

**CLEANING UP THE JOINT:
COMMAND, CONTROL, AND AGENCY IN AMERICAN WAR FIGHTING**

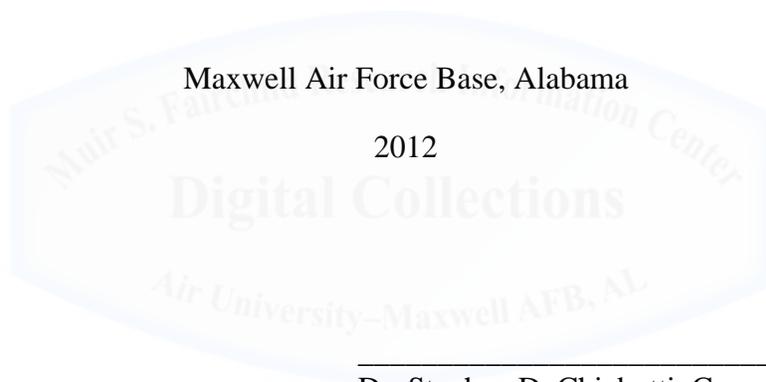
by

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My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:2

To complete a work of this scope and magnitude, a student requires opportunity coupled with the mentorship, patience, and encouragement of many. For the opportunity I am grateful. To those who provided the latter in abundance I am forever indebted.



ABSTRACT

The Goldwater-Nichols Act ostensibly brought true jointness to American warfighting by vesting a joint force commander with the responsibility and authority necessary for command and control a joint force assembled from a pluralistic military. Each service's unique slant on war together with its wartime imperative to demonstrate institutional legitimacy and relevancy has repeatedly frustrated coherent military strategy in multiservice endeavors of the joint age. The resultant disunity of effort has undermined the efficacious continuation of United States policy. The 1986 law culminated a forty-year quest for the ideal-type unified command in which greater centralization and hierarchy would enable professionalism to overcome the allure of service self-interest. This dissertation challenges the limited perspective of this structural, normative prescription by examining joint command and control through the lens of agency theory, which allows for material factors and rational calculation. By tracing the evolution of the American military from autonomous origins through transition to the joint age and the subsequent struggle for unity, the narrative builds an image of the modern joint command as a *de facto* delegation of warfighting tasks to service components based upon functional specialization. This creates an agency relationship that invariably involves a strategic interaction between superior and subordinates. Turning the agency lens upon four major conventional combat operations of the contemporary era, historical case studies demonstrate that professional norms are but one factor influencing joint command and control. Material considerations such as costs and benefits as well as rewards and punishment drive more rational behavior, bringing an inherent set of challenges for the formulation and implementation of strategy. When conditions are conducive, one or more components will pursue service imperatives at the expense of a unified, joint effort. Moving beyond the current conception of jointness requires a constructivist approach to craft a unifying vision for the joint force.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS PUZZLE

An Introduction to Efficacy in the Joint Age

Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If we ever again should be involved in war, we will fight with all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort.

General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower
1946¹

Introduction

In 1946, Army Chief of Staff General Dwight D. Eisenhower recognized that he stood firmly in the joint era. He had seen it clearly from his vantage point at the helm of Operation OVERLORD—the long-awaited Anglo-American invasion of Europe in World War II. At dawn on the sixth of June 1944, along the beaches of Normandy, Allied landing craft began spewing a seemingly never-ending stream of soldiers who, at long last, would liberate France and push the German Army back across the Rhine. This was possible, in part, because Allied naval power, having overwhelmed the German fleet and driven its remnant back to the relative safety of its homeports, controlled both the English Channel and the routes of supply across the Atlantic. In the early morning darkness, the massive armada's guns began shelling enemy strongholds on the coast and continued to do so throughout the landing.² Likewise, the Allies enjoyed near complete air superiority.³ In the months prior, Allied airpower had reduced the German Luftwaffe to a hollow shell and systematically severed critical lines of communication, in effect, isolating the defending forces from resupply and impeding the movement of reinforcements.

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower memorandum to Chester W. Nimitz quoted in Williamson Murray, "The Evolution of Joint Warfare," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 31 (Summer 2002): 36.

² The Channel was virtually clogged with watercraft of various types. The United States alone operated nearly 3000 vessels for the cross-channel invasion. See: Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, "Chief of Naval Operations annual report to the Secretary of the Navy, 1945" in Walter Millis ed. *The War Reports* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1947), 622.

³ The Luftwaffe sent fewer than 200 sorties into the fray against more than 15,000 Allied sorties. See: Thomas Alexander Hughes, *OVERLORD: General Pete Quesada and the Triumph of Tactical Air Power in World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 4.

Throughout the night, thousands of transports dropped paratroopers with objectives to secure the flanks of the landing. And on that Sunday morning, swarms of fighters and bombers pounded German positions, and continued to sortie throughout the day, providing cover for the ground forces fighting to secure beachheads and prepare the coast for a subsequent breakout. D-Day was a close-run affair, beset by every kind of friction, and Eisenhower needed the unified effort of all the services to pull it off.

Prior to World War II, the American military had relied upon mutual cooperation between its services to engender unity of effort—effective and efficient pursuit of a common goal, despite unique capabilities employed in interdependent operations. This *de facto* doctrine produced largely *ad hoc* collaborations such as the Joint Army-Navy Board and multiservice operational duties, to include shared responsibility for protecting Pearl Harbor. The near complete surprise of the Japanese attack on Hawaii aptly demonstrated the shortcomings of this *laissez-faire* approach to command of multiservice endeavors. Admiral Husband Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter Short's inability to prepare an effective, coordinated defense despite having had between them sufficient warning and indication, taught the lesson, at least for the Army, that only superior command authority could ensure unity of effort.⁴ Thus, for OVERLORD, the Allies pursued coordinated combat effort through unity of command. Quite simply, the theater command structure posited a single Supreme Commander—General Eisenhower—at the pinnacle of the hierarchy.⁵

⁴ Roberta Wohlstetter argues that the “noise” of myriad conflicting signals prevented accurate discernment of Japanese intentions, and one cannot fully attribute the surprise of the attack at Pearl Harbor to neglect. What is clear from her study is that defenses suffered from lack of service coordination. She writes, “This...strikes at the central confusion in the defense plan of Pearl Harbor: No one knew who possessed the final command responsibility for the defense of the Hawaiian Islands in the event of an enemy attack.” Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 10.

⁵ It is important to note that command in the European theater was never completely unified. During the Combined Bomber Offensive, American strategic bombers were under General Carl Spaatz, who reported directly to Chief of the Army Air Forces, General Henry “Hap” Arnold. Upon the establishment of Supreme Headquarters, Allied

Command Anomalies

General Eisenhower's pursuit of a singular, concentrated effort was frustrated, however, by the very nature of the American military establishment, specifically its inherent pluralism.⁶ Reflecting the nation at large, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps possess and perpetuate very different perspectives on war and national security, in general. This pluralism derives in part from historical precedent since, for much of the nation's history; the shoreline had served as a natural place at which to divide the duties of defending the nation. Further, the Army and Navy incubated in a decidedly pluralistic nation that itself began as a rather loose confederation. But, in many ways, this diversity is the product of political choice and design. The nation inherited from the Cromwell era in England a fondness for the citizen soldier and a profound aversion to a large, standing army—a mindset that was reinforced by the incessant clashing in eighteenth-century Europe and the resultant North American colonial wars. Thus, the framers of the Constitution went to great lengths to minimize the possibility for a monolithic military to threaten the government and the liberties of citizens or otherwise be employed at the whim of the executive for unprofitable ventures. Not only is separatism an intentional hedge, but it also stems from the very vital, but distinct missions assigned to the services in times other than war. Given this nature, it is not at all surprising that unity of effort was elusive.

Disagreement over the use of strategic bombers during preparations for Overlord illustrates the role of discordant perspectives in joint combat. Army Air Forces doctrine had been carefully crafted around strategic bombing as a decisive element of war. In the case of

Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), General Eisenhower exercised only “operational direction” over Spaatz and his bombers, in effect, leaving the existing command arrangement intact. See Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe* (Washington DC: Center for Air Force History, 1993), 342-3.

⁶ World War II in Europe, to include the Normandy invasion, was also a *combined* operation in current parlance, as it involved the efforts of more than one combatant nation acting in concert. See Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010 as amended through 15 July 2011, 187. This added yet another dynamic to the challenges General Eisenhower faced.

Germany, American airmen believed that high-altitude, precision, daylight bombing of industrial centers would grind the Wehrmacht to a halt. This strategy required control of the skies, which, by early 1944, the Allies had achieved in sufficient measure to permit the Combined Bomber Offensive to strike truly strategic targets. Standing in the way, however, was the strategy for the Normandy invasion and its so-called Transportation Plan, which threatened to divert bombers to France to interdict railroads and bridges in direct support of the ground invasion.⁷ Commander of the United States Strategic Air Forces, General Carl Spaatz, ordered his planners to devise an alternative that would achieve the same ends but prevent the siphoning of bombers for these less-desirable targets and preserve the possibility for airpower to be decisive by striking at the enemy's core.⁸ The resulting Oil Plan proposed to target Germany's synthetic oil plants, which accounted for the majority of the country's fuel production. Planners estimated loss of these plants would cut fuel supply by fifty percent, thereby reducing German combat capability.⁹ General Spaatz was, however, unable to say with any certainty when such effects might begin to manifest themselves in frontline forces. Thus, General Eisenhower opted for the Transportation Plan as it more readily linked air efforts to the invasion's ground objectives. Despite this fact, bombers continued to strike deep into Germany throughout the buildup to OVERLORD, and General Eisenhower granted General Spaatz a significant measure of autonomy that enabled him to send bombers to strike Oil Plan targets as late as a month before D-Day.¹⁰ Whether this impacted the effectiveness of the interdiction campaign is debatable. Nevertheless, this anecdote highlights what has proven to be a persistent trend—unity of command is at best difficult to achieve and even then it is no guarantee of unity of effort.

⁷ Regarding the Transportation Plan and the dispute over target sets, see: Davis, *Spaatz*, 345-354.

⁸ Davis, *Spaatz*, 345.

⁹ Davis, *Spaatz*, 346

¹⁰ Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, vol. I, *Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907-1960* (1989; repr. Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2002), 158.

The Pacific Theater of WWII provides an interesting contrast to that in Europe. Curiously, during the war, command in the Pacific was not significantly different from the model of mutual cooperation that existed prior to Pearl Harbor. In the aftermath of the attack, Admiral Chester Nimitz replaced Admiral Kimmel as commander of the Pacific Fleet. Viewing the Pacific as a predominately maritime theater, the Navy expected Admiral Nimitz to lead the war against Japan. However, the humiliating defeat in the Philippines for General Douglas MacArthur and the Army made liberation of the islands, *de facto*, a primary objective. Subordinating General MacArthur, given his seniority and stature, was, however, never really an option. Further, Navy leaders simply refused to accept any arrangement placing the Pacific fleet under the command of the Army. President Roosevelt, either unwilling or unable to resolve the impasse, approved a division of the Pacific theater into the Pacific Ocean Areas under Nimitz and the Southwest Pacific Area under MacArthur.¹¹ In short, very little, if any, effort was devoted to establishing true unity of command. Rather, commanders erected a somewhat arbitrary geographic boundary to deconflict two nearly independent operations. This, too, has proven to be a recurring theme in theater command.

Since WWII, America has called its Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps together for combat on numerous occasions. The persistent challenge of melding her military services into a coherent fighting force is common to all of these conflicts. The soldier, sailor, airman and marine, historically having little peacetime interaction, often struggle to find common ground in wartime. World War II highlighted the dilemma of pluralism and precipitated a forty-year quest for unified effort on a grander scale. Beginning with the National Security Act of 1947, the United States has increasingly centralized authority within both the bureaucratic and operational

¹¹ See Louis Morton, "Pacific Command: A Study in Interservice Relations", *The Harmon Memorial Lecture Series in Military History*, Number Three (Colorado Springs, CO: United States Air Force Academy, 1961).

organizational structures of its military via a combination of legislation and executive order. This unification struggle ostensibly culminated with the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986—often times called the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Did Goldwater-Nichols complete the task of unifying the Pentagon as James Locher declares in *Victory on the Potomac*?¹² This assertion is the subject of some debate. Few claim that the unification process precipitated no improvement.¹³ However, some argue the job is not done.¹⁴ For example, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry H. Shelton, called for standing joint task forces.¹⁵ Locher himself admits there is more to do, such as combating duplication of effort and overhauling a “change-resistant culture” in a Defense Department “choking on bureaucracy.”¹⁶ Despite such critiques, the quest for unity of command often gets high praise for its effect on *battlefield* jointness.¹⁷

Over the course of the unification struggle, an iterative process evolved a theater command doctrine in which a Joint Force Commander presides over component commands focused on the three primary combat domains: maritime, land, and air. In truth, however, componency is merely pluralism repackaged. Regardless of the rubric, Goldwater-Nichols supposedly established the theater commander as the supreme authority on the battlefield.

¹² James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (2002; repr. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).

¹³ Marine Lieutenant General Paul Van Riper cautioned, “The path to ‘jointness’ some are advocating has grave implications for national defense...The organizational structures brought about by Goldwater-Nichols are not necessarily appropriate for the future.” Retired Colonel Mackubin Owens averred, “The contributions of the Goldwater-Nichols Act to the improved performance of the U.S. Armed Forces are marginal at best...” Both quoted in Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 447.

¹⁴ Don Snider argues for a Goldwater-Nichols II to establish a more-or-less permanent Joint Warfare Profession that amounts to a fifth “purple” service “with full authority over its own internal jurisdictions.” See Don M. Snider, “Jointness, Defense Transformation, and the Need for a New Joint Warfare Profession,” *Parameters* XXXIII, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 17-30.

¹⁵ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 446

¹⁶ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 448.

¹⁷ For example, former Secretary of Defense William Perry attributed “the resounding success of our forces in Desert Storm” to Goldwater-Nichols. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili said, “No other nation can match our ability to combine forces on the battlefield and fight jointly.” Both quoted in Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 446-7.

Fifteen years after Goldwater-Nichols, Senator Sam Nunn, one of the chief architects of its passage, wrote, “The act addressed a huge problem—the inability of the military services to operate effectively together as a joint team—and *solved it*.”¹⁸ (emphasis added) Subordinating service pluralism, in the guise of domain-focused components, to a Joint Force Commander *should* produce unity of effort. By his vested authority, the commander *should* arbitrate disputes between services to produce idyllic jointness. Or as retired Marine Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor has averred, “Goldwater-Nichols may not have intended that they fight the same way, but it did anticipate that a joint command would be knowledgeable of the differences and harmonize them.”¹⁹

Yet, even a cursory examination of contemporary conflict suggests problems still exist. The rough execution of Operation ANACONDA in 2002 is but one case in point.²⁰ On 2 March, Coalition Joint Task Force MOUNTAIN (CJTF MTN) began a hastily conceived hammer-and-anvil operation targeting al Qaeda fighters hiding in the Shah-i-Kot Valley of Afghanistan. Planned as a three-day cleanup mission, it lasted over two weeks and resulted in more than eighty allied casualties. Problems were myriad: accurate intelligence was lacking; the weather was poor; Afghan forces pulled out leaving the American anvil without its hammer. Though generally considered a tactical success, ANACONDA in no way resembled the battle for which the forces had planned. The skeletal staff planners had envisaged a classic ground campaign to the extent that they were late to bring the full expertise of the joint force together.²¹ As CJTF MTN commander, Major General Franklin Hagenbeck, later put it, “we weren’t asking the

¹⁸ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, xii.

¹⁹ Bernard E. Trainor, “Jointness, Service Culture, and the Gulf War,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 3 (Winter 1993-94): 74.

²⁰ For more on ANACONDA and its lessons, see: Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Airpower Against Terror: America’s Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2005) and Richard L. Kugler, Michael Baranick, and Hans Binnendijk, *Operation Anaconda: Lessons for Joint Operations* (Washington DC: National Defense University Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2009).

²¹ See Kugler, et al, *Operation Anaconda*, 3.

questions we needed to.”²² Consequently, the air component learned fully of the plan just days before it was to begin. This precipitated numerous air-to-ground coordination issues when soldiers found themselves in dire need of close air support in a complex, compressed battlespace, and airmen had neither the resources available nor the procedures in place to support them.²³ Eleventh-hour scrambling and flexible adaptation effectively salvaged the operation when fighting bogged down; but, suboptimum inter-component relations highlighted the persistent challenge of the joint age. It seems that despite seemingly dogged pursuit of unified command for nearly six decades, teamwork remains as elusive as it was for General Eisenhower.

Anomalies have thus marred the notion of unified theater command since its inception. In some instances, leaders have not sought unified command at all, or merely pursued it in name only. In other cases, components of a unified command either clashed or effectively resisted attempts to bring their subordinate operations under the umbrella of a truly joint campaign. More precisely, the underlying tenet of unity of command has failed, in practice, to deliver reliably effectiveness and efficiency in joint conventional combat operations. The inescapable conclusion is that espoused command-and-control doctrine does not fully account for nor sufficiently prescribe the behavior of a joint force assembled from America’s pluralistic military. This begs the question: *What other factors influence joint command and control, and how do these factors affect the efficacious continuation of American policy?*²⁴ In seeking the answer,

²² Quoted in Lambeth, *Airpower Against Terror*, 230.

²³ Problems included a dearth of close air support assets and trouble integrating command and control systems and procedures in the heat of battle as the air component was initially assigned to interdict the ingress/egress routes emanating from the valley. See Kugler, et al, *Operation Anaconda*, 6.

²⁴ The meaning of efficacy has been appropriated from the pharmaceutical industry to capture the notions of effectiveness *and* efficiency. In that context, it refers to both how much of a drug comes through the metabolic process (efficiency) and how well the drug delivers the intended result (effectiveness). A characteristic of the “American way of war” is a focus almost entirely on effectiveness. I am indebted to Dr. Tom Hughes for this keen insight. See the final section of this chapter for more on the notion of efficacy in war.

this study employs an analytical framework based upon agency theory to provide a new perspective on command and control of joint forces.

A Problem of Perspective

Misconception surrounding command and control does not stem from blindness to the inherent dichotomy between service pluralism and unity of effort, as it is entirely intuitive, even from the brief anecdotes above, that service interests have *always* been at play in American warfare. In fact, recognition of these antithetical aims has been the impetus for the entire unification struggle. In 1944, Harry S. Truman remarked, “Proof that divine Providence watches over the United States is furnished by the fact that we have managed to escape disaster even though our scrambled professional military set-up has been an open invitation to catastrophe.”²⁵ More than twenty years later, Rear Admiral J. C. Wylie recognized that pluralism still existed, writing of the services in his treatise on military strategy, “appreciation of one’s own strategy almost automatically inhibits adequate appreciation of any others...partially blocking communication between the practitioners...One man thinks like a soldier, the next like a sailor, and so on.”²⁶ Following the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor observed, “It was expecting too much...to assume that the Marine Expeditionary Force on the southern border of Kuwait would think much about its Army counterpart in the western desert. The same may be said of VII Corps in that desert. It cared little about what the Marines were up to. The force commanders planned to fight the war according to their own style.”²⁷

²⁵ Quoted in Edgar F. Raines, Jr. and David R. Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Evolution of Army Ideas on the Command, Control and Coordination of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1942-1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 37.

²⁶ J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (1967; repr. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 29.

²⁷ Trainor, “Jointness, Service Culture, and the Gulf War,” 74.

Not only has there been recognition of the pluralistic nature of the American military, but scholars have also studied its origins, its character, and its resultant effect on the joint force. In *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, Kenneth Allard attributes the origins of self-interest to a tradition of autonomy that developed from a mixture of circumstance and intent since the founding of the Republic. He notes, “Autonomy...suggests both a basic division of labor (separate land, sea and air forces) and a profound historical legacy. Each of the services is responsible for producing the forces that ultimately defend American interests in its particular operational environment, but each is also the repository of powerful traditions and heritages...The Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marines therefore need to be understood...as large, well-established, and uniquely American institutions.”²⁸ In other words, jointness is a rather recent concept that often must compete with long-standing precedent.

RAND analyst Carl Builder gives vivid substance to differences between these unique American institutions and their derivative self-interests in his well-known treatise on service personalities, *The Masks of War*. He argues that each service possesses a unique culture amounting to an “institutional personality.”²⁹ This personality, among other things, predisposes a service to “cultural and institutional preferences for certain kinds of military force.”³⁰ These preferences serve as the basis for a peculiar slant on warfighting and strategy, which often becomes a significant source of friction between the components in a joint-combat operation. Further, these cultural-cognitive paradigms form the foundation upon which the services build their institutional legitimacy and relevancy.

²⁸ C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 8.

²⁹ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 194.

³⁰ Builder, *The Masks of War*, 6.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology political scientist Barry Posen, drawing upon Graham Allison's famous exposition of bureaucratic politics, highlights the effect of discordant cultural and institutional preferences. He notes that security requires matching military forces to threats and opportunities, which, in turn, requires prioritizing among the services. He argues, however, "the tendency of individuals within organizations to preserve the task and power of their organization...suggests that...it is very difficult for a group of services to accomplish the task of setting priorities."³¹ Rather, combat becomes a means for institutional affirmation and, as a result, "Each service will prepare for its own war. Forces will not cooperate effectively. Neither will they be well balanced."³²

Put another way, it is known that service self-interest derives from a tradition of autonomy, manifests itself as institutional personality, and drives a propensity to view war as organizational self-actualization.³³ Yet to be elucidated, however, is a *mechanism* by which service interests are able to override ostensibly unified command. Unity of command *ought* to trump service interests, but very often falls short of this ideal. Why, for example, would a Joint Force Commander choose to erect only a veneer of unity? If not command authority, then what governs whether component commanders support or oppose truly joint endeavors when directed by the Joint Force Commander?

Two prominent scholars encountered a similar quandary in the prevailing conception of civil-military relations. Namely, they recognized that predominate theories governing the

³¹ Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (1984; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 53. Regarding bureaucratic politics, see Graham T. Allison and Philip D. Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1999)

³² Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 54.

³³ Self-actualization—the realization of one's full potential—is the pinnacle of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Some scholars have used this concept in relation to organizational behavior and motivations, which is the intent here. See, for example, Matthew J. Kiernan, *Investing in a Sustainable World: Why GREEN is the New Color of Money on Wall Street* (New York: AMACOM, 2009).

relationship between civilians and officers failed to account sufficiently for the historical record. Their insights point the way to a framework of analysis that sheds new light on theater command.

A Normative-Perspective Problem

Peter Feaver argues that the predominant prescription for American civil-military relations—Samuel Huntington’s objective control—fails to account for the manner in which the dialog between politicians and officers actually unfolded over the latter half of the twentieth century.³⁴ A traditional fear for a state is *coup d’état*—the military uses its strength to overthrow the government of the nation it is entrusted to protect. The democratic solution to this paradox is subordination of the military institution to the control of civilian political leadership, which is, in turn, answerable to the citizenry. Huntington proposed that, in the United States, civilians could ensure their control by granting the military significant autonomy, which he argued would set the soldier apart and engender willing subordination by strengthening the power of professional values. Feaver demonstrates that quite the opposite, in fact, occurred. Civilians monitored and intervened in military affairs quite intrusively throughout the Cold War.³⁵

Despite the popularity of Huntington’s view in military circles, Feaver argues that it suffers from a narrow, normative perspective that limits understanding to what *should* happen.³⁶ To be sure, military professionalism, in fact, *is normative* largely as Huntington proposed since it is generally agreed that a *coup d’état* is not a significant concern for America. As Feaver notes, “The American military has internalized the view that to be professional means that it does not directly challenge civilian political authority for control over the government.”³⁷ The issue is not

³⁴ He writes, “...for all its elegance and appeal, the prevailing model, Huntington’s framework, does not adequately explain the record.” See Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (2003; repr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 16.

³⁵ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 37.

³⁶ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 13.

³⁷ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 11.

that Huntington is necessarily wrong. Rather, pointing to “Huntington’s stress on the *norm* of military subordination” that elevates “ideational over material factors,” Feaver argues that reliance solely on a normative theory provides an incomplete understanding, failing to account for politics—friction and foot-dragging—in the relationship that prevent attainment of the ideal.³⁸ (emphasis original)

To remedy this shortcoming in Huntington’s predominant theory, Feaver introduces an agency model that “brings material incentives back into the story”—incentives such as self-interest, cost, reward and punishment.³⁹ Drawing upon the principal-agent theory used extensively in economics, he examines civil-military relations as a civilian principal delegating the specialized task of defending the nation to a military agent—an arrangement made necessary by the bifurcation of statesman and soldier in modern democracies.⁴⁰ By virtue of specialization in political and military matters, respectively, knowledge and expertise asymmetries exist between principal and agent, which grant the agent maneuvering room to “shirk” rather than work—to pursue self-interests rather than the interests of the principal.⁴¹ The civilian must circumscribe the military temptation to shirk with a combination of monitoring and punishment.

A strictly normative perspective similarly inhibits understanding of theater command. A set of norms or rules, embodied in the tenet of unity of command, is thought to prescribe and explain the behavior of a joint command. These norms derive, in part, from the heroic tradition that invests the commander with supreme authority on the battlefield as in John Keegan’s portrait of Alexander the Great.⁴² Command imperatives such as prescription and sanction mean that the

³⁸ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 13.

³⁹ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 285.

⁴⁰ See John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books-Viking, 1987), 4-6.

⁴¹ The terms working and shirking derive from the vernacular of the principal-agent literature. The putative connotation of malign intent is not meant to convey in application to the military. Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 3.

⁴² Keegan, *The Mask of Command*.

commander sets and enforces the rules.⁴³ Fealty to the commander is also woven into the professional soldier's code of honor through which "coercive power is considerable."⁴⁴ In the United States, this means allegiance not only to the President, but also an "attachment for the commanding officer."⁴⁵ Classic American images of the professional commander include George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army; Ulysses S. Grant at the helm of the Union Army; or John J. Pershing leading the American Expeditionary Force in WWI. Through this normative lens, command authority ought to outweigh the pluralistic influences of components. Indeed, the entire unification struggle is grounded in faith in the triumph of professionalism and norms over bureaucratic organizational behavior. The "military ethic..." Huntington notes, "...exalts obedience as the highest virtue of military men."⁴⁶ This too leaves no room for material influences, and, thus, offers no means to explain how service self-interest affects command in a pluralistic military.

An Internal, Structural Perspective Problem

Paralleling Feaver's epiphany, Barry Posen recognized an internal-external focus problem in the theory and literature surrounding civil-military relations that inhibits a complete explanation for the events of history.⁴⁷ Akin to the structural realist comeback to the allegedly myopic views of organizational theorists such as Graham Allison, he argues that focus on the structure and processes of the organization itself fails to weigh external influences that

⁴³ Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, 343-4.

⁴⁴ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 215.

⁴⁵ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 220.

⁴⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957; repr. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1985), 79.

⁴⁷ Posen's book is a treatise on civil-military relations inasmuch as it rings a consistent note regarding the necessity for civilians to audit and intervene in order to drive integration and innovation in military doctrine.

inexorably affect the relations between civilians and their military.⁴⁸ This critique mirrors that of Stephen Krasner, who impugns organizational theory as hinging national policy not on rational assessment and decision-making, but on the machinations of a grid-locked bureaucracy in which “administrative feasibility not substance becomes the central concern.”⁴⁹ Examining France, Britain and Germany between the world wars, Posen argues that the military doctrines of these nations were driven largely by their respective civilian statesmen reacting to the *external* geopolitical situation. In other words, assessments of the threat and intent of other players in the international system influenced processes and decisions regarding military capability within these states.

Posen turned to *balance of power* theory to provide a complementary view to the prevalent bureaucratic politics model of organizational theory. He demonstrates that military doctrine is not only the product of internal structure and processes, but also a derivative of the rational balancing behaviors of nations in an anarchical system. Civilian statesmen, he argues, scan for asymmetries based upon “the state’s political ‘position’ in the international system” and, when necessary, intervene in military affairs to correct imbalances.⁵⁰ Threats, he contends, drive the statesman to seek ways “to overcome the limits on their own military knowledge and get around the bureaucratic shenanigans of their military organizations.”⁵¹ In this respect, Posen’s approach also provides a useful complement to Feaver’s agency model, which does not explicitly treat external influence as an independent variable.

⁴⁸ Structural realism is most often associated with Kenneth Waltz, who argues that state behavior is a rational attempt to achieve and maintain balance in an anarchical system of international actors. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, Rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001) and Kenneth N. Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

⁴⁹ Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy* 7 (Summer 1972): 162.

⁵⁰ Posen points to two ways to correct imbalances: forming alliances and adjusting military doctrine. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 40.

⁵¹ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 223.

An inherently internal point of view, which takes no account of external influences, also limits the perspective offered by unity of command. In other words, unity of command focuses exclusively on the structure and processes of the military establishment itself, neglecting the broader environment in which it operates. The unification struggle confirms this since the legislation and executive orders from 1947 to 1986 fixated largely on improving the military's organizational chart to establish clearer command relationships.⁵² Viewing the functioning of command and control as simply a product of internal structure does not make room for contextual assessments, such as adversary capability and intent, and their attendant influences.

In sum, the prevailing image of theater command and control is the unified command—a Joint Force Commander presiding over domain-focused component commands. Its underlying precept—unity of command—is anchored by faith in the normative power of professionalism to overcome service self-interests that are known to exist in the pluralistic American military establishment. It, therefore, prescribes an internal, structural, normative approach that restricts efforts to understand and improve command and control largely to the domain of studying and tweaking the internal organizational structure of the unified command. This limited perspective does not account for external influences in command-decision processes; nor is it able to identify a mechanism by which service self-interests compete with professional norms.

A Remedial Approach

With the aim of improving the understanding and conduct of joint command and control, this dissertation provides an “empirical critique” of unified command.⁵³ It examines unified command through an analytical framework derived from agency theory that applies Feaver's

⁵² For an overview of the unification struggle, see Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, and Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*.

⁵³ An empirical critique tests whether the theory or prescription stands up to the historical record. See Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 9. The intent is wholly analogous to that of Posen's “theory testing,” which deduces and tests “empirical statements” (read hypotheses) from a given model. See Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 37.

approach at the next level down from civil-military relations. The hypothesis is that unified command, in its current conception, resembles a principal-agent relationship between a Joint Force Commander as principal and component commanders as agents that, in effect, are employed to fight in their respective domains. By virtue of service specialization, there is often service-unique capability, knowledge, and expertise upon which the Joint Force Commander, at times, must rely to conduct a joint combat operation. This specialization creates asymmetries in knowledge and expertise that offer components cause to pursue service self-interest.

Dissertation Overview

In the chapters that follow, this dissertation examines joint command and control in the context of military pluralism that, at times, rises to the level of “partisan politics at their most intense.”⁵⁴ Viewing command and control of a joint force through the theoretical lens of agency, it seeks to determine the aspects of unified command that impact efficacious employment of joint forces. Command and control—a rubric for the organizational, doctrinal, technical and other constructs for the orchestration of armed conflict—aligns fighting with a political purpose and maintains its focus on the objective, lest battle become “a complete, untrammelled, absolute manifestation of violence.”⁵⁵ It is thus command and control that, ultimately, must reconcile the American military establishment’s pluralistic traditions with the demands of the joint era. Or as one scholar put it, “Fusion is seen as good by those able to control it.”⁵⁶

Organization of the study is customary; it begins with historical foundations, moves to theory exposition and then to analysis via case-study methodology to arrive at formal conclusions, implications, and recommendations. The next two chapters explore the origins of

⁵⁴ Roger A. Beaumont, *Joint Military Operations: A Short History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), xvi.

⁵⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Indexed ed. Ed. and trans. Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret (1984; repr. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87.

⁵⁶ Beaumont, *Joint Military Operations*, xiv.

unified command. Chapter Two begins with examination of the nebulous definition of command and control. The chapter then provides a brief review of the genesis of military pluralism. The American approach to command and control has origins in the collective mindset that arrived with the early colonists. The security requirements of the frontier and overseas trading by a burgeoning commercial nation shaped its evolution for the century and a half following the birth of the Republic. Autonomy characterized the services during this period, and their interactions were few and far between. This situation lasted until the end of the nineteenth century when the beginning of the joint age called for better teamwork. A *de facto* doctrine of cooperation by operational commanders gradually grew into a rudimentary joint system. WWII, as noted, revealed the severe shortcomings of mutual cooperation as a model for joint command and control and birthed a unified command system that evolved over a forty-year unification struggle. Chapter three gives a brief exposition of the evolution of the unification struggle, along the way demonstrating the structural, normative orientation that has characterized the American approach to command and control in the joint age.

Chapter four introduces agency theory and develops the analytical framework aimed at providing a different perspective on theater command and control. It articulates and adapts the essence of Feaver's agency model to develop "tools for the apprehension of reality" in order to gain greater insight into the operation of a joint command in practice.⁵⁷ The problem of agency is, in the basest sense, the potential for the introduction of divergent aims via delegation—a problem arising, to some extent, in any act of delegation. When the principal and agent in an agency relationship pursue divergent aims, efficacy nearly always suffers. With its separate services, the structure of the American military ensures that a commander of joint forces will be reliant upon the specialized capabilities of service components to wage joint war, thus creating a

⁵⁷ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 8.

type of “forced delegation,” which inevitably introduces the agency problem into a unified command.

The next four chapters detail the application of the framework to the major conventional combat operations following the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This endeavor covers the major combat phases of Operations DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE, ANACONDA, and IRAQI FREEDOM. The final section presents concluding observations drawn from the insights provided by the case studies. These findings, in turn, form the basis of recommendations for the refinement of joint command and control as well as areas for further study.

In Pursuit of Efficacy

The United States military has, according to many accounts, enjoyed stunning success in major combat operations in recent years. Why bother tweaking what seems to be a winning formula? Peter Feaver faced a similar dilemma in his study of civil-military relations. If a *coup d'état* is unlikely, is it worth the effort to study them further? He writes, “...the principle of civilian control is well established in the United States, but what that principle means may be contested. We may be seeing the emergence of a norm among American military officers that civilian control does not mean that civilians have the right to be wrong...officers see no inconsistency between endorsing civilian control and endorsing an ‘insist’ role for the military...the effect is *pernicious* for the principle of civilian control...Shirking undermines democracy.”⁵⁸ (emphasis added)

The motivation for the present study lies in the fact that war is not the normal state of things. Rather, it is a “pulsation of violence”—politics by other means—as Prussian theorist

⁵⁸ In this context, insistence means “accept our advice or else we will shirk or resign in protest.” See Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 300-301.

Carl von Clausewitz noted.⁵⁹ It is, one hopes, just an interlude to the peace.⁶⁰ Presently, the nature of that peace enmeshes, for better or worse, largely with America's fortunes; and, to a great extent, her fortunes in war. This is true not only for Americans, but also for much of the rest of the world, as the dollar anchors the world economy and the United States military helps gird global stability.

