

“Connecting the Dots”: Munich, Iraq, and the Lessons of History

Peter Conolly-Smith
Queens College, City University of New York

IN SEPTEMBER 2002, during the build-up to the war in Iraq, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder ran for re-election on an anti-war platform. Taking stock of the tense international situation during the final days of the campaign, one of his cabinet members, Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gemlin, noted that “[United States President] Bush wants to divert attention from his domestic problems. It’s a classic tactic. It’s one that Hitler also used.” Schröder immediately distanced himself from the remark, stating “that anyone who compared Mr. Bush to a criminal would not have a seat in his cabinet.” Still, the comment, as well as Schröder’s own anti-war stance, played well with German voters, as indicated by his close victory at the polls a few days later. Ms. Däubler-Gemlin resigned on the first day of Schröder’s new term, and the chancellor himself apologized to President Bush in writing, if to little avail: the comment contributed to a chill in German-American relations that did not fully subside until Schröder’s defeat in the subsequent elections of fall 2005. Then-White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer denounced the Hitler-Bush comparison as “outrageous” and “inexplicable,” and within days of its first being uttered, Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor at the time, weighed in on the subject by asking, incredulously, “How can you use the name of Hitler and the name of the president of the United States in the same sentence?”¹

All diplomatic bluster and campaign-sniping aside, the comparison is an intriguing one, especially because, at this very same time, the Bush administration was painting Saddam Hussein as a sort of Hitler, while those nations and leaders unwilling to join the U.S. in throwing down the gauntlet—Germany’s Chancellor Schröder prominent among them—were labeled as “appeasers,” an obvious reference to Britain’s failed pre-World War II efforts to appease Hitler at Munich in 1938. Throughout this period leading up to the war, President Bush himself, along with his chief spokespeople Fleischer, Rice, Colin Powell, and Donald Rumsfeld, repeatedly invoked “the lessons of history,” asking the world to “connect the dots” and see that it was the Iraqi president who was in fact the latter-day Hitler, and that a failure to stop him before he started a major war with his purported weapons of mass destruction would lead to global disaster.

To fully evaluate and contextualize the Bush administration’s use of the so-called “Munich analogy”—and the counterargument; that it was the administration whose policies more closely resembled Hitler’s in 1938—this essay will first re-visit the events leading up to Munich, then examine ways in which the Munich analogy has been used to justify post-World War II American foreign policy. Recent re-assessments of Munich as well as the policy of appeasement in general—in particular, the work of Jeffrey Record and Stephen Rock—inform these sections of the paper, much as the reportage of the *New York Times* serves as the main source for the essay’s final section, which re-visits the events leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the Bush administration’s effort to justify that invasion at least in part through its invocation of Munich.

It is significant in this respect that the above-mentioned sources, as well as others used for this paper, are not noted for any particular anti-war inclination. On the contrary, Jeffrey Record is a professor in the Department of Strategy and International Security at the United States Air Force Air War College, and the *New York Times*, although reviled by the political right as a prime representative of the “liberal media,” was by its own belated admission less than critical of the Bush administration’s claims of Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction, the main justification for the invasion of Iraq. In accepting at face value not only the administration’s since-disproven claims, but also the sources of those claims—now-discredited Iraqi defectors whose testimonies, “looking back, we [the *New York Times*] wish we had been more aggressive in re-examining”—the newspaper opened itself up to criticism of “accepting, and relaying, the ‘official version’ of events without so much as a sideways glance at non-administration . . . sources,” according to Peter Fallon, a professor of journalism at Roosevelt University. It is not as a “paper of record,” then, that the final section of this essay will use the *New York Times* to establish

the various claims and maneuvers of the Bush administration during the months prior to the invasion, but as a self-admitted, uncritical forum for the administration’s rationale for going to war.²

Even such arguably Bush-friendly sources, however, cannot help but support the conclusions of the present paper: first, that it is historically inaccurate to compare either Saddam Hussein *or* George W. Bush to Hitler; but, second, that the Bush administration’s strong-arm diplomacy immediately prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq is indicative of a determination to force war regardless of Iraq’s efforts to satisfy the United States’ demands, and despite the opposition of much of the world. In this respect, the administration’s single-minded pursuit of war does perhaps bear some resemblance to the policies of Germany in 1938. Most importantly, this paper seeks to explore the ways in which “lessons of history,” in particular the Munich analogy, have been misconstrued in justification of United States armed intervention since the beginning of the Cold War. While the wisdom of a hawkish foreign policy is indeed one lesson of Munich—certainly as applied to World War II, in hindsight—this paper cautions that Munich, in more recent contexts (most pertinently, as it relates to the 2003 invasion of Iraq) offers not just one, but many, and more complex lessons by far.

The Munich Conference

On September 12, 1938, Hitler addressed the annual Nürnberg rally in a speech anxiously anticipated throughout Europe. The situation was particularly tense that fall because the German dictator had in recent months shown unmistakably his aggressive intentions through his annexation of Austria and his ongoing support of the fascist effort in the Spanish Civil War. At stake now was Czechoslovakia, whose very existence represented an affront to Nazi ideology and whose Central European location and part-German population made it the obvious next target for Hitler’s expansionist *Lebensraum* policies.³

In fact, Hitler’s hysterical speech at Nürnberg, while sounding the drums of war, actually postponed its declaration. Hitler did, however, demand “self-determination” (read: incorporation) for the ethnic Germans—the Sudets, or *Sudeten*—who lived in the western rim of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland. Taking the lead in the effort to appease Hitler, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain flew to meet the German dictator three times in September 1938. In Berchtesgaden on September 15, during the first of these meetings, just three days after his speech at Nürnberg, Hitler renewed his demand that Czechoslovakia cede the Sudetenland to Germany. Over the protests of the Czech government, Chamberlain had accepted Hitler’s demand, but expected the separation to

be carried out under the supervision of an international commission. But upon Chamberlain's return for a meeting in Bad Godesberg a week later to discuss the details, Hitler unexpectedly raised the stakes by suddenly demanding that separation proceed within three days (only two days, by some accounts) and that the German *Wehrmacht* immediately occupy the contested territory without any international presence. According to Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador to Berlin and an aide to the Prime Minister, Chamberlain, having arrived with a carefully prepared plan that conformed to Hitler's original demands, was rebuffed with the words, "I am exceedingly sorry, but that is no longer of any use."⁴

