
PART FIVE

SOVEREIGNTY AND POWER IN
A COMPLEX WORLD



Causation and Responsibility in a Complex World

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Power, as a form of causation, is at the heart of how we try to understand our world. It is hard to tell a story without bringing in how the behavior of one person leads others to respond, and even the youngest children interpret what they see in terms of cause-and-effect relations. It is a further but small step from saying that someone exercised power and caused an outcome to arguing that she was responsible for the way events unfolded, and responsibility has important normative connotations and implications.

The problem is, of course, that power can be disguised in various ways. Stephen Krasner has shown that in back of choices made by various actors can be power exercised by others at times or places at some remove that, by changing the structure of the situation and the alternatives that the actor faces, can do much of the causal work.¹ Even those without social science training sense this. When I have my students play Prisoner's Dilemma, some of them ask who arranged the situation this way and insist that next time they be able to be the District Attorney. But if this idea is not new, it has not been fully explored. This is not to say that I can do so here, but at least I will call attention to it and bring out several of its aspects, including the implications for allocating credit and blame.

When a typhoon kills thousands of people in Bangladesh, this seems like a natural disaster. In part it is, but stepping back we can see that people lived in these low-lying areas only because of shortages of land and jobs. So we might argue that the cause is overpopulation. Or we could see the hand of powerful interests and individuals in the disaster by noting that most farmland is controlled by large landlords, or that the government followed economic policies that rewarded the military and/or special interests at the expense of providing more widespread employment. We cannot try to choose among these accounts in the same way that we pit standard explanations against each other. In some sense, they may all be correct. But they differ in their starting points and therefore offer different accounts of responsibility.

Causation is particularly difficult to attribute when the effects—if any—are mediated and indirect. Recent events provide two quite different examples. How, to what extent, and in what ways were the heated political atmosphere and the right-wing attacks on liberals and the government implicated in the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and others in Tucson in January 2011? Jared Loughner might have killed had talk radio not existed; he does not seem to have listened, and in fact his political views are unclear. But there is a social atmosphere, and treating government officials as the enemy can seep in in ways that are almost impossible to determine. So it is not surprising that liberal commentators did see a connection, if only an indirect one, and that conservatives considered this argument outrageous. It is similarly hard to tell whether the leaked American cables documenting the egregious extravagance and corruption in Tunisia played a role in fueling the mass protests that led to the overthrow of the government. It is not clear how many people read the cables, and in any event it was hardly news to anyone in the country. But they may have rubbed salt into the wounds, led to discussion of how bad the government was, and provided a shared sense of outrage that helped coordinate the protests. The fact that we do not know and probably cannot know does not mean that the leak played no role.² These are unique events, but having lots of cases may not solve the problem. Thus we know both that children who grow up poor, especially without an intact family, are more likely to become criminals than are more-advantaged children. Yet some of the latter turn to crime, and not all of the former do. We talk of contributing factors and predisposing ones, and with enough data we can make much more fine-grained generalizations, but the questions of causation and responsibility remain. As in the Giffords case, it is not surprising that conservatives stress that the fact that only a minority of poor people become criminals shows that responsibility remains in the hands of the individual, and that liberals argue that the overall difference shows society's role.

Causation, power, and responsibility do not take place in a vacuum or between two atom-like actors. Rather, they are embedded in a context and operate within structures. Some of this is nicely caught by Karl Marx in one of his most famous statements: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living."³ Almost impossible to deny, this makes understanding causal and power relations extremely difficult. It may be best to start with the point that causes can be necessary or sufficient (or both), which, while familiar, needs to be more deeply explored in connection with power and responsibility. This analysis leads to a consideration of counterfactuals. Here what is most important is that we need to bring out the counterfactual claims that are implicit in many arguments if we are to reach considered judgments about the empirical and normative questions

involved. All of this is rather static, however. Even analysis of counterfactuals often looks at variables one at a time. In fact, interactions are frequent, and their presence means that the relationship that at first appears to be at work may be disguising more significant ones. Further interesting twists appear when we look at changes through time, which I do in the last section of this chapter. Here we see that attributions of power and responsibility can be crucially influenced by the point in time at which we start our analysis.

Multiple Sufficient Causation

It is often the case that several pathways lead to the same result, something known as multiple sufficient causation. Although all social scientists know about this phenomenon, it nevertheless causes a variety of problems, which may be why we try to put it aside whenever we can.⁴ To start with, it means that the use of the standard comparative method may not be able to eliminate a causal role for a variable. For example, Michael Blaker's *Japanese International Negotiating Style* presents an interesting picture of the way Japan conducts international negotiations, and relates this pattern to Japanese politics and society.⁵ My first reaction was that this style did not seem so different from what the Americans did. But even if this is correct, my impulse to dismiss Blaker's causal argument may be premature, because similar Japanese and American behaviors could have been generated quite differently. The comparison to the United States shows that Japanese politics and society is not necessary to produce the outcome, but it cannot show that it is not sufficient. Indeed, even if key elements of Japanese culture and government changed and the pattern did not, Blaker's argument would not be disproved, because other factors could have arisen to produce the same result. This might reduce the significance of the factors he originally focused on, but would not mean that they had been unimportant at the time.

The broader question behind the possibility of multiple sufficient causation is whether there are alternative ways of reaching an outcome. A policy may succeed, and let us say we have reason to believe that the results would have been less favorable had policies A, B, or C been pursued. So far so good, and in practice we may be satisfied to stop here. But we would really like to know whether the outcome would have been as good or even better with policies E, F, or G. If we believe that this is the case, should we credit the leader for producing a success or blame him for not having done better? Some evidence may guide us here, but it is not likely to be definitive. Even if policies E, F, or G had been applied in other instances, the circumstances are not likely to have been the same (and indeed cannot be if knowledge of the previous cases affects the actors' behavior).

