintain the status quo. In order to achieve this goal (mutual cooperation:CC), Israel increased the cost of Egyptian defection policy with assured mutual defection (DD) of war. Israel's warning was simple: if Egypt initiated a war, Israel would surely take revenge with intolerable costs. DD (war between Israel and Egypt) could produce two outcomes: Israel's winning (DD1) or Egypt's winning (DD2). Israel's preference order was DC>CC>DD1>CD>DD2. Considering the power gap between Israel and Egypt, DD2 (Israel's military defeat in a war with Egypt) was hard to happen.

Therefore, Israel's preference order was summarized as DC>CC>DD>CD. This is the preference order of the Prisoner's Dilemma, in which the dominant strategy is defection. Under Israeli deterrence, Sadat had the preference order of the Chicken Game. The Egyptian preference order regarding the final outcome is summarized in Table 6-2: DC>DD1>CC>CD>DD2. The most desirable outcome was DC (Egyptian surprise attack without Israeli retaliation). In this case, Egypt had the greatest chance to recover its lost territory without paying the high costs of war. The second best outcome was DD1 (win a war). DD1 was a worse choice than DC because Egypt had to pay the costs of war. The third best was CC (status quo, no war). The worst outcome was DD2 (losing a war with Israel), because Egypt had to pay war costs without gaining anything. The second worst was CD (Israeli attack when Egypt does not want a war). It only existed in theoretical terms because as long as Egypt had no intention to challenge the Israeli deterrence policy, Israel would not initiate a preemptive war. Because Egypt had a high chance of being defeated by superior Israel, DD2 (Egypt's winning) was not likely to occur. In this sense it is realistic to omit DD2 (Egypt's winning) in Egypt's preference order. In sum, Egypt's preference order was DC>CC>CD>DD.

**Table 6-2. Egypt's preference order**

Preference order	Outcomes	Egyptian choice	Israeli choice
Best	DC	Challenge Israeli deterrence	Deterrence
Second Best	DD2	Challenge and succeed	War but defeat
Third Best	CC	On intention to challenge	deterrence
Second Worst 1)	CD	No intention to challenge	Attack on Egypt
Worst	DD1	Challenge but fail	War and victory

1) is theoretically possible outcome

In the Chicken Game, a dominant strategy is cooperation. It is a safe choice to avoid the cost of mutual defection (DD). But Sadat was in a loss frame in which decision makers tend to take a gamble.

The game structure that Sadat faced before October 1973 is summarized in Figure 6-4. Theoretically there were four possible outcomes for Egypt. The best outcome for Egypt was DC: Egypt challenges Israeli deterrence, but Israel does not retaliate. The second best choice was mutual cooperation (CC): Egypt does not challenge Israeli deterrence and Israel does not attack Egypt. The second worst outcome was CD: Israel attacks, Egypt does not respond with military operation. The worst outcome was mutual defection (DD): War with Israel. Among the four possible outcomes, CD (Egypt seeks a peaceful solution when Israel is ready to attack) only existed theoretically. As mentioned above, the purpose of Israeli deterrence was to induce mutual cooperation (CC, keeping the status quo), rather than to initiate a war with Egypt.

Under Israeli deterrence, Sadat had only two choices: keeping the status quo (cooperation) or challenging deterrence (defection). Keeping the status quo (not initiating a war) was a safe choice with sure loss, but challenging deterrence (initiating a war) with Israel was a risky choice with a high chance of losing (DD1) and a low chance of winning (DD2) with a possible gain huge enough to recover from its domestic crisis.

		<b>Israel</b>	
		No War	War
<b>Egypt</b>	No war	(-2,2)	<b>(-3,3)</b>
	War	(1,-2)	(-4,-1)

**Figure 6-4. Game structure of the October War**

Key: (x,y) = (payoff to Egypt, payoff to Israel)