Apparently, Hitler had made up his mind to force a war over the Sudetenland at this point. Most historians agree that he did not believe France and England would rise in defense of Czechoslovakia, and that, under those circumstances, he viewed war with his southeastern neighbor as not only inevitable, but desirable.⁵ Making demands he knew were unreasonable, yet confident in his belief that England would not fight, Hitler hoped to bring about the strategic retreat of England and France, leaving Czechoslovakia to defend itself against a German attack without allies. "We must always demand so much that we can never be satisfied," he is said to have explained of this negotiating tactic to Konrad Henlein, the leading Nazi propagandist in the Sudetenland.⁶ A crestfallen Chamberlain, frustrated in his aim to preserve peace, appealed for one last meeting, brokered by Mussolini and to take place in Munich on September 29, one week later. During this, the actual Munich Conference, attended by Hitler, Chamberlain, French Premier Edouard Daladier, and Mussolini, Germany received control over the Sudetenland effective October 1—precisely as Hitler had demanded—with only minor reciprocal concessions on Germany's part, including a weak assurance as to the integrity of the rest of Czechoslovakia. "I have no more territorial demands to make in Europe," Hitler promised, and Chamberlain returned to England and announced that the conference had achieved "Peace in Europe; Peace for our Time."⁷

In fact, the conference had not achieved peace, but merely postponed war. Within six months, Hitler violated his pledge, took the rest of Czechoslovakia (in March 1939) and, undeterred by the fact that England and France had in the meantime extended defense guarantees to Poland, his obvious next target, proceeded to plan and carry out the Polish invasion that finally plunged the world into war in September of 1939. Chamberlain's career ended soon thereafter. Today, his appeasement policy is generally considered to be the epitome of misguided, cowardly diplomacy. The "lesson" of Munich—as it has been construed in justification for post-World War II U.S. foreign policy—is that giving in to the demands of aggressive enemy-states in an effort to avoid armed conflict will at best result in the

war being delayed while the aggressor’s hand is strengthened, causing the conflict to be fought at a later date under less favorable conditions.

The Munich Analogy and U.S. Foreign Policy, From Containment to Preemption

This apparent lesson, long accepted as undisputable truth, has been invoked by almost every post-World War II American president as the rationale for foreign policy decisions that have often, though not always, led to armed conflict. To President Truman, the Munich analogy justified “police action” in Korea; Eisenhower invoked Munich to justify U.S. support of France in its colonial war over Indochina; Kennedy, to justify a hard line (though one that stopped short of war) over the Cuban Missile Crisis; Johnson and Nixon, to justify their respective escalations of U.S. involvement in Vietnam; and Reagan, to justify U.S. military action in Grenada and Nicaragua.⁸ During the Cold War in particular, the Munich analogy seemed eminently applicable, given the United States’ and its Western allies’ tendency to equate communism (especially as embodied by Stalin) with Nazism under another ideological guise. George F. Kennan, architect of the United States’ Cold War containment policy, famously observed that the Soviets, in their stated intention of spreading communism worldwide, would retreat only “in the face of superior force.” Therefore, he reasoned in his 1946 “long telegram,” communist aggression would have to be answered with “unalterable counterforce” by the United States—the principle underlying the American policy of deterrence for the next forty-plus years.⁹

Such reasoning ultimately yielded the Truman Doctrine of 1947, committing the United States “to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes.” For all the vigor of Truman’s words, however, it is important to note that America’s Cold War containment policy and its attendant notion of deterrence were designed to *avoid* confrontations with the Soviets, rather than to justify armed intervention against them. Indeed, it was the deterring threat of U.S. intervention, the early cold warriors hoped, that would keep the Soviets in check. Not for nothing has American historiography elevated to the greatest public triumph of containment 1962’s Cuban Missile Crisis. There, Kennedy applied the lessons of Munich not in order to fight, but to avoid war: the “nineteen thirties taught us a clear lesson,” Kennedy reasoned, “aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked, ultimately leads to war.”¹⁰

Thus, the policy of containment, although in great part a response to the failure of appeasement in World War II, self-consciously recognized

that an aggressive foe need not necessarily be confronted directly with armed force. True, the Cold War power blocs engaged in proxy wars throughout the world by supporting competing regimes in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, often with tragic consequences. Kennedy himself used the same Munich analogy that helped him avoid war over Cuba to justify an increased American presence in Vietnam.¹¹ It remains telling, however, that the original architects of containment policy did not envision armed conflict as an inevitable response to communist aggression. As Jeffrey Record reminds us, “Containment was originally conceived by George Kennan as a predominantly *nonmilitary* means of containing Soviet power.”¹²

With the end of the Cold War and the gradual rise of terror-centric policies, however, the notions of containment and deterrence as possible maps to peaceful resolution fell out of favor, increasingly so as terrorists launched evermore spectacular attacks on Western, and especially American targets. In September 2002, the Bush administration released its statement on “The National Security Strategy of the United States,” a strategy document every president is required by law to submit to Congress. George W. Bush’s version of the document was noteworthy for its break with the past, as it pronounced “the strategies of containment and deterrence—staples of American policy since the 1940’s—all but dead. There is no way in this changed world . . . to deter those who ‘hate the United States and everything for which it stands.’” The document, generally referred to as the Bush Doctrine, “sound[ed] the death knell for many of the key strategies of the cold war” and sent a particularly ominous signal through its embrace of the possibility of preemptive strikes in “anticipatory self-defense,” a policy now poised to replace that of containment.¹³

Nevertheless, even if containment policy itself may have fallen by the wayside, that which had helped inspire it in the first place, the failure of appeasement and the attendant “lesson of Munich,” still enjoyed some credence even in the post-Cold War world: the first President Bush invoked Munich in justification of his administration’s own march to war following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990: “If history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression . . . As was the case in the 1930s we see in Saddam Hussein an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbors.” As the buildup of U.S. troops in the Gulf continued, he elaborated: “In World War II, the world paid dearly for appeasing an aggressor who could have been stopped. Appeasement leads only to further aggression and, ultimately, to war. And we are not going to make the mistake of appeasement again.”¹⁴ Bill Clinton, too, evoked Munich in his decision to go to war over Kosovo: “What if someone had . . . stood up to Adolph Hitler earlier?” Clinton asked shortly before committing U.S. troops to oust Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. “How many people’s lives might have been saved?”¹⁵