Problems of attributing responsibility can arise not only when different circumstances or policies can yield the same result, but also when multiple sufficient causes are present simultaneously—that is, when the outcome is overdetermined. They were in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, in which all of the people in the car participated in killing the victim, who richly deserved his fate. Legally all are guilty, and if this had been a real case, presumably all would have been severely punished; but this disturbs some of our standard notions of causation and responsibility, because in the counterfactual of any individual having lost his nerve or being sick that day, the victim still would have died.⁶ This question is not academic but arose when John Edwards was tried for having used campaign funds to keep secret his payments to his mistress. Under the law, he was guilty if the motive was to protect his presidential campaign but not if his goal was to keep the affair from his wife. The obvious problem was that both motives could have been at work, and so the judge instructed the jury that “the government does not have to prove that the sole or only purpose of the money was to influence the election.... On the other hand, if the donor would have made the gift or payment notwithstanding the election, it does not become a contribution merely because the gift or payment might have some impact on the election.”⁷

Although it is impossible to tell with certainty whether many historical events are in fact overdetermined, the question raises important analytical and normative questions. An example is the debate over the extent to which anti-Soviet motives were responsible for President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs against Japan. The arguments are intricate and fascinating, but all that I want to do here is note that while the desire to intimidate the USSR and limit its gains at Japan's expense may have not only been present, but been sufficient to produce the bombing, the more obvious motive of ending the war as quickly and favorably as possible was even more clearly sufficient to produce the outcome. Indeed, I do not think we can find a single case of a country that has developed a weapon of great power refraining from using it when there is no danger of retaliation.⁸ We can argue that the use of the weapon was unwise or immoral (although I am not persuaded of this), but the claim that Truman was anti-Soviet enough so that this consideration might have led to his actions is not incompatible with the argument that he would have used the bomb irrespective of his views of the Soviet Union.

A parallel argument can be made for American policy toward sharing the atomic “secret” with the USSR,⁹ which some see as playing a large role in triggering the Cold War. These analyses treat the American (really the Anglo-American) decision as problematic. But do we find cases in history where countries have shared such secrets?¹⁰ One can of course reply that the circumstances were unusual, that the Cold War would have been mitigated if not avoided if Truman had been more forthcoming, and that Truman was

therefore responsible for the frictions that did in fact result. But this argument must recognize that Truman's behavior was not unusual, which means that even without the special element of fear and hostility toward the Soviet Union, only a decision maker of rare courage and boldness would have been willing to follow this path. Here as with the use of the bomb, the fact that the decisions fit the normal pattern of international history casts a different light on assertions about the blame (or credit) due to Truman. If any leader would have acted as Truman did, then it is hard to assign him unique credit or blame; he just happened to be the person in the position of responsibility (and the use of this word brings up the ambiguity of whether or not we should hold Truman responsible).

Some of the problems of multiple sufficient causation can be seen in terms of whether functional substitutes are possible.¹¹ In many cases we can readily detect an event that led to a certain response. In a real sense, the event then was a cause, but perhaps had it not occurred any number of others could have, and produced the same effect. A well-known example is that while it was the Vietcong raid on the American air base at Pleiku that preceded the American bombing of North Vietnam, it is implausible to argue that American policy would have been very different had this raid not occurred (assuming that all the relevant major actors continued their basic policies). As McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's national security adviser who was in Vietnam at the time, put it: "Pleikus are streetcars."¹² What he meant was that one will come along if you are waiting for it. The Vietcong and North Vietnamese were bent on victory, and the United States was determined to prevent it, and if the raid on Pleiku had failed or not been ordered, the United States sooner or later would have been faced by the same alternatives of escalating or losing. It would then be foolish to say that Pleiku was a cause of the American bombing, let alone of the entire wider war.

There is room to disagree with my argument that the existence of likely functional substitutes for an action reduces if not its causal role, then at least the credit or blame we place on the actor. In a murder trial, a hit man cannot plead innocence on the ground that if he had not accepted the job, someone else would have, nor can he say that he should not go to jail because the victim was suffering from a terminal disease. Even though the person would have died even had the perpetrator gone to the beach instead of carrying out the murder, the fact that he did carry it out means that in the eyes of the law, and much morality, he should be punished. But do we want to apply the same kind of attribution to politics? Even if we were to agree that the failure to give the Soviets information on the atomic bomb would have provoked hostility in almost any country, it would not seem to make much sense to argue that this was a cause of the Cold War if Soviet-American relations would have been much the same had Truman and Churchill behaved differently, especially if one were to believe that Stalin was paranoid and/or aggressive and so could not have been conciliated.

Necessary Conditions

Things do not get much easier when we move to necessary conditions. While sufficient causes always are important, necessary ones can be trivial from the standpoint of most analysis. Thus it does not get us far to say that the existence of oxygen is necessary for wars. This example is linked to the now-familiar point that searching on the dependent variable (i.e., looking only at cases in which the phenomenon of interest occurs) may not discover factors that distinguish cases in which the effect is present from those in which it is absent.

But this does not mean that the approach is without value. Critics of Organski and Kugler's power transition theory were quick to point out that even if it was the case—which can be debated—that major wars occurred only during periods of power transitions,¹³ other power transitions, such as that between Great Britain and the United States, occurred peacefully. This is clearly true, but if—and this remains a big if—power transition are not only a necessary condition for war, but also are quite rare, then the theory would be of significant value in narrowing the range of circumstances in which major wars occur.

Theories that involve necessary conditions also shed light on actors' responsibilities. Most obviously, we should give no credit to leaders who have avoided war in circumstances in which the necessary conditions for it are absent, because there was nothing they could have done that would have led to war. On the other hand, we could also ask whether their policies and actions had some role in seeing that the necessary conditions were absent. Indeed, one major virtue of theories of this kind is that they may direct actors' attention to how they can make the situation safer. Obviously, not all necessary conditions can be manipulated—we cannot bring peace by removing oxygen from the atmosphere. But the danger of fire in some industrial processes can be eliminated by conducting them in oxygen-free containers, and if decision makers cannot go this far, awareness of the necessary conditions may enable them to exercise greater vigilance when those conditions are present. For example, the knowledge that power transitions are dangerous could lead to greater efforts at diplomacy and conciliation during these periods. Of course, the knowledge could also lead to preventive war; but if it had the more benign effect, the result would be to reduce the apparent explanatory power of the theory because there would be more cases in which the necessary condition was present without producing war.¹⁴