Number implies cardinal value

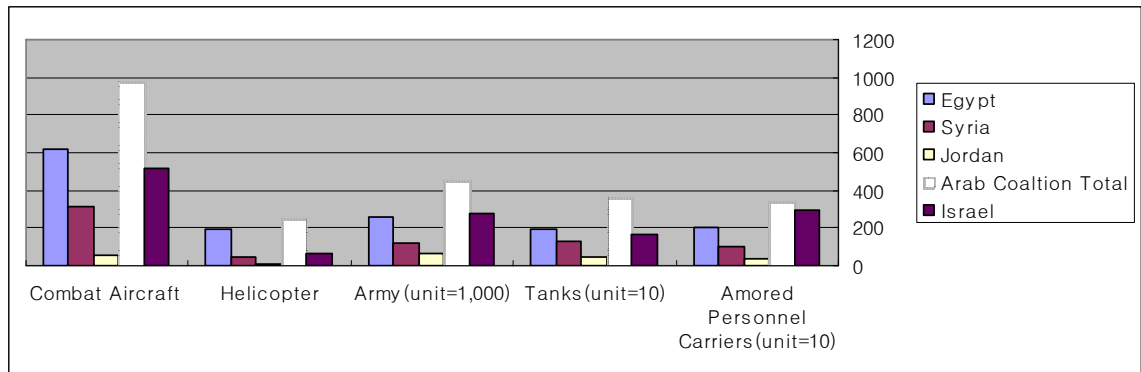
Negative number implies negative utility

Bold exists only in theoretical term

#### **VI-4. Sadat's Risky Calculation**

##### **VI-4-1. Risky Choice of War Initiation (Defection)**

The Egyptian challenge against Israel's deterrence policy was a risky choice with a low chance of success and a high chance of failure. In terms of the balance of power, which is important in deciding a final outcome in military conflicts, Egypt, combined with the power of every available Arab country, was in a weak position.



**Figure 6-5. Military balance prior to the October War**

Source: Tahtinen, 1974.

Figure 6-5 shows the quantitative balance between Egypt and Israel. Egypt had advantages in quantitative terms. The numbers do not tell everything about military power between the Arab states and Israel. Israel held a “qualitative edge” in four major military dimensions: air superiority, technological capability, intelligence superiority, and geo-strategic advantage (Rodman, 2001:75-76).

A competitive air force is essential in modern warfare. The Six Day War was clear evidence of the critical importance of air superiority for successful desert combat. When only comparing aircraft, the Arabs had a numerical advantage of two-to-one. However, Israeli combat air effectiveness far outweighed any numerical advantage; thus Israel had an overall advantage in terms of quality (Dupuy, 1978:145).

Israeli airplanes could deliver a maximum of some 2,100 tons of ordinances in a single strike, while the combined Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian ordinances could deliver only 1,000 tons, 60% less than that of Israel’s. Israel’s airplanes were capable of making an average of eight sorties a day per plane while the Arabs could make fewer than four sorties per day per plane. Israel’s combat aircraft had a greater range than those the



Arabs', which enabled them to penetrate and bomb deeply. The Israeli combat range advantage was intensified because Israel had two airborne tankers capable of in-flight refueling. Israel could strike deep within Arab territory far beyond the normal combat radius.

Israeli air powers were also well equipped with effective Electronic Counter-Measure (ECM) gear, which enabled Israeli airplanes to detect Egypt's radar system and to strike precise or preemptive attacks on the air and ground. In addition to this technological advantage, Israeli pilots were expected to have better expertise because Israeli pilots received about 200 flight hours a year, whereas Egyptian pilots had only 70 hours a year. Israeli air superiority was demonstrated during the Six-Day War with an Israeli ten-to-one kill ratio in air combat.

In terms of manpower, Israel remained at a quantitative disadvantage. It was the only area in which Israel did not have a large qualitative margin. Israeli superiority only existed in the ability to move troops, equipment and supplies on the ground. Israeli tanks were better-equipped with 105mm guns, far superior to comparable guns on most of their opponents' tanks. Israel's highly mobile ground forces had the advantage with the protection and assistance of air superiority.

Intelligence is one of the major factors in modern warfare, and Israel was superior in this area. As shown in the Six Day War, Israel had the capability to collect invaluable information on Arab war plans, capabilities, vulnerabilities, troop dispositions, and redeployment. Preemptive air strikes nullified the opponent's offensive capability. A large military mobilization is easily detected by Israeli intelligence and be victims of an Israeli preemptive air strike. Israel's intelligence capability increased its military capability.