America's necessity or choice for war inexorably imperils the peace since the nature of that peace derives, in part, from the *outcome of war*. Defeat could bring a host of unsavory consequences including, in the extreme, the end of the Republic. Therefore, victory in war is essential; but to win is often insufficient since the nature of the peace also derives from the *conduct of war*. How one arrives at the outcome bears heavily upon one's stature thereafter, and, in turn, the structure of the subsequent geo-political environment. Thus, the United States must emerge not only victorious from the wars it fights, but also with a strong military, a healthy fiscal economy, and a harmonious relationship between the citizenry and its "armed servants."⁶¹

When armed conflict is necessary, war seeks a "*measure of control over the enemy*."⁶² (italics original) Control allows the imposition one's will on a foe, presumably with regard to the dispute that precipitated conflict. In the ideal, war is duel a between military forces.⁶³ Control goes to the nation whose forces win the duel—a binary winner-takes-all outcome. In reality, control comes at a price, even for the victor; for it, one trades blood, treasure and time—the lives of citizens, the welfare of the state, the morale and energy of the nation. Their expenditure, while often necessary, is at cross-purposes with the requirements of the peace. It is

⁵⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

⁶⁰ Indeed peace is often defined in the negative—the absence of conflict. Though, this narrow meaning is irksome to myriad activist groups seeking utopian harmony.

⁶¹ From the title: Feaver, *Armed Servants*.

⁶² Wylie, *Military Strategy*, 66.

⁶³ Regarding the duel metaphor, see Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

imperative, therefore, that victory also come at minimum cost. J. F. C. Fuller called this the *law of economy of force* and elevated it above all other principles of war.⁶⁴

On the presumption that war is the sound course of action in a given situation, the desiderata for its economical conduct are effectiveness and efficiency. Effective combat speaks to the attainment of objectives; its importance in war is self-evident. Efficiency relates to minimizing the cost of securing a favorable outcome. Efficacious continuation of American policy thus requires both effectiveness *and* efficiency in the conduct of combat operations. Clearly, one ought to eschew an operation that is both ineffective and inefficient. Consider, for example, the staggering loss of life and inconsequential results at Verdun and the Somme in World War I. Parsimony in defeat—that is, to the point of ineffectiveness—is rationally unsupportable. Further, if defeat becomes inevitable, the most economical course is to sue for peace. Conversely, one could be effective but pay exorbitantly for that success. Put another way, victory is, at best, unlikely without effective combat operations; but effectiveness is no guarantee of efficiency. To fight inefficiently, or worse ineffectively, is to court weakness and possibly defeat, neither of which bodes well for the peace. To verify this, one need only consider the poisonous results of failure in Vietnam or the current dire fiscal realities America faces following two decades of engagement in the Middle East and ten years of war.

Efficacy in war is, admittedly, a thorny dilemma as the path to effectiveness and efficiency is not necessarily an obvious one. War is highly non-linear.⁶⁵ Cause and effect are not always, if ever, clearly linked. Fog and friction are the norm and frustrate control over the

⁶⁴ He writes, “If, in its entirety, we could grasp the law of causation, we could then so economize our force that, whatever force might be at our disposal, we should expend it at the highest profit...as the fundamental law of war, I will call this the law of economy of force...” J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (London; Hutchinson and Co., 1926), 202.

⁶⁵ For an excellent explanation of nonlinearity in warfare see G. Scott Gorman, “Seeking Clocks in Clouds: Nonlinearity and American Precision Air Power” (PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2006).

conduct of war, particularly at the tactical level. The resultant uncertainty drives conservatism that makes honing combat at the margins difficult at best. Nevertheless, the effects of marginal inefficiency and ineffectiveness are, much like subtle reinterpretations of civilian control, pernicious. Command and control, over which there *is* a measure of influence, bears significantly upon the efficacious conduct of combat. It is, therefore, worthwhile to seek its improvement.



CHAPTER TWO

OUT OF JOINT

Origins of Service Self-Interest in Command and Control

The confusion comes from the fact that our organization is weak at the top. It does not make adequate provision for a directing and coordinating control. It does not provision for an adequate force to see that these branches of the administrative and the different branches of the line pull together, so that the work of each one will fit in with the work of every other, and bring out the result which always has to be the result of the conspiring of a great number of people doing a great number of duties.

Secretary of War Elihu Root¹
1899

On Command and Control

A constructive dialog requires a shared understanding of terminology. The intent here is not necessarily to come to consensus on the merits of extant definitions. Nor is it necessary to proffer new ones. Rather, the desire is to establish a foundational understanding of existing terms as they are used in this study. This ensures mention of *command and control*, for example, conjures the same image in the minds of all parties as the rhetorical discourse proceeds, whether or not absolute agreement exists. “Conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term,” however, makes simple recitation of doctrinal definitions a bit unsatisfactory for this purpose.² For one thing, full disclosure of supposed “doctrinal verities” regarding command and control fills an entire volume.³ Indeed, joint doctrine goes to considerable lengths to elaborate three types of *control* into which command authority might be divided to delineate which commander owns a

¹ Elihu Root, *The Colonial and Military Policy of the United States: Addresses and Reports*, comp. and ed. Robert Bacon and James Brown Scott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 349.

² Gregory D. Foster, “Contemporary C² Theory and Research: The Failed Quest for a Philosophy of Command,” *Defense Analysis* 4, no. 3 (1988): 202.

³ Foster, “Contemporary C² Theory and Research,” 202. Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 02 May 20007 incorporating Change 1 20 March 2009 is a 156-page volume concerned primarily with command and control. Joint Publication (JP) 3-31, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations*, 29 June 2010 piles on another 167 pages.

particular set of forces. Add to these no less than four types of *support* that various commanders might provide or receive, and things become quite unwieldy.⁴ The notion that such doctrine is the embodiment of the tenet of unity of command strains credibility. As Allard notes, joint doctrine often reads like a “well-crafted union contract.”⁵

The command-and-control lexicon also groans under the weight of accreted jargon that dilutes the precision of any traditional meanings. The term *command* alone, notes Martin van Creveld, used to suffice in much the same way that the rubric *management* captures the “manifold activities” of running a business.⁶ *Command* then became *command and control*, or C2 in Pentagon shorthand. Next came C3 with the addition of *communications*. This accretion continued until what ostensibly used to be “C₁,” as another author laments, has now become C4ISR for *command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance*.⁷ Beltway logic has thus succeeded in needlessly parsing truly inherent functions—most prominently communications—with the stroke of an acronym. As a result, the more general term *command and control* is often conflated with some of its more narrow, constituent parts. For example, recent study has focused heavily on network centric warfare and the debate between hierarchical organization and “power to the edge,” as well as on the employment of information technology and the attendant need for system interoperability.⁸

⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 1 lists operational, tactical and administrative control as forms of authority commanders may possess over forces. It also describes general, mutual, direct, and close support as flavors of relationships that could exist between commanders. See Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 02 May 20007 incorporating Change 1 20 March 2009, IV-2 – IV-12.

⁵ Allard refers specifically to *Unified Action Armed Forces*. This early attempt at joint doctrine grew out of the Key West roles and missions agreements crafted after WWII. See: C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 126.

⁶ Martin L. van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 1.

⁷ See Greg Todd, “C₁ Catharsis,” *Army Magazine* (February 1986), reprinted in Foster, “Contemporary C² Theory and Research,” 203.

⁸ See publications of the Command and Control Research Project (CCRP) such as David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes, *Power to the Edge: Command...Control...in the Information Age* (Washington, D.C.: Command and Control Research Program, 2003). Allard’s study is, in the final analysis, about the development and acquisition of systems

The situation with command and control is akin to the scientific paradigm in crisis that Thomas Kuhn describes in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.⁹ Terminology, on the whole, has become muddled to the point one can “take no common body of belief for granted” and, to an extent, it is thus necessary to “build [the] field anew from its foundations.”¹⁰ A complete reconstitution of the theoretical and historical underpinnings of command and control is well beyond the scope of this study. Rather, by deriving more precise meanings for a few key terms via a brief review of the evolution of armed conflict, it is possible to establish a firmer foundation on which to proceed with the present inquiry.

The essence of conventional combat is the application of “*measured violence* at the direction of the state.”¹¹ (italics original) Modern-day military officers are regarded as “professionals in violence,” having sufficiently mastered skills for the “management of violence.”¹² *Command and control* herein thus refers to the field of endeavor, *in toto*, for the management of violence. Following paragraphs derive this as a rubric aptly capturing the crux of the discipline, but this juncture affords opportunity for a few key provisos. First, this study necessarily excludes nuclear forces and strategic command and control, which other scholars have studied extensively.¹³ Similarly, the focus herein is not civil-military relations between politician and officer, also the subject of considerable scholarly work. Although certainly important and obviously not without bearing upon warfighting, the “direction of the state” is taken as an input.

such as the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS). See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*.

⁹ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Third ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 13.

¹¹ Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 33.

¹² The former observation is made in Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 3. The latter is from Harold Lasswell as quoted in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957; repr. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1985), 11.

¹³ See for example, Paul J. Bracken, *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces*, (1983; repr. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985) and Bruce G. Blair, *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1985).

Lastly, note that this study is limited to and, indeed, primarily focused upon the point of application—the actual orchestration of the fight. Martin van Creveld defines command as a broad rubric for “a function that has to be exercised more or less continuously, if the army is to exist and to operate.”¹⁴ He divides that concept into a “function-related” responsibility to “arrange and coordinate everything an army needs to exist” and an “output-related” responsibility to “carry out its proper mission.”¹⁵ This distinction is analogous to Clausewitz’s delineation of “preparations for war” and “war proper.”¹⁶ Giving all due acknowledgement to the importance of equipping and training forces, supply, logistics and myriad other preparatory requirements, this study delves exclusively into command within the realm of war proper. In turn, whereas a tactical focus regards “*the use of forces in the engagement,*” the concern herein is strategy or “*the use of engagements for the object of war.*”¹⁷ (italics original)

A state desires, in the final analysis, to ensure its security. It goes about this in a variety of ways, among them armed conflict. When applied violence is necessary, the state turns to its military for security. Thus, in the basest sense, security is the object of war and the *raison d’être* of the armed forces.¹⁸ Samuel Huntington writes of the officer, “his responsibility is the military security of his client, society.”¹⁹ More specifically, the first imperative of the *commander* is to *command* or direct fighting toward the object of war. In ancient times, the commander’s duty was far simpler “[b]efore the management of violence became the extremely complex task that it is in modern civilization.”²⁰ In what Martin van Creveld calls the “stone age of command,”

¹⁴ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 5.

¹⁵ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 6.

¹⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Rev. ed. Ed. and trans. Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 131.

¹⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 128

¹⁸ In other words, armed forces are not solely for *waging* war, since security without fighting, if it can be had, might be the most economical situation.

¹⁹ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 15.

²⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 13.

technology, or lack thereof, conspired to restrict combat to comparatively homogeneous forces fighting in a rather confined area on land.²¹ Further, the present-day dichotomy between soldier and statesman did not exist. In the “heroic” age, warrior-rulers such as Alexander the Great combined these responsibilities seamlessly in a single person.²² John Keegan notes, Alexander scarcely would have needed reminding “war is merely the continuation of policy by other means,” as he “inhaled war and politics in the same breath.”²³ As a result, formulation and implementation of strategy were, in effect, one and the same; in modern parlance, the strategic and tactical levels of war were indistinguishable. The commander was an integral part of the fray, leading by his personal example. Command was largely a matter of choosing the location of the battle, arraying forces, calling for the charge and then plunging into the melee.

From an overarching perspective, technology drove evolutionary changes in the conduct of battle that had profound effects on both the commander and the imperative of command. Weapons grew evermore lethal over time. As clubs gave way to swords, which, in turn, yielded to lead balls and bullets, growing destructiveness and improved accuracy made killing increasingly more efficient. Likewise, as iron fodder replaced stone, and explosives filled its core, destruction of things became more effective and complete. New technology also afforded the ability to attack at range. Whether fought by Stone Age warriors or Peloponnesian hoplites, ancient land warfare was largely, if not totally, the domain of hand-to-hand combat. Archers and later artillery enabled one to thin the ranks of the adversary before the culminating clash of the infantry. This afforded a numerical advantage in some cases, or offset the weakness of a numerically inferior force in others. Advantage also came as a result of increased mobility. Chariots and cavalry, which would later find expression in mechanization, had tremendous shock

²¹ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 6, 17-57.

²² See John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books-Viking, 1987).

²³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 87, and Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, 4.

value when unleashed on the infantry fracas. Further, mobile forces led to maneuver warfare in which one could seek to establish an advantage by improving one's attack position relative to the adversary, or by encircling and isolating adversary forces, perhaps avoiding the direct clash altogether.

Quite obviously, the battlefield became an increasingly dangerous place, particularly for the monarch or head of state. As van Creveld notes, "killing was now carried out at a distance by bullets that failed to distinguish between nobleman and commoner."²⁴ Increasingly the commander would observe the battle from some safe distance once it began. Physical prowess thus yielded to intellectual acuity and, correspondingly, "knights in shining armor gradually gave way to 'chess players' like Maurice of Nassau."²⁵ The demand of technology for increased technical competence and, in turn, specialization was also a key factor in a growing trend toward professionalism and the bifurcation of statesman and soldier.²⁶ Thus, combat gradually transferred to the hired mercenary and later to the professional soldier and "high-ranking commanders from the age of Moltke on were gradually transformed from fighters into military experts whose precise function is perhaps best called the management of violence."²⁷ In a sense, this was the genesis of the delegation of the domain of war, and command hence would come to include establishing the all-important link between military means and political ends to which Clausewitz alludes.

The increasingly perilous battlefield also precipitated a dispersal of armies over much larger areas.²⁸ Further, specialization within armies—for example, into infantry, cavalry, and artillery

²⁴ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 52.

²⁵ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 52.

²⁶ Technology was important, but certainly not the only causal factor in the rise of professionalism. See Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 19-58.

²⁷ Martin L. van Creveld, *Technology in War: From 2000B.C. to the Present*, Rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 146.

²⁸ Fronts have grown as much as tenfold since the eighteenth century. See: van Creveld, *Technology in War*, 2.

branches—magnified the complexity of orchestrating an already chaotic enterprise. Coupled with his own exclusion from direct combat, these two factors presented a dilemma for the commander: how best to manage the violence? One option was to initiate battle via rigid orders, hoping for the best. The ability to affect the course of the battle was often limited to committing one's cavalry and reserves at some seemingly opportune moment. When things did not go according to plan, disaster was often the result, as formations disintegrated and retreats turned into routs.

Alternatively, a commander could attempt to preserve flexibility through decentralized direction as Napoleon did. The emperor put his marshals “at the head of very considerable forces...without orders for days on end and yet expected them to conform to an overall design.”²⁹ This was possible, in large measure, because he divided forces into self-contained, mission-oriented units, instituted a standardized system of regular reports from and orders to subordinate units, and established a General Headquarters consisting of a functional staff to handle this traffic.³⁰ In doing so, he was able to give subordinates significant latitude to exploit advantageous situations of their own initiative, while he kept the fighting on track via a strategy that set the course, and incremental orders to correct deviations or account for new circumstances. Therein lies the genius of Napoleon.

The decentralization of the battlefield gave strategy new significance. Not only would strategy, and thus the function of command, serve to link military means to political ends, but it would also serve as the grand design that would afford the commander a measure of *control*—the second imperative—over scattered, specialized and somewhat autonomous forces. If the commander was to be responsible for the outcome of battle, he required some means of ensuring

²⁹ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 97.

³⁰ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 97.

its coherence and of adapting the fighting to evolving circumstances. Integral to this method of control was the establishment of a formal feedback loop to provide the commander with a “directed telescope” with which he could monitor the battle.³¹ Napoleon’s setup became the model for the modern *command*—a complex system of people, organizations, tools and processes for the management of violence.³²

Not only did technology permit, and indeed likely force, decentralization within the land domain, it also allowed man to operate in other domains—first the maritime domain and later the air domain. Not unexpectedly, these domains became the loci for new competition and conflict. This brought a new dimension to the imperative of control as land and sea forces, for example, were *de facto* independent of one another from the outset. It was thus necessary to *gain* a measure of control in order to direct disparate operations toward a common goal. Put another way, the challenge became to centralize control of inherently decentralized forces. Here again, strategy provides the answer. In addition to linking the means within each domain to political ends, it serves as the grand design by which the forces may be melded together in pursuit of a common object.

To sum, *command and control* is the field of endeavor concerned with management of violence. The focus herein, is on the *commander*—the military professional charged with management of applied violence to ensure the security of the state—as the key part of a *command*—a complex system designed for the application of violence. Giving privilege to war proper, this study examines the commander’s imperative *to command*—to link military means to

³¹ van Creveld, *Command in War*, 97.

³² van Creveld lists three categories: organizations, procedures, and technical means which “should make it possible, in principle, to describe the structure of any command system at any given time and place.” van Creveld, *Command in War*, 10. Retired Lt Gen John Cushman takes a similar systems view saying, “Broadly defined, command and control systems include people—commanders, staffs and others—and their ways of organizing and operating, their procedures, and their working relationships, both formal and informal.” Quoted in Philip S. Kronenberg, “Command and Control as a Theory of Organizational Design,” *Defense Analysis* 4, no. 3 (1988): 230.

political ends via the formulation of strategy—and *to control* or maintain the coherence of decentralized operations within, but particularly between, warfighting domains via the implementation of strategy. These dual imperatives levied on the modern commander thus, in concert, capture the essence of applying violence for the security of the state. Fulfilling the imperatives is, however, the central challenge of the joint age, as each of the American military services has a unique slant on war. It is thus necessary to briefly examine how heritage, design, and circumstance, evolved a military establishment that is anything but joint.

Origins of Autonomy

The American Republic grew out of the British colonies that established a foothold on the North American continent early in the seventeenth century. The settlements that eventually became the states of the Union were not colonial in the sense of subjugated native peoples under English rule. Rather, they were filled with subjects of the Crown who had left England to establish a new home. They did so for a variety of reasons such as profit in the case of business venturers at Jamestown and religion for the Pilgrims who later founded Plymouth. In any case, the colonists brought a rich heritage that would, among other things, predispose them to view armies and navies from significantly different perspectives. One hundred and fifty years of practical need and growing separation from England, culminating with the American Revolution, drove a military establishment based upon autonomous services at the founding of the new Republic.

For the Common Defense

Upon their arrival in the new world, the settlers' most pressing need was security. As Allan Millet and Peter Maslowski point out, "The initial colonies represented little more than amphibious landings on a hostile coastline followed by the consolidation of small, insecure

beach-heads.”³³ For the better part of the following century, “every part of the colonies remained subject to military danger, potentially from Spain and France, and actually from the Indians.”³⁴ Backers of the expeditions had anticipated this; and the Jamestown charter, for example, instructed settlers to “form themselves immediately into three groups: one to erect fortification for defense, one to serve as a guard and to plant a crop, the third to explore.”³⁵ Thus, the colonists brought with them veteran military men such as Captains John Smith and Myles Standish, and, once ashore, they promptly set about establishing defenses.³⁶ Early on, security was so precarious, “...settlement in English America was practically coterminous with the fort,” notes Russell Weigley.³⁷ Each settlement, at times, also required the concerted effort of all its colonists for economic (and thus actual) survival. Nowhere could they afford to devote “able-bodied men...solely to war and preparation for war.”³⁸ Defense was, from the start, everyone’s imperative. Each man, and in some cases many of the women, necessarily bore inherent responsibility for protecting property and family.³⁹

The citizen-soldier represented not only a practical solution but was also the natural outgrowth of an ingrained preference for the militia. Popular militias were, in some respects, common to all of Western European nations of the period.⁴⁰ They were, however, integral to the homeland defense of England and especially prominent during the Elizabethan Wars with Spain

³³ Allan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, Revised and expanded ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 1.

³⁴ Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, Enlarged ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 4.

³⁵ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 4. Within a month, the Jamestown settlers had erected a primitive fort. Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 2.

³⁶ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 2.

³⁷ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 5.

³⁸ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 4.

³⁹ “The Colonists in America were the greatest weapon-using people of that epoch in the world...In the early days every settlement had been virtually a military colony.” Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study in American Military History* (1956; repr. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 23.

⁴⁰ See also Oliver Lyman Spaulding, *The United States Army in War and Peace* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1937), 3.

in the late sixteenth century.⁴¹ Not only did the colonists thus view defense as a universal duty, but they also saw an armed citizenry as the only sound alternative to the most reviled of institutions, the standing army. In hindsight, the British Civil Wars of the seventeenth century were, in some respects, as much about control and use of military power as they were about religious ideology and the struggle between monarchal and popular rule. Whether at the hands of the Crown or Parliament, pamphleteers of the day pilloried the standing army as the “universal tool of despotism” and Cromwell’s New Model Army came to symbolize the evil of militarism for Britons and their brethren in the American colonies.⁴² Aristocrats from the upper tier of society and rabbles from the very bottom filled the armies of the day.⁴³ Neither maintained allegiance to popular society or ideals such as liberty. Instead, this powerful military class, built upon tradition, rigid authority, and brutal discipline, was not easily subject to checks and thus represented “the ultimate in uncontrolled and uncontrollable power.”⁴⁴

As the colonial frontier in America marched westward, conflict between Britain and France intensified, particularly over the lucrative fur trade in the Great Lakes region and lush Ohio Valley. Colonial militias also struggled to fend off the Indians, who were becoming increasingly alarmed by the insatiable whites. This difficulty was, in no small part, due to the fact that each colony had particular interests and was often unwilling to supply soldiers for seemingly unrelated ventures on the frontier. With no centralized direction, coordinated effort was exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Further, sending citizen-soldiers to battle often required farmers and businessmen to leave home for extended periods, which they were understandably

⁴¹ See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 3; and Spaulding, *The United States Army in War and Peace*, 3. Walter Millis writes, “By an admirable economy they were drawn, generally speaking, from the least productive elements at the two ends of the social scale.” Millis, *Arms and Men*, 17.

⁴² Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 4.

⁴³ See: Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 2-3.

⁴⁴ Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 2.

loath to do. Increasingly, the fighting thus fell to larger and larger contingents of British regulars.

This period put enormous strain on England's economy as the country engaged in a costly struggle with other European nations. To support the expanding operations in North America, Parliament increasingly taxed the colonist for funds, provisions, and men. The experiences of the Colonial Wars, culminating with the Seven Years, or French and Indian War, helped to reinforce the colonists' disdain for standing armies and concomitant penchant for the militia, all the while sowing the seeds of the American Revolution. From the start, redcoats considered the colonials without merit and "totally ignorant of Military Affairs," often relegating their service to menial supporting duties.⁴⁵ Further, unscrupulous recruiting, shockingly harsh discipline, and a propensity to take by force what the colonies would not provide willingly amounted to "an unconstitutional and arbitrary Invasion of...Rights and Properties."⁴⁶ Upon the near expulsion of the French from North America at the conclusion of the war, King George III and Parliament, quite naturally, expected to recoup via taxation some of the cost of the war and profit from the now seemingly secure trade industry. British regulars, in turn, became the means of enforcement in the pursuit of these aims.

The colonists' desultory approach to what the British saw as "the just and equitable demands of their King and Country" exposed the widening rift that had opened between America and England.⁴⁷ The American Revolution was as much about "expelling the 'ministerial armies'" as it was a fight for liberty and freedom.⁴⁸ This, however, required an organized military force that the colonies simply did not possess. If the French and Indian Wars had taught the colonials anything, it highlighted the fact that the militias were primarily for defense of home and property.

⁴⁵ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 43.

⁴⁶ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 44.

⁴⁷ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 45.

⁴⁸ Millis, *Arms and Men*, 26.

But, from them one could raise capable volunteers for sufficient reward. Further, these volunteers were most effective when organized around a core of regulars. Thus, in 1775, trying to catch up with the situation that the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord had set in motion, the Continental Congress hired the most experienced military man they could find—George Washington. It fell to the new Commander-in-Chief to form the Continental Army around what little experience remained from the French and Indian War. Thus, the Revolution established the outlines of the American model. As Russell Weigley notes, “a history of the United States Army must be...a history of two armies...a Regular Army of professional soldiers and a citizen army of various components variously known as militia, National Guards, Organized Reserves, selectees.”⁴⁹

After the Treaty of Paris officially ended the war, Congress voted to disperse all but 700 men of the Continental Army, albeit “in an atmosphere of disgruntlement and of threats of mutinies and coups.”⁵⁰ The resulting situation put the problem of defense in harsh relief. For one thing, the British defied the terms of the peace and maintained garrisons in the Northwest forts.⁵¹ Perhaps more importantly, the Americans now owned the Indian problem. Though Congress had the power to declare war, it depended on the states to supply soldiers “for the common defense.”⁵² Further, delegates found raising funds to train and equip such a force just as vexing as it had been during the Revolution. If the inability to police the frontier were not enough, Shays’s Rebellion exposed the powerlessness of the tiny national force even to maintain internal

⁴⁹ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, v.

⁵⁰ Failure of the Congress to enact promptly promised pensions to the Continentals pushed the officers encamped at Newburgh, New York to consider drastic measures. Timely intervention by General Washington defused the situation before a mutiny developed in full. See Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 88-9. Congress planned to maintain for garrison duty just 700 men in the 1st American Regiment. See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 78-9.

⁵¹ See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 81.

⁵² See Preamble and Article III, *Articles of Confederation*.

order.⁵³ Chronic defenselessness under the Articles of Confederation would drive the nation toward the maintenance of the regulars that George Washington had so desired.⁵⁴ Thus, exigencies bred pragmatism as the delegates met in Philadelphia to iron out a new constitution for a new republic. Essential, if not central, to its effectiveness was the necessity to provide adequate defense for the nation.⁵⁵

To say that the Constitution represents a carefully crafted compromise is to flirt with understatement. Despite pressing needs, few were anxious to replace in kind what they had just fought to expel. In some respects, the traditional, amorphous fear of standing armies continued to militate against the desires of nationalists for strong central government and with it a larger permanent military force to defend against the Indians as well as the British and Spanish, who still maintained colonies and thus military in North America.⁵⁶ But, Patrick Henry captured a subtle shift in the long-standing angst when he said, “no nation ever retained its liberty after the loss of the sword and the purse.”⁵⁷ Monolithic power was the true evil; the Army was merely guilty by association. Democratic idealism, forged in the uniquely American experience, had made the citizen-soldier the prevailing image of the military; and the resolution of the Newburgh Conspiracy without incident had shown him to be faithful to such ideals.⁵⁸ As Samuel

⁵³Debt-ridden farmers rebelled in Massachusetts, threatening the Springfield Arsenal. With the Army unable to respond, it fell to Massachusetts volunteers to quell the uprising. To make matters somewhat worse, the militia used the Arsenal’s weapons, in defiance of the Confederation, to do so. See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 84.

⁵⁴ Drawing on his experiences, primarily of having to recruit whole new armies of volunteers while fighting a war, the Commander-in-Chief penned “Sentiments on a Peace Establishment” recommending to a Congressional committee led by Alexander Hamilton, among other things, four permanent regiments to patrol the frontier. See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 80. See also Millis, *Arms and Men*, 43.

⁵⁵In Federalist 3, John Jay wrote, “among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their *safety* seems to be the first.” (italics original) John Jay (“Publius”), “No. 3 The Same Subject Continued: Concerning Dangers From Foreign Force and Influence,” *The Federalist Papers: A Collection of Essays Written in Favour of the Constitution*, (Sweetwater Press, 2006), 23.

⁵⁶ Richard Kohn notes, “The overriding barrier, to the framers and to nearly every American who thought about the problem at the time, was an inability to define clearly what ‘standing army’ meant.” Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 88.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 85.

⁵⁸ Regarding the Newburgh Conspiracy, see: Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 17-39.

Huntington notes, “Unable to visualize a distinct military class, [the Framers] could not fear such a class.”⁵⁹ Fear was thus not so much of the Army itself, but, more precisely, of its control by a central government.

Thus, the framers judiciously balanced military power between the national government, the states, and an armed populace, which via the second and tenth amendments retained “final power over both national and state governing authorities.”⁶⁰ Congress could, in addition to declaring war when necessary, “raise and support” an Army, which operated at the direction of the executive as Commander-in-Chief.⁶¹ The states, always jealously guarding their own rights, maintained control of their militias, which could be called together for defense of the nation in time of crisis. The Bill of Rights would reserve unallocated powers to the people and preserve their right to bear arms. The net result was the limitation of the regular army to a comparatively small constabulary force in peacetime, sufficient only for policing the frontier.

For a Commercial People

Although Patrick Henry labeled navies “instruments of imperial ambition” (which perhaps they were at the time), the establishment of a navy did not engender nearly the feral anxiety that plans for an army evoked.⁶² For one thing, the British generally held a favorable opinion of the Royal Navy, which, like their attitude toward land forces, made its way to America with the colonists. The Navy was never an overt tool for despotism as had been alleged of the Army. Nor could it be since ships spent most of their time at sea where scarcely could they be a threat to liberty. A strong navy also complemented the natural ocean barriers surrounding the British Isles, making an invasion in force, especially a surprise one, exceedingly difficult. This, in turn,

⁵⁹ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 168.

⁶⁰ Millis, *Arms and Men*, 48

⁶¹ See *United States Constitution*, Article 1, Section 8 and Article 2, Section 2.

⁶² Quoted in Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 25.

allowed for a smaller regular Army and, at times, even heavy reliance on a militia. Given America's similarly fortuitous geography, colonists were naturally inclined to view the navy as a key element of national defense.

Practical experience, or perhaps the lack thereof, also played a role in shaping attitudes. Threats on land loomed far larger, and colonial commercial shipping could rely upon the Royal Navy for protection, obviating the requirement for a concerted effort to maintain anything close to an organized maritime force. Thus, naval power scarcely existed in the colonies before the Revolution, and therein only to a very limited extent.⁶³ Naval experience was thus restricted to commerce raiding by privateers during the colonial wars. Clashes, such as those that plagued relations with the redcoats, largely did not have the opportunity to materialize between the colonists and the British sailors. Further, witnessing the success of the Royal Navy in securing the rise of England's power and wealth during the eighteenth century no doubt served to cast sea power in a more favorable light.

During the Revolution, Congress had voted to outfit a Continental Navy—a mix of converted merchant ships and newly constructed vessels. These, and the small flotillas maintained by the states for port defense, were no match for the Royal Navy with its state-of-the-art ships of the line.⁶⁴ Chronically hampered by shortages of materials and experienced sailors, the miniscule Continental Navy was relegated to commerce raiding alongside the numerous privateers that saw action. Those warships that did engage directly often were sunk or captured and the crews were either interned or impressed into service by the British. By war's end, only five ships remained, and the colonies relied almost exclusively on the French Navy in the maritime domain. Indeed, the Continentals sent not a single ship to face Britain's forty ships of the line during the siege of

⁶³ See Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 79.

⁶⁴ Regarding state "navies" see Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 79-80.

Yorktown.⁶⁵

As the Constitution went out for ratification, it included provision for Congress to “provide and maintain a Navy.”⁶⁶ Not only does this clause reflect a favorable attitude toward sea power, but it also stems from simple pragmatism as ships could not quickly and easily be brought into existence in times of crisis. Further, the Founders clearly envisioned a different role for sea power, as Alexander Hamilton defended the Navy in “considerably less cathartic terms” than had fueled the debate over the Army, writing, “If we mean to be a commercial people, or even to be secure on our Atlantic side, we must endeavor, as soon as possible, to have a Navy.”⁶⁷ As Kenneth Allard notes, “his rationale for a navy—commercial expansion and national security—are a succinct statement of the primary and secondary missions the Navy would have.”⁶⁸

The Age of Autonomy

The Constitution thus inaugurated the military establishment into what might be called the age of autonomy. If heritage and democratic idealism had set the political climate in which service autonomy was all but inevitable, then the military clauses established a distinct division of labor between land and maritime forces in which different “operational purposes” would further perpetuate their pluralism.⁶⁹ The combination of differing political pressures and distinct operational requirements ensured that the Army and Navy would evolve decidedly different points of view, particularly with respect to attitudes and norms regarding command and theories for the application of violence.

⁶⁵ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 81.

⁶⁶ See: *United States Constitution*, Article 2, Section 2.

⁶⁷ See: Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 24. Alexander Hamilton (“Publius”), “No. 24 The Powers Necessary to the Common Defense Further Considered,” *The Federalist Papers: A Collection of Essays Written in Favour of the Constitution*, (Sweetwater Press, 2006), 188.

⁶⁸ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 24.

⁶⁹ Regarding operational purpose see Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 33-36. Note that initially there was but a single War Department. Later, in 1798, after stark ill preparedness for “quasi war” with France, Congress established the Department of the Navy, thereby giving full form to the autonomy of the services. See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 27.

The Framers had, in effect, created two small police forces to protect American interests, “neither designed nor intended for waging major...war.”⁷⁰ The Army went westward to patrol the frontier and garrison its forts in order to “awe” the “numerous, soured and jealous Indian tribes,” while the Navy ventured abroad to “suppress occasional piracies, to keep a protective eye upon our far-ranging whaleships and commercial traders, to ‘show the flag’ and lend a hand in minor diplomatic imbroglios in distant seas.”⁷¹ Even quasi war with France in 1797, and actual war with Britain in 1812, could not effectively loose the shackles that kept the services “small and static.”⁷² Proposed and actual increases to military strength in times of crisis were invariably reversed following the return to normalcy, establishing a pattern that would persist for over a century.

Constrained in size though they were, the services were at last permanent institutions. Although never approaching the distinct military class that the Framers had feared, soldiers and sailors embraced what Samuel Huntington called “technicism” or pursuit of “practical and intellectual mastery” of military tasks.⁷³ Each service began to establish foundations for its respective craft and to institute means to perpetuate knowledge and expertise. Early on, this meant mastery of engineering for the Army officer and seamanship for the naval officer.⁷⁴ Indeed, West Point was initially an engineering school.⁷⁵ For the naval officer, practical apprenticeship at sea in subjects such as navigation eventually gave way to formal training with the establishment of the Naval Academy in 1845, which, at the outset, closely resembled its sister institution in technical orientation.

⁷⁰ Millis, *Arms and Men*, 85.

⁷¹ Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 46. Millis, *Arms and Men*, 85.

⁷² Millis, *Arms and Men*, 86.

⁷³ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 193. Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 10.

⁷⁴ As Huntington notes, “the good military officer was expert in some special scientific skill.” Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 197.

⁷⁵ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 198-9.

Technicism would have two offspring: bureaucratization and professionalism. In 1813, the establishment of a War Department General Staff was intended to bring some order to the chaos that had plagued preparation for war up to that point. At this juncture, it was not a staff of the type the Prussians would bring to prominence. Rather, it was a loose collection of bureau chiefs, such as the adjutant, inspector, and quartermaster generals, designed to provide the Secretary with technical advice and aid in preparations for war, that provided enough coherence to operate as a governmental department. As Richard Kohn notes, “the military establishment as a whole contained enough of a hierarchical structure, enough separate offices with different functions, a sufficiently clear definition of the institutions’ mission and the interrelationships between each element...to enable the organization to take on an internal life of its own.”⁷⁶ What followed was a bifurcation of those preparing for war (the staff) and those charged with its execution (the line) with the creation of the commanding general. With the more technical aspects of the trade in the hands of the powerful bureau chiefs, line officers would seek to develop their expertise in the waging of war. Toward this end, they would find a model in the professional armies of Europe.

The study of the art of war and the establishment of schools and curricula for its instruction were prominent markers of the rise of professionalism. Constabulary duties on the frontier provided no compelling intellectual locus on which to build a theory of war. Thus, the Army turned to the now-classic studies of Napoleonic warfare. During his tenure from 1832-1871, Dennis Hart Mahan brought the writings of Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini into the West Point Curriculum.⁷⁷ Jomini’s attempt to deduce immutable principles of war provided a foundation for the disciplined study and instruction of land warfare. Graduate schools for the infantry, cavalry, and artillery would build upon that foundation. Later, Carl von Clausewitz’s treatise, *On War*,

⁷⁶ Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 291.