Counterfactuals

As the previous paragraphs indicate, like most analyses of causation my discussion points to the importance of counterfactuals.¹⁵ In most formulations, to say that A was a cause is to imply that if it had been absent or different, the

subsequent behavior of others would have been different. Although this is well known, making it explicit can be useful for probing arguments. For example, President Eisenhower comes in for severe criticism for sponsoring the overthrow of the Mossadeq regime in Iran in 1953 and Arbenz in Guatemala the next year. To the extent that the condemnation is rooted in the moral precept that one government should not overthrow another, counterfactuals are irrelevant. But much of the animus stems from the subsequent unhappy history of both countries. The regimes the United States helped put in place were oppressive and supported the upper classes; both countries still bear the scars of the American-supported regimes, and in the case of Iran the backlash has come to haunt the West. I have sympathy with this analysis, but it involves beliefs about causation and counterfactuals that need to be scrutinized. The claim that the United States made things worse implies that the trajectories of these countries, absent the overthrows, would have been more benign for the populations involved and perhaps for the United States. But this happier story is vulnerable to two lines of reply. One is that the coups mattered much less than is generally assumed and that even without US covert action, the forces of the old power structure would have reasserted themselves. The regimes of Mossadeq and Arbenz were very weak, and the very fact that they were overthrown by small operations shows this.¹⁶ By contrast, the Bay of Pigs failed because Castro had much more popular support and had been able to build strong institutions. Arbenz and Mossadeq had not been able to do this, and in the absence of the covert actions any number of perturbations could have overturned them. Of course this leaves open the question of what would have replaced these regimes, but there is little reason to believe that the successors would have acted in accordance with the values of the critics of US policy. The second line of argument is that if the regimes that the United States helped overthrow had continued, they might not have brought democracy and prosperity to their peoples. Arbenz and Mossadeq had strong authoritarian streaks, and it is far from clear that they wanted to establish a liberal democracy or would have been able to do so. One can argue that it is hard to imagine outcomes worse than those that did eventuate, but such a stance may betray a failure of imagination.

In the end this kind of argument must remain speculative. But nevertheless once we admit that the outcome might have been similar no matter what the United States did, then the attribution of causality that seems so obvious in most accounts needs to be questioned, and if either line of rebuttal is correct we should hesitate before putting too much blame on the United States.¹⁷ The other side of this coin is the defense that Tony Blair offered to the commission investigating his decision to join in overthrowing Saddam: if he and the United States had not done so, “we [now] would be facing a situation where Iraq would be competing with Iran on nuclear weapons capability and in support of terrorist

groups.”¹⁸ Although this straight-line projection from 2003 assumes too much and is too simple, the claim similarly needs to be rebutted rather than ignored.

Interactions

Things get more complicated when we look at how factors can combine and interact.¹⁹ Basic difficulties in tracking causation and allocating responsibility arise when the influence of one factor depends on the state of another variable. Sometimes the processes are simply additive, but often they interact in more complex ways. That the relations are not always linear further hinders the search for causation and responsibility.

Many people have observed that while per-student educational spending in primary and secondary education has increased greatly over the past twenty years, test scores have not. The obvious inference is that increased spending has not had an effect. While this conclusion may be correct, it does not follow from the evidence. Even leaving aside the question of whether test scores measure education and the fact that much of the increase in spending has gone to teaching children whose disabilities led to their exclusion from many earlier tests, two lines of argument are possible. First, changes in society may have made today’s children harder to educate. More children come from broken homes, education is less valued in a more commercialized world, and the prevalence of TV and electronic games distracts students from studying and may reduce their attention spans. In other words, the increase in spending could be having a real effect, but one that is disguised by counterbalancing changes. Second, a significant part of the increase in spending is attributable to higher salaries for teachers. The obvious inference would be that the data show that this money is wasted, or at least has failed to produce better teachers. But this ignores the fact that the labor market has changed over the past thirty years, especially in the vastly increased opportunities for women. Thus at least a portion of the increased spending may be an example of the “Red Queen” effect of the need to run ever faster to stay in the same place: in order to attract as skilled teachers as were employed years earlier, schools have to pay more. The spending is not wasted, but the only way to reveal this would be to return salaries to their earlier levels and observe the (posited) decline in teacher skill and student achievement.

Here the effects of each variable, taken separately, are independent of one another. But this is not always the case. For example, the number and severity of floods does not seem to have decreased with the building of more and higher levees. One possibility parallels the previous discussion: other factors such as deforestation and climate change may have worsened, with the result that flooding would be even more frequent and severe had stronger levees not been constructed. But it is also possible that the levees themselves, while helping contain

high waters, have simultaneously contributed to the problem by changing both the physical and human environment. The levees restrict the channels of the rivers, lead more silt to be deposited in the main channel, and reduce the seepage into adjoining lands. Other changes involve human reactions. People take advantage of the construction of levees by moving into the floodplain, which means that high water can no longer be diverted out of the main channel and damage is much greater when the levees do break. Furthermore, once people have moved into flood-prone areas, the political pressures for more and higher levees will increase.

Turning to international politics, the obvious case is an arms race. In the ideal type—and there is great debate about which if any historical cases actually fit it—two states seek only security, and do so by procuring an “adequate” level of arms. But because what is adequate for one side depends on how armed the other is, Red Queen dynamics operate as each side has to increase rapidly in order to keep up with the other. Interestingly enough, students of evolution have tracked similar dynamics between predator and prey.²⁰ Here causes and effects merge through reciprocal causation, and while the entire interaction may be futile in the sense of not yielding changes (or at least not desired ones), each action does indeed have an effect (or rather has multiple effects).

This complicates our sense of causation and responsibility for the sad state of affairs. This kind of arms race can be halted only by both sides cooperating, which is the obvious point of arms control proposals. But for a whole slew of familiar reasons, these are difficult to arrange. When they cannot be, it is easy enough to say that the failure is a shared one. But what exactly does this mean for the responsibility of each individual actor? Only by working together could they change the situation, but no actor can be sure that taking a peaceful initiative would be reciprocated, and, if it were not, such an action could damage the state. (This is the familiar problem of a malign Nash equilibrium.) The stance of blaming everyone while excusing each individual is not satisfying, and while it is too mechanistic and misleading to say that the blame should be equally shared, it is not easy to say much more. The flip saying current in the 1960s that “the system is the problem” has a good deal of merit, but makes responsibility illusive. Can we—should we—be satisfied with the conclusion of the chief investigator for the Chemical Safety Board concerning the BP oil spill of the summer of 2010: “Most accidents are not caused by individual acts but [by] safety-system deficiencies,” and so prosecuting individuals is not appropriate?²¹

In another set of cases, the problem is not that the influence of one factor may offset that of others or that causation may be reciprocal, but that factors interact in a way that complicates our judgment of the contribution of any one of them. It is trite but true to say that the whole is often greater than the sum of its parts. More usefully, this means that an effect may depend less on the quantity or even quality of each kind of input than on the way they do (or do

not) work together. One example could be the use of threats on the one hand and diplomacy on the other to reach foreign policy goals. Each of these affects the other side's incentives, and in a simple world one might function as a substitute for the other in that the goal could be reached either by large enough rewards or by sufficiently credible and punishing threats. But in many cases this model is inappropriate, and neither instrument alone, no matter how potent or well-crafted, can do the trick. Here both are necessary, and the problem is how to combine them effectively, which varies from one case—or at least one kind of case—to another. The crucial details of the empirical analysis is the focus of much diplomacy and scholarship,²² but the point here is just that in situations like this, parsing causation and allocating responsibility between the instruments is difficult in practice and perhaps unsound in conception.