The Israeli army had acquired the Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, which provided the Israeli army with strategic battle depth. The Bar-Lev line especially was the Egyptian forces' main obstacle. The possession of this strategic area gave Israeli military forces a 200-mile-long buffer zone (Depuy, 1978; Kemp, 1974).

Crossing the Suez Canal itself was quite a demanding task for the Egyptians. According to the army's internal estimates, the Egyptian forces would suffer 17,000 casualties in crossing the Suez Canal. Soviet experts calculated that Egyptian losses over the first four days in combat would reach as high as 35,000. Egypt would gain nothing politically from such a bloody conflict, even if it could gain some territory in the Sinai. Therefore, before embarking upon any hostilities, Sadiq, who was Sadat's military commander-in-chief, wanted to have a well-trained and well-equipped force of 250,000 troops, one capable of defeating the Israelis in a decisive battle (Gawrych 2000:131). According to the appraisal of the Egyptian Chief of Staff General Saad el Shazly, Israel had an overall military superiority ratio of 2:1.

Moreover, Israel possessed nuclear weapons as an ultimate deterrence. As a matter of fact, Israel had made ambiguous nuclear threats since 1970 (Pry, 1984). Even if Egyptian decision makers had avoided publishing this information, there were clear indications that Egypt was also aware that Israel possessed between six and ten nuclear weapons before the 1973 war (Farr, 1999; Van Creveld, 1998:220-221). Israel also had the diplomatic advantage of full support from the United States, which was stronger than Egypt could have expected from the U.S.S.R.. In strictly military terms, the limited Egyptian offensive strategy was irrational because Egypt would have to pay huge casualties for just crossing the Suez.

In sum, the choice to initiate a war against Israel had a high chance of failing. But, if successful, war would produce huge benefits. This made it an attractive option for Sadat, given his domestic crisis. The first benefit was personal honor. If he succeeded, he would be the Arab leader who defeated formidable Israeli forces. As the “hero of the crossing” of the Suez Canal, Sadat could be rewarded with a great deal of legitimacy and support for both himself and his policies.

Regaining lost national pride was another military aim. The Six Day War had left the Egyptians humiliated. The stigma of a humiliating defeat seriously damaged the Egyptian populace’s national pride in every respect. Military redemption could give Egypt back its national pride and contribute to the enhancement of its legitimacy.

Another military benefit was the possibility of resuming negotiations. The stigma of defeat left Egypt in a weak position for negotiation. The failure to recover even a single centimeter of lost territory in the Sinai could leave the image of diplomatic impotence. As mentioned above, the Israeli government refused to negotiate with the Arabs, believing in the invincibility of its armed forces. The Israeli belief in its own military supremacy produced a diplomatic stalemate and contributed to a crisis in Sadat’s regime. In order to induce Israel to the negotiation table, Sadat needed to damage the invincible image of the Israeli forces. In this sense a military victory was essential in order to rupture the diplomatic status quo. A successfully executed military action that seriously threatened Israeli security and created a significant regional crisis would lead to superpower intervention and result in a negotiated settlement in favor of Egypt (El Badri, El Magdoub, and El Din Zohdy, 1978:17-18).

Military action could also turn the superpowers’ attention away from detente

toward the recovery of Egyptian lost territory. Sadat worried that postponing action month after month would consolidate the cease-fire: “the world will forget our problem” (Sadat, 1978:237). Even if Egypt could not regain lost territory, small military achievements such as only crossing the Suez Canal, or defeating Israel forces on the battlefield, or causing high casualties for Israel, could improve Egypt’s negotiation position. But the chance of getting even a small military achievement was low against the superior Israeli forces.

In contrast to the huge benefits, the war also had an unacceptable cost if it failed to produce a desirable goal. A defeat would accelerate the domestic crisis in Sadat’s regime. The aftereffect of defeat in the Six Day War was a good example, in which Nasser’s regime suffered by erosion of public confidence. According to Meital (1997:17-8), there were serious debates about responsibility and losing confidence inside the power circle. The first large-scale demonstrations blaming Nasser for the defeat took place in March 1968. Nasser, a charismatic leader, had to resign, taking responsibility for Egypt’s humiliating defeat. Tremendous support from the Egyptian masses salved Nasser from this bitter defeat. But his regime was continuously burdened from the defeat. Another defeat, without doubt, could weaken Sadat’s political system more seriously (Hinnebush, 1985:35).