Problems with the Munich Analogy

The problem with most presidential invocations of Munich, from Truman through Clinton and, as we shall see in the next section, the second President Bush, too, is that they have, either “knowingly [or] unwittingly, misused the Munich analogy,” according to Jeffrey Record. “Invocations of the Munich analogy to justify the use of force are almost invariably misleading because security threats to the United States genuinely Hitlerian in scope have not been replicated since 1945.” Indeed, any invocation of Munich requires an exaggeration of the threat facing the United States—the threat has to be “Hitlerian in scope,” which, given the historical analogy, can be met with no response other than armed force.¹⁶

Furthermore, many who have invoked Munich have misinterpreted, and therefore misrepresented its lesson due to an incomplete understanding of the history. Recent historiography in particular has emphasized that Chamberlain’s appeasement approach, although undoubtedly a failure in hindsight, made good sense in the context of its times. Britain had successfully appeased the territorial demands of another rising world power—the United States—as recently as the turn of the century.¹⁷ Indeed, the nineteenth-century tradition of resolving political differences through negotiation, compromise, and concession—including territorial settlement—had given Europe in the wake of the Congress of Vienna one hundred years free of sustained armed conflict between major powers. There were, therefore, good reasons to believe that appeasement and territorial concessions might serve to maintain peace—a goal deemed noble and virtuous in the aftermath of the still-recent Great War.

More still, and counterintuitive though it may sound, Chamberlain’s strategy actually succeeded in the short term. The goal, after all, was to prevent war, precisely that which Hitler was determined to achieve. Had Munich been the strategic victory for Hitler that cold war historians and U.S. presidents have painted it to be, i.e., had the incorporation of the Sudetenland—the spoils of appeasement—been Hitler’s actual goal, then surely he would have rejoiced in the achievement of his strong-arm diplomacy. “In fact, however, a preponderance of evidence suggests that Hitler regarded Munich as a crushing defeat,” according to Stephen Rock, “one in which he abandoned his true objective—war—in the face of Anglo-French intransigence.”¹⁸ Chamberlain, in an oft-overlooked but important strategic gambit, had made it clear to Hitler that France and Britain would come to Czechoslovakia’s aid if he insisted on attacking her, though both countries were willing to allow the annexation of the Sudetenland. Faced with the options of a major war against England and France (which Hitler in 1938 did not want; nor the Allies) or the peaceful incorporation of the

Sudetenland (which had been the pretext through which Hitler had hoped to force war upon Czechoslovakia *sans* Allies), he reluctantly settled for the latter, “irritated,” in the words of Paul Kennedy, “that the prospect of smashing the Czechs was removed by the concessions he gained at the Munich conference.”¹⁹

The series of events that followed Munich—Hitler’s violation of the agreement, his seizure of the rest of Czechoslovakia, and the subsequent invasion of Poland—have obscured the initial success of Chamberlain’s efforts and, given the long-term consequences, rightly so. Nevertheless, it remains significant that, “[a]lthough Britain and France were prepared to appease Hitler by ceding him the Sudetenland, their policy of preventing him from acquiring it by force was mainly one of deterrence. And in the end, Hitler was deterred.”²⁰ While this may be but a minor point in the larger context of the debate, it is one ignored by, or perhaps unknown, to those who invoke the lesson of Munich in order to justify armed intervention: that even Hitler could be deterred by the threat of force, albeit only temporarily. Were this part of the conventional wisdom on Munich, the analogy might not so quickly persuade the general public that armed conflict is the *only* available response to aggressive diplomacy. The prevailing, incomplete understanding of Munich, however—which casts Chamberlain as having been blinded by his peace-at-any-price policy and as guilty of having sold out the Czechs, leaving Hitler the strategic victor—has won the American public’s support for foreign policy decisions whose consequences, including the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, many have come to regret.

None of this is to suggest that Chamberlain was right to appease Hitler, but there are multiple lessons, rather than one monolithic lesson, to be drawn from Munich, such as that a leader less bent on war than Hitler might indeed back down in the face of inducements and/or deterrent threats. The failure of Munich was perhaps less a result of the policy of appeasement itself than the fact that Hitler was determined to have war in any case and therefore represented, in Paul Kennedy’s phrase, a threat that was “fundamentally *unappeasable*.”²¹ Blaming Chamberlain for his failure to recognize what few statesmen were willing to acknowledge a mere twenty years after the end of World War I—that another war was inevitable—seems ungracious, but such is World War II historiography’s need for heroes, villains, and patsies.

The Munich Analogy Applied to Iraq, 2002-2003

During the buildup to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration re-cast these time-honored World War II stereotypes in light of

recent events. Saddam Hussein, of course, was Hitler, the villain; in the Chamberlain role, representing the patsies, were those countries willing to appease rather than confront: Germany, France, and (later) Russia. As for the anti-appeasing Churchill-type, the hero of this drama, there could be little doubt as to the administration’s casting. On September 12, 2002, one year and one day after the terrorist attacks of 9-11, President George W. Bush addressed the United Nations. The widespread expectation was that Bush planned to announce the United States’ invasion of Iraq.²² Instead, he merely pushed the United Nations to honor its charter and its earlier resolutions, and to insist on the return of weapons inspectors who had been expelled from Iraq by the Hussein government in 1998.

In making his case, Bush invoked World War II: “The founding members [of the U.N.] resolved that the peace of the world must never again be destroyed by the will and wickedness of any one man. We created a United Nations Security Council so that, unlike the League of Nations, our deliberations would be more than talk, our resolutions would be more than wishes.” Now, he warned, the U.N. risked becoming “irrelevant” unless it enforced its resolutions. In his invocation of “generations of deceitful dictators and broken treaties and squandered lives,” Bush’s reference to World War II could not have been any clearer, nor his use of the Munich analogy. Hussein was, he suggested, a latter-day version of Hitler circa 1938, guilty of “refusing to comply with his own agreements” and on the verge of forcing a major war. In this view, Hussein’s “unilateral ... subversion” of U.N. resolutions—the aborted weapons inspections to which he himself had agreed in 1991—were analogous to Hitler agreeing to the incorporation of the Sudetenland before unilaterally piling on new and increasingly unreasonable demands. For his part, Bush pledged to abide by the rule of the United Nations, to which he referred as “the world’s most important multilateral body.”²³