The operation of military forces provides a more concrete example of what I have in mind. Throughout history debates have raged about the relative importance of various military arms, with proponents of each branch or weapon arguing for its potency. Some do make greater contributions than others, and hard choices cannot be avoided. But in many cases military efficacy is produced by the joint operation of several weapons. Thus while early enthusiasts for tanks argued that they could substitute for infantry or that the latter needed to be subordinated to the former, only in a few cases are even the best tanks able to operate alone because they are vulnerable without the support of other branches. Victory can only be secured by both kinds of forces operating together, and so when we compare the military strength of countries or try to find predictors of which side will win battles, often the quantity or quality of any one weapon or even the training of those who operate it does not tell the full story. Instead we need to look at how each side is able to orchestrate the use of multiple weapons and tactics, and praise or blame cannot be parceled out among the weapons, but goes to the way they are—or are not—brought together.

In the same way, contemporary actors and later observers often argue about the relative contributions of military offensives and the economic blockade in bringing down the Central Powers in World War I. A more sophisticated understanding, however, is that the two worked in tandem. Those who argued for conserving manpower by staying on the defensive and letting the blockade do its work did not realize that it was the continuing need to fight at a high tempo that put the pressure on the Central Powers' economic system that enabled the blockade to do real damage.²³ Similarly, in World War II, strategic bombing and land campaigns worked together in multiple ways. Although German military production did not collapse until the last months of the war, Allied bombing throughout the war required the Germans to divert extensive resources to anti-aircraft activities, thus reducing the effort they could put into fighting Allied armies. To take a narrow example, because the Germans had to try to beat off the deep bombing the raids in 1943 and 1944, their fighter forces suffered

grievously, which meant that they could do little to harass the Allies when they landed in France. Soldiers on the ground at Normandy complained that they could not see any benefit from the bombing campaign, but the great benefit was in what they did not see—German forces that were destroyed or could not get to the battlefield. Bombing reciprocally had greater effects because the land fighting put German forces on the roads, where they could be attacked from the air, and stretched German requirements, which gave bombing damage much more effect than would otherwise have been the case.²⁴

Of course a scholar can simply say that these sorts of interactions mean that it is foolish to try to apportion credit. But the armed forces compete not only for bragging rights, but for resources. Civilian officials have to make decisions about what forces to buy, and therefore have to face trade-offs between tanks and planes. There is no straightforward way to proceed here, and it is not surprising that the arguments about past battles never end or that decisions on resource-allocation seem muddled.

Interactions are even harder to unpack when the effects are less visible. In the nineteenth century, French philosopher and economist Frédéric Bastiat pointed out that arguments about taxation and government spending were often ill-conceived because people focused on what economic activity occurred rather than what did not, which was what we now call the opportunity cost of the spending.²⁵ This point is a foundation for modern economics, but even when we do not lose sight of it, it complicates our analysis of causality and responsibility because it is difficult to determine the counterfactual—that is, to say what the other side would have done if the actor had behaved differently. Only in a few cases is the answer clear. It was when, in the wake of the militarily insignificant American bombing attack on Tokyo of April 1942 (the “Doolittle raid”), the Japanese pulled enormous resources out of the field to construct extensive anti-aircraft defenses. The common view that the raid was only important for boosting American morale missed its more concrete contributions to the war effort.²⁶

Disentangling causation and responsibility is particularly difficult when variables interact in a nonlinear fashion. Here inputs and outputs do not scale directly, and sometimes the sign as well as the magnitude of the effect will differ. Thus scholars often ask how Sino-American relations will be influenced by the rate of the PRC’s economic growth. Some theories make invariant predictions in claiming that frictions if not armed conflict will increase to the extent that China narrows the economic gap with the United States, but a plausible alternative is that the effect of Chinese economic growth will depend on the course of Chinese domestic politics. If China remains authoritarian, greater growth would be seen by the United States as at least somewhat threatening. But if it democratizes, an economically stronger China would be seen not only as more of a valued ally than would be the case if China were not democratic, but as a more valued partner than it would if the Chinese economy were growing more

slowly.²⁷ If this claim is right, we can still analyze the causal role played by the rate of economic growth, but have to do so with particular care. If China were to remain authoritarian and to grow rapidly, we might be tempted to blame the (posited) worsening of Sino-American relations on China's growing power. While this would be correct in the sense that this was the factor that changed, it would disguise the fact that the causation depended crucially on the status of another factor. We might then be led to an incorrect generalization (along the lines of power transition theory) and would place an undue burden of responsibility on material factors in determining rivalries and friendships.

Causation, Responsibility, and Chronology

Some of the previous discussion touched on temporal changes, and this is what I want to focus on for the remainder of this chapter.²⁸ Politics of course unfolds over time, and the very notion of causation implies that the cause comes before the effect. Nevertheless, political scientists usually pay relatively little attention to chronology, and when it comes to analyzing causes and responsibility I think we can fruitfully note three sorts of troublesome phenomena. The first is how causation is blurred as each actor takes over from what another has done. The second is the power to structure situations. The third is the crucial question in analyzing conflicts that we find on the playground as well: "Who started it?"

Chains of Events

As a situation moves through time, each actor finds herself in a situation not entirely of her choosing, as Marx noted, and in turn passes on a changed situation to others. What happens at the end may be very different from what any actor expected or sought at any stage, and while we can trace causation at numerous points, it is hard to encompass for the entire arc of the interaction. What I have in mind is illustrated by three encounters with the police that ended in the death of an innocent person. The simpler one was the shooting of Sean Bell in New York in November 2006. He and his friends were out drinking in a bar known by the police for illegal activities, and the undercover officers on the scene witnessed a dispute, believed they heard one of Bell's companions say he was going to get a gun, and therefore tried to search the members of the group when they started to drive away. Bell, not knowing that the person approaching him with a gun was a policeman, drove his car at him and tried to escape, leading the police to open fire, killing Bell and seriously wounding one of his friends.