Setting aside casualties and economic losses, military defeat might make it more difficult to regain the Sinai through negotiation with Israel. Israel’s military superiority could be proved again. It could cause Egypt to lose the Sinai permanently.

#### **VI-4-2. The Safe Choice: Cooperation (Choosing not to Initiate a War).**

Considering the high chance of failure, maintaining the status quo was a safe choice. It was true that Sadat had suffered from delayed recovery of lost territory. It was the main cause of his domestic crisis. But there were no imminent threats to overthrow his government. As Barnett (1994:224) concluded, the state's ability to control and penetrate Egyptian society had not declined substantially. Even if his political base was weaker than Nasser's, Sadat had stabilized his inside power after purging his rivals. Social discontent could have been suppressed by monopolizing state physical power. Student demonstration and intellectuals' opposition were already under control.

Diplomatic inertia could have been broken by a dramatic change in foreign policy, just as Sadat broke the relation with Soviet forces, Egypt's old ally and approached the United States, Israel's ally. Sadat's access to the U.S. was slow, but it would be difficult to say that these foreign policy initiatives were fruitless. The choice of a highly risky war was not the only possible exit from his crisis. But Sadat, in a loss frame, considered war as the most feasible choice under Israel's deterrence which posited only two choices: war or status quo.

#### **VI-4-3. New Narrow Window of Opportunity**

It was very difficult for the Egyptian army to cross the Suez Canal and achieve the desired aims with tolerable human and material costs, but it was not impossible. Even if the chance of crossing the Suez Canal with a tolerable causality level was low, there was still a very low chance of success. Israeli deterrence doctrine was based on three elements: the Bar-Lev Line, superior air powers, and intelligence (Herzog, 1982:230).

For each of Israel's deterrence elements, Sadat had good reasons to overestimate the likelihood of this gamble's success. New windows of opportunity, such as a new military strategy to maximize Egyptian quantitative advantage, newly delivered advanced Soviet weapons, and well-coordinated deceiving plans, made this risky choice appear more rational.

The Egyptian qualitative disadvantage could be offset by sound planning and proper deployment of new weapons received from the Soviet Union (Dupuy, 1978:14). Concerning with the Israeli qualitatively superior capabilities, Egypt had two objective quantitative advantages: greater experience at defensive combat and numerical superiority in manpower and equipment.

The well-coordinated attack plan could have taken advantage of Egypt's numerical superiority of manpower. For example, an Egypt attack along the Canal's entire length would have extended the front and therefore diluted the Israeli air forces' efficiency. Egypt had one of the largest standing armies in the world. It included 800,000 troops, 2,200 tanks, 2,300 artillery pieces, 150 anti-aircraft missile batteries and 550 first-line aircraft (Dupuy, 1978:239). Joint military operations with Syria and Jordan added quantitative depth to Egypt's forces. The Syrian air force possessed more than 300 aircraft, including 110 MiG-21s, 120 MiG-17s, and Forty-Five Su-7s. For the ground war, Syria committed over 75,000 men, with a total of 1,500 tanks and 675 artillery pieces. In addition to military buildups, Syria and Jordan opened a second front against Israel. A Syrian attack on the Golan Heights would force Israel to divide its efforts. Jordan also prevented an Israeli counterattack on the Syrian front.

Newly delivered Soviet weapons could have been used to weaken Israel's air and

air superiority. The Soviets promised to deliver a MiG-23 squadron, a Soviet-controlled brigade of Scuds surface-to-surface missiles, a SAM-6 brigade, 200 of T-62 tanks, 200 of BMP armored personnel carriers, and sophisticated electronic equipment. Various missiles from the Soviets opened new windows of opportunity. The Egyptian front line would have to be covered to minimize the impact of air interdiction with the Canal crossing. Even if weak Egyptian air forces could not have provided effective support, ground to air missiles (SAM-2, SAM-3, SAM-6 and SAM-7) could have created a dense missile “umbrella” for the ground troops along with anti-aircraft artillery. Such a missile umbrella also could have provided necessary protection for Egyptian artillery and armour to be fully effective during the Suez Canal crossing (Buckwalter, 2002:121).