⁷⁷ See Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Art of War*, G. H. Mendell and W. P. Craighill trans. (1862; repr. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971).

would come to America, adding to professional study more-theoretical underpinnings regarding the nature and purpose of war.⁷⁸ Despite the adoption of many European and Napoleonic precepts, the American Army would, until the dawn of the joint age, execute its mission largely on home soil, creating a powerful vision of the soldier as the nation's ultimate protector. The net result was the establishment of a "paradigm for land warfare that was above all a prescription for the totality of war on land as the ultimate form of national expression" built upon "the precepts of concentration of force, employment of the combined arms, and the maintenance of unity of command."⁷⁹

The Navy also underwent bureaucratization with establishment of heads for: Yards and Docks; Construction, Equipment and Repairs; Provisions and Clothing; Ordnance and Hydrography; and Medicine and Surgery.⁸⁰ Its professionalism, however, came later and in a more practical sense as the Navy attempted to codify its role abroad and, in effect, establish America's ability to project power akin to that evolved by the British Admiralty over nearly two centuries.⁸¹ At its inception, the Navy was intended to protect maritime commerce and defend the coast from invasion. When Alfred Thayer Mahan penned *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, he provided naval officers with theoretical underpinnings for the contribution of maritime power to the strength of the nation and, thus, their own distinct theory of war.⁸² His image of the oceans as "great highways" and deduction of production, shipping and colonial expansion as key to greatness for "nations bordering upon the sea" meant that "it is the possession of that overbearing power on the sea which drives the enemy's flag from it, or allows

⁷⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Rev. ed. Ed. and trans. Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁷⁹ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 56.

⁸⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 202.

⁸¹ See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 65.

⁸² Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, Fifth ed. (1894; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1987).

it to appear only as a fugitive.”⁸³ This imperative for projection of American power gave rise to the need for a “great navy” and the prescription for concentration of force for the decisive naval battle.

If autonomy bred pluralism in terms of unique views of service contributions to national defense, it also engendered distinct norms regarding command. Both the Army and the Navy had begun their existence within the framework of “classical command and control,” wherein the on-scene commander holds the ultimate authority for the direction of mission operations.⁸⁴ However, unique operational purposes, political constraints, and technological pressures ensured command prerogative would evolve quite differently in the two services. Beginning with the Revolution, and, in truth, before that, the Founders embraced the notion of a single commanding general charged with the execution of war.⁸⁵ Once again, fear of standing armies would come into play and ensure that the political establishment would seek to maintain control with varying degrees of “strategic review.”⁸⁶ With the Army on home soil, or very close to it, the President could, if he chose, maintain reasonably tight control. Presidents Polk and Lincoln, for example, were very active in the direction of the war with Mexico and the Civil War, respectively.⁸⁷ The invention of the telegraph only enhanced the ability for centralized overall direction of war. Thus, the Army, despite pressures to decentralize authority, particularly on the battlefield, would

⁸³ Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, 25, 138. Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 66.

⁸⁴ Allard writes, “Classical command and control...typically represented the efforts of a single commander to extend his ability to control events on a battlefield.” Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 37.

⁸⁵ With the reforms initiated by Elihu Root, there would be ambiguity, and indeed conflict, between what would become the Chief of Staff and the commanding general in the field. See Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 44-5. Nevertheless, the enduring feature of the Army viewpoint is the “investiture of a significant degree of authority in the person of the on-scene commander.” Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 42.

⁸⁶ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 38.

⁸⁷ “Although Polk had no military experience, he acted not only as commander in chief but also as coordinator in chief for the war effort.” See Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 148. President Lincoln’s direction of the Civil War is well known, to include what amounted to firing General George McClellan in March of 1862. See: Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 190. Not until WWII, would another Commander-in-Chief take such an active role in the Nation’s war effort.

evolve a very hierarchical command structure. Indeed, the evolution of Army command is, in some respects, concomitant to the rise of central government in America, a fact that will explain much during the quest for unity following WWII.

Pressures for centralization and hierarchy came later for the Navy. Command at sea, up to the twentieth century, resembled heroic command in that a ship's captain, upon arraying his vessels and committing them to battle, became an integral part of the fighting himself. The notion of a battle fleet and command from a distance would come only with Mahan's prescriptions and the invention of more robust ship-to-ship communications. More important to note, however, is that when, where, and why to seek battle on behalf of the nation fell to the ship's captain. Political pressure to keep tight control over the Navy's ships abroad was likely far less than the pressure to keep close tabs on an Army operating on home soil. That the Founders saw less to fear in the Navy probably contributed to greater autonomy. Likely more influential, however, was that fact that early on, no means existed to closely control the Navy's scattered ships. Single ships or small squadrons operating far from home could be out of contact for weeks, particularly in the age of sail and before the arrival of the telegraph. Captains set out with general sailing orders and were expected to use judgment. They were, of course, subject to review upon their return to port.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Navy tradition would come to jealously guard the authority and prerogative of the ship's captain. In turn, Navy leaders would repeatedly oppose attempts to centralize authority within the military establishment.

In sum, the Army and the Navy enjoyed near complete autonomy from one another for over a century, interrupted only by "occasional improvisations" that produced no compelling impetus for more systematic cooperation.⁸⁹ The neat division of labor at the shoreline would come into

⁸⁸ See: Allard, *Common, Control, and the Common Defense*, 38.

⁸⁹ Allard, *Common, Control, and the Common Defense*, 76.

direct conflict with the advent of the joint age.

The Joint Age

The joint age—in which the United States, on numerous occasions, would call its Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps together for major combat operations in some foreign land—began in 1903. In the aftermath of the war with Spain—a conflict that, “although quickly and satisfactorily concluded, had revealed astounding shortcomings in the military establishment”—there existed a growing recognition of the need for both greater centralization of control within the military departments and better cooperation between the services.⁹⁰ These pressures provided impetus for two significant organizational developments that would have profound impact on the evolution of the American military for the remainder of the twentieth century.

Always kept relatively small and ill equipped in peacetime, the Army had chronically struggled to establish a wartime footing in each conflict up to and including the war with Spain. The Nation’s fear of standing armies and fondness for the citizen soldier ensured that when hostilities broke out in 1899, the Army, as in previous wars, would require a large mobilization and rearmament effort.⁹¹ The enormous difficulty that repeatedly befell the War Department in this endeavor was in no small way attributable to the disjointed, if not outright dysfunctional, bureau system.⁹² In studying the problems of the war with Spain, the Dodge Commission found that “pluralism of American public administration had undermined central authority in the War

⁹⁰ Vernon E. Davis, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, Organizational Development*, vol. I, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff* (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff historical Division, 1972), 1.

⁹¹ Millet and Maslowski note that difficulty stemmed from “hasty mobilization of too many men...and the country’s long neglect of the Army.” Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 303.

⁹² Russell Weigley notes, “...the coming of war overwhelmed the supply departments and produced a mess.” Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 299. According to Paul Hammond, “The result of having autonomous bureaus was anarchy in the administration of the War Department. As long as the business of the department was modest the Secretary could referee the bureaus adequately. But the Spanish-American War showed that an increase in activity by the department imposed impossible burdens of coordination upon him.” Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 12.

Department by encouraging and protecting bureau...autonomy.”⁹³ Secretary of War Russell Alger became a “specimen of the late nineteenth-century age of *laissez faire* and tolerated wastefulness, carried over into a time when planlessness and wastefulness would no longer receive easy tolerance.”⁹⁴ The resulting imbroglio eventually cost Alger his job. His replacement was a prominent lawyer with demonstrated administrative abilities.

Elihu Root, in attempting to rein in the powerful bureaus while Secretary of War from 1899-1904, set in motion reforms, the intellectual foundation of which would eventually serve as the basis for the evolution of the entire military establishment to the present. He first established the Army War College to serve not only as a “capstone of the Army’s professional development,” but also as a *de facto* General Staff designed to coordinate the activities of the various bureaus.⁹⁵ In 1903, he succeeded in making the subordination of the bureaus a permanent arrangement with the creation of an official Army General Staff.⁹⁶ Consisting of officers rotating from the line, the staff’s primary function was to aid in administrative control of the War Department and its preparation for war. Secretary Root also took on three quarters of a century of Army tradition by proposing that a Chief of the General Staff be the senior ranking Army officer, doing away with the Commanding General as a permanent office, and thus, to some extent, reversing the bifurcation of the line and staff that developed during the Army’s formative years.⁹⁷

⁹³ Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 11. President McKinley tapped Grenville M. Dodge, a prominent Civil War veteran and reconstruction transcontinental railroad builder, to investigate charges of neglect and incompetence in the War Department. See Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 303 and Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 310.

⁹⁴ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 312.

⁹⁵ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 77. Weigley notes, “...the War College Board became a forerunner of a general staff...It made a study of the organization and equipment that might be necessary for armies of 25,000, 50, 000, 150,000 and 250,000 men...and it helped develop further the idea of a permanent general staff.” Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 317.

⁹⁶ See Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 320 and Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 10.

⁹⁷ For analysis of Secretary Root’s reforms, see Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 12-24.

Until the Root reforms, operation of the War Department was largely a matter of relative power. At the heart of nearly every struggle—the Secretary versus the bureaus and line versus staff, for example—was what General Otto Nelson called “pride of position” and the inherent power therein.⁹⁸ Information channels and decision-making processes were often *ad hoc* and transitory arrangements characterized by political maneuvering and the forming of coalitions.⁹⁹ Secretary Root’s approach was grounded in what Leonard White called “new Hamiltonianism,” which borrowed from American business management “the assumption that clear lines of accountability provide effective policy control.”¹⁰⁰ Root had tapped a vein of American progressive thought that would come to motivate nearly every subsequent evolutionary step taken by the military establishment, which would, henceforth, be aimed at establishing clearer lines of responsibility and accountability. Such clarity, it was thought, would eventually bring disputes or differences of opinion to the proper level in the hierarchy, where someone with the proper perspective and, more importantly, the proper authority could arbitrate and make the difficult decisions that escaped a pluralistic, committee-laden system.¹⁰¹ As Paul Hammond notes, “Root’s ideas ...were based not upon relative power, but responsibility.”¹⁰²

Although the Spanish-American War did not place the Navy under scrutiny quite as intense as that directed toward the War department, the Navy Department, in reality, suffered from a similar inability to coordinate the efforts of its autonomous bureaus. In 1900, Captain

⁹⁸ “Pride of position works to step over...subordinate rungs and insists that no coordinating or controlling restrictions emanate from any authority except the supreme heads, and only then from the chief in person.” From Otto L. Nelson, Jr. *National Security and the General Staff* (Washington DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1946). See also: Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 85.

⁹⁹ Hammond notes, “...once established in Washington, the bureau soldier had plenty of time to cultivate political support, for the period of his assignment was not limited. The result was the development of minor political figures within the Army bureaus, and the entrenchment of the bureaus themselves through the acquisition of political status.” Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 23.

¹⁰¹ That the defense establishment should face a struggle between a desire for federal organization born of pluralism and the need of central direction for efficacious collective action is not at all surprising. It is precisely this struggle that has defined the evolution of the Republic since its founding.

¹⁰² Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 23.

Henry C. Taylor, while serving as chief of the Bureau of Navigation, convinced Navy Secretary John D. Long to establish the General Board of the Navy—a committee consisting of the senior Navy admiral (at the time, Admiral George Dewey of Manila Bay fame) and the various bureau chiefs that resembled the Army’s first attempt at a general staff in 1813.¹⁰³ Since the Navy’s war effort had not been plagued by the abject unpreparedness that was alleged of the Army, its efforts to centralize authority lacked a sense of urgency and would continue to lag behind those of the War Department. Nevertheless, the Navy would continue firmly down the path of centralization of authority with the creation of the Chief of Naval Operations in 1915.¹⁰⁴ Later, the merger of the Command-in-Chief, United States Fleet with the Chief of Naval Operations would create the equivalent of the Army Chief of Staff.¹⁰⁵ Though centralization came later and more slowly in the Navy, by 1903, modest progress in this area made it possible for the pursuit of more purposeful joint interaction between the services.

The Spanish-American War was the first set of expeditionary combat operations for the United States military and readily exposed the extent of the divide between the two autonomous services, as their interaction can best be described as chaotic. What amounted to a large-scale amphibious landing at Santiago produced acrimony that injunction from the President himself was only partially successful in quelling.¹⁰⁶ This fact alone likely would have provided sufficient evidence that the Army and Navy could no longer rely on jointness by improvisation.

¹⁰³ See Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ See Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 2 and Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 71.

¹⁰⁵ This merger occurred in March 1942, when Admiral Ernest J. King, already Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, took over for Admiral Harold Stark as Chief of Naval Operations. See: Edgar F. Raines, Jr. and David R. Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Evolution of Army Ideas on the Command, Control and Coordination of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1942-1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 19. See also Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 103. Eric Larrabee notes, “King...had been granted powers withheld from any Chief of Naval Operations since the title was created in 1915.” Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 171.

¹⁰⁶ Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 75.

More importantly, however, the war created an American empire with the acquisition of far-flung territories—Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines—inexorably complicating the task of national defense. Protection of such possessions could no longer be tasked solely to one service or the other. Further, for the first time, significant numbers of American soldiers would be stationed overseas, requiring, among other things, the logistical assistance of the Navy for resupply.¹⁰⁷ Mundane considerations heretofore entrusted to a particular service bureau chief now required substantial coordination between the services—a level of interaction that would necessitate new “interdepartmental machinery.”¹⁰⁸

In July of 1903, Secretary of War Root and Secretary of the Navy William H. Moody co-signed an order establishing the Joint Army and Navy Board to link the General Board of the Navy with the Army’s General Staff.¹⁰⁹ Membership initially consisted of 4 officers from each service. For the War Department this included the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Assistant Chief of Staff, the President of the Army War College, and the Chief of Artillery (the latter due to the importance of artillery in coastal defense). Representing the Navy, Admiral Dewey initially served as the presiding member, bringing with him the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and two others drawn at large from the General Board of the Navy.

Prior to 1919, progress in joint cooperation was modest. The Joint Board met only sporadically, “conferring upon, discussing and reaching common conclusions regarding all matters calling for the cooperation of the two services.”¹¹⁰ Although its members managed to lay the groundwork for a strategy for the defeat of Japan that would later become Plan Orange—the

¹⁰⁷ For the history of the Joint Board—the common name of the forerunner to the Joint Chiefs of Staff—see: Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*. For a brief overview of the Spanish-American War see: Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 284-313.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 5

¹⁰⁹ Secretary Moody, characterized as possessing a “like-minded progressive spirit,” succeeded John D. Long in 1902. Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 6.

¹¹⁰ Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 6-7.

blueprint for future success in the Pacific—the board’s early impact was nearly negligible for it had “great responsibility and little corresponding authority.”¹¹¹ The mere existence of the Joint Board did, however, sow the seeds for the doctrine of mutual cooperation, which, once codified following the Great War, would serve as the basis for command and control of multi-service operations until World War II.

The year 1903 also serves as a prominent marker for the beginning of the joint age due to the advent of controlled, heavier-than-air flight. On the seventeenth of December, on the wind-swept beaches near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, two erstwhile bicycle mechanics from Ohio succeeded in giving man the means to operate freely in the vast expanses above the earth. Though Wilbur and Orville Wright envisaged a military role for the airplane they had invented, they did not foresee the truly subversive effect it would have on the long-standing division of labor between the Army and Navy. Airpower—what Brigadier General William “Billy” Mitchell later called “the ability to do something in the air”—would birth a new service and revolutionize maritime combat, and in the process relegate the shoreline to increasingly minor importance in the conduct of warfare.¹¹² This realization lay in the future, though, as the development of American airpower was stunted when the United States failed to grasp the full potential of the airplane as a combined-arms weapon and relinquished the lead in aeronautics to Europe.¹¹³

This is not to say that the field was completely stagnant. Both the Army and the Navy

¹¹¹ Edward S. Miller, *War Plan ORANGE: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan 1897-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 13-14. Its “conclusions,” at best, produced questionable advice for the Command-in-Chief, and, at worst, prompted insubordinate action. After a leak of classified information in the midst of tension with Japan, President Woodrow Wilson essentially disbanded the Joint Board during the buildup to World War I. See Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 10 and Miller, *War Plan ORANGE*, 14.

¹¹² William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power Economic and Military* (1925; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006), xii.

¹¹³ Historian Robert Futrell notes, “When the United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917, the US Army did not possess a single modern combat aircraft...” Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, and Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force*, Vol. I, 1907-1960 (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1987), 19.

attempted to incorporate the airplane into their existing theories for war. That the Navy more readily accepted air power as integral to sea power and that Army airmen relentlessly pursued independence is perhaps common knowledge. This divergence stems, in part, from the implications of the service's war theories. Mahan's prescriptions had given the Navy a reasonably clear vision of its role in national destiny as America's power-projection force and first line of defense. The Navy would thus carefully engineer naval air power to be an integral part of sea power. The Army's link to national destiny was never articulated so clearly. Though not yet members of a separate service, airmen began to think of themselves as such. From rather humble beginnings in a division of the Signal Corps, airmen successfully lobbied for and attained increasing autonomy for the air arm during the period up to and including WWI.¹¹⁴

The Great War proved the "tipping point" for the joint age.¹¹⁵ Prior to 1917, the United States had pursued its favorite national policy of "unilateralism and noninvolvement" despite growing entanglement in the global system.¹¹⁶ The mobilization and deployment of the American Expeditionary Force, however, rang the death knell of isolationism and accelerated the inexorable transition of the American military establishment from western hemisphere constabulary to expeditionary fighting force. Correspondingly, the interwar years gave new life to the Joint Board, which resurrected a measure of joint operational planning as it oversaw formal efforts to develop the Rainbow war plans that became foundational for the United States' World War II strategy.¹¹⁷ The war had gone well enough for American forces, however, that

¹¹⁴ The Aeronautical Division of the Office of the Chief of the Signal Corps—in 1907, all of one officer and two enlisted men—was tasked "to take charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines and all kindred subjects." See, Herman S. Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence 1943-1947* (Washington DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), 5-6.

¹¹⁵ Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (2000: repr. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2002).

¹¹⁶ Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 381.

¹¹⁷ In the interwar years, the geopolitical situation presented American war planners with a two-theater problem. At the time each nation presenting a threat was identified by a color codename such as orange for Japan. The Rainbow

joint command and control underwent relatively little change in the interwar years. The functions of the services had been sufficiently decoupled, creating no stark instances of breakdown during operational improvisation. As a result, the Joint Board's first attempt at joint doctrine for command and control, *Joint Action of the Army and the Navy*, served only to codify unity of command and mutual cooperation as equally valid precepts, with the latter preferred.¹¹⁸ In this respect, it was little more than a "nonaggression pact concluded between the Army and Navy of the United States," ensuring that the Navy's preferred approach would remain the rule as the Nation prepared for war in Europe once again.¹¹⁹

With the advent of the joint age, America, for the first time, needed to contemplate *real* military strategy to ensure its security. The nation now had its own empire with attendant global responsibilities. Further, the airplane seemed to put the homeland at some risk of attack and invasion for the first time since the War of 1812. Not only did the nation need real strategy, but it also needed a coherent one, blending the capabilities resident in each domain. The services' pluralistic notions of war and their respective convictions about the primacy of land, air and sea power in national security engendered strong preferences about how to deter war or, if necessary, to fight one. The need for strategy thus brought *real* requirements, particularly for the new weapons of war. Following the Great War, however, the nation did what it had always done after war—demobilize and cut the military to the bare minimum. Isolationist parsimony exacerbated by the Great Depression thus brought the services into conflict and exposed the self-interest inherent in pluralism. Indeed, the interwar years were a period of intense rivalry

moniker was used to identify five war plans for defeating combinations of these would-be opponents. For an overview of the plans see Louis Morton, "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 1987), 12-20.

¹¹⁸ See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 95 and Davis, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff*, 37.

¹¹⁹ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 96.

between the services in the full flower of autonomy.¹²⁰

The promising debuts of the airplane and two other inventions—the tank and the submarine—portended a new way of war, launching two decades of rapid, transformative technological advancement following the Great War. Of the three, the airplane would provide the greatest challenge to traditional patterns of service autonomy. Much like Mahan’s writings had focused the Navy, Perry Smith has argued that the Italian, Giulio Douhet, provided in *Command of the Air* a foundational theory of war for the United States Air Force. By providing a justification for service autonomy, establishing a rationale for the service’s decisive weapon—the strategic bomber—and lending an argument for air power as a nation’s first line of defense, his precepts accelerated the professionalization of airmen.¹²¹ Douhet’s treatise put a bold new twist on the lessons of WWI. Pointing to the protracted slaughter of trench warfare and the indecisive naval battle at Jutland, he essentially argued that technology had relegated the theoretical frameworks of Jomini, Clausewitz, and Mahan to anachronisms. No longer could there be a decisive clash between armies or navies, all would end in stalemate or non-decision. Further, naval blockades were ineffective against industrial, continental powers. In short, Douhet averred that nations had become impregnable to all but air power.

With the ink on the armistice barely dry, Billy Mitchell and like-minded airmen in the Army launched a campaign to fully unify airpower under a single air commander via the creation of an independent Air Force. He preached that only liberation from the myopia of surface-bound soldiers would give air power its deserved stature as the ultimate guarantor of the nation’s

¹²⁰ The Army Air Corps in the interwar period, was, quite obviously, not yet fully independent of the Army. It did, however, have the outlines of its own theory of war and sufficient autonomy to add a third dimension to the pluralistic landscape.

¹²¹ Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans. Dino Ferrari (1942; repr. Washington DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998). See Perry M. Smith, *The Air Force Plans for Peace*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970). See also, Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 91.

security. In fact, his more bombastic proclamations called for air power to supplant land and naval power altogether.¹²² The ensuing debate over the proper place for the airplane provided, at once, both the greatest impetus for and the primary impediment to unity on a grander, joint scale prior to WWII.

The Reorganization Act of 1920 established the Air Service as a fourth combat branch of the Army.¹²³ Unappeased, airmen successfully kept airpower in the public debate during the interwar years, which precipitated numerous boards and studies on the issue of an independent Air Force.¹²⁴ The subject presented a dilemma, however, as a separate, co-equal Air Force seemed, at first glance, a threat to exacerbate the coordination issues that already plagued a military establishment of two services. This led to further studies regarding the organization of the entire military establishment such as that by the 1925 Lambert Committee, which recommended granting airmen independence under a single Department of National Defense.¹²⁵ The issue of an independent Air Force was, at the time however, a highly political one, particularly for the Navy's congressional benefactors. During the interwar years, the notion of unification of the military establishment thus became hopelessly entangled with the rather divisive issue of Air Force independence, ensuring that any proposal for a single Defense Department would not be evaluated on its own merits. As a result, while the Air Corps Act of 1926 moved airmen further toward independence, neither the War Department nor Congress

¹²² In the foreword of *Winged Defense*, Mitchell writes, "With us air people, the future of our nation is indissolubly bound up in the development of air power. Not only will it insure peace and contentment throughout the nation because, in case of national emergency, air power, properly developed, can hold off any hostile air force which may seek to fly over and attack our country, but it can also hold off any hostile shipping which seeks to cross the oceans and menace our shores...In the future, no nation can call itself great unless its air power is properly organized and provided for, because air power, both from a military and an economic standpoint, will not only dominate the land but the sea as well." Mitchell, *Winged Defense*, ix-x.

¹²³ Mitchell, *Winged Defense*, 7.

¹²⁴ For example, the Lassiter and Morrow Boards both recommended an elevation of stature for airpower in the form of a General Headquarters Air Force and a Department of Aeronautics, respectively. However, they stopped short of supporting a separate service. See Mitchell, *Winged Defense*, 9.

¹²⁵ Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 9

took any action toward unification on the grander scale, leaving the Joint Board as the only forum for service interaction.¹²⁶

World War II was the first true test of the joint age, and the United States military was found wanting.¹²⁷ Beginning with the abject failure of “mutual cooperation” at Pearl Harbor, the war fully exposed a key weakness of the American military establishment: quite simply, no effective and efficient means existed for pursuit of a common goal by the otherwise autonomous services. The Battle for the Atlantic, for example, renewed friction between the Army Air Forces and the Navy over land-based aircraft, which hampered antisubmarine warfare and permitted the sinking of supplies desperately needed by the British.¹²⁸ In North Africa, soldiers and airmen found that they had no experience fighting together and virtually no doctrine for close air support.¹²⁹ The Joint Board had contributed virtually nothing toward development of command and control of a multi-service force. Rather, whatever teamwork arose, emerged hard-won as the product of trial and error during combat as wartime leaders grappled with the task of determining how best to meld the nation’s distinct combat arms into an effective, efficient

¹²⁶ Another important step toward an independent Air Force was the 1935 creation of the General Headquarters (GHQ) Air Force since it was the first time airmen were organized in a mission-oriented (coastal defense in this case) command that did not report to or directly support the Army Field Forces. See Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 14. By mid-1941, the GHQ and Army Air Corps had been consolidated under General Henry “Hap” Arnold with the creation of the Army Air Forces. See Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, and Doctrine*, Vol. I, 102-105. In 1942, an Army reorganization set up the Army Air Forces as coequal with the newly created Army Ground Forces and Army Service Forces. With this move, the Army Air Forces gained the penultimate step towards its eventual autonomy as a separate service co-equal with the Army and Navy, in the process, inheriting all of the Army’s proclivities for unified command. See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 101.

¹²⁷ World War II in Europe, to include the Normandy invasion, was also a *combined* operation, in current parlance, as it involved the efforts of more than one combatant nation acting in concert. See Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010 as amended through 15 July 2011, 187. This added yet another dynamic to the challenges of the joint age.

¹²⁸ This harkens back to the fracas between the Air Corps and the Navy dating from the 1920s. As Allard notes, “The suggestion, therefore, that antisubmarine warfare could be conducted by the joint operation of these bombers in conjunction with carrier-based airplanes immediately ran afoul of established service roles.” Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 110-111

¹²⁹ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 106-7.

fighting force.¹³⁰



¹³⁰ Although still officially part of the Army, the Army Air Forces had gained sufficient autonomy by WWII to be considered a separate service in practice. For a description of this evolution, see: James P. Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy Toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1998).

CHAPTER THREE

THE UNIFICATION STRUGGLE

A Structural, Normative Approach to Jointness

In that battle the lessons were lost, tradition won. The three service departments were but loosely joined. The entire structure...was little more than a weak confederation of sovereign military units.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower¹
1958

Introduction

Amid recriminations swirling after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt established field commands under Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur as well as Admiral Nimitz, placing a single flag officer over the service components in each area of operations.² The fix for the problems exposed on 7 December 1941 was, it seems, quite obvious: unity of command. To facilitate joint action, one need only provide a clear chain of command with unambiguous responsibility and authority vested in a single overall commander. In this respect, failure at Pearl Harbor can be thought of as a turning point for the military establishment, after which a four-decade struggle ensued to replace the coordinative approach to command and control that had defined inter-service relationships thus far in the joint age.

The establishment of unified commands is indicative a structural, normative approach to improving command and control of military forces that seeks an ideal-type organization—one that emphasizes hierarchy and centralization of decision-making to provide clear delineation of responsibility and authority while relying on the military professional ethic of obedience to retain

¹ Quoted in James R. Locher, III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 25-26.

² See for example, Thomas A. Cardwell, III, *Command Structure for Theater Warfare: The Quest for Unity of Command*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1984), 10, and Louis Morton, "Pacific Command: A Study in Interservice Relations", *The Harmon Memorial Lecture Series in Military History*, Number Three (Colorado Springs, CO: United States Air Force Academy, 1961), Appendix Chart #2.

control over decentralized endeavors. This approach purports to address the chief shortcoming of the coordinative model of multi-service command. As Pearl Harbor aptly demonstrated, when everyone is responsible, in fact, no one is. The reliance on mutual cooperation between the Army and Navy to coordinate the defense of Hawaii by gentlemen's agreement meant that only the President himself held complete, overarching responsibility and authority. Whenever the services' approaches differed, threatening to produce friction, the commanders either ignored the problem or agreed to disagree, in essence, allowing each service to pursue its own interests. Ineffectiveness and inefficiency were frequently the result.

The pursuit of improved effectiveness and efficiency through better organization had, in fact, already been at work since the beginning of the joint age, reshaping the internal structure of the War department in the wake of the Spanish-American war. Secretary Root's foundational reforms had defined a general trend that would play out over the near half-century following WWII: increasing hierarchy and subordination within the military establishment to generate integration by establishing more distinct lines of responsibility and authority. It is this notion of centralization of authority and responsibility through hierarchy and subordination that undergirds unity of command. Spurred by the lesson of WWII and its aftermath, defense leaders at all levels up to and including the President, would turn increasingly to what Paul Hammond called, somewhat pejoratively, "a dogma for the line officer of the Army" to combat the tendency of divergent service interests to impede the integration needed in the joint age.³

In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Act supposedly legislated the ideal-type organizational structure for the American military. A brief examination of the four-decade struggle for unity of command demonstrates that this is not a wholly accurate characterization. The process evolved

³ Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 47.

an organization and doctrine that retained elements of the coordinative model of inter-service relations. At every turn, the legacy of the idiosyncratic command arrangements that evolved during WWII would impede the pursuit of unification and preserve inroads for pluralism and the pursuit of service self-interest.

The Legacy of World War II

In 1946, General Eisenhower proposed what would later become the *Unified Command Plan*, in effect, formalizing a concept for multi-service commands based upon the theater warfighting organizations of WWII.⁴ The largely *ad hoc* arrangements that attended the creation of these unified commands during the war ensured the newly minted theater commands would, however, be riddled with problems from the start—problems that inevitably would serve to impede jointness. Perhaps most obvious is that the WWII commands were, in fact, not unified at all. As noted in the opening chapter for example, General Carl Spaatz, who commanded the strategic bomber force in Europe, reported directly to Army Air Forces Commander General Henry Arnold. The official relationship between Generals Eisenhower and Spaatz was akin to a coordination channel, and not the line of command authority one would expect for the Supreme Commander.⁵ This arrangement caused significant friction as General Eisenhower sought to employ Spaatz's planes in preparation for the Normandy invasion.⁶ Of all the myriad challenges he faced, this situation is perhaps the only one that caused the Supreme Commander to give

⁴ Called the "Outline Command Plan" at the time, President Truman approved it in December, 1946, thus establishing seven geographic commands: Far East, Pacific, Alaskan, Northeast, Atlantic, Caribbean, and European. See Cardwell, *Command Structure for Theater Warfare*, 11.

⁵ The relationship was known as "operational direction," which is roughly equivalent to tactical control in modern parlance. See Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe* (Washington DC: Center for Air Force History, 1993), 342-3, and Cardwell, *Command Structure for Theater Warfare*, 10.

⁶ According to General William Momyer, Spaatz lobbied Arnold to prevent placing the strategic bombers under Eisenhower's control for the invasion. See William W. Momyer, *Air Power in Three Wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam)* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2003), 53.

serious consideration to resigning.⁷ General Arnold successfully erected a similar setup in the Pacific as the focus of the war shifted fully to Japan in 1945.⁸ A separate command channel for strategic bombers would be a recurring theme throughout the unification struggle, resurfacing to produce friction during the war in Vietnam and to a lesser extent in Korea.⁹

The war in the Pacific bequeathed yet another legacy that would resurface in later conflicts. Recall, the Pacific theater was, from the start, divided into two separate commands under General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz. In essence, neither the Army nor the Navy would consider fully subordinating all of its forces to the other service.¹⁰ The default solution was to deconflict operations so that each service could fight its preferred war. Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur were thus given responsibility for distinct geographic areas separated by an arbitrary line on the map.¹¹ Further, once American forces had secured the Mariannas, thereby providing a base from which B-29s could reach the Japanese main island, XXI Bomber Command added yet a third command element to the Pacific theater such that, by the time of the Japanese surrender, the Army, Navy and Army Air Forces were, in essence, waging three separate wars against Japan.¹² Carving out areas of responsibility to avoid tough command and

⁷ Davis, *Spaatz*, 344.

⁸ General Arnold wrote, “I could not give [the B-29 bombers] to MacArthur, because they would operate ahead of Nimitz’s command; I could not give them to Nimitz since in that case they would operate in front of MacArthur’s advance. So, in the end, while everybody wondered why I kept personal command...there was nothing else I could do.” Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 348. Eric Larrabee writes regarding Arnold’s rationale, “The B-29s...made up the first aggregate of air power that was truly global, bound to no single theater of operations...this was in the nature of their range and bomb capacity, of their ‘strategic’ mission; they were a war-winning weapon or they were nothing.” Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 581.

⁹ See Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 112-122. See also, Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, Rev. Ed. (Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 46-47.

¹⁰ Louis Morton notes, “The ideal solution to command in the Pacific would be to place the entire theater under one head. Everyone was agreed on this, but no one quite knew how to overcome the formidable obstacles in the way of such an arrangement...The reason was evident: there was no available candidate who would be acceptable to everyone concerned.” Morton, *Pacific Command*, 6-7, 14.

¹¹ Morton, *Pacific Command*, 7-8.

¹² Regarding XXI Bomber Command and B-29s in the Mariannas, see: Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, and Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force*, vol. I, 1907-1960 (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1987), 162-165, Allan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the*

control decisions would appear again, most notably as the much-maligned route packs that divided Vietnam into attack zones to placate the Air Force and the Navy.¹³

Perhaps more important is the legacy of the Joint Chiefs of Staff system, which, more than anything else, ensured that service interests would maintain significant inroads into the unified command structure.¹⁴ The enormity of the mobilization for WWII and the totality of the subsequent war effort provided the conditions for an unprecedented increase in the size and power of the services. No longer were the Army and Navy small and static; rather, they had become the most powerful bureaucracies in the government.¹⁵ In late December, 1941, in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack and America's official entry into the war, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill convened the Arcadia conference to discuss the Allied war effort. The President brought Admirals King and Stark as well as Generals Marshall and Arnold to the conference in order to meet the British wartime leaders on equal terms.¹⁶ Following Arcadia,

United States of America (1984; Rev ed. New York: The Free Press, 1994), 477 and Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 613. Millet and Maslowski note, "General George C. Marshall fretted about 'localitis' and 'theateritis,' a virulent condition of limited perspective that seemed to infect all the Allied principal commanders." Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 454. Hammond writes, "Interservice cooperation declined perceptibly during early 1945...it seemed that all three services were to fight their own individual war with Japan." Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 163.

¹³ See Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 104-112.

¹⁴ Hammond writes, "The JCS, it should be emphasized, is the most essential single factor in our further analysis of American defense institutions." Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 159.

¹⁵ Allard writes, "...the demands of total warfare were to have a lasting impact upon the command structure of the armed forces...The services would evolve quickly for rather small, decentralized and utterly separate entities into well-developed hierarchies that deployed vast land, sea and air forces in operational theaters encircling the globe." C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 98.

¹⁶ The British military had been a tri-Service arrangement since the creation of the Royal Air Force in 1918. Thus, the British Chiefs of staff included, at the time, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, Field Marshall Sir John Dill, and Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Portal. Though not organized into a formal war council like the British chiefs, the Americans brought military leaders for land, air, and sea power to meet the British on somewhat equal terms. Together, the military leaders of both countries formed the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Note that when the Arcadia conference was held in late December, 1941, Admiral Harold Stark was still the Chief of Naval Operations and Roosevelt had just appointed Admiral King as Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet. Further, Arnold was General Marshall's Deputy Chief of Staff for Air and the Chief of the Air Corps. The President would, henceforth, deal directly with this group, which acted as a *de facto* war council, for the direction of the war effort. Regarding the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Vernon E. Davis, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, Organizational Development*, vol. I, *Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff* (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff historical Division, 1972). Arcadia attendees are listed on page 139.