This closely resembles a security dilemma, and the result was a tragedy despite—or because of—each person acting sensibly and defensively at each point in time. Given that the police officer believed that someone in Bell's group was armed and looking for trouble, it made sense for him to try to stop and search them. Bell, confronted with an unfamiliar figure whom he might reasonably have guessed to be a friend of the person he had quarreled with, sought safety through first attacking and then trying to escape. But judging the entire interaction is different from examining each stage, and is difficult. Several police officers were indicted, but all were acquitted. As leaders in the police department realized, the problem was less that the officer was wrong to shoot after he was grazed by Bell's car than it was that he should not have been in this position at all. Using undercover agents in bars to quash minor crimes may be running excessive risks for insufficient gains. To try to search a car at night when people have been drinking and the officer is not wearing a uniform may be foolhardy and excessively dangerous to all concerned. Once Bell's car had struck the officer, shooting was justified, but we must also look at how this situation arose and who bore responsibility for it. Should it have been those who established the policies that guided the officers' behavior who faced the judge instead of or at least in addition to the individual policemen?²⁹

A case in London shows even more diffused causation and responsibility. Shortly after the bombings of the London transportation system in July 2005, a similar attempt failed when the bombs did not go off. In the course of an all-out effort to find the perpetrators, the police staked out a house, followed a suspect from it who first took a bus and then entered an Underground station, and finally shot him in order to prevent him from setting off his explosives. Unfortunately, the victim had no explosives, was not a terrorist, and was not the person the police thought he was. But none of the officers involved were punished. Given all the errors, at first glance this is hard to understand, or perhaps is easy to see as an example of people in authority protecting one another. But it is the very fact that such a chain of errors was involved that makes the lack of prosecution reasonable, if still debatable.

Because of pressures of time and widespread commitments, no stage of the operation had sufficient personnel, and the same factors limited coordination among them. Thus the stakeout team was undermanned (and, in an unfortunate coincidence, one person had left his post in order to go to the bathroom), which meant that the officers could not make a clear observation to determine whether the person leaving the house was the one they were looking for. But the second team, who picked up the trail on the bus, was told that the suspect appeared to be the terrorist who had tried to set off a bomb earlier. Because this person got off one bus and onto another before heading for the Stockwell Underground station, the third team that

was racing there was told that they were facing a probable terrorist, one who might well be about to detonate a bomb. In shooting him, they thought that they were saving countless lives.

Although the results were dreadful, everyone acted appropriately given the information conveyed to them. But like the children's game of telephone, distortions occurred at every point, in part because of the great pressures that everyone felt. Each individual error was small, but in succession they magnified each other. Perhaps we can say that everyone should be blamed, but given the costs of another terrorist bombing and the fact that fully adequate surveillance was impossible, even this statement may not be justified. Many observers were understandably frustrated by the official (and undisputed) account, which avoiding placing blame.³⁰ The statement that this was a tragedy is trite but true. Everyone had the best intentions and tried to protect the community and innocent life. The circumstances that led to a very different outcome were largely unpredictable and uncontrollable, aside from the staffing shortage and the predictable but uncontrollable propensity for people to process information badly when they are under great stress. Unlike in the Sean Bell case, it is even hard to say that those who created the circumstances (other than the bombers) should be held accountable.

In a third case, responsibility appears to shift as the interaction progresses. As of this writing (June 2012) it is clear that George Zimmerman never should have gotten out of his car to follow Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, on the night of February 26, 2012, which led to a deadly encounter. Had Zimmerman abided by police instructions, Martin would still be alive, and so in causal and I believe moral if not legal terms, he was guilty. The Florida "Stand Your Ground" statute recognizes this in specifying that the immunity conferred on those who kill rather than retreat does not apply if the person "initially provokes the use of force against himself or herself."³¹ But what constitutes provocation may be unclear, and if Zimmerman's story is to be believed, it was Martin who not only challenged but assaulted him. Students of international politics know that fear can lead to aggression, and even if Zimmerman's account minimizes his own role and exaggerates Martin's, it is plausible that the latter initiated the direct confrontation, threw the first punch, and retained the advantage in the physical struggle until Zimmerman shot him. Zimmerman had the option of walking away at the start; Martin had the option of doing so before the fight started, and it is not clear how Zimmerman could have ended the fight without shooting. This account does seem like blaming the victim, but just because the person is a victim does not mean that he is without blame. The phrase "innocent victim" is usually employed in a way that implies a redundancy—victims are innocent. We are better served by realizing that the term actually points to the possibility that the wrongheaded behavior of some victims played a role in bringing on their fate.

Structuration

In cases like these the situation changes over time in a way that no one intends. This is in contrast to the second category I want to discuss, which is structural power. Here there is more purposeful action, but again we will be misled by looking only at the final stages. Thus to return to an example used earlier, the Bangladeshi peasants caught in the typhoon died by drowning. But how did they end up living in such a vulnerable place, and whose decisions and policies made them do so? We can say that they freely chose their location in that Bangladesh does not limit where people live. Technically true, and let us posit that these people made the best choices they could. But their choices were structured by the presence or absence of other opportunities, which in turn stemmed from patterns of land use and ownership, industrial hiring practices, and national economic policies. Similarly, in the nineteenth century, millions of Europeans chose to move to cities where they lived in overcrowded, unhealthy, and dangerous housing and worked long hours in hellish factories. They were not compelled to do so by the explicit use of power; they made decisions to get the best life they could. But the situation looks one way if country life was stable and the cities represented a new opportunity, and it appears in a very different light if conditions in the countryside were badly deteriorating, especially if landlords (and the government) were changing policies and practices so that living on the land was more difficult. Our understanding of power and responsibility would be further changed if we believed that landlords were doing this in *order to* leave people no choice but to go to the factories.

In other words, an actor can exercise great power if she can structure the situation in a way that gives others incentives to act as she wants them to. If a significant amount of time passes, furthermore, the actor's role will have disappeared from sight, and all we will see is the others making their choices. Lloyd Gruber, following Krasner's lead, demonstrates this nicely with Mexico's decision to join NAFTA. At first glance, this looks like a free choice made by the leaders (if not the people) of Mexico in order to gain greater access to the American market. This is true in that joining NAFTA did look better to Mexico than staying out, but what Gruber shows is that this neglects the context, which was that the United States had been changing the trading rules in a way that put Mexico increasingly at a disadvantage. Mexico made choices within a framework built by the United States, and maintaining the previous status quo, which might well have been Mexico's first choice, was foreclosed by the United States, thus leaving Mexico with unpalatable options, the best of which was to join.³² My student was right to ask who created the dilemma for the prisoners.