The initial response to Bush’s speech was widespread relief. The world’s fear of the United States as a go-it-alone superpower was at least temporarily suspended, and Bush’s challenge that the U.N. honor its own resolutions was both reasonable and quintessentially multilateral in its appeal to collective security. However, it almost immediately—literally within twenty-four hours—became clear that, despite his stated commitment to multilateralism, the president was in fact readying his own nation and its Congress for the possibility of unilateral war. Thus, on September 13, he stated with an eye towards America’s midterm elections in November, “If I were running for office, I’m not sure how I’d explain to the American people why Congress was failing to act while waiting for the United Nations to act.” Having challenged the U.N. to honor its commitments to weapons inspections so that that the organization not be

rendered “irrelevant”—as the League of Nations had been when it failed to enforce *its* resolutions after Munich, following Hitler’s seizure of the rest of Czechoslovakia—Bush now revealed, just one day after his speech, that he himself considered any new resolution to be irrelevant. “I don’t imagine Saddam Hussein sitting around saying, ‘Gosh, I think I’m going to wait for some [U.N.] resolution’ ... He’s a threat that we must deal with as quickly as possible.” In any case, the president stated, it was “highly doubtful” that Iraq would meet any U.N. demands, old or new.²⁴

Unexpectedly, however, Saddam Hussein on September 16 announced to the world that “U.N. Inspectors Can Return Unconditionally.” This foiled any hope the Bush administration may have had of basing its case for war on Iraq’s continued non-compliance with U.N. weapons inspections, so now a *return* of the weapons inspectors—which had been Bush’s basic demand—was suddenly no longer good enough. Explaining why this was the case, Ari Fleischer, invoking Hitler while addressing the White House press corps, explained that “[history] has shown that Saddam Hussein’s word cannot be taken at face value ... He has a history of playing rope-a-dope with the world while he develops a more powerful punch.” Also invoking history the next day at a Pentagon press conference, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld deflected mounting criticism that the U.S. had failed to prevent the terrorist attacks of the previous year by turning the point around and maintaining that, “this time the administration was ‘connecting the dots’ on Iraq before that country had a chance to use weapons of mass destruction or put them in the hands of terrorists. ‘The dots are there for all to connect. ... If they aren’t good enough, rest assured they will be good enough after another disaster.’ By then, he said, ‘it will be too late.’”²⁵

Explaining why weapons inspections were not a sufficient means to prevent this nightmare scenario from occurring, Rumsfeld stated the next day that “the more inspectors that are in there the less likely something is going to [be found] ... The longer nothing [is found] the more advanced their weapons systems [become].” This circular argument served to make the case that the inspections demanded less than a week earlier would no longer suffice.²⁶ To further preempt any actual return of weapons inspectors, now considered counter-productive to the administration’s larger aims—because there was a possibility that the inspections would yield no weapons, after all, thus robbing the United States of its *casus belli*—Colin Powell began urging members of Congress to approve the possibility of U.S. military action, warning that “tepid support in Congress for action in Iraq would undermine the effort abroad.” Around this time—that is, still only one week after the president had embraced multilateralism before the U.N. general assembly—the White House announced the aforementioned

“Bush Doctrine,” its right to fight pre-emptive wars in “anticipatory self defense.” Three weeks later, on October 11, Congress approved a resolution allowing President Bush to “use all means . . . including force, in order to . . . defend the national security interests of the United States against the threat posed by Iraq.”²⁷

The administration’s strategy of superseding its original insistence that the United Nations resume its weapons inspections with a call for a more immediate and muscular course of action was complicated when, on November 8, the U.N. Security Council unanimously gave the White House what it had initially demanded but, apparently, no longer wanted: a tough weapons inspections resolution calling for the re-admission of inspectors—a demand to which Hussein had already acquiesced—with a binding and tight timetable: by December 8, Iraq was to issue to the U.N. a full and truthful statement as to the status of its weapons programs and stockpiles, and by January 27 of 2003, the returning weapons inspectors were to issue their own report as to whether or not Iraq was in compliance with this and previous U.N. resolutions.²⁸ Proof of any “material breach” of previous resolutions (such proof would have been constituted, for example, by the discovery of forbidden weapons systems) or of untruthfulness in Iraq’s December 8 report to the U.N. would be considered a “serious matter.”

Although tough, Security Council Resolution 1441 was not as tough as the White House wanted, as it did not include an automatic “trigger” that would justify war should Iraq indeed be found guilty of standing in “material breach.” Instead, the resolution called for a *second* resolution to be drawn up in the event of evidence of Iraq’s non-compliance. Hopeful that Hussein would defy this new resolution altogether, administration officials openly stated that “the president would prefer a bold rebuff by Mr. Hussein,” as it would justify skipping the timetable and moving immediately on to a second, and in this case, a war resolution.²⁹ Thus, by effectively slowing down the clock, Resolution 1441 came to be seen as a hindrance to the efficient preparations for war the administration envisioned: “Speed is important, military experts say, because the cooler winter months ending in February or March are an optimal time for an attack against Iraq.” Basking in the glow of Republican gains in the recent midterm elections, the president himself “gave notice to the U.N. and the American people today”—the day before 1441 was announced—“that the political season is over and that the time has come to disarm Saddam Hussein—and that it may take a war to accomplish that goal.”³⁰

Thus the war drums sounded, with daily headlines of “War Plans,” of “U.S. Turning Horn of Africa into Military Hub,” of “U.S. Taking Steps to Lay Foundation for Action in Iraq,” of “G.I.s Hon[ing] Skills on Iraqi Border,” and so forth.³¹ It was as if there were two parallel timelines op-

erating that November 2002: one, the Bush administration's, led to what increasingly looked like inevitable war; the other, the United Nations', led to a possible peaceful resolution. Understandably, Iraq chose to follow the latter timeline by announcing that "Weapons Inspectors [Would] Be Permitted," and by "Deny[ing] Baghdad Possesse[d] Prohibited Weapons." Immediately, the White House went on the attack, President Bush "Disput[ing the] Denial," calling it "Not Encouraging," and insisting that "Iraq Must Reveal Weapons Sites"—sites whose existence, of course, Iraq was denying, and whose locations it therefore would not, and could not divulge. Asked what evidence the U.S. had for the existence of such weapons sites, Press Secretary Fleischer conceded there was none he could share, but that "the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense would not assert as plainly and bluntly as they have that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction if it was not true, and if they did not have a solid basis for saying it."³²