Moreover, the Soviet SCUD missiles, with a maximum range of 180 miles, enabled the Egyptian army to strike deeply into Israel’s population centers. Like medium-range bombers, SCUD surface-to-surface missiles could have threatened and deterred Israel’s long range bombers (el-Badri, el Magdoub and El Din Zohdy, 1978:20).

The Soviets also supplied 6,500 precision-guided antitank missiles. These missiles were carried by infantry in what looked like suitcases. These missiles made it possible for the infantry to bypass the strong points and set up an operation to take out Israeli armor. Personnel-carrying antitank missiles might enable Egyptian infantry, that were superior in number, to combat and defeat Israeli armor.

The receipt of large numbers of the Soviet military equipment provided Sadat with the estimate that Egypt, though still inferior to Israel, had nevertheless reached the zenith of its capacity. Egypt was not likely to achieve military parity with Israel in the foreseeable future, nor was it likely to receive further significant military aid.

Nonetheless the president concluded that this would be Egypt's best chance for its army to cross the Canal and hold a limited amount of territory (Stein, 1985a: 47-8).

The most important factor was the element of surprise attack, which would give the Egyptians precious time to cross the Suez Canal and set up defensive bases with few casualties. However, Robust Israeli intelligence was a threatening factor for Arab coalitions seeking to sneak across the Suez Canal. Israel's preemptive attack in the Six Day War devastated the Arab counter-attack capabilities and succeeded largely because of information provided by Israel's intelligence services. To succeed again in this situation, Israeli intelligence needed at least 48 hours advance warning. This timetable could have been circumvented by a well-coordinated surprise attack strategy and thus thwart the critical role of Israel's intelligence. As a matter of fact, Egypt had deluded Israeli intelligence in several previous operations: frequent massive military exercises in May and August 1973, misinformation in the Egyptian press about its lack of preparedness, demobilization of 20,000 Egyptian soldiers 48 hours before the war; and open frankness in public speeches about war by President Sadat which appeared to be standard, sober rattling. Egypt mobilized three times to initiate a war against Israel from 1970-1973. Each time, Israel responded with a partial mobilization. Each time Israel mobilized, which cost it over \$ 11 million per incidence (Dupuy, 1978:389). "Crying wolf" might have enabled Egypt to deceive Israel's intelligence long enough to at least delay a full mobilization (Sadat, 1978:242).



## **VI-5. Conclusion: Sadat's Gamble**

This study focused on Sadat's decision to initiate war while in a loss frame with a Chicken Game preference order imposed by Israel's deterrence. It is reasonable to assume that Sadat carefully thought through this matrix of ends, means, ways, costs and risks, and the constraints on his available options to achieve Egypt's national interests. A careful decision, however, does not necessarily mean that Sadat's choice of war against Israel was made on a rationally solid base as Expected Utility theory argues. The chance of success in crossing the Suez Canal and defending the Sinai was slim. Even when the Egyptian military capability reached its strongest point, which would be hard to achieve again, the military balance between Israel and the Arab countries favored Israel.

In terms of Expected Utility theory, initiating a war with a slim chance of victory can not be considered an efficient means to achieve desired ends. Most intelligence experts did not expect Egypt to start a war against Israel because there was no way it could succeed. Sadat's own war commanders also objected seriously to war with Israel when Sadat ordered his army to prepare for the coming of war at a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on 24 October 1972. (Haikal, 1973 :181; Sadat, 1978:234-236; Shazli,1980:172-181). The commanders objected strenuously to war because they lacked adequate weapons and expected high casualties. They argued that even limited military operations were at risk of turning into a major failure because of Israel's superior air power and intelligence services. They also maintained that the situation could develop very quickly into a full-scale war (Jabber, 1971: El-Badri, El-Magdoub, and Zhody, 1978:16-19).