Many small countries certainly ask this question. The larger ones tell them that they will thrive if they adopt the best policies. But the set from which they

can choose is structured for them by the history, habits, and rules set by the great powers that even if not designed to disadvantage them, arguably have had this effect. When this is the case, looking at the choices actors make and attributing responsibility to them, so tempting from the perspective of free-market economics, disguises a great deal—or, rather, accepts the disguise presented to us by looking at the immediate choices without going further back in time to see how actors arrived at a situation in which these were the choices that they had.³³ The structuring does not have to be malign. The French prohibition of head scarves in public schools and burkas in public places seems odd to Americans who view this as a restriction on individual rights. But the French argue that given pressures from the local extremist communities and the vulnerability of women and girls, the state has the responsibility to structure the situation so that they can act autonomously.³⁴ One does not have to find this persuasive to accept the legitimacy of this kind of reasoning. Many laws and forms of social pressure are designed to create situations that will lead people to do what is right. In other cases, options may be shaped and foreclosed in a way that leads to behavior that the powerful abhor. The classic case is when people without good choices resort to rebellion and violence. Thus in discussing one of the labor bombings in the early twentieth century, Louis Brandeis asked, “Is there not a causal connection between the development of these huge, indomitable trusts and the horrible crimes now under investigation?”³⁵

Some of the processes of path dependence can be seen in these terms as a cause that can continue to produce effects indirectly long after it has ceased operating. The current situation may have deep roots in the past, and sometimes the participants may no longer be aware of them. Patterns can be set down that then structure habits, capabilities, and incentives. One does not have to be a Freudian to believe that at least part of the explanation for how a person behaves today is what happened to her when she was much younger, and, even leaving aside the unconscious, people and institutions often become prisoner to decisions made much earlier. We also see that in interpersonal and international life, rivalries can outlive their initial causes. For example, the short-term effects of the Austrian ultimatum to Russia before the Crimean War were much less than the long-term ones,³⁶ and although the Anglo-German naval race was over by 1912, the challenge was part of the reason why Britain aligned with France and Russia rather than Germany, an alignment that became self-reinforcing and so no longer required naval competition to sustain it. To turn to current world politics, the Cold War left the United States with attitudes and armed forces that shaped its response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Many of the sources of the American policies are to be found in the experiences of the earlier era. These processes also mean that we should be careful before attributing causality to the most recent variables that have changed, since the real impact may be from factors further in the past. If an army wins victories with a new general or

a new tactic, the reason may be not that these alterations were central, but that the previous battles had improved the forces or worn down the enemy.

Who Started It

The third and related way in which chronology plays a crucial role in our understanding of causation and responsibility for disputes is highlighted by the question that is simple—even simpleminded—in formulation but difficult to answer: “Who started it?” Any parent will find this familiar, but this does not mean that the question is childish. It gets at crucial issues of how to understand the past and, if the interaction is a continuing one, how to break out of the cycle in the future. Just as it is obviously incorrect to say that the state that fired the first shot caused or is responsible for the ensuing war, so we need to exercise care in where we start our story.³⁷ Of course where we start may itself be influenced by our sense of who is responsible, and both processes are at work in the conflicting analyses on the Cold War. Traditional views are prone to begin with the Yalta conference in 1944, which focuses attention on the great power agreements and the subsequent Soviet behavior in East Europe and Iran that contradicted them. Revisionists tell a different story in part because they have a different starting point. For some, the conduct of World War II itself is the best place of entry, with the Soviet Union doing the bulk of the fighting and the Western powers trying to keep the atomic bomb secret and then dropping it on Japan instead of allowing the Soviet army to deliver the final stroke. Others start the clock much earlier, with the attempt by the capitalist powers to strangle the Bolshevik baby in the cradle, to use the phrase that was common at the time. Subsequent Soviet hostility, Stalin’s seeming paranoia, and the need to see that the postwar regimes in Eastern Europe were not closely tied to the West, were not (or at least were not only) a product of unbridled ambition or Marxist ideology, but the natural and perhaps appropriate reaction to previous Western hostility.

We can take almost any episode in the Cold War and see smaller-scale arguments that similarly turn on the starting point we select. Disputes over the responsibility for conflicts between the United States and numerous radical regimes often involve whether we should (and can) take account of American covert actions that may have increased if not created hostility on the part of the leftists. Turning to specific cases, Americans generally analyze the Cuban missile crisis as beginning with the Soviet placement of missiles in Cuba, as the term that American scholars use indicates. The Soviets saw a different starting point, as is indicated by their calling the episode “the Caribbean crisis,” and it predated and indeed caused the Soviet deployment. In their view, the crisis grew out of the American unwillingness to accept the Cuban revolution, most dramatically revealed by the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the emplacement of missiles was a move

late in this game that was designed to end the Caribbean crisis by thwarting the American efforts to overthrow Castro. To start the clock in October 1962 is to ignore what brought the world to this place.³⁸ To take another example, Western accounts of the second Berlin crisis start in November 1958 with Khrushchev's demand that a new agreement had to be reached by May. If taking Khrushchev's ultimatum as an unmoved mover implies aggressive intentions on his part, asking why Khrushchev made the ultimatum when he did rather than years earlier or later suggests the possibility that he was reacting to the American policy of putting nuclear weapons in West German hands.

Many other arguments also turn on the appropriate starting point and "the details of who did what when," as Piero Gleijeses puts it in his discussion of the American, South African, and Cuban interventions in Angola,³⁹ a remark that applies as well to discussions of the breakdown of the negotiations between the United States and North Korea.⁴⁰ The debate over who was responsible for the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt in 1970 followed a similar arc, with a Soviet diplomatic note arguing that "what leaps to one's eye is that the American side while so unsparingly accusing [Egypt] of 'violating' the terms of cease-fire, keeps almost completely silent with regard to actual violations made by Israel from the very first day of the cease-fire."⁴¹ The general rebuttal to the claim that a given action was an inappropriate escalation is exemplified by what the Canadian foreign minister said in partial defense of the coup against the democratically elected government of Honduras in the summer of 2009: "The coup was certainly an affront to the region, but there is a context in which these events happened. There has to be an appreciation of the events that led to the coup."⁴²

In some cases, analysts can point to the character and previous behavior of the actor who at first glance seemed to be at fault as showing that the real cause had to be located earlier. This is part of Paul Schroeder's argument that Napoleon was an unappeasable aggressor and that the details of which country broke the peace at various times is less than central.

I find it inexplicable that good historians can simply assert what is technically true, that Prussia started the war of 1806 or Austria that of 1809, and not ask themselves what could have induced so timorous and irresolute a king as Frederic William III, eager only to enjoy further peace and neutrality, to gamble everything on war against the French? Or what could make so narrow-minded and fearful a sovereign as Emperor Francis, whose highest ambition was to hang on to his hereditary estates in peace and who had been thoroughly beaten by France in three great wars, throw the iron dice again alone and unsupported in 1809? *That* demands explanation.⁴³

As usual, the Middle East provides numerous examples. When asked to comment about the fighting in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, President Bush said that it had started "because Hezbollah has been launching rocket attacks out of Lebanon into Israel, and because Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers.