All this while, the "Hitlerizing" continued: again and again, Hussein was referred to as a "threat," as a "dictator," as someone who "violated his own agreements." The administration carefully tailored this approach to appeal to the specific sensibilities of the audiences the president addressed. While in Romania on November 23, 2002, touring new NATO member nations, Bush's references to Hussein as an "aggressive dictator" invoked the Ceausescu regime. That same day, in Lithuania, he "compared the threat ... to the Nazis and communists who had controlled much of Europe for parts of the twentieth century ... Mr. Bush told Lithuanians that 'we must be willing to stand in the face of evil, to have the courage to always face danger.'" Returning specifically to the Munich analogy, he told Czech students in Prague on November 20, "Czechs and Slovaks learned through the harsh experience of 1938 that when great democracies fail to confront danger, greater dangers follow ... that aggression left unchecked by the great democracies can rob millions of their liberty and their lives ... Place names of Europe ... evoke sad and bitter experience—Verdun, Munich, Stalingrad, Dresden, Nuremberg and Yalta. We have no power to rewrite history," but, he intoned, "We do have the power to write a different story for the future." Taking aim at those nations opposed to the U.S. march to war, he added, "Free nations must accept our shared obligations to keep the peace ... Ignoring dangers or excusing aggression may temporarily avert the conflict, but they don't bring true peace." Having already identified Germany as the aggressor in the great wars of the twentieth century with his references to Verdun, Munich, and Stalingrad, Bush here also held the Germans (and of course France and, by now, Russia too) accountable for appeasing the *new* threat of the twenty-first century, the new Hitler, Saddam Hussein.³³

Meanwhile, United Nations inspectors continued in their unsuccessful search for forbidden weapons. A day ahead of the deadline, on December 7, Iraq had produced the report mandated by the U.N., a 12,000-page document which “show[ed] no banned arms.” Within days, the administration dismissed the report for having “big omissions,” based upon which President Bush was “expected to say Iraq failed to meet U.N. terms.” In a new approach, the White House evidently hoped to show that the Iraqi report was dishonest, which would have justified claiming a “material breach” of Resolution 1441 and would in turn have allowed for a new and specifically war resolution even before the inspectors completed their search.³⁴ An increasingly impatient Colin Powell observed that “Iraq Raises Risk of War by Lying on Arms,” while the White House issued statements warning that “Baghdad’s Deceptions Could Rule Out a ‘Peaceful Resolution.’” Confident in its new approach, the administration slashed the projected cost of the war to \$50-\$60 billion—“in today’s dollars, a cost less than for the 1991 gulf conflict”—while predicting that an eighteen-month occupation would yield a “democratic Iraq.”³⁵

Soon, however, it became apparent that the new strategy, too, might fail. There was resistance within the United Nations Security Council. “Just because there’s a material breach,” an unnamed Security Council diplomat stated—in fact, no such breach was ever proven—“doesn’t mean you bomb them the next day.” Equally troubling from the administration’s perspective, the U.N.’s team of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, led by Hans Blix and Mohamed El Baradei, were reluctant to cast in a positive light their few discoveries that might have helped strengthen the administration’s case. Chief among these discoveries were twelve empty warheads dating back to 1988, found on January 16. While the White House embraced these warheads as “Evidence in the Case for War,” calling them “serious and troubling,” even Blix, the more hawkish of the two chief inspectors, dismissed them as “not something that’s so important.” Nor would the inspectors commit on the thousands of aluminum tubes possibly destined for uranium centrifuges, whose discovery the previous September seemed the most incriminating piece of evidence—since discredited—in support of the administration’s case: “Agency Challenges Evidence Against Iraq Cited by Bush,” the *New York Times* reported, prompting Colin Powell to pronounce it “useless to give more time to the inspectors,” whose only helpful admission had been that Iraq, during the inspectors’ time there, had occasionally “Fall[en] Short on Cooperation.”³⁶

Realizing, then, that they were unlikely to succeed in their effort to prove that Iraq stood in material breach of Resolution 1441, and no longer even confident that a follow-up resolution would necessarily lead to war, members of the administration again changed course. President Bush,

who had once “appeare[d] to regard U.N. deadlines ... as crucial,” now announced that he was “sick and tired of games and deception and that is my view on timetables,” too. It was not only Resolution 1441’s timeline the administration considered no longer binding, however, but also its call for a second, follow-up resolution to determine whether or not war against Iraq was justified. The “U.S. [was] Resisting Calls for a Second U.N. Vote for a War on Iraq,” the *New York Times* reported on January 16, noting that President Bush now also rejected the call of other nations that the U.S. seek the “explicit blessing of the United Nations Security Council before going to war with Iraq. The White House further suggested that it could decide in favor of military action even if weapons inspectors do not turn up concrete evidence against Saddam Hussein.” During these last weeks prior to the invasion, the rationale for war changed frequently. The same day that the president dismissed 1441’s timeline and the need for a second resolution, Donald Rumsfeld argued that “failure of Mr. Hussein to cooperate fully with arms inspectors could itself provide critical weight for war”—this, on a day when “U.N. Weapons Inspectors Search[ed Saddam Hussein’s] Presidential Palace Compound in Baghdad,” the second such impromptu search of one of Hussein’s private residencies. Another few days later, the administration contended that “withholding information from inspectors should be enough to justify force in Iraq,” and, a few days later still, that “exile for Hussein” was the last remaining option likely to prevent war.³⁷

Last minute third-party efforts to avert a U.S. invasion—such as by the Saudis—were rejected, as was the U.N. weapons inspectors’ own final report on January 27, largely for its publication of “Findings [that] Undercut U.S. Assertions.” Around this same time, the protests of France and Germany—whose foreign ministers Dominique de Villepin and Joschka Fischer cautioned that a U.S. invasion without U.N. Security Council-support would represent “a victory for the law of the strongest,” and that “Iraq has complied fully with all relevant resolutions”—were dismissed by Donald Rumsfeld as the spineless pandering of “Old Europe.” Condoleezza Rice, meanwhile, in a *New York Times* op-ed piece titled, “Why We Know Iraq Is Lying,” suggested that Iraq had the potential to “kill up to one million people.”³⁸

That war had become all but unavoidable became clear on January 28, when, in his second State of the Union Address, President Bush “spoke forcefully, purposefully and in somber tones of an America unafraid to take unilateral action, if necessary, against an Iraqi leader he portrayed as the personification of evil.” In reference to the United Nations—whom he had challenged less than four months earlier not to allow itself to be rendered “irrelevant”—Bush stated that “the course of this nation does not depend

on the decisions of others.”³⁹ Still desirous of obtaining the blessings of the U.N. if at all possible, Colin Powell one week later, on February 5, made a lengthy illustrated presentation to the U.N. Security Council. In an argument rehearsed a few days earlier at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, again rife with references to World War II—“more than half a century ago, the United States helped to save Europe from the tyranny of fascism”—Powell now warned the Security Council in New York that “the United States will not and cannot run [the] risk” of an Iraqi biological or chemical attack.⁴⁰ But even this speech failed to persuade at least two permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council (France and Russia) to commit to a “yes”-vote on a possible war resolution. Realizing that it was not going to get United Nations approval, the United States thus went to war without it, which, given the present review of the timeline of events leading up to this critical juncture, the administration appears to have been willing to do all along.