Roosevelt would increasingly refer war matters to the military heads of these powerful organizations, which became known collectively as the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹⁷ To this group the President also added his personal Chief of Staff, Admiral William Leahy, setting the precedent for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that was to come later. Together with President Roosevelt's style of leadership as Commander-in-Chief, the growth of the services vaulted the service chiefs into positions of great power and influence.¹⁸

Early on, Admiral King set the precedent for unanimity in decision-making by insisting on the right of any member, in effect, to veto any proposal.¹⁹ This ensured that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would be little more than an updating of the old Joint Board's management by committee, and that the Navy's preferred coordination model would enjoy considerable longevity in the military establishment.²⁰ Nonetheless, for a significant portion of the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff pulled together to form a reasonably effective inter-service coalition, ironically, based upon mutual cooperation. But, as the exigencies of war abated, the coalition began to fall apart and with it went the spirit of cooperation that had brought the Allies to the threshold of victory.²¹ As attention turned to preparing for the postwar demobilization, service interests inevitably came to the fore.

¹⁷ Collectively, the military heads from both allied nations were known as the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

¹⁸ Robert Watson notes, "Throughout the conflict the Joint Chiefs operated with no formal charter or directive defining their duties. President Franklin D. Roosevelt preferred to leave them free to extend their activities as necessary." Robert J. Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the National Security Structure," in Paul R. Schratz ed., *Evolution of the Military Establishment Since World War II* (Lexington, VA: George C. Marshall Research Foundation, 1978), 91.

¹⁹ King exercised veto power to block a proposal for a "Special Anti-Submarine Task Force under Army command." "...in Admiral King [the Army] encountered an immovable object. Antisubmarine warfare was part of the war at sea, and the war at sea was the responsibility of naval officers, to be understood and executed solely by them." (italics original) Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 179. See also Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 20.

²⁰ The Army's official study of the defense reorganizations during and after WWII notes, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff possessed a major weakness as an operating agency from the very beginning: it lacked the power of decision." Edgar F. Raines, Jr. and David R. Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Evolution of Army Ideas on the Command, Control and Coordination of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1942-1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986),

²¹ Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 164.

Not only would service interests remain a significant, if not dominant, force in Washington, but the newfound power of the services chiefs and the coordinative nature of the Joint system would also extend service interests into the field commands in two important ways. The first is the notion of service branding of theaters. Another legacy of WWII, the services were, in effect, able to lay claim to a particular theater command by virtue of their “preponderance of interest” in that theater. For example, Admiral Nimitz was the top commander in the Pacific Ocean Areas since it was predominately a maritime theater. Expecting a large portion of its battles to be fought by the opposing fleets, Admiral King argued that a Navy admiral should command it. Similarly, General MacArthur headed the forces in the Southwest Pacific precisely because the liberation of the Philippines would involve a significant ground campaign.²²

The command arrangements in the Pacific thus established a link between service imperatives and “possession” of a unified command. Since each service’s theory of war forms the cornerstone of its institutional legitimacy and relevancy, and, in the defense arena, legitimacy and relevancy translate directly into resources—funds, manpower, and weapons—theater branding created a self-reinforcing dynamic that provided incentive for the services to pursue self-interest. If, for example, one makes the case that a particular theater is largely a maritime one, then it follows that the nation’s interests are perhaps best served by a largely maritime force—perhaps in the ideal, a Mahanian battle fleet. Further, if the nation’s interests in theater are best served by a maritime force, then it is a short leap to the notion that only a naval officer can properly command the theater. The theater, now cast in terms of a service view of war,

²² See Morton, *Pacific Command*, 7, 16-18. There is likely a bit of tail wagging the dog here as the establishment of the Pacific Ocean Areas and Southwest Pacific Area were quite likely based on the assumption, implicit or otherwise, that Nimitz and MacArthur would have command of some portion of the Pacific campaign. Nevertheless, the point that the services established the precedent for “ownership” of a unified command remains valid.

becomes a significant justification in securing resources for that “owning” service. In this way, the interests of the service come to dominate the entire setup for that theater, in essence, controlling both the supply and demand side of the equation.²³

Service competency in the unified commands—a direct outgrowth of the way in which President Roosevelt chose to route orders to the field—also left an inroad for service self-interest. Although President Roosevelt appointed a supreme commander for each area of operations, the fact remains that, to some extent, each commander presided over a confederation of service components. During WWII, orders were not transmitted directly to field commanders from either the Commander in Chief or the Joint Chiefs as a body. Rather, the Joint Chiefs of Staff operationalized the President’s directives, but then routed orders via their service staffs to the services’ respective theater and component commanders.²⁴ The net result was that each service component as well as the theater commander retained strong ties back to the parent service. This dynamic usurped the authority of the field commander to some extent and tended to undermine the spirit of jointness.

Not only had the organizational ad hocery of WWII established precedents that would preserve service pluralism, but the culmination of the war also foretold the continuation of service autonomy and self-interest. Two important, lasting images arise from WWII: the epic land battle against Germany that bequeathed the east-west division in Europe and an increasingly chilly relationship with the erstwhile Soviet allies; and the endgame in the Pacific where each service was prepared to deliver the *coup de grâce*: the Navy via blockade, the Army via invasion of the main island, and the soon-to-be-independent Air Force by bombing the Japanese into

²³ The intent here is not to impugn the Navy (or perhaps only the Navy), implicitly or otherwise; the issue is systemic and the same charge applies to all of the services.

²⁴ See Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 104, and Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 18.

submission—all made irrelevant by the atomic bomb.²⁵ The final act in Europe set the stage for the Cold War, while the concluding chapter of the Pacific campaign(s) ushered in the nuclear age that would define the Cold War and ensured that each of the services would attempt to claim the lion's share of the credit for the victory. Even before Japan's surrender, the services began to jockey for position in the resource battles that were sure to ensue as the nation attempted to return to normalcy. Together, the Cold War and the return to service separatism would provide the impetus for the bitter rivalry that would characterize much of the unification struggle.

The Department of Defense

As might be expected, the exigencies of WWII in general, and the war's early, costly lessons in particular, renewed the interest in organizational reform that had surfaced during the interwar years. In 1942, for example, the War Department reorganized to form the Army Ground Force, the Army Air Forces, and the Army Service Forces, each headed by a commanding general under Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, in some respects, thus

²⁵ In 1945, given the fall of Germany and the imminent capture of Okinawa, the debate turned to how best to precipitate Japan's unconditional surrender. The options were to continue conventional operations or employ the atomic bomb. President Truman established what became known as the Interim Committee to consider the way forward. Those primarily involved in the development of the new weapon urged for its employment of at the earliest opportunity. The Joints Chiefs, perhaps not wholly convinced the atomic bomb would actually work, favored continuation of conventional operations, which centered on continuation of strategic bombing and blockade followed by assaults on Kyushu and Honshu, Operations OLYMPIC and CORONET. The rationales given by the respective service chiefs amount to classic expressions of service self-interest. See: Minutes, White House Meeting 18 June 1945. Record Group 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Decimal Files, 1942-1945, box 198 334 JCS (2-2-45) Mtg 186th-194th, and Louis Morton, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 1987), 500-502. General Arnold is illustrative: Citing the interim report of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey committee, which stated, "The strategic air offensive as developed and employed in the latter part of 1944, effectively paralyzed the German war economy and thereby contributed in a decisive measure to the early and complete victory which followed," Arnold wrote, "Accordingly, with all of the Air Power available to us, I submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff the following: I consider that our concept for operations against Japan should be to place, initially, complete emphasis upon strategic Air offensive, complemented by a Naval and Air blockade...Estimates of the Joint Target Group indicate that the military and economic capacity of the Japanese nation can be destroyed by an effective dropping, on Japan, of 1,600,000 tons of bombs. This tonnage should disrupt industry, paralyze transportation and seriously strain the production and distribution of foods and other essentials of life. These effects might cause a capitulation of the enemy, and, in any event, will assure the success of the land campaign in Japan, and reduce the loss of American lives to a minimum." Arnold, *Global Mission*, 595-596.

bringing Elihu Root's vision to full fruition.²⁶ General Marshall also revived the debate regarding a reorganization of the entire military establishment, proposing as early as 1943 a United States General Staff with a single Chief of Staff at its helm.²⁷ Again, the approach was structural and normative in nature. Spurred by the acute lack of preparedness that had hamstrung the Army from the start of the war, Marshall began to lay the groundwork for unification that he hoped would secure an equitable share of post-war resource allocation.²⁸ Airmen supported the Army approach as a means to long-desired autonomy, for inherent in the Army's vision of unification was an independent Air Force to serve as a hedge against the Navy's domination of the defense budget that had traditionally hampered Army readiness.²⁹ Regardless of the underlying motives, one intent is clear: General Marshall sought to improve the preparedness of the military by streamlining the structure to provide clear responsibility and authority. Although the shift towards greater centralization had occurred first within the services, the notion of unity of command slowly, but surely, gained traction and would come to influence the entire military establishment.

Given the problems that had beset the American military during WWII, as perhaps highlighted best by Pearl Harbor, it thus appeared that some reorganization was inevitable. In 1944, with the tide of war turning in favor of the Allies, leaders began to contemplate postwar demobilization and organization. Congress established the Woodrum committee to conduct

²⁶ See: Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, Enlarged ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 442-3. Characterized as General Marshall's "floor-shaking and widow-rattling reorganization of the Army" in Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 104.

²⁷ See Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 31-32, and Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 112-113.

²⁸ Hammond notes, "...unification had become the device for dealing with the same problem: the avoiding, or at least minimizing, of competition for appropriations...The Army proposals for unification would maximize the extent to which questions involving the treatment of the services would be answered in the consolidated military staff, where the Army could meet its sister services on equal terms." Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 194.

²⁹ See: Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 193.

hearings toward this end.³⁰ Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney presented what amounted to a restatement of General Marshall's 1943 unification plan. The central theme of the McNarney Plan was the creation of a single military department consisting of Army, Navy and Air Force components.³¹ In the meantime, the Joint Chiefs of Staff referred the plan to the Joint Strategic Survey Committee headed by retired Admiral James O. Richardson. Admirals Leahy and King succeeded in broadening the charter of this study group to a determination of the optimum defense organization, whether one, two or three departments, thus hinting at the divisiveness of the unification issue.³² Although the study recommended "three services within one military organization," major changes were postponed until after the war.³³ That Richardson Committee report formed the basis for the unification platform of what Demetrios Caraley called the "War Department coalition."³⁴ Congressional hearings resumed in the fall of 1945, and Lieutenant General J. Lawton Collins presented a revised Army plan based upon the recommendations of the report.

Although the Navy participated in the Richardson study and had, in general, endorsed some of the report's findings, Navy Secretary, James V. Forrestal, blanched at the proposed unification as the long-term implications were clear: the Army and presumed-independent Air

³⁰ Officially, The House Select Committee on Post-war Military Policy, Representative Clifton A. Woodrum, Chairman. Its charter included, "...study of the development of unity of command as practiced during the present war, with a view to determining to what extent that unity of command and administration may be developed and applied as a part of future military policy." See Demetrios Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification: A Study of Conflict and the Policy Process* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 25.

³¹ Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 27. See also, Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 33-34.

³² Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 32.

³³ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 33. Note that Admiral Richardson filed a dissenting view with the report, contending that the lessons of WWII were not sufficiently clear. See Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 36

³⁴ The War Department coalition advocated: "a unitary defense department headed by a single secretary administering a common budget; a JCS headed by a single chief of staff having control of the department budget and direct access to the president; a separate Air Force with control over all land-based aircraft, including those of the Navy; and the limitation of congressional authorization to broad organizational guidelines, with details being delegated to the executive branch." Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 115. See also Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 57.

Force intended to bolster their statures at the expense of the Navy.³⁵ For the Navy coalition, unification would not only risk direction of the fleet by a non-naval officer, but also the loss of land-based aviation and the Marine Corps.³⁶ Further, the plan threatened the Navy's traditional unfettered access to its congressional allies.³⁷ In response, Forrestal commissioned Ferdinand Eberstadt to produce a counter-study. Not surprisingly, the Eberstadt report proposed a setup favoring the status quo. Eberstadt argued that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and unified commands provided sufficient balance to integrate the services without introducing the possibility of arbitrary assignment of roles and missions. The report also reflected Forrestal's contention that the military departments could best be integrated through better interagency coordination, proposing yet another committee system in the form of a National Security Council.³⁸ The Eberstadt Report effectively checked the Army coalition, and the ensuing stalemate lasted until 1947.

President Truman, growing more impatient by the day and increasingly frustrated by his military secretaries, demanded an intense effort to reach a compromise solution.³⁹ Forrestal and Secretary of War Patterson found that they could come to consensus on several of the key elements of unification that the President had outlined in his 1945 proposal to Congress, including formal continuation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, though without a single military Chief

³⁵ See: Herman S. Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence 1943-1947* (Washington DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), 162.

³⁶ The various war department proposals had created a lasting fear of the absorption of the Marines Corps by the Army and all land-based aircraft by an independent Air Force. See Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 162. In testimony, Admiral King referred to the concept of a single Chief of Staff as "potentially, the 'man on horseback'...there are positive dangers in a single command at the highest military level. I consider this fact the most potent argument against the concept of a single department." Quoted in Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 115.

³⁷ In testimony, Admiral King remarked, "The Congress is entitled to full and public examination of all considerations which have a bearing on the question. The needs of the Navy should not be subject to review by individuals who do not have informed responsibility in these premises." Quoted in Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 116.

³⁸ On the recommendations of the Eberstadt report see, for example, Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 38-44, and Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 41-42.

³⁹Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 163.

of Staff. The major areas of contention continued to be the creation of a single Department of National Defense and the status of naval aviation and the Marine Corps.⁴⁰ The services tasked Major General Lauris Norstad and Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman to tackle the remaining stumbling blocks. Throughout much of 1946, Norstad and Sherman canvassed the positions of the relevant stakeholders and worked to close the gap. Despite arguments of duplication and waste on several fronts, the Navy would not budge on the issues of its Fleet Air Arm and the Marine Corps.⁴¹ In effect, the Army was forced to concede these two issues to gain the Navy's acquiescence regarding Air Force independence and the creation of a (somewhat) unified military establishment.⁴² Although the compromise called for a Secretary of National Defense, it also included provisions that preserved significant power and autonomy for the service secretaries, and thus for the services. Though the War Department achieved some of its aims, particularly in terms of a co-equal Air Force, the net result was largely a win for the Navy coalition.

On the surface, the National Security Act of 1947 appeared to be a major restructuring of the American military along the lines of unity of command. The legislation, in addition to creating a separate Air Force, established the position of Secretary of Defense overseeing three military Departments—Army, Navy and Air Force—each headed by a civilian secretary. It also formally recognized the Joint Chiefs of Staff and established the National Security Council on which the Secretary of Defense and the service secretaries would serve to advise the President directly. In reality, however, the compromises that enabled the passage of the law ensured that it

⁴⁰ With respect to aviation, the divide between the services centered largely on long-range aircraft. Army airmen viewed land-based naval aviation as encroachment on the strategic bombing mission. Meanwhile, the Navy saw the specter of an independent Air Force using the issue of the land-based aviation as a first step towards wresting control of all air assets from the fleet. See Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 179.

⁴¹ “The navy and Marine Corps opposed unification as a way of ‘protecting their functions and the composition of their forces.’” Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 24.

⁴² Interestingly, the fact that these provisions were included in the draft legislation had the added effect of giving long-term statutory legitimacy to roles and mission related to naval aviation and the Marine Corps.

would be largely a continuation of the status quo. The service secretaries, by virtue of their inclusion on the National Security council, still enjoyed what amounted to cabinet-level status. With only a small staff and carefully limited authorities, the new defense secretary could do little more than make personal appeals in attempting to coordinate the departments.⁴³ Further, the service chiefs still enjoyed the unprecedented power they had garnered in WWII.⁴⁴ The law did not establish a powerful Chief of Staff as General Marshall had proposed, thus ensuring the ponderous committee approach of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would continue. Though it was a major event in the evolution of the unification struggle, the National Security Act of 1947 did little more than repackage service autonomy as the “National Military Establishment.”⁴⁵

Shortly after Forrestal became the first Secretary of National Defense, the shortcomings of the 1947 legislation became painfully apparent.⁴⁶ Tasked by President Truman to cut defense spending and prepare the military to deter the increasingly worrisome Soviets, Forrestal found himself virtually powerless in the face of service interests. A bitter feud erupted between the Air Force and Navy over the B-36 bomber, a new flush-deck and thus large-aircraft-capable carrier, and, ultimately, the extent to which each service would ultimately provide security for the nation in the nuclear age. The increasingly acrimonious debate over roles and missions led Forrestal to

⁴³ “Because the military departments...retained the status of ‘individual executive departments,’ they were still largely autonomous organizations, with nearly full control over their internal affairs. In fact all power and duties not specifically conferred on the Secretary of Defense became part of the authority of each respective departmental secretary. Furthermore, any service secretary, after informing the Secretary of Defense, could appeal any decision relating to his department.” Steven L. Rearden, *The History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense* vol. 1, *The Formative Years 1947-1950* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office, 1984), 25. President Eisenhower would later remark, “Few powers were vested in the new secretary of defense. All others were reserved to three separated executive departments.” Quoted in Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 26.

⁴⁴ Locher writes, “The National Security Act did not diminish the service chiefs’ power, which they used to erect a service-dominated system.” Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 25.

⁴⁵ The “National Military Establishment” was the original moniker. Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 46. Not until the Amendments of 1949 would the name change to the “Department of Defense.” Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 59.

⁴⁶ President Truman offered the position first to Secretary of War Robert Patterson, who declined. Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 192.

seek changes.⁴⁷ The Hoover commission assembled to study the problems, and testimony before its members precipitated the 1949 amendments to the National Security Act.⁴⁸ This reorganization at last created a single Department of Defense consisting of the three subordinate military departments. It clarified responsibilities and lines of authority by formally subordinating the services to the Secretary of Defense and removing the service secretaries from the National Security Council. The amendment also created the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Despite the implication of the title, the holder of this position was limited to the role of advisor to the President and Secretary, thus ensuring that the coordinative nature of the joint system would be left largely intact.⁴⁹

Korea: An Unexpected Test

Since WWII, the United States had been working up to the role of superpower in the new bipolar world order, grappling with how best to contain the spread of communist influence while helping to rebuild a shattered world. In terms of military power, when North Korea invaded the South in 1950, the nation was in the midst of a transition to support a strategy of nuclear deterrence that relied heavily on the strategic bomber. As a result, the military, once again, struggled with mobilization and rearmament.⁵⁰ Further, the turf battles of the late 1940s had done little to resolve the issues of inter-service cooperation. Naturally, command and control

⁴⁷ Millet and Maslowski write, "Air Force and Navy partisans in uniform and mufti, used Congress to conduct an erratic, bad-tempered review of defense policy and organization. Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 504.

⁴⁸ The Feud boiled over into a public power play by the Navy, known as the "revolt of the admirals," after Secretary Johnson, who President Truman had named to replace Forrestal in early 1949, summarily canceled the *United States*, the Navy's first flush-deck carrier. Both services were maneuvering in the print media, courting both the public and congressional benefactors. See Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals* (Washington, D.C.: Ross and Perry, 2001). Barlow actually characterizes the situation as the Air Force being more skilled in conducting the public relations battle than the Navy. The end result was the resignation of Navy Secretary John L. Sullivan and the ouster of Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld.

⁴⁹ The 1949 amendments came in two parts, enacted in April and August. For details see Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 59.

⁵⁰ Millet and Maslowski note, "From every perspective postwar defense policy seemed calculated to widen the gap between military responsibilities and capabilities." Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 506.

issues also plagued American forces—further evidence of the legacy of WWII. For example, the Far East command staff proved to be formed in the Army image. General MacArthur, upon being named the Supreme Commander of the war effort had a staff dominated by Army officers, not the joint one that might be expected in a unified theater command.⁵¹ Control and integration of airpower, as might be expected, produced friction between the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.⁵² As each sought to conduct air operations in a comparatively small airspace, the best that Far East Air Forces Commander Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer could do in attempting to integrate airpower from the three services was to secure yet another instance of rather ambiguous authority in the form of “coordination control.”⁵³

The limited, conventional war that dragged on for the next three years seemed out of place to an American public that had been sold on the deterrent value of Strategic Air Command, and, of course, general nuclear war if deterrence failed.⁵⁴ President Truman was forced to backtrack on his intended pursuit of economy and seek significant increases in defense

⁵¹ Futrell notes, “In June 1950 the composition and functioning of General Headquarters, Far East Command clearly demonstrated an absence of any vestige of unification principles. In theory, the major commands of the Far East Command were the Army Forces Far East (AFFE), the Naval Forces Far East (NavFE), and the Far East Air Forces (FEAF), but General MacArthur had never organized an Army Forces Far East headquarters. Instead, AFFE was a shadow headquarters, in which CINCFE personally commanded and the GHQ Far East Command staff doubled in brass as the theater-level Army headquarters Staff...Almost wholly manned by Army personnel and predominantly concerned with Army business, the GHQ Far East command was quite naturally ‘dominated by Army thinking and prone to honor Army concepts.’” Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, 44-45.

⁵² For example in early July, 1950 Navy Forces Far East Commander, Vice Admiral Turner Joy, secured exclusive use of a large section of airspace around Pyongyang for air attacks by Task Force 77—essentially a carrier group. Neither Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, Commander of Far East Air Forces, nor his staff was able to contact Task Force 77 to coordinate B-29 strikes in the area. The imminent addition of Marine Corps air assets threatened to make the situation worse, prompting Stratemeyer to seek more centralized control of airpower. See Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, 49-50.

⁵³ See Cardwell, *Command Structure for Theater Warfare*, 15-16.

⁵⁴ SAC was a specified command—that is, an operational command encompassing a broad ongoing mission assigned to a particular service and reporting directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff—in the 1946 Unified Command Plan, though it did not receive official direction from the JCS until 1949. See Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence*, 173-4. General Curtis LeMay, SAC commander at the time, said in an interview, “SAC was the USA Sunday punch and that every effort must be made to make sure that it stayed intact and able to strike and not be pissed away in the Korean War.” Quoted in Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 26.

spending.⁵⁵ Eisenhower, now in military retirement, rode into the White House on the resultant wave of discontent characterized by the slogan: “No More Koreas.”⁵⁶ He promised an economical “New Look” defense policy that would hold the Soviets in check, largely by eschewing proxy wars and vigorously pursuing deterrence via threat of massive retaliation by a formidable, but affordable nuclear striking force.⁵⁷

Unification under Eisenhower and the New Look

The National Security Act of 1947 together with its amendment in 1949 left much to be desired in terms of unity of command. As noted, WWII significantly enhanced the power of the services, and, due to the war’s legacy, their interests were destined to dominate theater commands. Further, the comparative weakness of the position of Secretary of Defense had stymied Forrestal and his successor, Louis A. Johnson, in their attempts to reconcile service interests in order to eliminate overlap and waste as rivalry escalated between soldiers, sailors and airmen jockeying for position in the Cold War defense arena.⁵⁸ President Eisenhower found this arrangement at cross-purposes with his New Look defense plan, which he hoped would secure

⁵⁵ “The Truman administration had an appropriate substitute for victory in the Korean War, and that substitute was the rearmament of the United States...” Some 60 percent of FY1951-53 budgets went toward military programs, while only 40 percent funded the war effort. Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 513.

⁵⁶ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 533. Army Historian Robert Coakley adds, “The election of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President in 1952, promising an end to the war in Korea, in effect repudiated Truman’s military policies. The Korean War, bringing conscription, casualty rates, and apparent lack of purpose, left a bad taste in the public mouth...In the new administration, the desire to avoid future Koreas became a dominating motif.” Robert W. Coakley, “The Army Since Unification: An Old Institution in a New Environment,” in Paul R. Schratz ed., *Evolution of the Military Establishment Since World War II* (Lexington, VA: George C. Marshall Research Foundation, 1978), 40.

⁵⁷ Coakley notes, “...New Look clearly sought, in the words of Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, ‘to maximize air power and minimize the foot soldier,’ to provide within a limited military budget the highest priority for strategic atomic weapons and the lowest for forces required to meet a local threat with a local response.” Coakley, “The Army Since Unification,” 40. Millet and Maslowski note, “Eisenhower believed that proxy wars like Korea and the pressure of defense spending would fatally weaken the American economy...Announcing its intention to have ‘security with solvency,’ the...administration deemphasized conventional forces and stressed the deterrent and war-fighting potential of nuclear weapons.” Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 534-5.

⁵⁸ Secretary Johnson was, arguably, more successful than Forrestal. He was, however, forced to resort to rather authoritarian tactics. Watson writes, “In 1949 Forrestal’s successor, Louis A. Johnson, initially seeking JCS agreement, met only continuing disagreement and made his own decisions on funds allocation and force structure.” Watson, “The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the National Security Structure,” 92.

the Nation without bankrupting it. In response, the President pressed for two defense reorganizations to address the shortcomings of the original unification legislation.

Reorganization Plan 6

In 1952, to aid in the transition of administrations, outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett drew up a list of challenges facing his successor that, among other things, identified his position's lack of complete responsibility for and authority over the Defense Department—a situation, he noted, that stood in stark contrast with the other cabinet positions.⁵⁹ As part of his shakeup of the military, for which Lovett's concerns provided additional motivation, President Eisenhower tasked his new Defense Secretary, Charles E. Wilson, to study the issue further and recommend changes. Secretary Wilson commissioned a committee headed by Nelson Rockefeller to hold hearings on Defense Department reorganization.⁶⁰ The committee's report formed the basis for what is known as Reorganization Plan 6, which the President enacted by notification of Congress in June of 1953.⁶¹ In transferring to the Secretary all functions of the department's subordinate agencies and offices, save for those of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and military services, the reorganization took an incremental step toward clarifying and strengthening the responsibility and authority of the office. In addition to adding six new assistant secretaries to improve oversight and administration, Plan 6 also gave the Secretary the authority to create unified commands and designate a particular service as executive agent.⁶²

The 1953 reorganization also explicitly removed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a body, from the “channel of command” which now ran from the Secretary of Defense (obviously acting on

⁵⁹ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 70.

⁶⁰ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 75.

⁶¹ Watson notes that although Plan 6 contained no measures requiring legislative changes, the 1949 amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 required the President to submit reorganization plans to Congress for approval. See Watson, “The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” 95.

⁶² Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 77-78.

behalf of the Commander-in-Chief) to the secretary of service designated as executive agent.⁶³ The service secretary would, in turn, task the service chief to issue orders to the field under the authority of the Secretary of Defense.⁶⁴ Though this arrangement seemed to be a step backwards from jointness, the power of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff did receive an important boost from increased control over the joint staff, particularly in the area of personnel assignments.⁶⁵

1958 Amendments

President Eisenhower's New Look defense plan placed the preponderance of the burden for the Nation's military security on the Strategic Air Command and, in the process, vaulted the Air Force to dominance among the services. The significant bias in the defense budgets of the 1950s toward the Air Force and nuclear weapons precipitated a crisis of confidence in the Army in particular, which had taken the lesson from Korea that nuclear deterrence, in fact, made proxy war *more* likely. This helped drive a wedge between the services, resulting in intense rivalry as the Army tried to promote a more flexible approach to national security than the all-or-nothing nature of "massive retaliation."⁶⁶

It had become clear to the President over the course of his first term that the reorganization in 1953 had not succeeded in clarifying and strengthening responsibilities and authorities in the Department of Defense. As Paul Hammond notes, "The Service Chiefs remained essentially spokesmen of the interests and perspectives of their services, and their actions as a corporate body consequently continued to have the character of bargains or compromises struck between competing interests rather than decisions based on judgment which

⁶³ Watson writes, "...the President's plan did not remove the JCS members from Service command, as some [Rockefeller] committee members had wished, but it did remove them from *corporate* command responsibility. Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 94-95.

⁶⁴ Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 95, and Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 78-79.

⁶⁵ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 77-78.

⁶⁶ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 84-86.

transcended service interests.”⁶⁷ As President Eisenhower tried to enact the New Look plan, a chief difficulty lay in the fact that the services developed separate budget requests, which “invariably...totaled far more than the Administration was willing to spend.”⁶⁸ In effect, Plan 6 had elevated the Chiefs’ role as military head of their services over their joint roles as members of the collective Joint Chiefs of Staff. By routing the chain of command to the unified commands directly through the service departments vice through the Joint Chiefs as a body, the 1953 reorganization had strengthened the concept of executive agency, giving service interests more sway in the resources battles. Thus, in 1958, Eisenhower pursued new legislation to amend the National Security Act of 1947 to move more responsibility and authority from the service departments to the Secretary of Defense.⁶⁹

The 1958 amendments provided a significant boost to the Secretary’s control over both the unified commands and the individual services. The law first redefined the chain of command to explicitly remove the service secretaries and chiefs, effectively ending the explicit practice of services acting as executive agents for the unified commands.⁷⁰ The chain would henceforth flow from the Commander-in-Chief through the Secretary of Defense to the unified commands, which, in theory, now exercised full control over assigned forces.⁷¹ Further, the law relieved the Secretary of the requirement to administer the military departments separately, requiring only

⁶⁷ Hammond, *Organizing for Defense*, 327-8.

⁶⁸ Watson, “The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” 96. Watson goes on, “Getting down to an acceptable figure involved discussions among the Secretary, the Services, and the JCS. Early in his second administration, President Eisenhower announced (and generally adhered to) an annual budget ceiling. Each annual JSOP [Joint Strategic Objectives Plan] had to be planned within the ceiling, but the difficult of agreeing upon force levels was intensified by the rising costs of weapons systems...”

⁶⁹ The President listed overhauling the defense establishment as his top priority in his 1958 State of the Union address. Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 28.

⁷⁰ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 127.

⁷¹ Service branding and componency would, however, give the services significant influence. Locher notes, “Although the act gave the unified commanders full operational command of assigned forces and removed the military departments from the operations chain of command, the services never complied with these provisions.” Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 28.

that they be organized separately.⁷² This seemingly innocuous provision removed a serious impediment to effective administration as it allowed the Secretary to reassign functions anywhere within the department, including among the services. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, as an entity, lost any command authority that might have remained and became the Secretary's, and by extension the President's, primary military staff to aid the administration and direction of the unified commands, thus providing a "channel of communications from the President and the Secretary to the unified and specified commands."⁷³ The law also provided another incremental boost to the stature of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by giving him a "vote" to put him on equal terms with the other chiefs.⁷⁴

Rise of the Civilians

In 1960, flexible response advocates in the Army found a sympathetic ear in newly elected President John F. Kennedy. The defense portion of his campaign platform was critical of the New Look agenda in general, and a (non-existent) nuclear missile gap in particular. With no apparent end to the nuclear arms race in sight, the new administration sought to erode the Soviets from the margins. This strategy required a balanced military with credible conventional forces and more special operations capabilities. President Kennedy had promised a full examination of the military and appointed former Air Force Secretary and then Senator Stuart Symington to head a committee to propose changes toward this end. Once again, the approach was largely structural. The committee's report recommended what amounted to the creation of a single service, elevating the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to head a Joint Staff in the mold of a General

⁷² Alice C. Cole, Alfred Goldberg, Samuel A. Tucker, and Rudolph A. Winnacker, eds. *The Department of Defense: Documents on Establishment and Organization, 1944-1978* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office, 1978), 316-324.

⁷³ Secretary of Defense, Neil H. McElroy used this language to emphasize that the Joint Chiefs of Staff held no actual command authority. See Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 92.

⁷⁴ See: Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 94, and Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 97.

Staff of the Armed Forces, in effect, making him the commander of the United States military. In this scenario, the service chiefs would be akin to the heads of combat branches. The Symington report also proposed to eliminate the geographically oriented unified commands and replace them with functional joint commands: strategic, tactical, defense, and reserve.⁷⁵

Rather than pursue a major organizational overhaul of the Defense Department, however, President Kennedy turned to Robert McNamara to enact his defense agenda within the existing framework. As Secretary, McNamara brought to fruition Eisenhower's vision of a powerful administrator of the Defense Department. Not content to rely on military assessment and advice, he surrounded himself with systems analysts who could make independent assessments of weapon systems and force structure as well as their attendant budgetary implications. As Edgar Raines and David Campbell note, "McNamara created the armed forces general staff advocated by [General J. Lawton] Collins in 1945 and manned it with civilians."⁷⁶ He also instituted the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) which, he averred, enabled a more objective and holistic view of Defense Department Resources. The PPBS was another element of the Secretary's "active management" style in which he exercised his authority in all areas, not only setting policy but also making operational decision that previous Secretaries had been inclined to leave to uniformed officers.⁷⁷ McNamara, in essence, "functioned as a deputy commander-in-chief, and as his own chief of staff of the armed forces."⁷⁸ In doing so, McNamara had reversed the situation that had existed since WWII, in which the service chiefs were the most powerful players in the military establishment.

⁷⁵ Regarding the Symington Committee proposals, see Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 98-100.

⁷⁶ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 109.

⁷⁷ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 109. Watson writes, "Unlike his predecessors, however, McNamara did not limit himself to evaluating JCS force proposals. He provided himself with his own civilian staff unit (the Office of Systems Analysis, ultimately headed by an Assistant Secretary), which felt free to advance proposals of its own." Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 99.

⁷⁸ Watson, "The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 99.

A String of Failures and The Goldwater-Nichols Act

The momentum for the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986—the ostensible culminating event of the unification struggle—began to build in Vietnam. The questionable notion of flexible response produced the strategy of gradual escalation that failed miserably in Southeast Asia. As Millet and Maslowski note, flexible response “brought such disarray to the armed forces and Congress that it took another war and a decade of learning and political infighting to devalue its assumptions.”⁷⁹ Much of the disarray stemmed from the fact that as the United States slowly sank deeper into Vietnam’s civil war, an utterly confused command structure evolved from the accretion of *ad hoc* arrangements, many of which owe their heritage directly to the legacy of WWII.⁸⁰

More importantly, perhaps, each service saw in the failure a crisis in the paradigm that governed its core identity. This crisis prompted a Khunian reevaluation of core purposes and competencies as each service tried to rebuild from first principles the notion of what it meant to be a soldier, sailor, airman and marine.⁸¹ If the muddled setup in Southeast Asia had provided the services with opportunity to fight the war in accordance with their respective service viewpoints and interests rather than as a joint team, the introspective bent that grew out of failure served to further alienate the services from one another. Jointness thus reached a nadir in and after Vietnam.

⁷⁹ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 555

⁸⁰ For a brief summary of the evolution of the command structure in Vietnam see Cardwell, *Command Structure for Theater Warfare*, 18-22. As an example, one result of the dysfunctional command arrangements was the route pack system that sidestepped tough decisions regarding command and control of airpower by dividing Vietnam into geographic attack zones for the Air Force and Navy. See Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 104-112.

⁸¹ James Kitfield writes, “While it brought the end of America’s direct involvement in the war in Vietnam, 1973 was a moment of reckoning for the U.S. military. There were those in uniform who blamed the defeat solely on mistakes made by the nation’s civilian leadership, and they saw little reason for dramatic change. Others believed nothing short of radical reform was needed. Not an officer who persevered through those dismal days was untouched by that fundamental struggle over the soul of their service.” James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 1995), 125.