That's why we have violence."⁴⁴ In parallel, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns explained an Israeli raid into Gaza that destroyed its only energy plant and seized two dozen Hamas elected officials by saying: "Let's remember who started this. It was the outrageous actions of Hamas in violating Israel's sovereignty in taking the soldier hostage."⁴⁵ Similar quotations could be supplied for almost every incident, and the replies are similarly parallel: Hamas, Hezbollah, or other Palestinians were reacting to the Israeli stranglehold over Gaza, raids into the West Bank, the assassination of Palestinians, and, most generally, the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

Sometimes the question of the starting point is more specific, and the relevance of the chronology is brought out nicely by the coverage in the *New York Times* of the clashes between Uighurs and Han Chinese in the summer of 2009. The first reports concentrated on the major riot in Urumqi, in which the Uighurs appeared to have been the aggressors, and only several days later did the *Times* tell of the riot in another city two weeks earlier that had started with attacks on Uighurs (in response to rumors that six Uighur men had raped two Han women), which was the violence that triggered the Uighur response in Urumqi.⁴⁶ Of course the entire interaction is part of a larger pattern "in which victims and perpetrators change places."⁴⁷

As these examples show, actors in a conflict often claim to be "merely" responding to what others have done. "We were provoked, our position was being undermined, we had to defend ourselves" is the essential claim being made. "The onus is on the other side, which made the first hostile moves. Those actions cannot be seen as a reaction to what we did, but instead are a reflection of the other's hostile impulses." The plausibility of these claims is closely linked to where we begin the story, which significantly influences how we see subsequent causation. Actors similarly often tell others that whether relations will be good or bad is up to them. The actor will respond appropriately; the cause of any change in relations—especially for the worse—will be the other's behavior; the other side will be responsible for any problems that ensue.⁴⁸ The same question of the appropriate starting point comes up in conflicts between individuals, and many of us are amazed at how "good" our spouses' memories are when it comes to recalling ancient slights and failures to do the dishes. The stakes are higher in judgments concerning interactions with police officers, who were correct to complain that the portion of the video clip of the horrifying beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles in March 1991 that was endlessly shown on TV not only started in the middle of the tape, but could not catch the previous history in which King had led the police on a long and dangerous car chase.⁴⁹

This is not to say that an understanding of the causes of all hostile encounters turns on the starting point. Thus it can be argued that the details of timing give little insight into the fundamental causes of the Cold War, which for some analysts reside in the bipolar structure of the international system and for others

are to be found in the clash of ideologies and social systems. On a smaller scale, timing may not be crucial when there are ready functional substitutes for specific actions in the way I discussed earlier. The argument about whether the introduction of American combat troops into Vietnam preceded or followed the North's sending its regular army into the battle is less than central because both the North and the United States were willing to escalate rather than lose.

A focus on who moved first also can distract us from other measures of causation and responsibility. For both explanatory and normative purposes, it may be at least as important to ask who was more powerful, who had reasonable alternatives, and who had the last clear chance to avoid major conflict (and these may not be the same). To return to the Cold War as an example, it can be argued that even if the USSR was the first to break its agreements and that its imposition of puppet regimes in Eastern Europe was largely unprovoked, the fact that the United States was so much more powerful means that it could have safely behaved less belligerently and so bears the bulk of the responsibility for the subsequent conflict. On the other hand, the transformation from tensions and hostility to the Cold War of large standing armies and limited wars occurred only after Stalin authorized the Korean War. Thus it may have been the USSR that had the last clear chance to keep the conflict to a significantly lower level.⁵⁰

Summary

We all know that isolating causation and assigning responsibility are linked and extremely difficult. The point of this chapter is to show that much can be learned through an appreciation of the complexities created by necessary and sufficient causes, the convoluted and sometimes nonlinear ways in which variables interact, and thorny problems of chronology. Choices that at first look like the key sites for causation and responsibility often need to be seen in a broader and deeper context. The ample room for disagreement in this kind of analysis is magnified and colored by the linkages between causation and responsibility. Since our conclusions about what acts and actors caused various outcomes almost immediately lead to attributions of credit and blame, they become politically and emotionally charged. It is then not surprising that many debates grow heated and that conclusions are strongly influenced by observers' general world-views and ideologies.

Notes

1. Krasner 1985. This approach was used to good effect by Krasner's student Lloyd Gruber, in Gruber 2000.

2. Tracking these kinds of influences is particularly difficult because even the most sincere self-reports are likely to be inaccurate. Modern cognitive psychology has confirmed the basic insight of much earlier figures that we lack access to many of our mental processes and so are not able to know what influences us in many areas; see Wilson 2002.
3. Marx 1952/1969, 15.
4. For good general discussion of intricate combinations of necessary and sufficient conditions, see Mackie 1965, 245–264; Most and Starr 1984, 383–406; Mahoney 2008, 412–436; Mahoney, Kimball, and Koivu 2009, 114–146. Also see Alexander George’s discussion of equifinality in George 2006, 60–61. For discussions of similar points in biology, see Jenkins 2004, 113–115; Hilborn and Stearns 1982, 145–164; Gannett 1999, 347–374.
5. Blaker 1977.
6. For a good analysis of causation and law, see Hart and Honoré 1985. A somewhat similar question arises with attributing causality in collective-goods problems. When they are undersupplied, each individual who attempted to free ride is in some sense responsible, but the outcome would not have been different had that individual contributed. Of course, that is what makes these situations so frustrating for policy and human welfare, and the same characteristics make them frustrating for our standard notions of power, causation, and blame.
7. *US vs. John Reid Edwards*, Final Jury Instructions, 2012, 8.
8. A possible exception is the American decision to refrain from using poison gas against the entrenched and fanatical Japanese troops on Okinawa near the end of World War II.
9. The quotation marks are necessary because thanks to his extensive spy network, Stalin was quite well informed about the Manhattan Project.
10. The United States and Britain did, but only under the extreme exigency of World War II, and even here the United States withheld information during the war for bargaining purposes and, in contradiction to its wartime promise, ended cooperation later.
11. See the parallel discussion of “actor indispensability” and “action indispensability” in Greenstein 1969, 1–32.
12. Hoopes 1969, 30.
13. Organski and Kugler 1980, 13–61.
14. For the general argument that theories of war, if believed by decision makers, will reduce the empirical support for them, see Gartzke 1999, 567–587.
15. The literature is very large. Particularly helpful in this context are Fearon 1991; Tetlock and Belkin 1996; Lebow 2010; Martin 2011, 37–73.
16. Ironically, one can argue that the American responsibility for the overthrow of Allende on September 11, 1973, was greater despite the fact that it did not have a hand in the coup itself because it had done so much to weaken the regime and cultivate the conditions that made the coup possible. But here too we should not exaggerate Allende’s domestic support (he was elected with only slightly more than one-third of the votes) or underestimate the extent to which his policies and behavior were responsible for his downfall; see Haslam 2005.
17. Ian Lustick is more explicit about why he believes that the Middle East would have become more peaceful and prosperous without Western interference; see Lustick 1997, 653–683.
18. Quoted in Burns and Cowell 2010.
19. This section draws on Jervis 1979, 3–28. See also the way causal processes are traced in the literature on “normal accidents”: Perrow 1984; Vaughan 1996; Snook 2000; Sagan 1993.
20. See Van Valen 1973, 1–30; Dawkins and Krebs 1979, 489–511; Dieckmann, Marrow, and Law 1995, 91–102.
21. Smith 2010.