Conclusion: Connecting the Dots

This paper’s main purpose has not been to reverse the Bush administration’s claim that Saddam Hussein represented a threat of “Hitlerian” scope, although the events leading up to the war do indicate that it was the administration’s pre-war policies, not Iraq’s, that more strongly resembled Hitler’s strong-arm diplomacy at Munich. In its refusal to accept as gestures of Iraq’s compliance either the admission of weapons inspectors, the submission of a comprehensive report on Iraq’s weapons stockpiles and programs, or even the U.N. weapons inspectors’ own report—all of which the administration at first demanded, then dismissed as lies and subterfuge—the Bush administration’s tactic does indeed seem to have been one of “always demand[ing] so much that we can never be satisfied.” As Stephen Rock observes, “it needs to be recognized that some adversaries are fundamentally unappeasable, either because their demands are so extreme that they simply cannot be met, or because they actually desire war.”⁴¹

The more important point, however, is that despite these superficial similarities between the *strategies* of the Bush administration in 2002-2003 and Hitler’s in 1938; and despite the fact that—it must of course be acknowledged—“Saddam Hussein was certainly Hitlerian in his brutality, recklessness, and appetite for aggression,” as Jeffrey Record rightly reminds us; and that Hussein did indeed “run a monstrous tyranny,” still, neither Bush nor Hussein bears more than a fleeting resemblance to Hitler, as Record himself argues convincingly. Neither, after all, was ever on the verge of attempting the military conquest of an entire continent, of eradicating an entire ethnic group, or of plunging the entire world into total war.

“Though the Munich analogy’s power as a tool of opinion mobilization is undeniable,” Record concludes, “no enemy since Hitler has, in fact, possessed Nazi Germany’s combination of military might and willingness—indeed, eagerness—to employ it for unlimited conquest.”⁴²

The more important issue, then, is not how accurate any comparison between Hussein (or Bush) and Hitler may be, but the manner in which such comparisons are calculated to achieve and justify certain ends. As previously shown, the most frequent goal of invoking the Munich analogy in the context of U.S. foreign policy has been to justify armed confrontation and war—often against nations whose threat, if any, was nowhere near “Hitlerian” in scope and could therefore have been met equally well, and at lesser human cost, with deterrence, containment, inducements, or diplomacy. “The trouble is that vague, sweeping generalizations tend to be accepted by an ill-informed public, and build themselves up into powerful myths,” writes Harry Hearder. “Such generalizations may be accepted by the media and the public for several decades after they have been discarded by most professional historians.” Ernest May, an early historian to subject the notion of the “lessons” of history to critical analysis, adds that politicians “necessarily envision the future partly in terms of what they believe to have happened in the past ... Often their knowledge of what in fact occurred earlier is shallow or faulty, and deficiencies in information breed greater deficiencies in reasoning.”⁴³ Unfortunately, these deficiencies in reasoning are then passed down to the general public, which, influenced over time by the recurring invocation of historical analogies, begins to believe their supposed lessons: for example, that aggressive diplomacy must be met with armed force.

The fact that this particular “rule” is based on a single historical instance, Munich, and a singular one, given the unique status of Hitler in recent history, is rarely raised by those who wish to persuade the public of the need to go to war against, rather than negotiate with, America’s strategic enemies. Nor is particular emphasis placed on the self-evident fact that oftentimes the United States government itself brings a hard line to bear upon one enemy while simultaneously appeasing another (witness the Bush administration’s contrasting policies towards Iraq and North Korea); or, alternatively, that the U.S. government has been known to appease a strategic counterforce first, then later wage war upon it (witness the first President Bush’s policies towards Saddam Hussein, whom he initially, in the late 1980s, courted, then vilified—as Hitler—then defeated).⁴⁴ Indeed, the only thing that makes Munich a “rule” in the first place is its selective invocation by those who wish to win support for military action: “Though presidents can and have, knowingly and unwittingly, misused the Munich analogy to describe security threats and the consequences of failing to act

against them, there is no gainsaying the power of that analogy to mobilize public opinion.”⁴⁵

All the more reason, then, for historians to be vigilant when historical parallels are invoked in the public realm, and to draw public attention to the underlying motives of such invocations, their often flawed logic, and their not infrequently faulty or incomplete historical reasoning. “The most important function for the historian as historian,” Ernest May once argued, “is analysis of those instances which men in government are most likely to see as parallels, analogies, or precedents.” His hopeful perspective that government officials would in fact care for the analyses to which historians might subject their historical analogies led May to conclude that “nothing is more important than that professional historians discover means of addressing directly, succinctly, and promptly the needs of people who govern.”⁴⁶ Given the willful nature with which those who govern misuse history to justify their own agendas, however, one cannot help but be skeptical of the historian’s potential to effect change “from the top,” as envisioned by May. As witnessed by the Bush administration’s insistence on re-casting contemporary issues in the context of World War II—a pattern that began with the president’s identification of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as members of an “axis of evil” in his 2002 State of the Union address and that continued throughout his presidency⁴⁷—it seems more urgent that scholar-teachers of history seek to instruct not those who govern, but the governed themselves. What better way to persuade America’s students and public of the relevance of history than to show how it is used and misused in contemporary political discourse? What better way to heighten their awareness that an incomplete understanding of history may perpetuate patterns of deceit and injustice? Were their knowledge of the past sufficient to connect for themselves the dots the media and politicians strew, Americans would surely be more likely to resist and question the simple conclusions foisted upon them. Only thus can they—can we—ever begin to benefit from the true lessons of history, and avoid repeating the errors of the past.

Notes

1. “Bush-Hitler Remark Shows U.S. as Issue in German Election,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, pp. 1, 12; “Germans Vote in Tight Election in Which Bush, Hitler, and Israel Become Key Issues,” *New York Times*, 22 September 2002, sec. A, p. 16; “Germany’s Leader Retains his Power after Tight Vote,” *New York Times*, 23 September

2002, sec. A, p. 1.