Both the Nixon and Carter administrations studied defense organization, but enacted no significant structural changes to the department. In 1970, a Blue Ribbon Panel recommended changes somewhat similar to the ones made by the Symington Committee a decade earlier. The action committee appointed by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird subsequently whittled away all of the substantive recommendations such that the only noteworthy change involved reinserting the Joint Chiefs of Staff into the channel of command. As this had been the practice since 1961, despite the provisions of the Eisenhower-era reorganizations, the inescapable conclusion is that “the Blue Ribbon Panel’s report had absolutely no impact on the channel of command.”⁸² Similarly, in 1978, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown commissioned three study groups that produced numerous structural recommendations that, on the whole, resembled what had come from Laird’s Blue Ribbon Panel. And, once again, little to nothing came of the effort.⁸³

The net effect of the evolution of the unification struggle in the period between the National Security Act amendments of 1958 and the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was a definite increase in the stature of civilian institutions in the defense establishment and a *de facto* return of the services to jointness by mutual cooperation.⁸⁴ In the face of the increased authority of the Secretary of Defense, particularly under Robert McNamara, the service chiefs resorted to forming what Barry Posen has called a “negotiated environment.”⁸⁵ In order to preserve service

⁸² Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 126. See also Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 440.

⁸³ Raines and Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 135-146.

⁸⁴ H.R. McMaster writes, “Kennedy gave his new secretary of defense carte blanche, and McNamara took advantage of it...He brought in an army of bright young analysts to assist him, and used the wide latitude given the secretary of defense in the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 to create a staff structure that mirrored military staff functions. Freed from dependence on the JCS for analysis, McNamara exerted civilian control over what had before been almost exclusively military prerogatives.” H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (1997; repr. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998), 18.

⁸⁵ Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (1984; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 54.

autonomy and enable the pursuit of service interests, the senior military leaders had resorted to “logrolling,” or, in effect, agreeing to stay out of each other’s business in order to present a unified front to the Secretary.⁸⁶ As General Colin Powell has remarked, “Almost the only way the chiefs would agree...was by scratching each other’s backs. Consequently...the joint staff...spent thousands of man-hours pumping out ponderous, least-common-denominator documents that every chief would accept but few Secretaries of Defense or Presidents found useful.”⁸⁷ The Chairman’s comparative lack of authority abetted this tendency by restricting the holder of that position to presenting the consensus recommendations of the collective Joint Chiefs rather than independent assessment and advice.⁸⁸

Heretofore, most, if not all, of the tweaking of the defense establishment had come at the initiative of the executive branch. Two key events, however, provided the impetus for Congress’ unprecedented action. In 1980, Operation EAGLE CLAW failed to liberate American hostages held captive in Teheran by Iranian militants. The abortive rescue suffered from numerous problems that were the direct result of the divide that had re-opened between the services. Air Force Colonel James Kyle, Eagle Claw’s on-scene commander, summed up the situation: “four commanders at the scene without visible identification, incompatible radios, and no agreed-upon

⁸⁶ Owen Coté argues that Robert McNamara, though he attempted to divide and conquer, actually drove the service chiefs into each other’s arms. He writes, “The new management style exposed all service programs to close review. No longer would programs be protected by majority or unanimous support within the JCS. Under such a regime, the value of tacit alliances between two services against a third in particular program areas evaporated, since the locus of decision making authority had shifted into OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]. Indeed, McNamara used the existence of such open competition between the services as evidence of the overwhelming need for centralized authority such as OSD unaffected by parochial service biases. Thus, McNamara practically forced the services into a cooperative relationship by using their competitive behavior as an excuse for denuding them of all programming responsibility.” Owen Reid Coté, “The Politics of Innovative Military Doctrine: The U.S. Navy and Fleet Ballistic Missiles” (PhD dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996), 370.

⁸⁷ Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 410-411.

⁸⁸ See Watson, “The Evolving Role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” 101.

plan, not even a designated location for the commander.”⁸⁹ It appeared that four decades of struggling for unity since WWII had comparatively little impact on jointness. Indeed, the same language used to describe the situation at the outset of WWII could aptly apply to the debacle at Desert One—there seemed to be no effective means to plan a joint operation; and the services appeared to have little, if any, experience working in close concert with one another.

The failed hostage rescue spawned numerous studies and after-action reviews that precipitated few, if any, immediate changes. It was not until Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones “broke ranks” in 1982 and pleaded to the Congress to intervene, that the arduous process that resulted in the Goldwater-Nichols Act began.⁹⁰ General Jones, frustrated in his efforts to promote jointness, had come to the realization that the services still dominated the unified commands via their direct oversight of the component commands, thus undermining the warfighting commander’s ability to wage a joint fight. In effect, the warfighting commander had no direct influence over the training of forces and development of weapons with which he would fight a war. Further, the Chairman’s restricted role in the system meant that no effective champion of jointness existed. Jones’ broad recommendations included strengthening the role of the Chairman, elevating the role of warfighting commanders in joint processes, increasing the reliance of the Joint Chiefs on the Joint Staff rather than services staffs, and providing better incentives for joint duty.⁹¹

The second event that spurred reform action was the 1983 invasion of Grenada. Codenamed URGENT FURY, the incursion achieved the objectives set for it, but revealed that,

⁸⁹ James Kitfield notes, “Because the services worked and trained together relatively infrequently, cobbled-together operations like Eagle Claw frequently led to friction over clear command-and-control.” Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldier*, 219.

⁹⁰ General Jones summarized the text of a forthcoming article, “Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change,” during testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in February of 1982. Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 33. See David C. Jones, “Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change,” *Armed Forces Journal International* 119, no. 7 (March 1982), 69-71.

⁹¹ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 36.

among other issues, not only were the services doctrinally divergent, but they also procured weapon systems based largely on service priorities and requirements.⁹² Thus, the lack of system interoperability, particularly for communications equipment, had become a significant impediment to effective joint operations.⁹³ Together with the disastrous, concomitant excursion to Beirut, Lebanon where 239 Americans, including 220 Marines, died from a terrorist bomb, Grenada punctuated a growing list of subpar military ventures highlighting just how truly disjointed and seemingly ineffective the American military had become.⁹⁴

The exigencies of WWII had permitted service-oriented precedents to take hold in the Defense Department that would make the struggle for unity exceeding difficult. Vietnam and the string of embarrassments that followed over the next decade cast a large shadow of doubt over the American military. After the bungled hostage rescue and sloppy Grenada invasion, the notion that the United States could underwrite free world security began to strain credibility. How, for example, could NATO withstand the purported Soviet juggernaut when its key player,

⁹² General Colin Powell, serving at the time as the Secretary of Defense's military assistant, remarked in his memoirs, "The invasion was hardly a model of service cooperation. The campaign had started as a Navy-led operation, and only at the last minute was Major General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, then commanding the Army's 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), added to Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf's staff to make sure someone senior was on board who understood ground combat. Relations between the services were marred by poor communications, fractured command and control, interservice parochialism...The operation demonstrated how far cooperation among the services still had to go. The invasion of Grenada succeeded, but it was a sloppy success." Powell, *My American Journey*, 292.

⁹³ General Schwarzkopf notes, "My emotions about the operation were complicated. Above all I was proud that we'd gotten the job done and elated that the American public—at least from my observation—had come out in support of its troops. At the same time, we had lost more lives than we needed to, and the brief war had revealed a lot of shortcomings—an abysmal lack of accurate intelligence, major deficiencies in communications, flareups of interservice rivalry, interference by higher headquarters in battlefield decision, our alienation of the press, and more." H. Norman Schwarzkopf with Peter Petre, *General H. Norman Schwarzkopf The Autobiography: It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 258.

⁹⁴ See Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 620. The list includes the 1968 seizure of the USS Pueblo by North Korean forces and the hijacking of the American merchant ship *Mayaguez* by Cambodian armed forces in 1975. For a brief review of the military failures often cited as the impetus for Goldwater-Nichols Act see: Paul M. Benson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act: A Ten Year Report Card* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for Information Policy Research, 1998), 15-20. Kitfield writes, "...crises requiring a joint military response in the past decade were a list of infamy—Vietnam, Mayaguez, Pueblo, Desert One, Beirut. As details continued to emerge on Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, even that 'victory' had written on it many of the problems that had doomed other operations to failure." Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 278.

the American military, could not put together a smooth operation facing armed thugs in a backwater like Grenada? As a result, the issue of joint and service interests came to the fore in the mid 1980s, and Congress, led in large measure by Senators Barry Goldwater and Sam Nunn, established nine broad reform objectives designed to restore balance: strengthen civilian authority; improve military advice; clarify the responsibility of combatant commanders for mission accomplishment; match the authority of the combatant commanders with their responsibilities; stimulate better strategy formulation and contingency planning; improve efficiency in the use of resources; improve joint officer management; enhance military effectiveness and Defense Department management overall.⁹⁵

For the present purposes, the objectives directed at the warfighting commands and the joint institutions are of particular interest. Much as General Jones had concluded during his tenure as Chairman, Congress, in studying the problem, found “the combatant commands weak, unified in name only” and merely “loose confederations of powerful service components and forces.”⁹⁶ To remedy this situation, the Goldwater-Nichols Act at once strengthened the role of the Chairman and removed him and the rest of the Joint Chiefs from the chain of command. No longer would the Chairman be the purveyor of the Joint Chief’s watered-down, consensus advice. Rather, the holder of that position would be the Commander-in-Chief’s principal military advisor, which had been the intention from the beginning. Further, the chain of command, particularly in wartime, ran from the President through the Secretary of Defense, directly to the combatant

⁹⁵ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 437. Congress derived its objectives primarily from the recommendations of three studies: CSIS Defense Organization Project, Philip A. Odeen, Andrew Jackson Goodpaster, and Melvin R. Laird. *Toward a More Effective Defense: The Final Report of the CSIS Defense Organization Project* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1985), the Locher Report (named after staffer James R. Locher, III): U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Defense Organization: The need for Change*, Committee Print 99-86 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1985), and the Packard Commission: President’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, David Packard, et al. *Quest for Excellence: Final Report to the President* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1986). For a summary see Benson, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act: A Ten Year Report Card*.

⁹⁶ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 440.

commander.⁹⁷ The service chiefs would be thus become merely force providers to organize, train and equip forces to be wielded by the combatant commanders. Further, they would be relegated to something akin to a war council to provide a sounding board for the Chairman and Defense Secretary.

Conclusion

The 1986 legislation ostensibly culminated the four-decade-long pursuit of unity of command, prescribing the proper hierarchy and centralization of decision-making that would finally ameliorate jointness by clarifying responsibility and authority within the chain of command. Over the course of the various reorganizations, the process of unification provided a strong civilian administrator in the Secretary of Defense to meld the service departments together. Legislation established the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and strengthened it in order to afford the Secretary and the President a neutral advisor and a strong advocate for jointness. Finally, the unification struggle birthed joint warfighting commands with a clear chain of command from the Commander-in-Chief to the joint commander, supposedly free from service influences. The Goldwater-Nichols Act thus serves as the transition point for the modern era for command and control of multiservice, and anchors the doctrine by which the United States military has waged war in all of the post-Cold War conflicts.

To put the point plainly, this brief survey of the unification struggle shows that a structural, normative approach has formed a consistent thread through all of the studies and reforms up to and including Goldwater-Nichols. Each evolutionary step has sought to tweak the internal structure of the military establishment to provide an ideal-type organization, in which clear responsibilities and authorities combined with a professional military's ethic of obedience would effectively mute self-interested service behavior. Indeed, in drafting the Goldwater-

⁹⁷ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 440, and Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 3.

Nichols Act, James Locher notes, “Congress modeled the law on the authority that the military had traditionally given to a unit commander.”⁹⁸

The legacy of the unification struggle is, however, “a decidedly mixed bag of integration and autonomy.”⁹⁹ Little aim was taken at the inherent pluralism that characterizes the American military. Thus, each service still operates largely within the narrow confines of its traditional paradigm. Further, some of the decisions regarding the structure of the military establishment, such as the retention of separate military departments and the continuation of componentry in the unified commands have served to retain a significant amount of autonomy for the services.

In leaving these remnants of service pluralism and autonomy untouched, the unification struggle has, unwittingly, introduced and perpetuated another problem in multiservice command and control—one that has gone largely unresolved, and, for that matter, unnoticed. Indeed, it is a problem that the structural, normative approach can neither identify nor fix; that requires another perspective altogether.

⁹⁸ Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 441.

⁹⁹ Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, 129.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE AGENCY PROBLEM

Challenges in Delegation

Each pursues his own course like a horse charging into battle.
The Prophet Jeremiah¹
c. 605 B.C.

Introduction

The net result of the evolution of the American military establishment from its inception through the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act is doctrine for multiservice combat operations in which a Joint Force Commander must rely on the various service institutions to provide the panoply of capabilities necessary for conventional combat. In effect, there is a delegation of warfighting tasks to the components by virtue of their respective, specialized expertise. Some basic examples of this delegation include tasking the air component (and by extension, largely the Air Force) for control of the air domain and the maritime component (by default the Navy) for control of the maritime domain. In essence, the Joint Force Commander “hires” the service components to act on his behalf in support of the overall war effort. Delegation, in this context, is virtually a necessity since the Joint Force Commander, as first and foremost a member of a service, has been conditioned by a particular war paradigm and does not possess all of the expertise necessary to prosecute a joint war. This division of labor is, however, not without drawbacks. In general, delegation brings a set of issues known collectively as the agency problem. An understanding of the challenges inherent in delegation helps point the way to a new perspective on multiservice command and control.

¹ Jeremiah 8:6 New International Version.

The General Problem of Agency

The study of agency originated in the field of economics as a response to two challenges in employer-employee relations. An employer (principal) seeks to hire an employee (agent) to perform some task on behalf of the employer, in this context largely in pursuit of efficiency. Clearly, the employer seeks an employee who will perform the task exactly as the employer desires—most generally, working productively and not loafing. The employer is thus immediately presented with the challenge of discerning whether or not a potential employee will be a diligent worker. To gain employment, the potential employee has incentive to misrepresent personal intentions and inflate the diligence with which he or she intends to approach the task.² This distortion by the potential employee raises the problem of adverse selection—that the employer is more likely to hire someone who will, in fact, not work as desired. Once hired, this employee has further incentive to perform as little work as possible—that is, to shirk—while trying to convince the employer otherwise. Further, the employer is at a disadvantage in discerning the actual performance of the employee. This moral hazard requires that the employer seek ways, other than the employee's self-reporting, to monitor the employee to ensure acceptable performance. Together, these issues prevent the employer from realizing all of the efficiency that might otherwise accrue from the relationship.

Fundamentally, agency is a “strategic interaction carried out within a hierarchical setting” between a superior (the principal) and a subordinate (the agent).³ Players act according to their view of what ought to be done as shaped by expectations regarding what the other might do and information about what the other actually does. In more general terms, the problem of adverse

² In the basic form, we set aside the issue of misrepresentation of qualification in terms of skills and assume that the agent has not lied about training, certification and the like and, thus, meets the minimum requirements to hold the position.

³ See Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (2003: repr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 54.

selection represents the potential for the introduction of divergent aims into any endeavor by the act of delegation. Further, in light of this potential, the moral hazard represents the principal's challenge of establishing and maintaining the alignment of an agent's efforts—that is, to direct efforts toward a desired outcome in the face of divergent aims without undermining the benefits that might otherwise accrue from the delegation.

The Agency Theory of Civil-Military Relations

Peter Feaver has built upon the basic elements of the principal-agent framework to develop what he calls an agency theory of civil-military relations. In general, his application of agency theory has sought to overcome the normative limitations of traditional views of the civil-military dynamic by capturing a rationalist element. As noted in Chapter 1, a similar normative limitation hampers analysis and understanding of joint command and control. Namely, unity of command prescribes what should happen, but does not offer any means to explain deviations from the ideal. Feaver employs his theory in a process of “reverse engineering,” which takes an “observed civil-military outcome and predicts the values of certain key variables” to construct the antecedents of that outcome.⁴ After briefly laying out the key dimensions of Feaver's agency theory, the remainder of this chapter seeks to adapt his approach into a framework for study of joint command and control.

Preference Gap, Working and Shirking

As noted in the discussion of the general principal-agent framework, the central issue in the act of delegation is the potential for (or perhaps inevitability of) the introduction of divergent aims. In general, a difference of some varying magnitude will inevitably exist between the goals of the principal and agent in any given situation. In the civil-military context, Feaver attributes

⁴ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 96.

this divergence to differing perspectives derived from two main factors.⁵ The military community, like any profession, has an identity or culture, symbolized by its uniforms, rituals and so forth, which mark it as distinctly different from those of civilians. Not only do civilians and military begin from very different backgrounds, but there is also an inherently different perspective given to each by the very act of delegation. The civilian is, in effect, hiring the military to manage the application of violence as a subset of some larger political milieu. The roles of superior and subordinate, and politician and combatant, for example, necessarily induce a difference of perspective on war that potentially translates into divergent aims.

Given an “irreducible difference between military and civilian...[that] will naturally extend to different perspectives,” what, in general, do the principal and agent “want?”⁶ Feaver is careful to point out that “both the civilian principals and the military agents want the same thing: security for the state. They can, however, disagree on how to provide that security, in general and especially in particular settings.”⁷ On the principal side, desires fall along functional and relational axes—civilians want a measure of protection from external enemies while maintaining control over their own destiny. Functionally, the civilian principal desires a competent military, working to the fullest extent to accomplish what has been tasked in terms of the civilian’s desire for both what is to be done and, in some instances, how it is to be done. The civilian also desires that the military accomplish its mission in a manner that also upholds the essence of the civil-military relationship. This includes acting in a manner that ensures that the civilian makes the key, substantive decisions. Quite simply, the civilian principal desires to be the overall decision-maker in substance as well as name.⁸

⁵ For Feaver’s development of the preference gap, see: Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 59-60

⁶ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 59.

⁷ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 59.

⁸ For Feaver’s development of the desires of the civilian principal, see: Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 61.

A key departure of Feaver's agency theory from the general framework is the notion that the military agent possesses some vested interest in any particular endeavor requiring the application of violence. He notes, "unlike an economic agent who might not care how many widgets he produces, the military agent cares about policy and has a general idea about what should be done."⁹ This interest generates three desires regarding the principal-agent relationship. In general, when called to risk lives, the military desires a worthy cause having a reasonable chance of success and seeks to meet the enemy from a position of advantage. These desires equate, for example, to a preference for the offense in order to deal with problems before they become unmanageable.¹⁰ In any case, the military agent wants to be directed to pursue a policy that satisfies these desires. Given a policy to execute, the military agent would prefer that it be given autonomy to do so both in terms of what to do (such as attack or defend) and how to do it (air strikes or a ground invasion). Further, the military seeks the approbation of the nation it serves, desiring honor and respect for placing lives in danger for the greater good.

In the case of civil-military relations, potentially divergent aims are thus introduced by this vested interest of both parties in the substance of policy in a given situation. Both the civilian principal and the military agent approach a problem and develop potential solutions based upon their respective preferences. However, as Feaver notes, "*civilians and the military are both imperfect judges of what is needed for national security.*"¹¹ (italics original) Indeed,

⁹ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 63.

¹⁰ Barry Posen notes, "it is strongly in the interests of a military organization to impose its 'standard scenario' on the adversary through offensive action before the adversary does the same to it...Warfare is an extremely competitive endeavor. Its most successful practitioners strive for even the smallest advantages. Thus, military organizations seem to prefer offensive doctrines not only because they appear to guarantee the side on the offensive its standard scenario, but because they also *deny* the enemy his standard scenario...Taking the offensive, exercising the initiative, is a way of structuring the battle...However, the defending organization is often in a reactive position...fighting a battle of improvisation which [it] would probably prefer to avoid." (italics original) Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (1984; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 48.

¹¹ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 65.

because of delegation, it is entirely likely, if not certain, that both principal and agent have but part of the answer to any given issue. As preferences diverge, the potential for any number of suboptimal arrangements and outcomes increases. Nevertheless, for civilian control of the military to work as envisioned in our democracy, the civilian must prevail, in effect, retaining “the right to be wrong.”¹²

Adapting basic working and shirking from the general principal-agent framework thus has the effect of stratifying the simple work-no work dichotomy over of spectrum of alignment and divergence. Preserving the principal-agent vernacular, perfect working by the agent is doing “what it has contracted with the principal to do, how the principal has asked it to, with due diligence and skill, and in such a way as to reinforce the principal’s superior role in making the decisions and drawing the lines of any delegation.”¹³ Perfect shirking is perhaps more difficult to define in this context, though a *coup d’état* would likely be an instance. It is possible, however, to identify, in general terms, when the agent falls short of the ideal, regardless of the degree to which it does so. Feaver writes, “The military agent is said to shirk when whether through laziness, insolence, or preventable incompetence, it deviates from its agreement with civilians in order to pursue different preferences.”¹⁴ In the negative of ideal working, shirking is “not doing what the civilians have requested, or not in the way the civilians wanted, or in such a way as to undermine the ability of the civilians to make future decision.”¹⁵ Put another way, due to the multi-dimensional nature of the preferences of the principal and agent in civil-military relations, a variable mix of working and shirking is possible.

¹² Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 65.

¹³ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 68.

¹⁴ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 68.

¹⁵ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 68.

Information Advantage

The mere existence of a preference gap between principal and agent does not alone permit shirking. Rather, any proclivity to pursue divergent aims is abetted by the agent's inherent information advantage over the principal, which gives the agent maneuvering room and precipitates the strategic interaction that is characteristic of the agency relationship. Both the civilian principal and military agent have imperfect knowledge of each other. Neither knows exactly how the other will act in a given scenario, and perhaps more importantly what the other has, in fact, done or not done. This information disparity favors the agent in the agency relationship precisely because it falls to the principal as the superior, and thus delegator, to shape the relationship in order to ensure its policy is implemented as desired. The principal thus requires information regarding the agent's intended and actual behavior. The agent, particularly a shirking one, would, in general, rather not divulge such information and can make it more difficult for the principal to unearth. This information advantage derives from two asymmetries in the civil-military relationship.

The asymmetry of hidden information hampers agency relationships in general. Like the economic agent, only the military agent knows what it prefers to do in any given situation. The principal is thus forced to discern such intentions *post facto* by observing output or behavior. Unlike the economic agent that is simply trying to avoid working altogether, the private preferences of the military agent can, almost certainly do, extend into the realm of policy. Though the principal is aware of the military's general preferences as derived above, only the military agent truly knows how these translate into the realm of action (or inaction as the case may be). Likewise, only the military agent knows its decision calculus for determining whether to work or shirk in a particular scenario.

Though an information advantage favoring the agent is present to some extent in all principal-agent relationships due to hidden information, the disparity is, as Feaver notes, “particularly acute in the civil-military relationship” due to an asymmetry of expertise.¹⁶ Whereas the employer, assumed to be equally capable of performing the work, hires an employee largely as a matter of convenience and efficiency, civilians hire the military precisely because of the military’s special expertise in the application and management of violence. Civilians are presumed to possess inadequate knowledge of combat, thus necessitating the delegation. This becomes increasingly true as the policy is translated into operations and the arcana of weapons and tactics. While it is true that the civilians establishing policy could be veterans with significant military experience, the military agent likely has more recent experience and certainly has more proficiency as an active member of the military. As a result, the civilian principal has significant incentive to defer to the agent on matters for which the military is presumed to have the requisite expertise.

The incentive to rely on military judgment is reinforced by the uncertainty inherent in warfare. Even if one were to assume perfect competence on the part of the military agent, the outcome of battle cannot be known *a priori* with any certainty whether due to the presence of a reactive enemy, about whom full knowledge is impossible, or the inevitability of simple Clausewitzian friction. Thus, neither the civilian principal nor the military agent knows whether victory or catastrophic failure awaits any given endeavor. The presumption is, however, that the military agent is the better, if imperfect, judge of the particulars of what is needed and how to fight. Human nature is to err to the side of caution in the face of uncertainty—particularly on matters of great import—a fact that will tend to give the military agent a bit more sway in the relationship.

¹⁶ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 70.

Adverse Selection and Moral Hazard in Civil-Military Relations

With an understanding of the underlying preference gap and information advantage, it is now possible to restate the agency problems of adverse selection and moral hazard as they apply to the civil-military relationship. Fundamentally, agency puts the principal in the role of evaluator of an agent tasked to execute some policy on behalf of the principal. Put another way, the agent acts in place of the principal, and the principal must ultimately judge whether the agent has performed in accordance with the principal's desires. The civil-military relationship retains these same fundamental roles. As should be evident from the preceding discussion, however, civil-military relations are a more complex form of agency than the employer-employee relationship. Rather than delegation as a matter of convenience, the civilian principal is, in many ways, reliant upon the military agent because of the military's particular expertise. Thus, the civil-military relationship also casts the military agent in the role of advisor to the civilian principal acting in the role of decision-maker. The agent's advice is not without bias, however, since the military has its own interests and thus preferences in the realm of policy.

Fundamentally, adverse selection is misrepresentation on the part of the agent. In the basic economic formulation of the agency relationship, this misrepresentation is limited to the hiring decision—the employee would like to appear more attractive to the prospective employer. With the added roles of advisor and decision-maker, this is not the case in civil-military relations. Adverse selection can, Feaver notes, “include all those situations in which the agent presents himself, or some proposal, to the principal for approval or decision.”¹⁷ Every potential use of military force has its own context and unique set of circumstances requiring both evaluation by both the principal and agent, and, ultimately, a decision as to whether or not to pursue a policy of military action. Because of the information gap, at each decision point, the military agent thus

¹⁷ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 73.

has opportunity to recommend a policy or course of action that suits its preferences, perhaps to the detriment of the principal's desires. As Feaver notes, "because the military has an information advantage it can advance artfully drawn proposals that appear to meet civilian needs but in reality are tailored to its own interests."¹⁸ For example, military commanders, dubious about the prospects of some given combat endeavor, allegedly could inflate the resources required to carry it out or the casualties that might ensue in order to discourage the civilian principal from pursuing its desired policy.¹⁹

Like adverse selection, the moral hazard is a bit more nuanced in the case of civil-military relations. In general, the moral hazard derives from the agent's attempts to manage the perceptions of the principal with regard to the delegation. The principal would like to know that the agent is acting in accordance with the principal's desires. When the agent is acting according to its own preferences—that is, shirking—it would rather mask this fact from the principal, or at the very least make it difficult or costly to expose. The information advantage of the agent provides the opportunity. In many cases, the true behavior of the agent is inherently difficult to observe or measure. This is particularly true of the military endeavor, which is fraught with indirect measures. For example, how can the principal know for certain whether the military is devoting the requisite effort toward an objective? Until the military either succeeds or fails,

¹⁸ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 74.

¹⁹ This tactic dates to the Peloponnesian War. Nicias, slated to lead the ill-fated expedition against Syracuse, attempted to dissuade his fellow Athenians by calling for an enormous (for the time) fighting force: "Nicias, perceiving that it would now be useless to try to deter them by the old line of argument, but thinking that he might perhaps alter their resolution by the extravagance of his estimates, came forward a second time and spoke as follows: '...Indeed, even if we leave Athens with a force not only equal to that of the enemy except in the number of hoplites in the field, but even at all points superior to him, we shall still find it difficult to conquer Sicily or save ourselves. We must not disguise from ourselves that we go to found a city among strangers and enemies, and that he who undertakes such an enterprise should be prepared to become master of the country the first day he lands, or failing in this to find everything hostile to him. Fearing this, and knowing that we shall have need of much good counsel and more good fortune—a hard matter for mortal men to aspire to—I wish as much as possible to make myself independent of fortune before sailing, and when I do sail, to be as safe as a strong force can make me. This I believe to be surest for the country at large, and safest for us who are to go on the expedition. If any one thinks differently I resign to him my command.' Robert B. Strassler and Victor Davis Hanson, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 373-5.

there are only indicators, such as targets destroyed or enemy soldiers killed, which, by virtue of their trend over time, (hopefully) point to success or failure. Indirect measures are complicated by the agent's information advantage since the principal often relies on the agent to develop the metric, collect the relevant data, *and* often interpret their meaning. The principal thus evaluates agent behavior by proxy. This situation provides "incentive to optimize on the indicator rather than on the true behavior desired."²⁰ Having duly assuaged the principal by optimizing metrics, the agent can then be relatively free to pursue its interests. Clearly, the military is not in the business of seeking monetary compensation for substandard performance, as does the theoretical shirking employee of classic agency. Rather, the temptation is to pursue self-interest.

Shaping the Relationship

Delegation need not and, indeed, should not occasion abdication or loss of control on the part of the principal. Though the principal delegates execution of its policy to the agent, the principal necessarily retains authority and responsibility for the substance and consequences of that policy. The primary purpose of studying the agency problem in general, and its application to civil-military relations specifically, has been to understand its inherent challenges and develop means for the principal to shape the principal-agent relationship to maintain control. Of course, one could seek to mitigate the problem of agency by focusing on the characteristics of the agent. For example, the principal may establish an elaborate screening process for candidates and follow selection with a focused indoctrination, measures both designed to reduce the preference gap. However, some divergence is inevitably built into the delegation, particularly in the case of civil-military relations where asymmetries between principal and agent can be particularly acute. Further, the preference gap is dynamic; it shrinks or grows with each new situation. At times there may be significant congruence, while in other instances a wide gulf may exist. Put another

²⁰ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 74.

way, delegation will always be, to some extent, a strategic interaction. Therefore, with perfect alignment all but impossible (at least all of the time), the principal must also have means to shape the relationship to mitigate the adverse selection and moral hazard problems. Material factors provide such means.

Recall, adverse selection is fundamentally a misrepresentation of intention, while the moral hazard is, at its core, the temptation to mask reality to prevent the principal from detecting the agent's shirking. These problems stem from the preference gap as abetted by the agent's information advantage. Driven by their interests as well as the parameters of the given situation, civilians establish policy. Likewise motivated by its general interests and assessment of the problem, the military derives a preferred policy. The degree to which these preferences diverge sets a certain proclivity to shirk—all else being equal, as the gap grows, the agent becomes more likely to pursue its interests vice the principal's policy. Feaver notes, however, agency presumes a rational, cost-sensitive agent. The principal thus can manipulate certain material factors, also present in the agent's decision calculus, to curtail the agent's desire to pursue divergent aims. The first is the probability that shirking will be detected. In essence, the agent must evaluate the likelihood that the principal will detect shirking both in intent and practice. The second factor is the consequence of having been caught. How likely is the principal to punish the agent and how severe will that punishment be? Manipulating these factors can aid the principal in providing the agent disincentive to shirking.

The probability of detecting a shirking agent is a function of the principal's monitoring regime. This regime exists on a spectrum of intrusiveness ranging from noninvolvement on one end to micromanagement or usurpation on the other. Also assumed to be rational and cost-sensitive, the principal most often chooses monitoring that falls somewhere between the

extremes. Cost considerations include the overhead required to conduct the monitoring as well as any potential impact to the civilian's policy arising from the monitoring or lack thereof. Though the chance of detecting shirking increases as the monitoring becomes more intrusive, so does the time and effort required. Time and effort devoted to monitoring detracts from the myriad other duties that compete for the principal's attention. Monitoring is thus partly a function of the parameters of the situation. A monumental event such as the Cuban missile crisis, for example, would justify significant attention by the civilian principal, while other, more mundane issues, would likely engender less scrutiny. As monitoring approaches micromanagement, however, there is increasing risk that the civilian's limited expertise will constitute interference and impede military effectiveness. The principal must decide how much divergence by the agent it can tolerate in a given scenario based, for example, upon the nature of the threat. In turn, the agent must consider the extent to which the civilian's chosen regime is likely to expose shirking.

Inherent in agency is the principal's right to sanction the agent. Punishment thus also informs the agent's decision calculus. With its simple work-no work dichotomy, the general agency framework presumes that the consequences for an agent caught shirking are automatic—in general, loss of compensation and dismissal. In the case of civil-military relations, the issue is not so straightforward since agent behavior spans a spectrum of convergence with (or divergence from) the principal's desires. Thus, behavior that constitutes shirking in general, and punishable shirking specifically, is open to some interpretation. The civilian principal must ultimately judge the agent's actions, which leaves the principal open to second-guessing and thus political costs—for example, loss of favor with the polity or the opening of an avenue of attack for political opponents. Feaver notes that the military generally receives credit for a certain amount of

“moral competence” that serves to add ambiguity to the civil-military hierarchy.²¹ As the side enduring the privations of battle and ultimately putting its lives in danger, the military has a “formidable moral arsenal” with which to justify its actions against charges of shirking.²² Thus, the principal’s decision to sanction must be viewed as another rational calculation and part of the strategic interaction.

As the agent’s behavior spans a spectrum, so does its punishment if caught shirking. Consequences could range from loss of autonomy (that is, increased monitoring) to formal rebukes, and ultimately to some form of dismissal. Once again, the principal must weigh costs in selecting the type of sanction. For example, dismissing a senior military officer in the middle of a war might impede effectiveness, at least in the short term, and, in theory, could precipitate collapse on the battlefield. In short, the military agent cannot be certain that it will or will not be punished, nor can it know what punishment the principal will mete out if it is, in fact, caught and sanctioned. The military must thus weigh against any preference gap it perceives not only its estimate of the principal’s willingness to sanction, but also its anticipation of the severity of that punishment.

Summary

Any act of delegation is, to a greater or lesser extent, subject to the problems inherent in hiring someone to act one’s behalf. In simplest form, the agency problem is one of divergent aims—that the agent or subordinate in the relationship will seek its interests rather than those of the principal or superior. Peter Feaver has built upon this basic truism a theory that captures the nuanced strategic interaction that results from the agency relationship that exists between civilians and the military. Given an irreducible preference gap between them, the principal and

²¹ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 71-2

²² Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 72.

agent engage in a strategic interaction governed by rational calculation. On one side of the equation are the interests of the principal and agent translated into the realm of policy and action. The extent to which the military agent's aims diverge from the policy dictated by the civilian principal establishes some proclivity for the agent to shirk—that is, pursue its divergent interests. Opposing are the probability of being caught and the likelihood and severity of punishment if, in fact, caught. If the cost of shirking is high enough when weighed against the benefits, the military is more likely to forego its divergent aims despite the preference gap. By “reverse engineering” a particular policy outcome to unearth the conditions driving these variables, Feaver has shown that one can gain a richer understanding of how civil-military relations unfold in practice.²³

Agency in Joint Command and Control

At first glance, an exposition of the problems of agency might seem a bit out of place in a study of joint command and control. After all, a joint force has a strictly military chain of command at the theater-operational level, ostensibly free of the trappings of politicians found at the level of grand strategy. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that a joint command is, in fact, a form of delegation—albeit, a forced one. Since combat expertise is distributed across autonomous service institutions, a joint force commander depends upon those institutions for the full spectrum of capabilities necessary for combat. In essence, the Joint Force Commander must hire the services to fight a war. As discussed in Chapter 2, the pluralism of the American military establishment ensures that each service will approach that war from its own perspective and self-interest.

²³ For example, Feaver employs his agency theory to show that the military successfully opposed President Clinton's move to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the military, over which there was undoubtedly a large preference gap. In demonstrating President Clinton's relative political weakness in military matters (attributed to Clinton's opposition to the Vietnam war and successful avoidance of military service), Feaver argues, in part, that the military shirked because the likelihood of punishment was low. See: Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 210-218.