22. See, for example, Thies 1980; George, Hall, and Simons 1971; George and Simons 1994; Art and Cronin 2003.
23. Peden 2007, 92.
24. Roche and Watts 1991, 165–209; for analysis of the same kind of effect on the tactical level, see Gooderson 1991, 210–231.
25. Bastiat 1850/1985.
26. Roche and Watts 1991, 186–187. If we view the Japanese response as a mistake from their standpoint, as I think many military historians do, then the American success depended on the adversary behaving foolishly (it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the broader question of what it means to behave rationally in the face of an irrational adversary).
27. For further discussion, see Jervis 2006, 206–208.
28. For a further discussion of the relative neglect of time on the part of IR scholars, see Jervis 2009.
29. This made sense to some but not all authorities in a later case; see Robbins 2011; Baker 2011. In this case “the question of whether an officer was justified in shooting because she feared death or serious injury... was judged separately from whether the officer, in her conduct leading up to the fatal firing of the gun, made mistakes of judgment or tactics that might have helped lead to the deadly outcome..., but some law enforcement analysts said it was hard to see how the department could determine that a deadly shooting was justified if it also sent the message that had proper procedures been followed, the shooting might not have been required at all” (Baker 2011).
30. See the official report: Independent Police Complaints Commission 2007.
31. Florida Statutes, Chapter 776.012.
32. Gruber 2000. In much the same way, in many instances American Indians sold their land to European and later American settlers, but the alternatives they faced were shaped by the settlers’ power; see Banner 2005. Foundational to this kind of analysis are Hirschman 1945; Baumgartner, Buckley, and Burns 1975, 49–47; Baumgartner and Burns 1975, 126–59; Schattschneider 1960. Also see James and Lake 1989, 1–29, and Barnett and Duval 2005, 39–76. Pushed further, this discussion leads to the topics of socialization and false (and perhaps not so false) consciousness.
33. For an argument that while tendentious in its attacks on others raises important questions that bridge the discussion in this section and the subsequent one, see Cumings 1993; also see Cumings 2007. Actors often condemn “unprovoked aggression,” but scholars should be sensitive to the possibility of provoked aggression. As Paul Schroeder notes, “the answer to ‘Who started the war?’ does not constitute an answer to ‘What caused the war?’”; see Schroeder 2000, 206. For a good example see Gause 2002, 47–70.
34. For the critical but empathetic discussion, see Bowen 2007.
35. Quoted in Gage 2009, 92.
36. Trager 2012.
37. Diplomats at the time as well as later scholars may differ in their diagnosis of a conflict with another country in these terms. The classic case is the debate between Eyre Crowe, permanent undersecretary at the British Foreign Office, and his predecessor, Thomas Sanderson, about German intensions and the extent to which British behavior was responsible for the deterioration of Anglo-German relations in the first years of the twentieth century; see Crowe 1928, 397–420; Sanderson 1928, 420–421.
38. There are significant non-chronological ways of dealing with the argument. The Soviet version implies that the main motive was to protect Castro, but skeptics can point out that Castro did not ask for these weapons or see them as useful for this purpose and that Soviet documents and related behavior indicate that the main motive was to even the nuclear balance and allow Khrushchev to exact concessions from the West over Berlin. Indeed, Castro went even further back in time and argued that one needed to start with

- the history of unequal relations between the United States and Cuba that predated the Cold War; see Laffey and Weldes 2008, 566.
39. Gleijeses 2002, 347.
 40. For the latter case, see Sigal 1998; Pritchard 2007; Chinoy 2008; Cha 2012. The conflict between England and Spain culminating in the Spanish Armada can be seen similarly; see McDermott 2005.
 41. United States Department of State 2006, 686.
 42. Quoted in Lacey and Thompson 2009.
 43. Schroeder 2004, 28. Also see Schroeder 2007, 21–22, and the perceptive if one-sided analysis by a British diplomat: Headlam-Morley 1921, 333–46.
 44. Quoted in Myre 2006.
 45. Quoted in “Lawless in Gaza” 2006, 4.
 46. Wong 2009a, (also see Wong 2009b); Jacobs 2009. It is not surprising that statements by the Chinese government refer only to the violence in Urumqi, ignoring the previous incident; see Jacobs and Fackler 2009.
 47. Horowitz 2001, 530.
 48. Note, however, that to claim that the actor is merely responding is to rob it of agency, and it is striking that much radical analysis of terrorism and strife in the Third World traces the fundamental cause to previous Western behavior and yet also seeks to portray the people and groups involved as autonomous.
 49. For a case in which it was the person under indictment rather than the police who argued for starting the clock earlier, see McKinley 2009.
 50. Similar but perhaps even more disturbing questions arise when an actor knows that its adversary is unreasonable. If conflict is to be minimized, it will have to be accommodating, although this may have a significant cost and be unfair. If it acts normally, later scholars may with some validity blame it for the heightened conflict. Thus one can argue that given unreasonable but known American sensitivities to the Soviet deployment of forces in the Third World, Brezhnev and his colleagues should have known that sending even limited forces to Ethiopia in response to Somalia’s attack would inflict a grievous wound on détente. Of course the Soviets with some reason saw this as blaming the victim; but if American attitudes could not be modified, the Soviets had the choice between being restrained and producing a situation that neither side wanted. One could perhaps say that the Soviets bore the final, but not the ultimate, responsibility for the heightened tensions.

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