2. “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, 26 May 2004, sec. A, p. 10; “Other Voices; Will the paper of Record Please Stand Up,” *New York Times*, 2 May 2004, sec. D, p. 2; for more on the ongoing debate over the *Times*’ pre-war reportage, see “Weapons of Mass Destruction? Or Mass Distraction?” 30 May 2004, sec. D, p. 2; “Political Bias at the Times? Two Counterarguments,” 8 November 2004, sec. D, p. 2.

3. Hitler’s desire for *Lebensraum* in the East, specifically, for “Russia and her vassal border states,” including Czechoslovakia, had been made clear more than ten years earlier with the publication of *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 646-655.

4. Sir Nevile Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin, 1937-1939* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1940), 158.

5. See Jeffrey Record, *Appeasement Reconsidered: Investigating the Mythology of the 1930s* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2005), 26, 27n90; Stephen R. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 72-74.

6. Alan Bullock, *Hitler, a Study in Tyranny* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 443.

7. Hitler, as quoted in Donald Kagan, et al., *The Western Heritage, Vol. 2: Since 1648*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2004), 1002.

8. For a useful and well-annotated review, see Record, 3-4.

9. The oft-quoted text of Kennan’s 1946 “long telegram” was later formalized in his anonymous article, published under the pseudonym Mr. X, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947.

10. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Signet, 1969), 134-135.

11. In an interview with Walter Cronkite in September 1963, Kennedy referred to Vietnam as “a very important struggle even though it is far away ... I don’t agree with those who say we should withdraw. That would be a great mistake ... We took all this—made this effort to defend Europe. Now Europe is quite secure. We also have to participate—we may not like it—in the defense of Asia.” Quoted in Robert J. McMahon, ed., *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War*, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 132.

12. Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam and Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 160. Emphasis in original.

13. “Bush Outlines Doctrine of Striking Foes First,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, pp. 1, 14.

14. George H. W. Bush, as quoted in Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 3.

15. James Phillips and James H. Anderson, “Lessons from the War in Kosovo,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder*, No. 1311 (22 July 1999), 5; quoted in Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 4.

16. Record, *Appeasement Reconsidered*, 5, iv.

17. See “British Appeasement of the United States, 1896-1903,” in Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 25-47.

18. Record, *Appeasement Reconsidered*, 72.

19. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 338. A contemporary witness, British ambassador Nevile Henderson, agreed: “The Munich settlement ...

deprived Hitler of the great satisfaction—to which he was ardently looking forward—of giving his army a little experience, of appearing himself in the role of conquering hero, and of wreaking vengeance on [Czech president] Benes and the Czechs.” Henderson, 180.

20. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 74.

21. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, 338. Emphasis in original.

22. “Bush Plans to Warn U.N. Act on Iraq, or the U.S. Will,” *New York Times*, 12 September 2002, sec. B, p. 23.

23. “In Bush’s Words: On Iraq, U.N. Must Face Up to Its Founding Purpose,” *New York Times*, 13 September 2002, sec. A, p. 10.

24. “Bush Is ‘Highly Doubtful’ Iraq Will Meet U.N. Demands,” *New York Times*, 14 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “U.S. Moves to Persuade Security Council to Confront Iraq on Arms Inspections,” *New York Times*, 14 September 2002, sec. A, p. 6.

25. “U.N. Inspectors Can Return Unconditionally, Iraq Says,” *New York Times*, 17 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “Rift Is Seen At U.N. Over Next Steps to Deal With Iraq,” *New York Times*, 18 September 2002, sec. A, p. 18; “Rumsfeld Says Other Nations Promise to Aid Attack on Iraq,” *New York Times*, 19 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

26. “Bush Seeks Power to Use ‘All Means’ to Oust Hussein,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, p. 15. One is reminded, by Rumsfeld’s argumentation, of the ability of General John DeWitt, Commander of the Western Defense Command in World War II, to persuade FDR of the imperative of interning all West Coast Japanese Americans because, DeWitt argued, “the very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.” “Final Recommendations,” Report by General John Lesesne DeWitt to the United States Secretary of War, February 14, 1942, quoted in Alice Yang Murray, “The Internment of Japanese Americans,” in Lon Kurashige and Alice Yang Murray, eds., *Major Problems in Asian American History* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 312.

27. “Bush to Outline Doctrine of Striking Foe First,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “Bush Seeks Power to Use ‘All Means’ to Oust Hussein,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “Powell Urges Strong Stand, Fast, for Move Against Iraq,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, p. 15; the full text of the resolution approved by Congress on October 11 is reprinted in “In Bush’s Words: ‘Use All Means’ on Iraq,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2002, sec. A, p. 15.

28. “Security Council Votes 15-0 For Tough Iraq Resolution; Bush Calls It ‘Final Test,’” *New York Times*, 9 November 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

29. “U.N. Plans Immediate Test for Iraq Inspections,” *New York Times*, 10 November 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

30. “Bush Signal: Time Is Now,” *New York Times*, 8 November 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

31. These articles appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* on November 9, 10, 17, and 18 of 2002, respectively.

32. “Iraq Tells the U.N. Arms Inspection Will Be Permitted,” *New York Times*, 14 November 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “U.S. Disputes Iraqi Denial,” *New York Times*, 14 November 2002, sec. A, p. 21; “Not Encouraging, Bush Says of Iraq on Arms Demand,” *New York Times*, 3 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “U.S. Tells Iraq It Must Reveal Weapons Sites,” *New York Times*, 6 December 2002, sec. A, p. 16.

33. “Bush Appeals to New Allies on Iraq Plans,” *New York Times*, 24 November 2002, sec. A, pp. 1, 18; “In Bush’s Words: ‘The Enlargement of NATO Is Good for All Who Join Us,’” *New York Times*, 21 November 2002, sec. A, p. 22; see also “A Speech Recalls Europe’s Ghosts,” *New York Times*, 24 November 2002, sec. D, p. 5.

34. “Iraq Says Report to the U.N. shows No Banned Arms,” *New York Times*, 8 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; “Iraq Arms Report Has Big Omissions, U.S. Officials Say,”

New York Times, 13 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; "Bush Is Expected to Say Iraq Failed to Meet U.N. Terms," *New York Times*, 18 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1. The world later learned that the United States had succeeded in forcing its own early receipt of the report, on December 9, while other Security Council members received theirs only on December 17, yet were pushed to denounce it within twenty-four hours. See "U.S. Is First to Get a Copy of Report on Iraqi Weapons," *New York Times*, 10 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; and "U.S. Weighs How Serious an Arms-Violation Charge to Make Against Baghdad," *New York Times*, 19 December 2002, sec. A, p. 16.