In retrospect, the Egyptian war initiation achieved very limited goals: the crossing

of the Suez Canal, and high Israeli casualties. But this does not mean that Egypt war choice was not risky. The success of the Egyptian limited military operation during the first stage of combat was based more on the failure of Israeli intelligence and an ill-configured defensive plan than the effectiveness of Egypt's combat strategy or its new military equipment. The disastrous casualties in the second stage of war showed that without Israeli intelligence's failure, the Egyptian army could not have achieved initial victory (Bar-Joseph, 1995; Heichal, 2000).

Objections to the war among the insider Egyptian decision makers were based on rational decision-making. While the Egyptian commanders' judgments were based on rationality, Sadat's decision was based on cognitive criteria. According to game theory's explanation of rationality, cooperation was the most rational choice under the deterrence structure because it was estimated to produce the highest benefits at the lowest cost.

Yet, Sadat was in the loss frame in which decision makers are prone to make risky choices. He asked his high commanders "What are we to do if the political situation would force us to go to war before we reached the ability to neutralize Israel's threat to attack Egypt's interior" (Shazli, 1980:94). A delayed return to the Sinai and an unsuccessful economy brought in popular discontent against Sadat's legitimacy. Situated in this loss frame, Sadat chose between two losses: sure loss by inaction vs. loss by defection (gamble).

As Stein (1985:54) points out, contrary to the expectations of rational deterrence theories, when in this loss frame, Sadat did not compare the likely gains and losses of military action with accurate calculations of the probability of success. Rather, his decision to initiate war was heavily influenced by his domestic crisis. Although there was

some opposition from the military against initiating the war with Israel, Sadat in a loss frame had to choose between losses: no war or war. Sadat thought that if Egypt did not go to war soon it would be faced with widespread societal disturbances (Shukrallah, 1987:70).

It is difficult to conclude that Sadat's challenge against Israeli deterrence policy was inevitable. Rather, the situation Sadat faced was not so desperate that there was any other better exit from it. There were no imminent threats to his regime. The reason for Sadat to choose a war was the potential benefits of success. No matter how unlikely they were, Sadat focused on huge benefits. As prospect theory would predict, when in a loss frame, Sadat chose the risky choice of war against superior Israel with the small hope of gaining large enough benefits to recover his declining legitimacy.

## VII. Conclusion

This research focused on weak states' (militarily and economically less powerful states) war initiation against strong states. Though the behavior of "rogue states" that might act irrationally and take high-risk policies became an important topic after the Cold War (Caprioli and Trumbore, 2003), Rational Choice theory does not provide a clear perspective on why weak states behave irrationally. Weak states' war initiation has been regarded as an irrational choice motivated by emotions such as rage or resentment. In this respect, it is not strange that Rational Choice theory does not provide a clear perspective on why weak states initiate or choose a war against strong states. Initiating a war with a low probability of winning is not rational because the costs of war exceed the benefit. It is not efficient.

This research developed a cognitive model to explain the irrational behavior of weak states. I argue that weak states initiate war after cool and calm calculations. Two inferences were inducted from Prospect theory and Game theory. One is the *deeper people are in a loss frame, the more they are likely to seek a risk* (Chapter 3-1.). The other is *cooperation is a safe choice and defection is a risky choice for the actors with the Chicken Game preference order* (Berejikian, 2002; chapter 3-3).

After careful consideration of each player's preference order over the ultimate outcome of the conflict, this study found that asymmetric conflicts have a different game structure than symmetric conflicts. While weak states have the preference order of the Chicken Game (DC>CC>CD>DD), strong states have that of Prisoner's Dilemma (DC>CC>DD>CD). The obvious military gap that is important for the outcome of war

makes strong states prefer DD (a war with weak states) to CD (concession to weak states' threats).

An asymmetric balance of power produces an asymmetric game structure in which each player has a different preference order. Strong states played the Prisoner's Dilemma where actors are more likely to defect. When strong states play the Prisoner's Dilemma they are ready to punish or begin a war when weak states choose defection. This readiness is a credible threat to weak states' defection.