To reiterate, *any* act of delegation is, to some extent, subject to the problems of agency. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that many of the issues plaguing joint command and control arise from the fact that a joint command, *de facto*, involves a principal-agent relationship. The joint force commander as principal establishes a contract of sorts with component commanders as agents to provide the special combat capability of their respective services. Conditions are therefore conducive for the introduction of divergent aims, and the joint force commander's challenge becomes establishing and maintaining the alignment of the agent's efforts with the overarching objectives. Put another way, joint command and control at the theater level is, despite the ideal-typecast suggested and indeed prescribed by unity of command, also a strategic interaction carried out in a hierarchical setting.

Feaver's agency theory of civil-military relations, which adapts the general agency framework to the arena of national security and military operations, is particularly helpful in illuminating and explaining civil-military interactions. It is thus also reasonable to expect that an agency lens would bear similar fruit when adapted and applied to the study of joint command and control. Beginning with Feaver's agency theory as a baseline, the remainder of this chapter seeks to adapt the key variables— preference gap, monitoring, and punishment—for the study of joint command and control. Armed with this framework, it then will be possible to “reverse engineer” certain outcomes of joint command and control and thereby discover their antecedents in order to move beyond the prescriptive viewpoint of the structural, normative approach.

Preference Gap, Working and Shirking

In general, agency produces a superior-subordinate relationship that assumes a principal as qualified as the agent to perform a given task and delegation is merely a matter of efficiency. Thus, in general, a principal has a functional preference—most generally that the agent performs

the task to the principal's satisfaction.²⁴ As the case of civil-military relations showed, however, the addition of specialization—and thus delegation by necessity—adds to this functional goal a relational preference on the part of the principal. When the principal is not the expert in the actual execution of policy—for example, a civilian in time of war—the agent has opportunity to usurp authority that rightly belongs within the purview of the principal. Therefore, relationally, the desire is that the agent not undermine the principal's authority such that the principal remains the superior in fact as well as name.²⁵

Joint command is also delegation by necessity, since it, like civil-military relations, involves specialization, most generally by combat domain. Therefore, the joint force commander, as the superior, inherits both the functional and relational preferences common to all principals in this situation. Namely, the joint force commander desires a competent agent—the service component, in this case—working to the fullest extent to accomplish the mission, and acting in a manner that ensures that the joint force commander makes all of the key, substantive decisions that are rightly within the commander's purview.

As Feaver has noted, a key feature of the civil-military agency relationship is that the military agent has vested interest in policy that involves military action. In general, the military has some notion of what ought to be done in a given situation, at least as far as the use of force is concerned. If war is necessary, the military desires, as the expert in the application and management of violence, orders to pursue the policy it deems appropriate. Given a policy, it strongly desires the autonomy to execute that policy in terms of both what to do and how to do it and, generally, seeks only some approbation for having answered the nation's call. Since the agents in a joint command—again, for the present purposes the service components—are

²⁴ Again, see: Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 61.

²⁵ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 61.

themselves military organizations, they naturally inherit the general preferences Feaver attributes to the military, writ large.

Given that the principal and agent in joint command inherit the general preferences of the principal and agent of Feaver's agency theory, his definitions of working and shirking are applicable as well. Namely, a working component in a joint command does what the joint force commander directs with due diligence and skill, and it does so in a way that upholds the principal's role as the superior both in terms of scoping the delegation and making decisions therein. Similarly, anything that falls short of this ideal as the result of the agent's pursuit of self-interest must be labeled shirking. In turn, since the preferences of principal and agent in the case of the joint command are multidimensional, the behavior of the agents will be spread over a spectrum of working and shirking similar to that found in civil-military relations.

The agency theory of civil-military relations considers only a monolithic military. This allows for a unitary actor and a generalized military culture as a basis for agent preferences. Applying agency to the joint command, however, requires disaggregating the military actor into its constituent services. Doing so adds a new dimension to the notion of preferences and divergent aims. The most obvious implication is that the principal must deal with multiple agents. Perhaps more importantly, each agent, due to the pluralism of the American military establishment, has a unique slant on any given situation. Specifically, the cultural-cognitive paradigms of the respective services become the primary determinant of agent preferences with regard to the conduct of any given combat operation.²⁶ Thus, in terms of divergent aims, policy

²⁶ The important role of service culture in agency has been demonstrated ably by Jeff Donnithorne. His study examines the impact of Air Force culture in civil-military relations during the 1991 Gulf War and the subsequent decade of quasi-war in Southwest Asia. See Jeff Donnithorne, "Culture Wars: Air Force Culture and Civil-Military Relations" (Masters thesis, United States Air Force Air University, 2010).

in consonance with service culture breeds working, but as dissonance grows, so does the agent's inclination to shirk.

Information Advantage

Recall that in agency both the principal and agent have “private information that is only dimly perceived by the other.”²⁷ This general condition of hidden information, common to all instances of agency, applies directly to a joint command. Thus, the joint force commander as the superior is, like the civilian principal, at a disadvantage since knowledge of the agent's intents and actual behavior is necessary in order to shape the relationship to curb any proclivity to shirk. Though perhaps not as acute as the asymmetry between civilians and the military, asymmetric expertise also contributes to the agent's information advantage in the case of the joint command. Clearly, the joint force commander is an expert in the application and management of violence, as are the components. However, due to the fact that the joint force commander is inescapably a member of a particular service, his expertise is, *de facto*, bound by the cultural-cognitive paradigm of that service. Quite obviously then, the joint force commander will not possess the expertise of components that are derived from the other services. Thus, like the civilian deferring to military judgment, there will be incentive for the joint force commander to rely on the judgment of the components. In sum, the component commands of a joint command possess the information advantage characteristic of agency relationships, which provides the maneuvering space to shirk.

Adverse Selection and Moral Hazard in Joint Command and Control

²⁷ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 68.

While principal and agent may agree on ends, they inevitably disagree to some extent on the means to achieve those ends.²⁸ As shown for the case of civil-military relations, the act of delegation puts the principal in the roles of decision-maker and evaluator of an agent that acts as both an advisor to the principal and an executor on its behalf. These roles are also present in the joint command since it involves delegation of a similar nature. The joint force commander, in effect, delegates portions of the military campaign to the components and ultimately judges whether or not they have performed in accordance with the commander's direction. The components, as experts in their respective domains, advise the joint force commander regarding the employment of their respective service capabilities.

Thus, in the case of the joint command, the delegation introduces into the relationship between the joint force commander and the components the same advisor-as-executor dilemma that gives rise to adverse selection in civil-military relations. Namely, the agent advises the principal regarding courses of action the agent itself eventually will be called to carry out. In large measure due to the asymmetry of expertise, this situation provides some opportunity for misrepresentation in which the agent advances proposals that suit the agent's own self-interest, potentially at the expense of the joint force commander's aims.

The moral hazard is also present in joint command since a shirking component would certainly desire to mask true behavior from the principal. Just as indirect measures of performance make it difficult for the civilian principal to observe and evaluate the behavior of the military agent, the joint force commander may also encounter some difficulty in knowing whether the agent service component is acting fully in accordance with directives. To some

²⁸ It is assumed that, from the theater perspective, the decision to go to war has already been made at higher levels. This implies that the central challenge of divergent aims exists largely in the realm of *how* to fight the war. In other words, for the present purposes, study of agency in joint command and control intentionally excludes the decision on whether or not to fight the war.

extent, the joint force commander, like the civilian principal, must also rely on the agent to develop metrics, collect data, and interpret their meaning. Here again, the temptation is for the agent to optimize the indicator, or indirect measure, in order to mollify the principal, thus freeing the agent to pursue its interests.

Shaping the relationship

Operating from the same basic premise that delegation need not, and should not, mean abdication or loss of control on the part of the principal, it is clear that the joint force commander must also have means to shape the relationship with the components. Again, one approach might be to focus on the characteristics of the agent in order to reduce the preference gap. In the case of the joint command, however, the very nature of the American military establishment makes this exceedingly difficult. In fact, significant divergence is, in some respects, built into joint command and control. Since a joint command is founded upon the notion of component commands derived from the respective services, the joint force commander will, by default, rely upon an agent operating from a significantly different cultural-cognitive paradigm. In other words, a preference gap is all but assured, and in the event of a large gap, the joint force commander must employ some other means to shape the agent's decision calculus. As a point of departure, it is then fruitful to consider the components' evaluation of the likelihood that shirking will be detected and, in turn, the consequences of having been caught. In a manner similar to that of civil-military relations, these two factors provide counterweight to the preference gap between principal and agent that the principal can manipulate to provide a deterrent to shirking.

The joint force commander, like the civilian principal, may choose to monitor components in varying degrees of intrusiveness. In general, the nature of the principal's monitoring regime determines the probability of detecting a shirking agent and thus is a factor in

that agent's decision calculus. Again, a rational principal is assumed and the primary disincentive to intrusive monitoring is cost. In the most basic sense, cost is the time and effort devoted to monitoring. As monitoring becomes more intrusive, the probability of detection rises, but so does the overhead cost since monitoring will reduce the time and effort available for the principal's other, perhaps more important tasks.²⁹ In the extreme, intrusive monitoring essentially reverses the intended delegation. Therein perhaps lies the more important cost—the resultant impact of monitoring on the effectiveness of the agent. The principal, ostensibly having limited expertise with respect to a different service's capabilities, risks impeding the utilization of those capabilities as monitoring approaches micromanagement. Indeed, this has been one of the most powerful arguments for componency.

It is perhaps axiomatic that some form of stick—that is, possibility of punishment—must accompany monitoring to effectively curtail shirking in the presence of a significant preference gap. In general, that stick takes the same general form as found in civil-military relations—loss of autonomy, censure, and dismissal. On the surface, it might seem reasonable that, with its foundation of unified command, joint command and control would more closely resemble basic economic agency with its assumption of automatic punishment for shirking. After all, “the most basic question of ‘who is in charge’ seems settled.”³⁰ The joint force commander, for instance, has no immediate political constituency and, therefore, no obvious political costs to consider. In the case of civil-military relations, however, Feaver found that relaxing this assumption and allowing for the principal's rational calculation of whether or not to punish proved especially revelatory. The present analysis follows this path and leaves open the possibility that a variable probability of punishment may indeed factor into the agent's decision calculus.

²⁹ Overhead costs are likely amplified, to some extent, by the fact that, in a joint command, the principal must monitor multiple agents likely performing significantly different tasks.

³⁰ Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 114.

Summary

Adapted for the joint military setting, the agency problem is a direct result of componency—to execute a mission, the joint force commander must often rely on component commands filled by other services. Moreover, the joint force commander is responsible for harmonizing their efforts to produce effective and efficient combat operations. The adverse selection problem, or more appropriately its analog in this context, is perhaps the natural result of a pluralistic military establishment. While it is assumed that a joint force commander and subordinate component commanders seek the same ultimate ends—the security of the nation—they, by virtue of their respective membership in a particular service, have very strong views on how to fight a war and, more fundamentally, *what constitutes victory*. As a result, superior and subordinate are bound to disagree over the means to secure their common goal. Due to *de facto* delegation that accompanies componency, when prosecuting a war there is opportunity for the components to manipulate the relationship in order to gain ascendancy for their respective service paradigms while promoting the appearance of carrying out the joint force commander's direction—the analog of the moral hazard. The joint force commander must thus shape the relationship to curb this tendency. The natural hypothesis is that it is this strategic interaction that often prevents full unity of effort, and, in turn, militates against fully effective and efficient joint combat operations.

The Process of Reverse Engineering

Employing the agency framework as an analytical tool is a process Feaver calls “reverse engineering.”³¹ Most generally, it is viewing an observed outcome through the lens of the agency to deduce the antecedents of that outcome. In terms of variables, given an observed (in

³¹ Feaver writes, “This process, which I am calling ‘reverse engineering,’ is nothing more than basic social science: making predictions based on hypotheses about causal relationships.” See: Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 118.

hindsight) strategic interaction between principal and agent, what relative magnitude can one infer for the preference gap, the probability of detecting shirking and the probability and severity of potential punishment? In turn, what can one deduce about the prevailing conditions and underlying decisions that provide a richer explanation of the observed outcome? For example, Feaver posits that the so-called civil-military relations crisis of the 1990s arose, despite intrusive monitoring, from a large preference gap (particularly on several key issues such as homosexuals in the military) coupled with a relatively low probability of punishment. He then traces the low probability of punishment to President Clinton's weakness in the defense arena arising, in part, from his personal history of opposition to the Vietnam War.³²

The intent, herein, is to perform a similar "reverse engineering" of joint command and control in action during the post-Cold War, post-Goldwater-Nichols era. For the present purposes, it is necessary to make one extension to Feaver's methodology. Leaving open for the moment what exactly constitutes "good" jointness, a causal linkage is assumed between the strategic interaction of a joint command and the efficacy of joint combat operations. The inclusion of this assumption provides a productive level of analysis beyond the structure of the relationship itself, which is Feaver's primary focus in context of civil-military relations. Put another way, this study is concerned not only with how shirking undermines the purity of the unified command, but also with the *impact of suboptimal command and control on the outcome and conduct of the combat operation itself*. That said, a caveat is in order.

National policy must, of course, stand on its own merits. It is important to note, however, the intent herein is not to critique the policy itself. Nor is it to weigh the comparative merits of various approaches to international relations within the milieu of statecraft. The present analysis does not, for example, focus on whether any of the conflicts fit within United States national

³²See Chapter 6 of Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 180-233.

interests at the time. Likewise, it makes no attempt to determine or argue the suitability of one course of action over another—reliance on economic sanctions vice military confrontation, for instance. Rather, the focus is squarely on military action as the chosen coercive instrument. The use of military force, its strategy and implementation, must be made to serve the aims of the policy. This, to reiterate, is precisely the domain of command and control. Where military strategy and its implementation falls short and fails in the efficacious continuation of policy, there is likely a lesson for managers of violence. More precisely, in terms of joint military action, inefficacy as a result of disunity and divergence of aims is of particular interest. The normative, ideal-type prescription, however, has little to offer in this regard; it can only point to what *should* have happened. The agency framework is, however, well-suited to the task. Viewing major conventional combat operations through this lens helps to illuminate instances in which service points of view and interests militated against the larger policy aims and desired ends for the war. Further, agency offers mechanism to help explain how the development and implementation of military strategy diverged from the ideal type.

With the foundation in place, it is now time to turn to the case studies, beginning with the purported triumph of unification in the 1991 Gulf War.

CHAPTER FIVE

A TARNISHED TROPHY IN KUWAIT

Agency and Efficacy in Operation DESERT STORM

It hasn't been a clean end—there is no battleship *Missouri* surrender. This is what's missing to make this akin to WWII, to separate Kuwait from Korea and Vietnam...

President George H. W. Bush¹
28 February 1991

Introduction

By most accounts, the conduct of the Gulf War represented a significant improvement over the dysfunction that contributed to defeat in Vietnam, doomed the Iranian hostage rescue, and marred the invasion of Grenada.² Granting reprieve for the United States' failure to give due consideration to Iraq's overtly threatening posture in prelude to its invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, and accounting for Saddam Hussein's abject ineptitude as a strategist, the American military, in concert with crucial coalition partners, orchestrated a truly impressive military campaign.³ President George H. W. Bush put it this way, "The stunning success of our troops was the result of superb training, superb planning, superb execution, and incredible acts of

¹ Diary entry quoted in George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998), 487. For similar remarks, see: President George H. W. Bush, "The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Conflict" (news conference, Washington, DC, 1 March 1991).

² A full recounting of the conflict, its antecedents and aftermath is beyond the scope of this study. There are several excellent single volume histories and analyses, each written from a slightly different perspective, listed throughout the footnotes.

³ Leading up to the invasion, intelligence showed Iraq amassing along the border a force well in excess of that required to coerce Kuwait. See Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 205-222. United States Central Command (CENTCOM) painted the worst-case scenario as a land grab with Iraqi troops occupying all of the Rumaila oil field, which straddles the Iraq-Kuwait border, and seizing the islands of Warbah and Bubiyan, which, Saddam averred, could be used to block Iraqi access to the Persian Gulf. Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 26. Regarding the territorial disputes, see: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report To Congress*, Vol. I (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 1992), 6. Jeffrey Record writes, "...a more worldly and strategically competent Iraqi leadership could in several ways have either derailed Desert Storm or significantly increased its costs. Fortunately for the United States and its allies, in Saddam Hussein they were dealing with a 'military' leader with the prudence of Custer and the strategic grasp of Mussolini." Jeffrey Record, *Hollow Victory: A Contrary View of the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1993), 101.

bravery. The Iraqi army was defeated. Forty-two divisions were put out of action. They lost 3,000 tanks, almost 2,000 armored vehicles, more than 2,000 artillery pieces. And over half a million Iraqi soldiers were captured, defeated, or disarmed.”⁴ At a cost of just 148 killed in action, the United States led an unprecedented coalition of more than thirty-two nations that compelled the “fourth largest army in the world” to abandon Kuwait after thirty-nine days of air attacks and a ground campaign lasting a mere one hundred hours.⁵

From a joint war fighting perspective, command and control of United States forces in the Persian Gulf War, on the surface, seems to conform to the ideal type prescribed by Samuel Huntington’s objective control and the tenet of unity of command embodied in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. From the outset, President Bush intended to avoid the mistakes that had plagued the war in Vietnam, such as gradualism and undue interference from Washington.⁶ Setting aside for the present purposes criticisms that the president’s directives were at times ambiguous and derived without full consultation with his chief military advisor, the Commander-in-Chief largely acceded to the military’s desire to amass overwhelming force, and generally eschewed

⁴ President George H. W. Bush, “Radio Address to United States Armed Forces Stationed in the Persian Gulf Region,” (radio address, Armed Forces Radio Network, 2 March 1991).

⁵ Total casualties from combat action total 615—148 killed and 467 wounded. There were another 235 non-combat deaths during all of Desert Shield/Storm. Data available from the Department of Defense Statistical Information Analysis Division web site: <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil> (accessed 8 February 2012). Regarding members of the coalition, see, for example: United States Central Command, *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, Executive Summary (Tampa, FL: United States Central Command, 11 July 1991), 1, and Department of the Navy, *The United States Navy in “Desert Shield” “Desert Storm”* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 15 May 1991), C-4 through C-6. Regarding characterization of Iraqi forces, see: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol. I, ii. Desert Shield began officially on C-day, 7 August 1990, with the start of force deployments to defend Saudi Arabia. Desert Shield became Desert Storm at H-hour, 0300 on 17 January 1991, with the start of the 39-day air campaign. The ground invasion began officially at 0400 on 24 February 1991. With the Iraqi army retreating, President Bush called for a cease-fire that went into effect at 0800 on 28 February 1991. All times listed are Persian Gulf times. See Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol. I, 44, 154, 358, 407.

⁶ See, for example: President George H. W. Bush, “Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf,” (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 16 January 1991), Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 454, and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 307, 339.

micromanagement of combat operations.⁷ More to the point, the chain of command ran, as prescribed, from the president via the secretary of defense to the commander in the field. As was his prerogative, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney relied heavily upon the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell to fulfill his role.⁸ General Powell, moreover, largely succeeded in giving the military a single voice with which to speak to civilian leaders, making full use of the provision of Goldwater-Nichols to avoid the consensus-style decision-making that historically plagued the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁹

In theater, the command structure was, compared to previous setups, a model of doctrinal tidiness. There seemed to be little doubt that United States Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander-in-Chief General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was the leader in the field. Although General Schwarzkopf chose to establish a command structure based upon service components, he largely avoided the geographic fragmentation of the theater that had hamstrung past war efforts. Further, when he named the head of United States Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF), Lieutenant General Charles Horner, as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), it marked the first time that the theater commander explicitly vested functional

⁷ Upon his return from Camp David on 5 August 1990, President Bush made a brief statement to reporters, and then answered several questions. Pressed about the possibility of military action, he replied in part, "This will not stand. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait." President George H. W. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait" (news conference, Washington, DC, 5 August 1990). General Powell recalls his surprise at the proclamation: "From 'We're not discussing intervention' to 'This will not stand' marked a giant step." Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 466. Jeffrey Record critiques the situation this way: "There is still something unsettling about this early lack of critical communication between a President and his senior military adviser on the vital issue of whether to place U.S. military forces in harm's way...Overruling military advice is one thing; not bothering to ask for it is quite another." Record, *Hollow Victory*, 123. See also Woodward, *The Commanders*, 260.

⁸ Bob Woodward describes Secretary Cheney's reflections while General Powell briefed the Desert Storm offensive plan to the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 19 December: "For Cheney, it was a satisfying symbolic moment. It showed he was keeping the chiefs involved. He felt that the chain of command was just right, running as it did from him to Powell, rather than to the chiefs as a committee." Woodward, *The Commanders*, 179.

⁹ Powell, *My American Journey*, 447.

responsibility and authority for the conduct of air operations in a single airman.¹⁰ As Jeffrey Record puts it, “Unlike the American military effort in Vietnam, in the Persian Gulf War there was a single command authority that counted, and he was accorded the necessary latitude to fight a single, integrated, joint-service and combined national military campaign. There was only one war, not a collection of individual service wars, and in the air there was only a single daily air tasking order, not a bundle of several separate air wars.”¹¹

Given the staggering lopsidedness of the military confrontation, it is perhaps tempting to remain at the level of explicit aims, call the victory a triumph of joint warfighting, and retreat into service domains to search for marginal lessons to be learned, as the Defense Department’s official report and the services’ after-action studies largely do.¹² There were indeed many success stories, particularly with regard to the United States’ high-tech weaponry.¹³ The conflict also revealed numerous glaring shortfalls in military capability.¹⁴ Even so, from an operational perspective, it is difficult to quibble with the coalition’s success in effecting the liberation of Kuwait. If one considers, however, the extraordinary lengths to which the administration went to

¹⁰ The JFACC did not control helicopters operating below 500 feet. See James A. Winnefeld and Dana J. Johnson, *Joint Air Operations: Pursuit of Unity in Command and Control, 1942-1991* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 100.

¹¹ Record, *Hollow Victory*, 2-3.

¹² See: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report To Congress*, 2 Vols. (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 1992). Haggling over the apportionment of post-war accolades delayed the final report, which resembles a work “written by a committee.” See: Barton Gellman, “Disputes Delay Gulf War History: Pentagon’s Report Will Affect Future Budgets and Authority,” *The Washington Post*, 28 January 1992. The following are the service perspectives: Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (1993; repr. Fort Leavenworth, KS; U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), Department of the Air Force, *Reaching Globally, Reaching Powerfully: The United States Air Force in the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, September 1991), Department of the Navy, *The United States Navy in “Desert Shield” “Desert Storm,”* and United States Marine Corps, *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991*, 9 Vols. (Washington DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1992-1999). Some credit does go to the Air Force for commissioning an independent review. See: Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993) and Eliot A. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, 5 Vols. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993).

¹³ For example: stealthy aircraft, precision-guided munitions, TLAMs, Patriot air defense systems, infrared targeting sights, armor-piercing rounds, and the global positioning system. See Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol II, D-17 thru D-23.

¹⁴ United States forces lacked mine clearing equipment (both on land and at sea) and adequate means to distinguish friend from foe, to name but two. See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 475-6.

establish and undergird the legitimacy of the war effort while seeking to avoid a Vietnam-style quagmire, and looks a bit deeper at the long-term results of that operational success, the picture is not so clear. In the aftermath of the war, the United States became the subject of harsh criticism for the suffering of ordinary Iraqis, and, as the stability of the country deteriorated, the American military became ensnared in a long-term deployment of forces. To be sure, one can certainly find significant fault with the administration's policy, at times vague and prone to "requirements creep."¹⁵ Nevertheless, these implicit aims—legitimacy and avoidance of open-ended military commitment—were readily discernable to military leaders by the manner in which the president managed the conflict.

Yet, the conduct of the war demonstrates that not everyone commanding and controlling United States military forces fully grasped these aims. In the following examination of the offensive combined-arms campaign to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait and reverse Saddam Hussein's annexation of his tiny neighboring emirate, it becomes clear that, although Desert Storm was perhaps more joint than some past efforts, idyllic unity of effort and thus full efficacy eluded the coalition in general. To be sure, sensitivities related to operating from an Arab nation and managing an extremely diverse multinational force certainly constrained integration efforts. More importantly, however, the development of the war's strategy and its execution by the American combat forces assembled in theater was marked by significant incongruity of often disparate operations and the presence of somewhat familiar tensions at the seams between components. While the services each had various accomplishments to trumpet after the war including success in the very important task of liberating Kuwait, the net result was a military victory lacking a measure of decisiveness that might otherwise have made it an unqualified triumph.

¹⁵ See, for instance: Record, *Hollow Victory*, 54-56.

To effect the liberation of Kuwait, CENTCOM planned an offensive campaign consisting of four phases. In Phase One, the coalition would conduct a strategic air campaign to “decapitate” Iraqi leadership, as one early version of the commander’s intent put it, and “eliminate [the] ability to reinforce Iraqi forces in Kuwait.”¹⁶ A second phase aimed to establish air superiority over Kuwait to enable a third in which the Coalition would attrit the Iraqi army in preparation for operations by ground forces. Phase four would then entail a combined-arms land offensive to “Destroy Republican Guard Forces” and “Liberate Kuwait City with Arab Forces.”¹⁷ In reality, the air campaign would more closely resemble a continuous parallel attack against a wide variety of targets over an extended period of time.¹⁸ As Richard Swain notes, Desert Storm was, in essence, an air war followed by a ground war supported from the air.¹⁹ Thus, analysis begins with the development and execution of the air campaign.

The Air Campaign: Losing Legitimacy

A New World Order

Cold rationality, no doubt, figured prominently in the Gulf Crisis, as the Iraqi invasion certainly posed a serious threat to the United States’ key interest in the region—oil. Yet interest alone cannot account for the manner in which the conflict unfolded. In the first place, President Bush went to great lengths to allay the fears of Arab leaders who generally suspected ulterior

¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 84, 98. Planners later softened the terminology to avoid the impression of target Saddam Hussein directly. See Diane T. Putney, *Airpower Advantage: Planning the Gulf War Air Campaign 1989-1991* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2004), 222-3.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 97.

¹⁸ Planners had parsed the campaign into “phases,” in part, to facilitate presentation of its discrete objectives. See Lieutenant General Charles A. Horner interview by Richard G. Davis, Perry D. Jamieson, and Barry Barlow, 4 March 1992. Typed transcript, 16-17. K239.0472-94, IRIS No. 00876284, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. See also: Eliot A. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, Volume II, Part II, *Effects and Effectiveness* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 79. General Horner portrayed the phases more in terms of varying level of emphasis placed on certain target sets. See Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 307, 316-7.

¹⁹ Richard M. Swain, *“Lucky War” Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 127-8.

motives for any United States initiative in the Middle East or Southwest Asia.²⁰ As Iraq massed troops on the Kuwaiti border, the president acceded to the strong desire within the region for a so-called “Arab solution” by muting his criticism and eschewing the United States’ typically confrontational military response, in retrospect, perhaps against his better judgment.²¹ In coming to Kuwait’s aid, he sought not just the approval of the leading Arab nations, tacit or otherwise, to oppose Saddam Hussein, but also courted their active participation in confronting an Arab brother in an international forum.²² Further, as Saddam Hussein rather clumsily tried to reframe the crisis to include the plight of Palestinians, the administration had to downplay its alliance with Israel.²³

In addition to accommodating Arab sensitivities, the president took the not unprecedented, if atypical, approach of opting for the ponderous international framework over the expediency of unilateral action; this, in spite of pressure from eager allies for more aggressive, not to mention

²⁰ See Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 69. Indeed, even the Saudis, who had spent billions on state-of-the-art American weapon systems, were initially less than eager to host western forces. Despite the fact that Iraqi forces had apparently already made at least three incursions into Saudi territory, King Fahd and other members of the ruling family remained wary that the United States might be inflating the threat to get its troops onto Saudi soil. See Woodward, *The Commanders*, 244-6. See also, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 39-40 and Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 85-90. On 5 August, Secretary Cheney traveled to Saudi Arabia, where he met with King Fahd. It was not until after Secretary of Defense Cheney shared overhead imagery of Iraqi forces massed on the border that the Saudi ruler granted permission to begin deploying United States military forces to defend his kingdom. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol. I, 22.

²¹ President Bush, however, took his cues for a low-profile, non-threatening role largely from Middle East moderates—Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in particular—who hoped to keep the West at arms length. According to Woodward’s account, Mubarak sent a personal message to President Bush cautioning the United States to refrain from attempting to influence the situation. He asked that the Arabs be allowed to handle things. See Woodward, *The Commanders*, 215. Gordon and Trainor note, “What the United States could have done unilaterally it had not done. No bombers had been dispatched to Diego Garcia. The Maritime Prepositioning Ships had not been sent toward the Gulf. There were no amphibious forces in the region; the 2,000-man Marine Expeditionary Unit, which might have been sent to the Gulf, was in Subic Bay, as a hedge against instability in the Philippines. The *Independence* was still four days away from the Gulf in terms of steaming time.” See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 17-18, 28.

²² Record, *Hollow Victory*, 143.

²³ Iraqi leader’s repeatedly attempted to goad the Israelis into joining the fray, thereby assuring the disintegration of the Arabs’ uneasy partnership with the West. It required an inordinate amount of skillful diplomacy to convince the Israelis to stay on the sidelines. That the United States would, in effect, side with Arab nations by supporting the United Nations censure of Israel after Israeli security forces killed twenty-two Palestinians during a clash on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount testifies to the importance President Bush placed on a partnership with Arab nations in resolving the situation with Iraq. Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 168-9.

timely, measures.²⁴ Indeed, from the first days of the brewing crisis until the last day of the ground war and beyond, the administration went to extraordinary lengths to accommodate a wide variety of stakeholders and interests in arraying an unparalleled coalition to oppose Iraq. Further, the administration followed what might be considered a textbook tiered-escalation response, starting with rhetorical censure, moving to sanctions, from there to airstrikes, and finally to ground invasion.²⁵ To be sure, in response to any Iraqi proposal, President Bush remained unyielding in his basic demand that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait without precondition, and arguably, rightly so. However, after a five-month international embargo, repeated attempts by numerous parties to provide Saddam Hussein a negotiated way out of his predicament along the way, and the Iraqi leader's utter contempt in the face of it all, one cannot credit the coalition with anything less than a good-faith effort to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis that did not in some way condone all or part of the misbehavior.²⁶ Furthermore, although sometimes a bit in front of the Security Council in implementing coercive measures, the coalition, and thus the United States as its leader, obtained the backing of the United Nations for each escalatory

²⁴ British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was not sanguine on the prospects of a United Nations resolution and counseled President Bush to go without. Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 228-9.

²⁵ The morning following the invasion, President Bush declared, "The United States strongly condemns the Iraqi military invasion of Kuwait. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all the Iraqi forces. There is no place for this sort of naked aggression in today's world." President George H. W. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait" (press conference, Washington, DC, 2 August 1990). The president also ordered all Iraqi and Kuwaiti accounts frozen. Executive Order 12722, Blocking Iraqi Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Iraq, 2 August 1990, and Executive Order 12723, Blocking Kuwaiti Government Property, 2 August 1990. CENTCOM officially began interception operations in the Persian Gulf on 17 August 1990. Authority for such action was based upon Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which provides for the collective security of member nations. See Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol. I, 62. On 8 November 1990, President Bush announced the buildup of United States forces for an "offensive option," which, as noted, started with a bombing campaign, giving Saddam Hussein the opportunity to avoid a ground war. President George H. W. Bush, "News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis" (news conference, Washington, DC, 8 November 1990).

²⁶ For example, King Hussein of Jordan, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, French President François Mitterrand and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev proposed variations on the theme of withdrawal in exchange for the promise of negotiations to address Iraq's grievances. See Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 154-179.

move.²⁷ This is particularly true with regard to a mandate for the use of force. Passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 678, which, in effect, gave the coalition the green light for offensive military action, required a sustained application of delicate diplomacy by the Bush administration.²⁸

President Bush, in going to such lengths to assemble a diverse coalition and work within a multilateral framework, made it clear that he placed critical importance on the international legitimacy of any measures to deal with the crisis. Throughout the conflict, but particularly in resorting to military confrontation to resolve the situation, he was motivated, in large measure, by his vision of “facing down a threat to decency and humanity.”²⁹ He summed this up in his 1991 State of the Union saying, “What is at stake is more than one small country; it is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.”³⁰ The admirable, if somewhat utopian, notion of a new world order thus carried with it the inescapable conclusion that Saddam’s affront could not stand. Hence, the president’s 5 August proclamation

²⁷ On 6 August, economic sanctions gained the backing of the United Nations when the Security Council voted unanimously to pass a resolution calling for all states to join in a full-scale embargo of trade with Iraq. Resolution 661 passed by a vote of 13-0 with Cuba and Yemen abstaining. U.N. Security Council, 2933rd Meeting. "Resolution 661 (1990) [The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait]" (S/RES/661). 6 August 1990. Resolution 665, which authorized “such measures as commensurate to the specific circumstance as may be necessary under the authority of the Security Council to halt all inward and outward maritime shipping...and to ensure strict implementation of the provision related to such shipping laid down in resolution 661 (1990),” passed on 25 August by a vote of 13-0, Cuba and Yemen again abstaining), in effect, authorizing the United States naval blockade. U.N. Security Council, 2938th Meeting. "Resolution 665 (1990) [The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait]" (S/RES/665), 25 August 1990.

²⁸ Resolution 678 passed by a vote of 12-2 with Cuba and Yemen dissenting and China abstaining. U.N. Security Council, 2963rd Meeting. "Resolution 678 (1990) [The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait]" (S/RES/678). 29 November 1990. Passage of resolution 678 hinged almost entirely on the Soviets, since, as a permanent member of Security Council with veto authority, they could deny the coalition the full measure of international backing.

²⁹ President George H. W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union” (speech, Washington, DC, 29 January 1991).

³⁰ Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” 29 January 1991.

to that effect and his retrospective determination that “I never waived from the position that I would do whatever it took to remove Iraq from Kuwait.”³¹

As evidenced by the unprecedented solidarity with which the international community reacted, much of the rest of the world shared the president’s view. Coming so soon after the promising start of the post-Cold War era, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait found the international system still adjusting to the collapse of the former order of things. The Gulf conflict thus presented a unique opportunity to set the tone for future relations between the West and the Arab states, between the major powers, and, more generally, among all nations in this new era. As Freedman and Karsh note, “The new world order was less a charter for universal human rights than a belief that traditional rights of states could now be protected if the worlds’ great powers could both show respect themselves and demand it from others.”³² The rest of the world was thus keenly interested in learning how the Cold War victor would handle the crisis. Quite simply, the remaining superpower had to convince the rest of the world that it was indeed a benevolent hegemon, able to rise above the cold rationality of self-interest. In the course of righting the wrong, the burden of upholding the ideals to which the president’s lofty rhetoric aspired thus fell squarely upon the United States, and, if the matter came to blows, its military in particular. In all things, its conduct of war had to be without reproach.

Unwanted Criticism

It is clear that General Schwarzkopf was, in some respects, sensitive to the president’s position. He clearly recognized the delicacy of the collaboration between the West and leading Arab nations, and thus the importance of cohesion. It was all but given that an American Commander would lead any coalition offensive, and Schwarzkopf succeeded in making this a

³¹ Bush, “Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait,” 5 August 1990. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 333.

³² Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 217.

requirement for the United States military buildup.³³ From the start, however, he took great pains to establish a coalition command structure that would accommodate “national, ethnic, and religious pride.”³⁴ In the early days of the crisis, CENTCOM and the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense established the Joint Directorate of Planning to oversee the influx of forces and organize a defense.³⁵ By October, a dual command chain had evolved that placed Arab forces under a senior Arab officer, Lieutenant General Khalid bin Sultan bin ‘Abd Al-‘Aziz of Saudi Arabia.³⁶ This gave the military organization an international face and avoided an unintentional discrediting of coalition military forces and their governments, as had been the mistake in Vietnam, where the appearance of United States ownership of the war served to demoralize the South Vietnamese forces and injure their credibility in the eyes of the populace.³⁷ Further, the coalition plan for the ground war ensured that regional nations would not only figure prominently in command, but Arab forces in general, and Kuwaiti forces in particular, would also be the ones to retake Kuwait City, and thus be viewed as the ultimate liberators of Kuwait.³⁸ The coalition also took a significant amount of care to eschew fighting in the cities and to avoid both collateral damage and civilian casualties.³⁹ There would be no terror bombing of populated

³³ H. Norman Schwarzkopf with Peter Petre, *General H. Norman Schwarzkopf The Autobiography: It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 373-4

³⁴ Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 55.

³⁵ United States Central Command, *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, Executive Summary, 5-6.

³⁶ Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 56, and United States Central Command, *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, Executive Summary, 7.

³⁷ Interestingly, Schwarzkopf points to the Vietnam case as something of an exemplar. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 312-3.

³⁸ Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 405-6. CENTCOM's Operational Order (OPORD) 91-001 list as one the campaign's objectives: "Liberate Kuwait City with Arab Forces." See, for example, Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 79.

³⁹ As Olsen notes, Iraqis had initially evacuated large portions of Baghdad, perhaps expecting wonton destruction. As the precision with which the coalition struck its targets became evident, civilians began to return to the city, and even began to take to rooftops to watch the bombing raids. John Andreas Olsen, *Strategic Airpower in Desert Storm* (Portland, OR; Frank Cass, 2003), 260. Several estimates put the number of civilian casualties on the order of two to three thousand. While higher than desired, and certainly lamentable, compared to previous wars and given the intensity of the bombing effort, civilian casualties were light. See Record, *Hollow Victory*, 112.

areas this time, and post-war reporting would be struck by the eerie precision with which many targets were destroyed.⁴⁰

Despite the coalition's considerable efforts to establish and maintain legitimacy, journalists and humanitarian watch groups would later level serious criticisms, at the United States in particular, for the conduct of the war. Perhaps most damaging among the claims were charges of inflicting severe hardship and suffering upon the Iraqi people, and thus indirectly contributing to a large number of civilian deaths. Greenpeace, for example, estimated between 177,500 and 243,000 Iraq civilians suffered war-related deaths.⁴¹ A report by the Center for Economic and Social Rights noted, "Over the past decade, Iraqis have experienced one of the most rapid declines in living conditions ever recorded."⁴² To be sure, the embargo itself, and the decision to continue it well after the cease-fire, played a large role in creating hardships for all Iraqis.⁴³ Indeed, economic sanctions are a rather blunt instrument that cannot easily distinguish between a wayward regime and its helpless subjects, often already oppressed and brutalized. However, sanctions were an international action taken in concert by many nations under the auspices of United Nations resolution. Criticism of the coalition in this respect can be seen more as an indictment of the efficacy of sanctions as a coercive measure. For the present purposes, the more important criticism was leveled at the bombing campaign.

Soon after the cessation of active combat, humanitarian and aid organizations fanned out across Iraq and Kuwait to survey the damage and assess immediate needs. They found key

⁴⁰ A Dutch sociologist noted, "What struck me most was how little damage allied air raids had actually caused to civilian areas, relative to the amount of bombs said to have been dropped. Especially in Baghdad, the bombing was eerily precise." Joost R. Hiltermann, "Bomb Now, Die Later," *Mother Jones* 16, no. 4 (July-August, 1991): 46.

⁴¹ See Reuters, "90,000 May Have Died After Bombs," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 9 January 1992, A2.

⁴² The report goes on, "Iraq's place on the Human Development Index dropped from 96 in 1991 to 127 by the year 2000, on a par with the small southern Africa country of Lesotho. No other country has ever dropped so far, so fast." Center for Economic and Social Rights, *The Human Costs of War in Iraq* (Brooklyn, NY: Center for Economic and Social Rights, 2003), 7.

⁴³ See U.N. Security Council, 2981st Meeting. "Resolution 687 (1991) [The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait]" (S/RES/687). 3 April 1991, paragraph 24.

infrastructure devastated by surgically precise bombing, which had left Iraq without many of its basic services. Attacks on Iraqi electrical power generation and distribution are illustrative. Over the course of forty-three days, the coalition would conduct nearly 300 airstrikes against electrical targets alone, hitting eighteen of Iraq's major power plants and nine transformer stations deemed critical to effective power transmission.⁴⁴ In the first ten days of the air campaign, coalition attacks reduced electrical power production by an estimated eighty-eight percent.⁴⁵ Restrikes successfully limited power generation to just fifteen percent of prewar capacity for the remainder of combat operations, and post-war accounts by hostages and coalition prisoners-of-war indicated widespread power outages that lasted for much of the campaign.⁴⁶ Writing after a mission to assess humanitarian needs, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management Martti Ahtisaari assessed the damage this way: "Iraq has, for some time to come, been relegated to a pre-industrial age, but with all the disabilities of post-industrial dependency on an intensive use of energy and technology."⁴⁷

After the war, critics were quick to link lack of electrical power to the disruption of basic services such as water purification and distribution, waste removal, and sewage treatment.⁴⁸ Researchers and aid organizations alleged that the attendant decline in the quality of living conditions had contributed to rampant spread of infectious diseases. For instance, a group of physicians from the Harvard School of Public Health, collectively known as the Harvard

⁴⁴ See Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol I, 214, and Eliot A. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey, Effects and Effectiveness*, 296, 306.

⁴⁵ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 301.

⁴⁶ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 303.

⁴⁷ Martti Ahtisaari, *Report to the Secretary-General on Humanitarian Needs in Kuwait and Iraq in the Immediate Post-Crisis Environment* (New York: United Nations, 20 March 1991), 5.

⁴⁸ See, for example: Harvard Study Team, "Special Report: The Effect of the Gulf Crisis on the Children of Iraq," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 325, no. 13 (26 September 1991).

University Study Team, found “suffering of tragic proportions.”⁴⁹ Reporting in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the team found “an alarming increase in the incidence of water-borne diseases, including cholera, typhoid, and severe gastroenteritis” at times reaching “epidemic proportions.”⁵⁰ Another interdisciplinary team, operating under the rubric *The International Study Team on the Gulf Crisis*, found that in the aftermath of the war, “the mortality rate of children under five years of age [was] 380 percent greater...than before the onset of the Gulf Crisis”—a result the researchers attributed, in part, to the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure.⁵¹ Further, analysts also cited loss of electrical power as causal in the disruption of emergency services, medical care and other basic services, which compounded problems. Greenpeace researcher William Arkin, for example, attributed an estimated 70,000 to 90,000 Iraqi civilian deaths to “hardships such as inadequate medical care and poor food distribution” which resulted from “superfluous” bombing.⁵²

There is perhaps a natural temptation to dismiss these claims as the inflammatory rhetoric of antiwar activists who would find fault with any military action. It may be equally tempting to engage in the debate, seeking to challenge the accuracy of the figures and refute accusations of impropriety through further study and counter-claim. Still further, one could seek to deflect the criticism by attributing civilian deaths to “unintended consequences of military operations” necessitated by the poor choices of Saddam Hussein, who thus bore ultimate responsibility, as the authors of the *Gulf War Air Power Survey* do, arguing, “To attribute responsibility for Iraq’s increased mortality rate in the aftermath of a major military defeat solely, or even primarily, to

⁴⁹ Several attorneys accompanied the team of physicians. Harvard Study Team, “Special Report: The Effect of the Gulf Crisis on the Children of Iraq,” 980.

⁵⁰ Harvard Study Team, “Special Report: The Effect of the Gulf Crisis on the Children of Iraq,” 978.

⁵¹ The International Study Team on the Gulf Crisis, *Health and Welfare in Iraq After the Gulf Crisis: An In-Depth Assessment* (Boston, MA: International Study Team, 1991), 1.

⁵² Reuters, “90,000 May Have Died After Bombs.”

the damage inflicted on Iraq's electric-power system ignores the Iraqi government's responsibility for its own prewar and post war decisions."⁵³ While true that Saddam Hussein, in the final analysis, chose to violate international norms, and his necessary forcible eviction from Kuwait likely would have sparked some amount of outcry from pacifists in any event, the fact remains that the strategic bombing campaign opened a very specific avenue of attack for critics. Wholly accurate or not, these charges served to undermine the legitimacy of the coalition effort in general, and the United States' leadership in particular. Every image of suffering would thus become fodder with which regional hardliners could later foment contempt for the West.

*The Agency View: Bombing to Win*⁵⁴

The question begs: How did the air campaign come to include infrastructure targets such as Iraq's power plants and distribution nodes? Quite simply, the Air Force airmen who, in essence, planned and led the air campaign sought a means of coercing Iraq to abandon Kuwait without a clash of ground forces. Part of their motivation likely derived from the belief that the American public would not support a large ground war that portended significant casualties.⁵⁵ From the start, however, planners of the strategic air campaign intended to give air power claim to victory. That the military strategy thus contained a target set inimical to the imperative for unquestioned legitimacy is difficult to reconcile using only the perspective offered by unity of command. Its normative prescription tells only what should have happened—for example, someone with the proper authority needed to bar such targets. To attempt to find out why that did not occur, it is necessary to turn to agency theory.

⁵³ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 307-8.

⁵⁴ Section title adapted from Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

⁵⁵ Major General Buster C. Glosson interview by Richard G. Davis, Perry D. Jamieson, and Diane T. Putney, 12 December 1991. Typed transcript, p. 9. TF6-25-368 V.2, IRIS No. 00872937 in Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) Task Force VI collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

General Schwarzkopf, the principal in this situation, did not seek to evict Iraq by means of a bombing campaign alone, nor did he expect Lieutenant General Horner, his agent in charge of the air domain, to pursue such a course of action. Initially, the CENTCOM Commander-in-Chief focused on erecting a *defense* of Saudi Arabia.⁵⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the Iraqi invasion, CENTCOM quite simply had nothing resembling an effective deterrent in theater and no credible response options to offer the National Command Authorities.⁵⁷ When General Schwarzkopf phoned the Air Force on 8 August and asked Vice Chief of Staff General John M. Loh for an “air campaign,” he was in search of retaliatory punishment options that he could offer the president in the event Saddam Hussein decided to spring any more surprises during the buildup of United States forces.⁵⁸ Only in September, after significant combat power had arrived, making the situation seem a bit less precarious, did CENTCOM begin to give serious consideration to planning an offensive campaign to evict Iraq by force.⁵⁹ Moreover, from its inception, the four-phase plan for what became Desert Storm included both air *and* ground combat. Further, the stated objectives for the first three phases, which constituted the majority of the air war, indicate that the principal intended any bombing campaign as a *preparatory* action

⁵⁶ General Schwarzkopf notes, “My main concern was that a ground war would come to us...I knew the Iraqis could overrun the Saudi oil region in a week...In an attack [the] only option would be to pull back to an enclave on the coast...something like the U.S. retreat to the Pusan perimeter in the early days of the Korean War...We had all the force we needed to prevent such a disaster. There was only one small problem: the force was still in the United States.” Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 310. The Pentagon's official after-action report notes, “A credible deterrence required the early presence of substantial numbers of combat units. The same sorts of forces would be required to defend Saudi Arabia if deterrence failed. However, available sealift meant the buildup of heavy ground forces would take several weeks, if not months. The overall intent of all deterrence and defense options was to confront Iraq with the prospects of unacceptable costs and a widened conflict with the United States if it launched further attacks.” Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, Vol. I, 43.

⁵⁷ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 313

⁵⁸ See, Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 313, Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 33-4,57-9, and Richard T. Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm: the Genesis of the Air Campaign Against Iraq* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1995), 24. It was presented to the president in this manner. See, for example: Powell, *My American Journey*, 479.

⁵⁹ See Swain, “*Lucky War*,” 74. In his memoirs, General Schwarzkopf recalls being pressured for an offensive plan as early as mid-August, to which he replied, “What? I wouldn't, I couldn't I've made it clear to everyone that we aren't sending enough forces [in the initial deployment plans] to do that,” giving further credence to the assessment that what he initially requested from the Air Force was a contingency option. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 314-315.

for a culminating combined-arms ground campaign.⁶⁰ By his own admission, General Schwarzkopf did not give serious consideration to an air-only option.⁶¹

The Air Force was, however, on a different sheet of music from the start, which created a preference gap with respect to the principal's intent, and set the stage for the strategic interaction characteristic of agency. Upon learning of Iraq's invasion, Colonel John Warden, the Air Force's Deputy Director of Plans for Warfighting Concepts, immediately recognized an opportunity to demonstrate, once and for all, the proper employment of air power. Indeed, he and his division of staff officers, known collectively as "Checkmate," had begun working feverishly to outline a concept for air attacks to reverse Iraq's conquest *before* General Schwarzkopf made his request.⁶² Checkmate based the plan, which bore the name "Instant Thunder" in direct refutation of Vietnam's Rolling Thunder debacle, largely on Warden's ideas for the design of an *offensive* conventional air campaign.⁶³ For the previous five years, Warden had been pondering the state of operational art in the Air Force and had come to the conclusion

⁶⁰ See Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 86.

⁶¹ In a postwar interview General Schwarzkopf remarked of the strategic air campaign, "It was an option but I have never felt that it was the complete option. I always felt that it would take ground forces on the ground to, in fact, eject the ground forces that were over there." General H. Norman Schwarzkopf interview for the BBC documentary, *The Gulf War*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/schwarzkopf/1.html> (accessed 20 March 2012). General Powell, not unexpectedly, shared Schwarzkopf's view. See Powell, *My American Journey*, 473, 476, and General Colin L. Powell interview for BBC documentary, *The Gulf War*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/powell/1.html> (accessed 20 March 2012).

⁶² Checkmate began working on Instant Thunder on 7 August. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 35-6. Warden himself had been contemplating ideas for an air campaign virtually from the moment he learned of Iraq's invasion on 3 August. Colonel John A. Warden, III interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, 22 October 1991. Typed transcript, 36-38. K239.0472-114, IRIS No. 00876326, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

⁶³ President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara conceived of the Rolling Thunder campaign as a means to signal the North Vietnamese drawing upon a theory called graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension (GRIT), developed by political scientist Charles Osgood and later extended by Thomas Schelling. See Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 68. Warden had become convinced that the Air Force tended to view conventional war a defensive battle of attrition, and he had made up his mind to cultivate offensive air power. Warden Interview, 22 October 1991, 10, and Colonel John A. Warden, III interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, Lt Col Edward Mann, and Lt Col Richard Reynolds, 30 May 1991. Typed transcript, 117. K239.0472-113, IRIS No. 00876324, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

that it had all but disappeared after WWII.⁶⁴ All that remained were the polar opposites, strategic air power, at the time merely a rubric for bombers and the ultra-rigid Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP), and tactical air power, which meant little more than servicing targets for defending ground forces under the AirLand Battle doctrine of Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5.⁶⁵

Colonel Warden, much like the airmen who planned the WWII strategic bombing campaign against Germany, sought to obviate the need for an attritional clash of field armies.⁶⁶ As had his predecessors, Warden attempted to analyze the enemy's war-making apparatus to find points of attack both critical to the enemy's waging of combat and susceptible to attack from the air.⁶⁷ In this, he leaned heavily on Clausewitz's notion of centers of gravity, which the Colonel defined as "that point where the enemy is most vulnerable and the point where an attack will

⁶⁴ Colonel Warden's ideas regarding an operational air campaign began to take shape while he attended the National War College during the academic year, 1985-1986. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 37, and Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 76. His ideas became the basis for a monograph, which the National War College published as a book in 1998. John A. Warden, III, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1988). See also, Warden Interview, 22 October 1991, 9., 13.

⁶⁵ On the decline of operational art in the application of air power see John A. Warden, III, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat*, rev. ed. (New York: toExcel Press, 2000), 2-3. Warden's writing belied skepticism that nuclear weapons could serve a purpose other than deterrence of nuclear attack. See Warden Interview, 22 October 1991, 4, 20. Regarding the philosophical divide between Strategic Air Command and Tactical Air Command, see Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 72, and Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm*, xi.

⁶⁶ The reference here is to the Air War Plans Division (AWPD) of the Army Air Forces air staff. With regard to the air plan for WWII, Richard Davis notes airmen "realized that if the WPD [War Department General Staff War Plans Division] prepared the plan, Army ground officers would base their estimates on tactical close air support needs while shortchanging strategic air war needs." Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe* (Washington DC: Center for Air Force History, 1993), 60. Warden writes, "Too frequently, our vision of war concentrates almost exclusively on its most obvious manifestation—the clash of the fielded military forces of the contestants... but it is not clear today that the actual clash of men on the front is the only way or the best way to wage war...to the contrary...it may be the most costly and least productive approach in perhaps the majority of cases." John A. Warden, III, "Centers of Gravity—The Key to Success in War," in Clayton J. Thomas ed., *Report of the Mini-Symposium on Operational Art and Analysis* (Alexandria, VA; Military Operations Research Society, 1990), I-18.

⁶⁷ In the interwar years, American airmen developed what came to be known as the industrial web theory, which served as a framework for "determining the vulnerability of industrial targets and selecting critical targets within a specific industrial complex" considering "the results desired in the light of the capability of available weapons." Robert T. Finney, *History of the Air Corps Tactical School 1920 - 1940* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998), 71.

have the best chance of being decisive.”⁶⁸ Whereas WWII airmen approached the enemy system largely from the perspective of disrupting the supply of war material, Warden saw industry as but one of five hierarchical “rings” of key elements making up the enemy’s war apparatus.⁶⁹ In Warden’s model, each ring, from the outermost representing the opposing fielded forces to the innermost denoting the enemy leadership, amounted to an increasingly important element of the enemy system, and thus evermore attractive target set. He argued that ground forces have little choice but to begin at the outer ring, and, in effect, fight to reach the center leadership ring.⁷⁰ Air power, however, could strike anywhere throughout the system, and particularly with the advent of stealth and precision weapons, directly at the potentially lucrative leadership bullseye at the center. Warden writes, “The essence of war is applying pressure against the enemy’s innermost strategic ring—its command structure...It is pointless to deal with enemy military forces if they can be bypassed, by strategy or technology, either in the defense or offense.”⁷¹ By way of metaphor for the case of the Gulf War, if the coalition could sever the link between the body of Iraqi army in Kuwait and its brain in Baghdad, the former could not function and would, Warden hoped, pick up and go home.⁷²

⁶⁸ Warden, *The Air Campaign*, rev. ed., 7.

⁶⁹ Recall the Oil Plan discussed in Chapter One. Warden’s five rings were originally, working from center outward: command structure, essential industry, transportation system, population and food sources, fielded military forces. Warden, “Centers of Gravity—The Key to Success in War,” I-19 to I-20. During the development of Instant Thunder, Checkmate labeled the rings: leadership, key production, infrastructure, population, fielded forces. Warden, *The Air Campaign*, rev. ed., 146. Based on feedback from Tactical Air Command (TAC), Checkmate dropped Warden’s rings from Instant Thunder, opting instead for a system of target categories. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 52. After the Gulf War, Warden refined the ring nomenclature to: leadership, organic essentials, infrastructure, population, fighting mechanism/fielded military. John A. Warden, III, “The Enemy as a System,” *Air Power Journal* XIV, no. 1 (Spring 1995).

⁷⁰ See Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 40.

⁷¹ Warden, “Centers of Gravity—The Key to Success in War,” I-20. After the war, Warden recalled that he “had no interest whatsoever in doing anything to the people in Kuwait. It was inconsequential in my view; was then and still is, as a matter of fact.” Warden Interview, 22 October 1991, 41.

⁷² Note that although the original Instant Thunder plan mentioned a contingency option to provide “U.S. air cover for Arab actions” in the event that Saddam failed to yield, planners mapped out only 6-9 days of strategic air attack precisely because Warden believed nothing more would be required. See Briefing, “Instant Thunder: A Strategic Air Campaign Proposal for CINCCENT” by Colonel John A. Warden, III, 10 August 1990, CHSH-7, IRIS No. 00874540, in Gulf War Air Power Survey Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

Although Instant Thunder intended from the beginning to target “Hussein” as the center of gravity in the leadership ring, listing the Iraqi leader’s demise as a stated objective was fraught with problems and thus became a controversial issue.⁷³ Initial discussions surrounding the air campaign raised the complicated legal aspects of trying to target the Iraqi leader directly. In 1981, President Reagan had issued Executive Order 12333, which forbade assassinations by any “person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government.”⁷⁴ Later, legal review would conclude that as the military leader and senior ranking officer, Saddam Hussein could, in fact, be attacked legally within the laws of armed conflict.⁷⁵ Further, the embarrassing failure to nab Manuel Noriega during Operation JUST CAUSE, as had been the objective the year before, also figured heavily among the concerns.⁷⁶ Although the coalition did, in fact, attack many of Saddam Hussein’s bunkers and other suspected hideouts, the issue remained sensitive, however, as evidenced by the firing of Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Dugan for alluding to this course of action in discussions with reporters during a September trip to the Gulf.⁷⁷

(Secret) Information extracted declassified, 7 March 2012. Lieutenant General Horner recalled Warden saying during his 20 August presentation in Riyadh, “Well, don’t worry about the ground forces. They are going to be demoralized and quit.” Lt. Gen Charles A. Horner interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri and Lt Col Richard Reynolds, 2 December 1991. Typed transcript, 34. K239.0472-93, IRIS No. 00876282, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. After the war Horner wrote, “In his [Warden’s] view, Iraqi land forces were actually a detriment, a drain, less a threat than a hungry mass that had to be fed and supplied. Therefore, once we had removed the core national strengths, the Iraqi army would simply go home.” Tom Clancy and Charles A. Horner, *Every Man a Tiger* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1999), 263.

⁷³ Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 50, 333.

⁷⁴ Executive Order 12333, United States Intelligence Activities, 4 December 1981, paragraph 2.12.

⁷⁵ Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 50.

⁷⁶ Eliot A. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, Volume I, Part I, *Planning* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 98.

⁷⁷ After the war General Schwarzkopf acknowledged, “After the shooting started we repeatedly asserted that the United States was not trying to kill Saddam Hussein—President Bush said so himself—and that was true, to a point. But at the very top of our target list were the bunkers where we knew he and his senior commanders were likely to be working.” Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 319. See also: Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 333. Regarding General Dugan’s remarks and subsequent firing, see, for example: Woodward, *The Commanders*, 290-6, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 98.

Since targeting the person of Saddam Hussein remained a largely unacknowledged objective with decidedly low probability of success, planners needed another causal mechanism to undergird their predictions for the efficacy of the strategic air campaign. Attacks on key infrastructure thus became a means of attempting indirectly to induce collapse of the Iraqi war machine. In particular, Checkmate planners identified Iraq's electrical power generation and distribution capability as a center of gravity within the "key production" target ring.⁷⁸ In his 10 August presentation to Schwarzkopf, Colonel Warden identified the rationale, listing "electricity" among Instant Thunder's aims as a "highly leveraged target set," asserting that it in some way affected many, if not all, of the other centers of gravity in the Iraqi system.⁷⁹ For instance, planners assumed a lack of electricity would shut down Iraq's communication systems, thereby impeding Saddam Hussein's ability to command his forces.⁸⁰ General Horner later noted, "Warden's reasons for this emphasis were straightforward: Airpower properly applied against the Iraqi centers of gravity would cause that nation's leaders to surrender and withdraw their forces from Kuwait."⁸¹

The transition from a *independent* strategic air campaign to an offensive campaign consisting of four phases, which included air attacks on the Iraqi army, and, eventually, coalition ground operations, undermined the basic rationale for Instant Thunder, as the shift carried implicit acknowledgement that air attacks alone were, at best, an unlikely to cause a systemic collapse, and thus an Iraqi surrender or withdrawal. Air Force airmen, however, still desired to prove airpower's decisiveness, and built the plan for the first phase of offensive operations around the core of Instant Thunder, laboring throughout the planning and execution to keep the

⁷⁸ Warden, *The Air Campaign*, rev. ed., 146.

⁷⁹ Briefing, "Instant Thunder" by Warden, 10 August 1990, slide 17.

⁸⁰ See for example, Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 116.

⁸¹ Clancy and Horner, *Every Man a Tiger*, 263.

essence of the strategic air campaign alive.⁸² Since they could no longer credibly project systemic collapse or Saddam Hussein's voluntary withdrawal as the outcome of strategic air attack (although that was still partly the hope), planners were forced to seek another causal mechanism by which airpower alone might win the war. If bombing of command bunkers and various parts of the Iraqi infrastructure was unlikely to influence Saddam Hussein directly, only two options remained. Airmen could plan an attrition campaign to destroy the Iraqi army by brute force. Although Phase 3 of the campaign plan eventually aimed, in part, to do just that, Checkmate had decreed this option inefficient and expressly avoided it since such a course of action would not be a wholly satisfying demonstration of airpower.⁸³ In essence, this option would trap airpower with ground forces in the outermost ring of Warden's model, hammering away at the enemy's fielded forces.

Thus, planners were left with that which airmen had fallen back upon many times in that past—bombing to influence the will and morale of the populace.⁸⁴ It was at this point that the Air Force, as the agent, introduced a divergent aim. To reiterate, there would be no terror bombing this time. The president and his advisors would restate often that the coalition's war, if and when it came, was with Saddam Hussein and his army, not the Iraqi people.⁸⁵ General

⁸² Lt Col David A. Deptula interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, Lt Col Richard Reynolds, and Lt Col Edward Mann, 22 May 1991. Typed transcript, 36-40. K239.0472-81, IRIS No. 00876256, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

⁸³ Warden's thinking on the subject: "By thinking in these larger strategic and operational level terms, we simplify our tasks enormously. We may not have to find and destroy thirty thousand tanks if we can destroy the few hundred fuel or ammunition distribution points. We may not have to destroy the few hundred fuel distribution points if we can immobilize an entire society by destroying dozens of electrical generation systems. And we may not need to destroy dozens of electrical generation systems if we can capture or kill the enemy leader. Our task is to look and work as close to the center of the enemy's operational and strategic rings as possible." Warden, "Centers of Gravity—The Key to Success in War," I-22.

⁸⁴ See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 93-4, and *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 291-2.

⁸⁵ See, for instance: President George H. W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit" (speech, Washington, DC, 11 September 1990). "Address to the People of Iraq on the Persian Gulf Crisis" (taped address, Iraqi state television, 16 September 1990). "Address Before the

Horner, recognizing heavy civilian casualties would certainly provoke unwanted criticism, proscribed such attacks in his operations order for Phase I: “The target is Saddam Hussein’s regime, not the Iraqi populace...Anything which could be considered as terror attacks or attacks on the Iraqi people will be avoided.”⁸⁶ Infrastructure attacks, in addition to impeding military functions, thus became an *indirect* means of disaffecting ordinary Iraqis from the regime. Intended as both a stick and a carrot, air planners hoped attacking electrical power production would help foment popular opposition that, in turn, might lead to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.⁸⁷ In the first place, planners intended to disrupt normalcy for Iraqi civilians by denying basic services in order to “put every [Iraqi] household in an autonomous mode and make them feel they were isolated.”⁸⁸ By “turning the lights off in Baghdad,” airmen could “bring the war home to the people of Baghdad,” thereby demonstrating to the Iraqi people that Saddam Hussein and his Ba’ath Party were powerless and, in fact, ultimately the sources of their discomfort.⁸⁹ Further, planners hoped that such denial-of-service attacks would carry the implicit message, “Hey, your lights will come back on as soon as you get rid of Saddam.”⁹⁰

The Phase I strategic air campaign, arguably, was not wholly successful in meeting any of the planners’ aims. While they certainly generated significant friction for Iraqi forces,

45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly” (speech, New York, 1 October 1990). “Remarks to United States Army Troops Near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia” (speech, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, 22 November 1990).

⁸⁶ COMUSCENTAF OPORD, Offensive Campaign-Phase I, 2 September 1990. TF5-1-33, IRIS No. 00872762, in Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) Task Force V collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. Quoted in Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 92.

⁸⁷ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 292.

⁸⁸ General Glosson goes on: “I didn’t want them to listen to radio stations and know what was happening. I wanted to play with their psyche.” Glosson Interview, 12 December 1991, 18.

⁸⁹ First quote by General Glosson: Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 93. Second quote by General Horner: Julie Bird, “Horner: Further AF Role in Gulf Not Needed,” *Air Force Times*, (18 March 1991), 8.

⁹⁰ Lt Col David A. Deptula interview by Richard G. Davis, Diane T. Putney, and Perry D. Jamieson, 8 January 92. Typed transcript, 43. TF5-4-103, IRIS No. 00872819 in Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) Task Force V collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. The implication here is a bid for postwar leverage. Glosson Interview, 12 December 1991, 19.

coalition air attacks never fully severed military communications.⁹¹ Robert Pape, for example, has argued that since the coalition derived significant intelligence on Iraqi plans from intercepts of high-frequency radio transmissions between systems of dispersed command posts, Saddam's military commanders were, in fact, able to communicate throughout.⁹² Over the course of the air campaign, the Iraqis were able to effect numerous workarounds that allowed them to issue orders to frontline commanders, as evidenced by the initiation of the raid on Al Khafji and the coordination of a general withdrawal with movement of Republican Guard divisions to screening positions in an attempt to cover the Iraqi retreat.⁹³ Further, Saddam Hussein maintained control over operations throughout since he apparently ordered SCUD launches as late as 26 February.⁹⁴ More to the point, strategic air attacks in general, and infrastructure bombing to deny Iraqi civilians basic services in particular, alone neither prompted a *coup d'état* nor induced popular uprising as hoped.

As John Andreas Olsen has argued persuasively, planners of the strategic air campaign failed to grasp that the Iraqi "target state" was such that open rebellion and attempts to overthrow Saddam Hussein were improbable, and faced dubious prospects were either actually to occur.⁹⁵ Indeed, it was not until *after* the ground campaign that Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite populations began their insurrections, which Saddam Hussein ruthlessly suppressed with just a fraction of his

⁹¹ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 224, 288-289.

⁹² Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 239.

⁹³ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell remarked after the first week of the air campaign, "With respect to their national command authority and their command and control systems, they are very good at this. They have redundant systems, resilient systems, they have work-arounds, they have alternatives, and they are still able to command their forces. They have not lost command and control of their forces or of the country." Quoted in Record, *Hollow Victory*, 107. Regarding instigation of the Al Khafji battle and subsequent retreat, see Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 240. Workarounds included use of couriers as well as laying/burying transmission lines between units. Postwar questioning of Iraqi officers revealed that they knew of the left hook in the west and received orders to reposition in response. See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 223-4.

⁹⁴ See: Keaney and Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report*, 70.

⁹⁵ Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 175.

military forces—in part, a battered lot after the coalition offensive.⁹⁶ As the leader of three antagonistic ethnic populations, Saddam Hussein had spent much of his adult life perfecting an elaborate system to undergird his personal power.⁹⁷ In the first place, the Iraqi government was not a consensus-making body with checks and balances as one finds in many western systems. Rather, the Revolutionary Command Council served as the clearinghouse for executive, legislative and judicial bureaucracies, over which Saddam, as president, held supreme authority, for example, influencing both development of statutes and selection of judges to interpret them.⁹⁸ Further, a single-party political system ensured no opposing ideology could gain a foothold in the country. As in other dictatorial regimes, the Ba’ath party became a means of control in the Orwellian image, by which “everybody felt watched, nobody could be trusted, and truth was decreed.”⁹⁹ A complex state security apparatus permitted such “politics by fear” and ensured Saddam had “sensors and tentacles everywhere” to ensure loyalty and root out opposition.¹⁰⁰

The Iraqi leader also applied his divide-and-rule tactics to the military, in effect, serving as the senior ranking commander and establishing the Republican Guard and later the Special Republican Guard, to insulate his regime from overthrow by the conscripted regular army.¹⁰¹ Kinship tied this elaborate system together, as only loyal members of Saddam Hussein’s family and tribe populated his inner circle and held the key positions in the civilian government, security services, and military.¹⁰² The Iraqi “target” thus featured a labyrinthine mass of formal

⁹⁶ As Freedman and Karsh put it, Saddam’s “rhetoric could not hide the magnitude of the defeat. Iraqis took matters into their own hands and, for the first time in Iraq’s modern history, rose in strength against their unelected ruler.” Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 410-411.

⁹⁷ The Kurdish Iraqis in the north and the Shiite Muslims in the south often resented the Sunni Muslim minority that held much of the political power. Removal of Saddam Hussein carried the potential of “Iraq’s disintegration into a Lebanon writ large.” Record, *Hollow Victory*, 109.

⁹⁸ Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 194-199.

⁹⁹ Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 187.

¹⁰⁰ Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 190, 223.

¹⁰¹ Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 200-202.

¹⁰² Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, 214-222.

and information networks and linkages, which, through extensive overlap and redundancy as well as rather effective compartmentalization and secrecy, rendered the regime extremely resistant, if not impervious, to the popular and elite disaffection intended by the coalition bombing campaign. As Jeffrey Record notes, “Saddam was simply not the kind of leader who dreaded the grass-roots public reaction that proponents of strategic bombing seem to have expected. After all, he had devoted virtually his entire political career to creating a system of government in which the opinion and fate of only one individual counted.”¹⁰³

It is, therefore, necessary to conclude that the Air Force airmen who planned and led the strategic air campaign acted not from a thorough understanding of the requirements of the situation, but attempted to impose a preconceived strategy onto a largely incompatible target set largely out of service self-interest. To argue that those leaders and planners who commanded and controlled the air war operated within the narrow confines of the airman’s perspective and according to the imperatives inherent in Air Force interests is not to say that they did not have noble intent, at least in part. It is difficult, for instance, to assail a desire to limit casualties on the ground, even if the motivation is not wholly altruistic.¹⁰⁴ Rather, the charge is that means became something of an end. To reiterate, combat serves as a significant (and fleeting) opportunity to demonstrate service legitimacy and relevancy. The desire to prove airpower a war-winner, and not merely an unsung deterrent to nuclear apocalypse or a supporting adjunct to ground forces, drove Checkmate, and later the CENTAF Special Planning Group, to attempt to

¹⁰³ Record, *Hollow Victory*, 111.