35. "Iraq Raises Risk of War by Lying on Arms," *New York Times*, 20 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; "White House Cuts estimate of Cost of War With Iraq," *New York Times*, 31 December 2002, sec. A, pp. 1, 12; "U.S. Is Completing Plan to Promote A Democratic Iraq," *New York Times*, 6 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1.

36. "Diplomatic Strain on Iraq: Allies See U.S. as Hasty," *New York Times*, 22 December 2002, sec. 1, p. 22; "Arms Inspectors Want More time for Work in Iraq," *New York Times*, 18 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1; "Inspectors Find Empty Warheads in Iraqi Depot," *New York Times*, 17 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1; "Agency Challenges Evidence Against Iraq Cited by Bush," *New York Times*, 10 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1; "Powell, in Europe, Nearly Dismisses U.N.'s Iraq Report," *New York Times*, 27 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1; "U.N. Inspectors Say Iraq Falls Short on Cooperation," *New York Times*, 28 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1. The aluminum tube issue is explored in comprehensive detail in an article that is required reading for anyone interested in these events: "How White House Embraced Suspect Iraq Arms Intelligence," *New York Times*, 3 October 2004, sec. A, pp. 1, 24-26.

37. "Not Encouraging, Bush Says of Iraq on Arms Demand," *New York Times*, 3 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; "Bush Warns Hussein Again But Sidesteps Any 'Deadline,'" *New York Times*, 15 January 2003, sec. A, p. 9; "U.S. Resisting Calls for a Second U.N. Vote for a War on Iraq," *New York Times*, 16 January 2003, sec. A, pp. 1, 12; "U.N. Weapons Inspectors Search Presidential Palace Compound in Baghdad," *New York Times*, 16 January 2003, sec. A, p. 12, cf. "Test of Power: Inspectors Tour an Iraqi Palace," *New York Times*, 6 December 2002, sec. A, p. 1; "U.S. Accelerates Its Efforts to Build a Case Against Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 January 2003, sec. I, p. 12; "Exile for Hussein May Be an Option, U.S. Officials Hint," *New York Times*, 20 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1.

38. "Fearful Saudis Seek a Way to Budge Hussein from Power," *New York Times*, 19 January 2003, sec. A, pp. 1, 19; "Findings of U.N. Group Undercut U.S. Assertions," *New York Times*, 28 January 2003, sec. A, p. 9; "An Attack on Iraq Not Yet Justified, France Warns U.S.," *New York Times*, 21 January 2003, sec. A, pp. 1, 10; "France and Germany Draw A Line, Against Washington," *New York Times*, 23 January 2003, sec. A, p. 10; Condoleezza Rice, "Why We Know Iraq Is Lying," editorial, *New York Times*, 23 January 2003, sec. A, p. 25.

39. "Calling Iraq a Serious Threat, Bush Vows that He'll Disarm It, and also Rebuild U.S. Economy," *New York Times*, 29 January 2003, sec. A, p. 1; "President's State of the Union Message to Congress and the Nation," *New York Times*, 29 January 2003, sec. A, p. 12.

40. "Powell on Iraq: 'We Reserve Our Sovereign Right to Take Military Action,'" *New York Times*, 27 January 2003, sec. A, p. 8; "Powell's Address, Presenting 'Deeply Troubling' Evidence on Iraq," *New York Times*, 6 February 2003, sec. A, p. 20.

41. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 76.

42. Record, *Appeasement Reconsidered*, 6, 46.

43. Ernest R. May, "*Lessons of the Past: the Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 190; Harry Hearder, "Editor's

Foreword,” in P. M. H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 2nd ed. (London, U.K.: Longman Group, 1997), viii.

44. On the first President Bush’s efforts to appease Saddam Hussein in the late 1980s, see Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, 103-126.

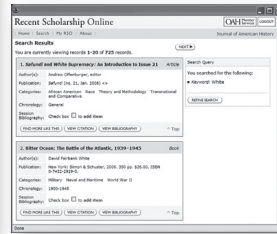
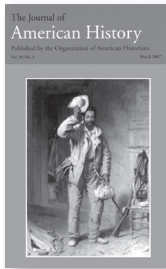
45. Record, *Appeasement Reconsidered*, 5.

46. May, 178, 190.

47. More recent Hitler comparisons leveled by former Bush administration officials include Donald Rumsfeld’s characterization of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez as “a person who was elected legally just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally and then consolidated power”; and, more recently still, Bush’s own comment that a failure to stop Iran’s nuclear weapons program could result in “World War III.” “Chavez Ousts U.S. Diplomat on Spying Charge,” *New York Times*, 2 March 2006, sec. A, p. 8; “The Nuclear Question: The Findings,” *New York Times*, 4 December 2007, sec. A, p. 14.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE OAH TODAY!

Join the Organization of American Historians, the largest learned society devoted to all aspects and levels of American history. The OAH promotes responsible and sound historical research, analysis, and presentation through its varied programs and activities, while striving to make the history of the U.S. more accessible to the general public. Membership not only provides you with a range and choice of important publications and services, you also become a partner in making the American past remembered, discussed, and valued.



MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Receive the **Journal of American History** in print and online. As the leading scholarly publication on the American past, the *JAH* is recognized as *the* journal of record in the field. Published quarterly since 1914, the *JAH* includes cutting edge scholarship in all areas of U.S. history as well as reviews of books, films, Web sites, and exhibits. Recent issues are fully searchable online.

Choose to receive a print or online subscription to the **OAH Magazine of History**, one of the best tools available to teachers of American history. This quarterly thematic publication is written by prominent historians from across the country and includes innovative teaching materials.

Add a \$15 subscription to **JSTOR**—exclusive to OAH members—and access full-text PDF files of the *Journal of American History*, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (*The Journal's* predecessor), and the *OAH Magazine of History*. Search, browse, download, and print these OAH publications beginning with the first years of their publication up until the most recent five years.

Attend the **OAH Annual Meeting** at a reduced rate. Experience the best new work in U.S. history research and practice, meet and exchange ideas with other historians, make professional contacts, and explore the latest U.S. history books and offerings in the exhibit hall.

Access **Recent Scholarship Online**, a searchable, cumulative database of citations for new books, dissertations, electronic resources, and articles drawn from more than 1,100 journals. Sign up to **receive monthly e-mail updates of the latest scholarship**, customized according to your areas of interest.



Organization of American Historians

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT www.oah.org or call 812.855.7311