This study's proposition that strong states play Prisoner's Dilemma is useful to explain strong state behavior. This expectation is confounded by these three cases studies. Rapid dispatches of U.S. forces in Desert Storm and Great Britain in the Falklands War are examples. Israel's counter-attack after the Egyptian invasion in the October War in the Middle East was another example. Strong states did not concede to weak states' challenges but were ready to punish them.

Weak states have the Chicken Game's preference order. The dominant strategy of the Chicken Game is cooperation. The huge cost of mutual defection (DD:war) induces players to cooperate. In terms of Prospect theory, defection is a risky choice and cooperation is a safe choice. Under threats of retaliation, cooperation (avoiding a war) was a safe choice and defection was a risky choice for weak states that have the preference order of the Chicken Game.

The frame effect of Prospect theory presents the possibility that weak states in a loss frame tend to take risky choices. The reason that weak states seek defection is the temptation to have the benefits of defection, DC (detering strong states) or DD2 (winning over strong states). Weak states were more enthusiastic about deterring strong

opponents or about waging a war than taking a peaceful solution (CC).

Considering the implications of Prospect theory and asymmetric game structure, this study proposed that *weak states in a loss frame could seek a gamble of war against strong states with the hope of achieving huge benefits of defection of DD2 (victory in a war against strong states) or DC (detering strong states).*

Three cases -- Desert Storm, the Falklands War, and the October War in the Middle East -- were scrutinized based on crisis analysis (DeDermott, 2001; Farnham, 1994; Weyland, 1996). Case studies are summarized in Table 7-1. The common in the three cases are as follows: (1) weak states were in a loss frame; (2) a sovereignty issue was dominant; (3) all initiators were non-democratic countries.

In all three cases weak states were in a loss frame. They suffered from declining legitimacy that pushed them into a loss frame. The reference points are diverse. Iraq's principal problem was its economy. Low oil prices were ruining the Iraqi oil-based economy, which suffered after an 8-year war with Iran. Argentina's problem was the economic and political crisis. Argentina's debt crisis in 1982 brought its economy to the brink of collapse. Brutal oppression by the military government damaged political legitimacy and increased demands for democracy. The delayed recovery of lost territory was a source of crisis for Sadat's Egypt. Israel was perceived to be too strong to beat in a military operation, but popular demands for military operations were increasing. Sadat's dilemma was that delayed military action damaged his legitimacy, but waging a war against superior Israel could be devastating to his legitimacy as well.

**Table 7-1. Summary of Case Studies**

	Initiator/defender	International mode	Seriousness of crisis	Reference points	Type of crisis	Outcomes for initiator
The Desert Storm	Iraq/U.S.-led Coalition	After the Cold War	The least	High oil price	Coercive Diplomacy	Negative
The Falklands War	Argentina/The Great Britain	In the middle of the Cold War	The most	Declining legitimacy	Coercive Diplomacy	The worst
The Yom Kippur War	Egypt-led Arab Coalition/Israel	At the beginning of Detente	In the middle	Lost territory	Deterrence	Slightly positive

Of all these cases, the Argentinean junta faced the most difficult crisis.

Argentina's military junta could not handle its debt crisis. Moreover, organized opposition was high. The weakest legitimacy crisis was in Saddam's Iraq, where the problem was the low international oil price. There was reported no organized opposition to Saddam's government. The seriousness of Sadat's crisis is located between that of Argentina and that of Iraq. Delayed recovery of the Sinai damaged the legitimacy of Sadat's government. War preparation was a serious burden on Egypt's economy and there was some social opposition. But Egypt's economic problems were not very serious, and social opposition under control.

Territorial issues were dominant in all three cases. Argentina occupied the Falklands and had been negotiating with Great Britain for decades over sovereignty. Egypt tried to recover the territory lost in the Six Days War. Saddam invaded his neighbor and argued Iraqi sovereignty over Kuwait on the basis of history. What is important is that despite these difference over sovereignty issues, weak states' decision makers had a good reason to justify their territorial adventures and mobilize popular support in their "Global Theory of Mind: GToM" (Morgan, 2003). Moreover, war was an exit from the legitimacy crisis.

Even if weak states initiated a war in all three cases, detailed study shows that there are slight differences among them. In the Falklands War and Desert Storm, weak states invaded and occupied a strong state's territory. After the weak states' initial challenges, the strong states coerced the weak states to retreat from the occupied territory. While Iraq and Argentina challenged coercive diplomacy, Egypt challenged Israel's deterrence to maintain the status quo. Despite these differences, the game structure of the



three cases is the same. Strong states coerced weak states to cooperate. While strong states played in the Prisoner's Dilemma, weak states played in the Chicken Game. The purpose of strong states was to deter temptation to defect with high cost of mutual defection and the credibility of punishment. In three cases, strong states' intention to coerce or to deter weak states to cooperate was proven to fail. These case studies correspond with this study's proposition that strong states' imposition of the Chicken Game's preference order on weak states is likely to fail because of weak states' risk-seeking choice in a loss frame.

Three weak states in a loss frame sought a gamble (defection) under strong states' credible threats of retaliation. In retrospect, only Egypt's challenge produced a limited success. The other two cases were disastrous to the weak states' governments. Argentina's military government was so humiliated by the defeat that they opened the door to democracy. Iraq suffered a huge human and material loss in the war with the U.S.-led coalition. The survival of Saddam's regime after Desert Storm was due not to Iraq's defense capability but to the Coalition's reluctance to occupy Iraqi territory.

Based on the case studies, the following tentative conclusions about asymmetric conflicts can be drawn. However credible the threats to retaliate, strong states cannot force weak states in a loss frame to cooperate or to deter a defection. In other words, weak states in loss frames make a war hard to win against stronger states when they are playing under the preference order of Chicken Game.

The tentative conclusion of study suggests two solutions to prevent a weak state's war initiation in asymmetric military conflict. This research pointed out two variables: the weak state in a loss frame and the Chicken Game structure. Based on these two

variables, four possible situations could be suggested in Table 7-2.

While decision makers in a loss frame tend to seek a risky choice, those in a gain frame make a safe choice and avoid a risky choice. In the Chicken Game, cooperation is a safe choice and defection is a risky choice. This situation is reversed in the Prisoner's Dilemma Game: cooperation is a risky choice and defection is a safe choice.

This research focused on the "I" case in which weak states in a loss frame played in the Chicken game. In the case of II (weak states in loss frame played in the Prisoner's Dilemma) and IV (weak states under the chicken game are located in a gain frame), weak states are supposed to seek cooperation (peaceful solution) in asymmetric conflict.

As discussed in three case studies, the reason that these weak states were located in a loss frame was structural, not temporal. The sources of crisis were difficult to adjust or change. It is hard to find an international solution to difficult economic situations (in the cases of Iraq and Argentina), rising domestic protests for political change (Argentina), and domestic demands for recovering the lost territory (Egypt). Any international efforts to solve these problems could make them more complicated or could be misunderstood as an intervention against the "self-determination" of nation states.

**Table 7-2. Weak States' Choices in an Asymmetric Conflict**

Frame \ game	Chicken Game	Prisoner's Dilemma Game
Weak states in a loss frame	<b>I</b> Risky choice: War, Defection	<b>II</b> Safe choice: Peace, Cooperation
Weak states in a gain frame	<b>IV</b> Safe choice: peace, Cooperation	<b>III</b> Risky choice: War, Defection

A more practical solution seems to be changing the game structure. One point of this research is that strong states had an initiative to impose a game structure in asymmetric conflict. As shown in Table 7-2, case II is an example. If strong states imposed the preference order of the Prisoner's Dilemma on weak states, weak states in a loss frame could take cooperation as a risky choice. The discussion about changing the game structure in international conflict is left for future studies.

The limit of this study is the difficulty in accounting for the detailed relations between the degree of weak states' crisis and weak states' choice. This research assumed that *the deeper weak states are in a loss frame, the more they are likely to take a risk*. There were differences in the seriousness of crises, but it is hard to say that Argentina had a deeper crisis than Iraq simply because Argentina sought a riskier choice than Iraq. In detail, it is very difficult to say that Argentina was more resistant to a peaceful solution (cooperation) and more enthusiastic about war with strong opponents than Iraq. The detailed explanation for this relationship between the seriousness of the crisis and the degree of risk attitude is also left for future studies.

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## **Vita**

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