¹⁰⁴ General Glosson, for example, remarked after the war, “I would prefer if we do not kill one Iraqi soldier...I have no desire to annihilate any portion of the Iraqi population.” Major General Buster C. Glosson interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, Lt Col Richard Reynolds, and Lt Col Edward Mann, 4 June 1992. Typed transcript, p. 65. K239.0472-90, IRIS No. 00876275, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. Glosson also thought the war had to be quick to avoid loss of life. Glosson Interview, 12 December 1991, 5-6.

break the Persian Gulf stalemate before the start of the Phase IV ground invasion.¹⁰⁵ Through mirror imaging very reminiscent of WWII, airmen, in effect, built a plan around what they *could* target. Having failed to analyze fully the Iraqi political power structure, they asserted a causal linkage that simply did not exist. In attempting to coerce Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait or induce his overthrow by bombing Iraqi infrastructure, and electrical power production in particular, Air Force airmen had, once again, “allowed their doctrine to become their strategy.”¹⁰⁶ As further evidence that the overriding motivation was indeed to prove airpower’s decisiveness, after the war, the Air Force downplayed the ineffectiveness of the strategic air campaign, claiming instead that airpower alone had *defeated a field army* in head-to-head combat—ironically, the very course of action Checkmate had sought to avoid from the start.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ In mid-August, CENTAF assumed the lead role in planning Phase I of the offensive, the strategic air campaign. General Horner summoned Brigadier General Buster Glosson to lead the effort. Glosson immediately established the Special Planning Group, an interdisciplinary team built around the core planners who had developed Instant Thunder, Lt Col David A. Deptula in particular. See Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 136-141. Regarding desire to obviate the impending ground invasion, General Glosson, for example, remarked after the war, “But from the very onset, our focus in Riyadh was one that a ground campaign would not be necessary...I still believe to this day that it wasn’t necessary.” See: Major General Buster C. Glosson interview by Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, Lt Col Richard Reynolds, and Lt Col Edward Mann, 29 May 1991. Typed transcript, p. 44 (quote), 73. K239.0472-89, IRIS No. 00876272, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL, and Major General Buster Glosson interview 14 April 92. Handwritten notes, p. 10. TF4-11-192 V.1, IRIS N. 00876596, in Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) Task Force IV collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

¹⁰⁶ Remark by Lieutenant General Elwood R. Quesada regarding application of airpower in WWII, quoted in Thomas Alexander Hughes, *OVERLORD: General Pete Quesada and the Triumph of Tactical Air Power in World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 82.

¹⁰⁷ A briefing after the war summarized the accomplishments: “air power can prevail over ground forces: Iraqi field army in Kuwait defeated by air power;” “strategic attack theory validated: paralysis imposed from the air.” In emphatically declaring “air power can and does win wars!” nowhere is there mention of the fact that Saddam Hussein did not simply give up due to the of strategic air attack. Department of the Air Force, “Instant Thunder/Desert Storm: A Strategic and Operational Level Air Campaign,” No date (facsimile transmission marginalia indicate a creation date not later than 14 August 1991; handwritten notes indicate presentation given 7 January 1992). Briefing, slides 30, 53, 56-7. TF5-1-4, IRIS No. 00872733, in Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) Task Force V collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. (Secret) Information extracted declassified, 9 March 2012. Marginalia indicate that the briefing was presented to the Gulf War Air Power Survey team by Lt Col Al Howey, who was a staff officer in Checkmate in 1991. See Perry D. Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets: The U. S. Air Force in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2001), ix. Also regarding the downplay of the strategic air campaign, see: Record, *Hollow Victory*, 107.

The analysis thus far reveals a situation with all the trappings of an agency problem. Given the introduction of a divergent aim through the pursuit of self-interest, it is necessary to conclude that the agent entered the realm of shirking. It now remains to examine the strategic interaction to understand how and why ostensibly unified command failed to produce the desired outcome. In the finer points of airpower employment, General Schwarzkopf demonstrated and, indeed, readily admitted his lack of understanding; hence, he relied heavily upon his air component.¹⁰⁸ While planning and executing the strategic air campaign, the Air Force exploited its information advantage to usurp a decision rightly within the purview of the principal—namely, the establishment of the objectives for the strategic air campaign. General Schwarzkopf fully supported efforts to target Saddam Hussein directly, but otherwise viewed the strategic air campaign as a necessary precondition for further air attacks to attrit Iraqi forces in preparation for the ground attack. Many of the targets in the plan were dual-use targets, meaning they served both civilian and military purposes, and therefore could be attacked under international law. Planners made use of this fact to expand the aims of the strategic air campaign beyond the principal's intent. The growth of the electrical power target set over the course of the planning effort represented not only the accumulation of more detailed intelligence on Iraq's infrastructure, but also the shift of the bombing's intent to include the will and morale of the people.¹⁰⁹ If any given target could be justified based upon its military use—for example, supplying power to an

¹⁰⁸ Major General Burton R. Moore interview with Lt Col Suzanne Gehri, Lt Col Edward Mann, and Lt Col Richard Reynolds, 21 September 1992. Typed transcript, 38-9. K239.0472-100, IRIS No. 00876296, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Storm collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 5. General Glosson describes a discussion with Schwarzkopf over the use of B-52s that reveals both the impression that the bomber made on the CENTCOM chief during his Vietnam duty as well as his lack of understanding of how the aircraft might fit into the Desert Storm air campaign. Glosson Interview, 4 June 1992, 57, and Buster Glosson, *War with Iraq: Critical Lessons* (Charlotte, NC: Glosson Family Foundation, 2003), 113-114.

¹⁰⁹ Electrical power targets grew from Instant Thunder's initial list of ten to seventeen by 15 January 1991, and finally to a high of twenty-nine by the end of the war. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 146, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 87.

Iraqi command facility—there was no need to highlight the fact that the same target might also serve to blackout all of Baghdad.¹¹⁰ Not only did air planners tend to emphasize the potential military utility of striking certain targets, but they also lumped targets into categories representing centers of gravity for the enemy forces—something that General Schwarzkopf, an Army officer, surely *would* understand—that did not necessarily make explicit connection to the will and morale of the people.¹¹¹ The agent could also mask such intent in execution by convincing the principal that he need only *apportion* the air effort, thereby delegating the all-important task of *allocating* airpower to specific targets.¹¹² The net effect served to limit the principal’s scrutiny of particular targets and the attendant rationale for striking them. Indeed, not until a 13 February attack on the Al Firdos bunker killed as many as two hundred Iraqi civilians did strategic target sets received serious review by the principal or his superiors.¹¹³

The existence of a preference gap is, to reiterate, all but assured in delegation driven by functional specialization. Whether the agent seeks its interests to the point of diverging aims, depends, in part, on the magnitude of the gap. In this instance, it is difficult to give a qualitative

¹¹⁰ In the early iterations of Instant Thunder, before dropping reference to the five-rings model, Colonel Warden listed no targets in the *Population* ring. Rather, electricity fell in the *Key Production* ring, emphasizing its military utility. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 118, 120.

¹¹¹ Electrical power infrastructure is again a case in point. Beginning in the early days of Instant Thunder, planners placed these targets under the heading *Electricity*—one of ten categories. Later, electrical power plants would be lumped under the more general heading *Infrastructure*. By execution, no rubric for Iraqi infrastructure existed at all. See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 145.

¹¹² Schwarzkopf tasked his JFACC to recommend to him “apportionment of theater air sorties.” Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Planning*, 42, and Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 5. Regarding maintenance of control over allocation to strategic targets, see: Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 49, and Lt Col David A. Deptula interview by Lt Col Richard Reynolds and Lt Col Edward Mann, 10 December 1991. Typed transcript, 28-9. K239.0472-83, IRIS No. 00876260, in College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE) Desert Story Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL. General Glosson succeeded in separating the targeting board for the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations from the allocation of sorties for the strategic campaign. Glosson Interview, 4 June 1992, 14-15.

¹¹³ The Air Force puts the number of casualties at one hundred and notes planners were unaware that the bunker served as a civilian shelter. Department of the Air Force, *Reaching Globally, Reaching Powerfully*, 37. Iraq claimed casualties as high as 204. Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 286. Although not an electrical infrastructure target, the Al Firdos bunker is illustrative in that General Glosson, in effect, picked the target and ordered the attack without significant further review or approval measures. See Glosson Interview, 29 May 1991, 84.

evaluation of how strongly the agent desired to pursue its preference. The difficulty inheres in the fact that the Air Force was not of a single mind on the subject of the air campaign. A significant number of airmen, particularly those from Tactical Air Command, actually favored attacks on the fielded forces and viewed Instant Thunder with some disdain.¹¹⁴ Thus, merely identifying the preference gap may not be sufficient in explaining the agent's shirking. It is therefore necessary to examine the manner in which the probability of detection and the structure of the punishments and rewards influenced the agent's decision calculus.

Several circumstances conspired to create an environment in which the probability of detecting a shirking agent appeared to be rather low. In the first place, General Schwarzkopf, likely somewhat out of necessity due to the nature of the coalition, erected a decentralized command structure that gave agents considerable freedom.¹¹⁵ As noted, he delegated heavily, thereby making his monitoring regime unobtrusive by default. Further, the costs of intrusive monitoring were somewhat high, making it somewhat unlikely that an agent would come under more intense scrutiny. To put it plainly, the principal was overwhelmed and had virtually little extra "bandwidth" to devote to monitoring. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, Schwarzkopf was in the "pressure cooker" trying to manage the frenetic mobilization and deployment from his Tampa headquarters.¹¹⁶ Nearly as soon as the Desert Shield deployment began, General Powell, on behalf the president, began pressing for an offensive campaign.¹¹⁷ Challenges in dealing with the multitude of stakeholders and interests that attended such a large, diverse coalition only compounded the problem. Moreover, General Schwarzkopf had elected to

¹¹⁴ See Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm*, 39-41, and Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 55-6.

¹¹⁵ See, for example: Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 299, 311-312.

¹¹⁷ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 314-315.

retain control over the land component himself.¹¹⁸ Thus, once the president announced the buildup of United States forces for an “offensive option,” the CENTCOM chief was consumed with the deployment of the heavy VII Corps from Europe and the planning of the now famous “left hook.”¹¹⁹ The Air Force also raised the cost of monitoring by compartmentalizing the planning of the strategic air campaign. Not only did the air component maintain a separate staff, but planners of the strategic air campaign remained segregated from those working on the attrition campaign against Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Brigadier General Buster Glosson, whom Horner had put in charge turning Instant thunder into an executable campaign, created the Special Planning Group, over which he maintained strict control of access, to the point that it garnered the title “Black Hole.”¹²⁰ Indeed, General Schwarzkopf seems to have been content with periodic update briefings and did not visit the Black Hole until 15 January, the eve of the air war.¹²¹

The agent’s assessment of the likelihood that its shirking will be detected by the principal is only part of the decision calculus regarding pursuit of self-interest. To take full measure of the strategic interaction, one must also consider the structure of the system of sanctions and rewards for doing so. In the present case, the air component seemed unconcerned that the principal might mete out substantive punishment for shirking. Although much has been made of General “Stormin’ Norman” Schwarzkopf’s fiery temper, legendary blowups, and often merciless treatment of subordinates, there seems to be no instance of his firing anyone of significant import

¹¹⁸ Doctrine allowed for aggregating all land forces under a Joint Forces Land Component Commander (JFLCC) similar to the JFACC designation given to General Horner. On Schwarzkopf declining to name a JFLCC, see Lieutenant General John J. Yeosock interview by John F. Antal, 8 May 1998. Typed transcript, 149. Listed as “Yesterday’s Preparation Builds Tomorrow’s Victories,” United States Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, and Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 6, 13.

¹¹⁹ See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 300.

¹²⁰ Glosson Interview, 4 June 1992, 14. The Black Hole garnered its name from both its secrecy and its physical isolation in the basement of the Royal Saudi Air Force building. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 140, 266.

¹²¹ Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 113. General Horner recalled that Schwarzkopf monitored the strategic air campaign very little. Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 49.

during the conflict.¹²² The CENTCOM chief's visit to the Black Hole on 15 January likely reinforced the perception that General Schwarzkopf blustered frequently, but rarely followed through on threats of sanction. During a briefing of the air campaign's opening attacks, he "exploded" over a perceived lack of emphasis on the Republican Guard shouting, "I'm the only one giving directions, and if you people aren't listening to me I'll replace you!"¹²³ By his own admission, General Glosson changed nothing and bore no further consequence for the defiance.¹²⁴ Furthermore, the air component retained an active "backchannel" connection to the Air Force in Washington.¹²⁵ The strong support of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff, and other ranking generals for the strategic air campaign meant that the planners had significant top cover back in Washington.¹²⁶ Moreover, postwar insinuations that General Glosson was given a green light to bypass General Horner when the two didn't see eye-to-eye suggests the notion that, from a service perspective, one could be "too joint," and that the more influential rewards and punishments often derive from the agent's parent service.¹²⁷

Summary

To sum in agency parlance, delegation of the air campaign, for all intents and purposes to the Air Force, resulted in the introduction of a divergent aim—attempting to affect the will and morale of the Iraqi people in order to induce overthrow of Saddam Hussein—that, in part, served to undermine the legitimacy of the war. From the start, a significant gap existed between the

¹²² See, for example: Woodward, *The Commanders*, 208, Powell, *My American Journey*, 492, Swain, "Lucky War," 17, and Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 3.

¹²³ Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 330-1.

¹²⁴ Glosson Interview, 4 June 1992, 58.

¹²⁵ Glosson was in contact with the air staff as much as three times a day, and his planners worked closely with Checkmate throughout the conflict. Glosson Interview, 29 May 1991, 40, and Glosson Interview, 12 December 1991, 19.

¹²⁶ Glosson Interview, 12 December 1991, 19. Warden Interview, 30 May 1991, 103-4. Gordon and Trainor report lobbying by General Merrill McPeak, the Air Force Chief of Staff, and Air Force Secretary Donald Rice to extend the air campaign in hopes of averting the ground war. Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 323, 328-9.

¹²⁷ Notes taken by the Gulf War Air Power Survey during a briefing on the campaign include reference to Checkmate instructions to "help Glosson" and "be his shadow staff" and to "bypass Horner intentionally to keep Horner from closing [the] B[lack] H[ole]." Department of the Air Force, "Instant Thunder/Desert Storm," slide 4.

intent of the principal, which sought a combined arms campaign supported by air, and the agent's preference, which centered on a demonstration of airpower's decisiveness. Airmen exploited their information advantage in the role of agent to pursue a target set largely for its support of service self-interests rather than its probability of producing a desirable outcome in the conflict. Due to the circumstances of the situation, the principal as superior and evaluator did not and likely could not erect an adequate monitoring regime. Moreover, the system of rewards and punishment appears to have been skewed in favor of the parent service and thus the service's imperatives. To be clear, in no way is the intent here to argue for or against one type of air attack or another; it would be difficult to argue that strategic air attack against command nodes, for example, had no value, even if they were not wholly successful. Rather, this analysis merely points out that, in this instance, airmen reached beyond what the principal needed to execute his plan, and indeed beyond what could be done, largely for the sake of service self-interest, and in spite of unified command.

The Ground Campaign: Absence of Decision

Redemption

In 1990, the American military was just beginning to emerge from the shadow of Vietnam and the disastrous operations that followed. All of the senior leaders involved in the Gulf War had witnessed the effects of those fiascos and seemed intent on avoiding the mistakes of the past. As one observer has noted, "From the president downward through the chain of command, the ghost of the Vietnam War hovered over every preceding."¹²⁸ For defeat in Southeast Asia, the United States had traded far too much blood and untold treasure, in the process sapping the will of the populace and poisoning the nation's relationship with the military. The president, the military, and the nation thus could ill afford another interminable war,

¹²⁸ Swain, "*Lucky War*," xxvi.

dragging on for years without perception of tangible gain to a rather unceremonious ending. First and foremost, this meant avoiding the indecisiveness and gradualism that piled up casualties to no effect and became the hallmarks of failure. Military leaders, and General Powell in particular, thus insisted that the National Command Authorities provide clear objectives before committing troops to the region.¹²⁹ Further, once the president had opted for a military buildup, the generals seem to have persuaded him rather easily to make it an overwhelming force, which, all told, consisted of more than 527,000 personnel, over 3,400 tanks and other armored vehicles, more than one hundred warships including six aircraft carriers, and over 3,500 fixed and rotary-wing aircraft.¹³⁰ In announcing his decision to send this massive force to the Gulf, the president declared, “Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world, and they will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back.”¹³¹ Moreover, the administration went to great lengths to maintain the support of the American people. In addition to calling up the reserves without hesitation, the president sought and obtained Congressional resolution to evict Iraq by force despite fierce criticism from Democrats.¹³² The failure to take such actions during the Vietnam War had divided the country, in part, by undermining popular support for the military, and the war in general. To sum, this would be, above all, a “redemptive war;” and redemption required a decisive military victory with a tidy ending to the conflict that would avoid an open-ended commitment of forces and thus ensure the unwavering support of the

¹²⁹ Powell, *My American Journey*, 465, and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 281.

¹³⁰ Reflecting on Operation JUST CAUSE, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff put his so-called “Powell Doctrine” this way: “Have a clear political objective and stick to it. Use all the force necessary, and do not apologize for going in big if that is what it takes. Decisive force ends wars quickly and in the long run saves lives. Whatever threats we faced in the future, I intended to make these rules the bedrock of my military counsel.” Powell, *My American Journey*, 434, 479. See also: Swain, “*Lucky War*,” xxvi, and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 251, 307. Regarding United States forces involved in the conflict, see: “Tracking the Storm: Forces Committed,” *Military Review*, LXXI, No. 9 (September, 1991): 81.

¹³¹ Bush, “Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf,” 16 January 1991.

¹³² See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 371-2, 389-390, 396-7, 416-419, 421-3.

American people.¹³³ Were this the only requirement, merely evicting Iraq from Kuwait likely would have sufficed.

Visions of a new world order, however, not only demanded an impeccable campaign to liberate Kuwait, but also required that something be done about the problem of Saddam Hussein, as it seemed clear that his power had grown out of balance. Saudi Arabia, for example, feared Iraq's strong conventional military and burgeoning capability for producing and employing weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the unchastened dictator.¹³⁴ If some settlement emerged or the coalition simply drove a largely intact Iraqi army out of Kuwait, the Saudis faced two undesirable options. They would either live under constant fear of the possibility for further Iraqi aggression or have to permit a large, open-ended deployment of United States forces to remain in country for protection, *a la* Korea. Thus, once an "Arab solution"—in part a euphemism for appeasement and bribery—failed and regional leaders had allied with the West to oppose Iraq, it became a virtual necessity to either eliminate the Iraqi leader or cut his military power down to size. This situation provided incentive for the expansion of intent beyond the singular objective of Kuwait's liberation with the inclusion of the rather vague objective "promote the security and the stability of the Persian Gulf," and some not-so-subtle suggestions that disaffected Iraqis take matters into their own hands and rise up against the regime.¹³⁵

In truth, to fulfill both imperatives, the United States needed Saddam Hussein not only to leave Kuwait, but also to account for his violation of another sovereign state in a manner and forum that would allow the international community to impose limits on his power and future

¹³³ Swain, "*Lucky War*," xxvi.

¹³⁴ President Bush's invitation to bring Iraqi foreign minister Tariq 'Aziz to Washington for talks and to send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad shook the coalition "to its core," and alarmed the Saudis in particular. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 419-421, 454.

¹³⁵ See: National Security Directive 54, Responding to Iraqi Aggression in the Gulf, 15 January 1991, and President George H. W. Bush, "Remarks to Raytheon Missile Systems Plant Employees" (speech, Andover, MA, 15 February 1991), Bush, "Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf," 16 January 1991, and Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 412.

activities. Although certainly a means to that end, seeking his ouster directly seemed problematic at best. As noted earlier, the Bush administration had been embarrassed a year earlier by failing to deliver on its promise to capture Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega. There was no reason to expect that the United States would meet with any more success in hunting Saddam Hussein. Further, the National Command Authorities also expressly precluded any option to take Baghdad by force, as invasion of Iraq would not only exceed the United Nations' mandate, but undoubtedly would also result in a long-term commitment of United States military forces.¹³⁶ Thus, holding at risk something of value to the Iraqi dictator was, in fact, the only viable way to achieve both the stated and implied objectives. Iraq's military was a source of personal and national power that Saddam Hussein clearly valued, and thus a potential source of leverage. Among the possibilities were Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and its conventional forces. Though air attacks could and did set Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons program back somewhat, scant intelligence on a well-dispersed network of facilities made it nearly impossible to target this capability in full.¹³⁷ The coalition therefore could not hold it at sufficient risk, leaving Iraq's conventional forces as the only practicable lever for the coalition. In short, the coalition had to threaten destruction or capture of a significant portion of the Iraqi army in order to compel Saddam Hussein to *sue for peace* and, in so doing, subject himself to whatever penalties the international community might impose.

Untidy Ending

As it happened, the United States military became trapped by the very open-ended commitment of forces that the president and his advisors had expressly sought to avoid from the

¹³⁶ See, for example: Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 413.

¹³⁷ For example, postwar inspections revealed many more sites and facilities than were initially known to war planners. See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 329, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 457-8, US News and World Report, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1992), 411.

outset. In the first place, the extent and status of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction remained unknown even at war's end, requiring further economic sanctions to coerce the Iraqi leader to admit United Nations weapons inspectors.¹³⁸ This meant continuation of the blockade, which relied on the backing of United States military forces.¹³⁹ Saddam Hussein likely permitted the inspections only as a calculated move designed to divert international attention from his brutalization of the Iraqi people. In the aftermath of the ground war, Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite populations did, in fact, rise up against Saddam Hussein, no doubt influenced by the Bush administration's suggestions that they do so. The loyal, and still formidable, Iraqi Republican Guard ruthlessly crushed the rebellions, slaughtering many in the process. International outcry at the unfolding travesty prompted a United Nations humanitarian peacekeeping mission, Operation Provide Comfort, also underwritten by American forces.¹⁴⁰ Further, the chaos compelled the United States to establish no-fly zones in Northern and Southern Iraq not only to prevent the Iraqi army from employing its helicopters to terrorize the insurrectionists, but also to deter an obviously still-dangerous Iraq. In total, the commitment United States forces would last another twenty-one years.¹⁴¹

Events took this unfortunate turn, in part, because the combined-arms ground campaign ultimately proved rather indecisive. Again, it is difficult to argue with the coalition's success in liberating Kuwait, and no attempt is made to do so here. One cannot, however, overlook the fact that when President Bush, acting upon the recommendation of his military advisors, announced his unilateral decision to "suspend offensive combat operations" on 27 February, not only was

¹³⁸ US News, *Triumph without Victory*, 410.

¹³⁹ U.N. Security Council, Resolution 687 (1991).

¹⁴⁰ Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 420-422.

¹⁴¹ Lieutenant General David L. Goldfein, Commander, Central Command Air Forces to Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force, and General Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, email, 4 January 2012. Copy in author's possession. See also, Aaron M. U. Church, "Air Force World: Mission Complete in Iraq," *Air Force Magazine* 95, no. 2 (February 2012): 16.

Saddam Hussein still in power, but he also remained unrepentant and, in fact, defiant, having not been compelled to sue for peace.¹⁴² Having not yielded to the coalition, the Iraqi dictator could not be made to answer for his actions in a manner or forum that placed the region on substantially better footing, thereby denying the coalition fulfillment of its key imperatives. At that point, there was little else the United States or the coalition could do but attempt to deal with the mess that followed since, at the cessation of fighting, Iraq's military capability remained troublesome, and the coalition held little of tangible value to Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi army's hasty withdrawal upon the commencement of the ground war indicates Saddam Hussein's recognition of the need to deny the coalition the leverage it sought in attempting to capture or destroy his core military forces. In effect, the retreat had become a race to avoid entrapment and annihilation by coalition forces.¹⁴³ In this, the Iraqi dictator prevailed largely due to problems that hamstrung preparation of the battlefield and execution of the ground campaign and produced an awkward ending akin to a sprinter stopping short of the finish line to avoid the unpleasant reality of a race already lost.¹⁴⁴ Admittedly, it is possible that Saddam Hussein would have remained defiant even if the coalition had destroyed or captured a significant portion of the Iraqi army. Ending the campaign while holding no source of leverage, however, virtually guaranteed that he would.

The Agency View: Doctrinaire in Disunity

Iraq's Republican Guard was the key to the leverage the coalition sought. General Schwarzkopf (correctly) viewed these elite units as *the* center of gravity since these forces were the coalition's most formidable opponents and key to both Iraq's regional hegemony and the

¹⁴² President George H. W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on the Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf" (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 27 February 1991).

¹⁴³ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 399.

¹⁴⁴ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 429.

survival of Saddam Hussein's regime. General Schwarzkopf's focus on the Republican Guard thus implied that every other action was to support its entrapment and destruction. The coalition military strategy for Desert Storm, and that of the ground campaign in particular, evolved considerably over the course of the six-month buildup of forces, but ultimately rested on two pillars: attrition and entrapment.¹⁴⁵ To ensure that the ground offensive would not devolve into a high-casualty slugging match, and thus avoid playing to Saddam Hussein's hand, General Schwarzkopf intended use his air arm to prepare the battlefield extensively. Phase III was thus to be a relentless bombing campaign to put maximum pressure on the Republican Guard and cut the Iraqi army down to size before any soldier or marine ventured into battle.¹⁴⁶ For Phase IV, CENTCOM planners had designed a variation of a classic hammer-and-anvil operation to finish the task of destroying the Iraqi army.¹⁴⁷ A combination of interdiction, feints, fixing attacks, and envelopment by the United States XVIII Airborne Corps and I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) together with coalition partners was supposed to prepare the Iraqi army for a crushing "left hook" by a "mailed fist" consisting primarily of United States VII Corps heavy armored forces and coalition airpower.¹⁴⁸ In theory, the plan was sound, but required both synergy and efficient interaction among numerous distinct operations. In execution, service imperatives clashed like

¹⁴⁵ Richard Swain writes, "The popular view of the Persian Gulf War, at least in the Army, is that it was a war of maneuver. It was nothing of the sort, at least not if 'maneuver' is viewed at the psychological undermining of an enemy by movement alone. Viewed from the theater level, Desert Storm was a war of attrition..." Swain, "Lucky War," 71. For the evolution of the ground campaign plans, see Swain, "Lucky War," 71-96, Scales, *Certain Victory*, 103-154, and Charles J. Quilter, II, *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: With the I Marine Expeditionary Force in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1993), 34-49.

¹⁴⁶ Swain, "Lucky War," 71.

¹⁴⁷ See Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 224, and Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 453.

¹⁴⁸ The Department of Defense official history depicts the flow of the ground war in graphic form. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 412. The VII Corps main attack feature the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions and the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) supported by the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 1st UK Armoured Division. The 1st Cavalry Division, initially held in reserve, would later join the VII Corps fight. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 464, and Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 358, 360, 365-7. The *mailed fist* moniker from Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 178. For the "fist" in graphic form see: Scales, *Certain Victory*, 268.

discordant cymbals, resulting in a cacophony of divergent aims that undermined the efficacy of the campaign. As Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor put it, "...the way the war was planned, fought, and brought to a close often had more to do with the culture of the military services, [and] their entrenched concepts of warfare...than it did with the Iraqis or the tangled politics of the Middle East."¹⁴⁹

In their accounts of the decision to terminate the war, President Bush, General Powell, and General Schwarzkopf each boil the rationale down to a desire to avoid the appearance of "slaughter for slaughter's sake" as television news reports began to show images of blackened vehicles littering the road north of Kuwait City, referring to the escape route as the "Highway of Death."¹⁵⁰ In declaring that the operation had achieved its objective of liberating Kuwait and that no more was to be gained by further destruction, there was both explicit intent to preserve legitimacy and implicit acknowledgement that coalition forces could no longer deliver the leverage that might have cowed Saddam Hussein.¹⁵¹ The campaign failed to do so, in part, because the coalition failed to hold the Republican Guard at sufficient risk, making a force-preserving retreat a viable Iraqi exit strategy.¹⁵² In fact, indications of retreat as early as 0840 on 24 February likely meant that the beleaguered enemy forces intended token resistance before they either surrendered to the coalition or fled.¹⁵³ With the ground war at last underway, the

¹⁴⁹ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, xii.

¹⁵⁰ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 485, Powell, *My American Journey*, 520, and Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 468.

¹⁵¹ Bush, "Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf," 27 February 1991.

¹⁵² As some evidence of the value Saddam Hussein placed on these forces, the Iraqi dictator, in essence, sacrificed the Tawakalna Division in order to enable the escape of the remaining Republican Guards. Coalition intelligence intercepted a radio transmission ordering a blocking action by the Tawakalna Division. The division was subsequently decimated by the US 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment at the Battle of 73 Easting, but, nevertheless, managed to impede the coalition advance. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 462, Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 269-270, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 390-392.

¹⁵³ See Swain, "Lucky War," 230. Kuwaiti resistance reported that the Iraqis had destroyed the desalination plant in Kuwait City, which General Schwarzkopf concluded "could only mean that the Iraqis were about to leave." See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 453, and Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, "Lessons of

coalition was unable to complete its planned envelopment before a significant portion of the enemy army had lunged across the Iraqi border near the town of Basra.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, skirmishes between the Hammurabi Division and the US 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) on 2 March indicated both that the Republican Guard had survived and that the Iraqis did not view the war as a complete defeat, but rather a mutually agreed upon suspension of combat that might resume at any time.¹⁵⁵

The Marine attack in the east had not fixed Iraqi forces in place as hoped; rather, I MEF's blitz to Kuwait City precipitated a mass retreat, throwing the timetable for the entire campaign out of kilter.¹⁵⁶ To complicate matters, the Marines had not drawn the Republican Guard southward and thus further into the trap. Instead, some of Iraq's elite forces joined the hasty withdrawal, while the others moved to block the advancing American army.¹⁵⁷ The escape by portions of the Republican Guard demonstrated that pressure on these elite forces had been inadequate during Phase III, as they remained sufficiently intact to be worth saving and also to serve as an effective fighting force to cover the retreat.¹⁵⁸ Once coalition commanders

Modern Warfare, Volume IV: The Gulf War" (monograph, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 October 1994), 651.

¹⁵⁴ Intelligence showed significant armor and mechanized forces north of Basra immediately following the cessation of combat. Estimates concluded that as much as half of the Republican Guard armor escaped, including a largely intact Hammurabi Division. See Cordesman and Wagner, *The Gulf War*, 724, Scales, *Certain Victory*, 310-311, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 429.

¹⁵⁵ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 312-313, and Cordesman and Wagner, *The Gulf War*, 724,

¹⁵⁶ Baghdad radio broadcasts ordered Iraqi troops out of Kuwait during the night of 25/26 February, Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 461, and Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 376. By the morning of 26 February, "military and commandeered civilian vehicles of every description, loaded with Iraqi soldier and goods looted from Kuwait, clogged the main four-lane highway north from Kuwait City." Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 387.

¹⁵⁷ Radio intercepts indicated orders for the Tawakalna Division to move into a blocking position to enable the retreat of the Medina and Hammurabi Divisions. Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 462. See also, Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 401.

¹⁵⁸ As Anthony Cordesman and Abraham Wagner remind, "it is important to note that the Coalition air offensive did not succeed in paralyzing the Republican Guards divisions to the north, or any of Iraq's major heavy divisions in the rear of the KTO [Kuwaiti Theater of Operations]. While these Iraqi units retreated or were quickly defeated by a much larger Coalition ground force, they retained significant combat capability when the air campaign ended." Cordesman and Wagner, *The Gulf War*, 91. On the eve of the ground war, intelligence estimates put the combat strength of these divisions above fifty percent, and several of the Republican Guard divisions were rated above

recognized the deteriorating situation, they scrambled to rescue the plan. General Schwarzkopf accelerated the timetable for the XVIII and VII Corps attacks, but the damage was done; weather and logistics would also limit the amount of time they could make up.¹⁵⁹ To make matters worse, for fifteen hours on 27 February, an unexpected, and in fact largely uncoordinated, movement of the Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL), denoting the boundary between airspace controlled by the ground commander and that under the purview of the JFACC, hamstrung the coalition air hammer in efforts to help slow the retreat.¹⁶⁰

Beginning with the failure to hold the Republican Guard at sufficient risk during Phase III of Desert Storm, application of the agency framework is useful in attempting to understand the military shortcomings that undermined the overarching policy. It is first necessary to point out that, while General Schwarzkopf desired to cut the Iraqi army down to size for the ground war, he intended for his air component to design and execute a campaign emphasizing the Republican Guard. CENTCOM Operational Plan (OPLAN) 1002-90, which became the basis for the Desert Shield/Desert Storm campaigns, together with General's Schwarzkopf's decision to name General Horner as the theater JFACC, provide significant insight into the CENTCOM chief's intentions for the use of airpower. Likely recognizing that, due to deployment constraints, the United States initially would face a numerical disadvantage on the ground in any conflict with Iraq, General Schwarzkopf had his staff build an attritional air campaign into OPLAN

seventy-five percent. See Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 355, and Swain, "Lucky War," 226. The al-Faw, Nebuchadnezzar, and Hammurabi Republican Guard Divisions skirmished with the US 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) during its race to Basra. Scales, *Certain Victory*, 306.

¹⁵⁹ Planners had allowed for a full twenty-four hours for the Marines to breach the Iraqi line. Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 453. General Schwarzkopf, after consultation with his field commanders, accelerated the start of the attack by fifteen hours. Swain, "Lucky War," 230-233, and Cordesman and Wagner, *The Gulf War*, 637. On weather and logistics troubles due to the rapid pace of the XVIII Corps see: Scales, *Certain Victory*, 305, and Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 457.

¹⁶⁰ FSCL placement well ahead of the coalition advance in both the XVIII and VII Corps sectors placed retreating enemy forces in areas under the control of the ground commanders. However, the ground forces had no forward air controllers in position to direct attacks as the rule of engagement dictated. According to General Glosson, entreaty to General Schwarzkopf rectified the dispute, but not until fifteen hours had passed, costing the coalition perhaps as many as four hundred attack sorties. Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 271-6.

1002-90 such that “force ratios shifted to favor the offensive land campaign.”¹⁶¹ This mindset continued into Desert Storm as, early on, CENTCOM established an objective to reduce Iraqi combat effectiveness by fifty percent prior to initiating a ground war. CENTCOM’s Operational Order (OPORD) 91-001, which activated the Desert Storm war plan, makes it clear, however, that General Schwarzkopf intended the air war to reduce the capabilities of both the regular forces and the Republican Guard prior to the final confrontation, but with emphasis on the *latter*.¹⁶² As noted, the CENTCOM chief considered Iraq’s elite forces to be *the* center of gravity, intending either their capture or, more likely, their destruction in order to diminish their future utility to Saddam Hussein.¹⁶³

Recalling the fragmented and inefficient air war in Vietnam, General Schwarzkopf, soon after taking the reins of CENTCOM, also readily agreed to assign a single air commander the responsibility for melding airpower into an integrated whole.¹⁶⁴ Further, as evidenced by his initial entreaty to the Air Staff in August for an air campaign and his subsequent delegation of the air war to General Horner, he demonstrated his belief that, at the time of the Gulf War, only Air Force airmen possessed the desire, doctrine, and expertise to produce an efficient and balanced operational-level air campaign. In terms of agency, it is necessary to view this setup as

¹⁶¹ Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 11.

¹⁶² OPOD 91-001 called for coalition forces to “reduce Iraqi combat effectiveness in the KTO [Kuwaiti Theater of Operations] by at least 50 percent, *particularly the RGFC* [Republican Guard Forces Command].” (emphasis added) Quoted in Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 94. For a description and depiction of the KTO, see Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 88-90. General Schwarzkopf told his air planners, “I want the Republican Guard bombed the very first day, and I want them bombed every day after that.” Quoted in Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 36. The *Gulf War Air Power Survey* notes, “Schwarzkopf’s continuing and consistent emphasis on the Republican Guard as the *primary target* for the air campaign in the KTO appears across virtually all...interviews with the senior planners o the air war.” (italics original) Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 259.

¹⁶³ War plans listed the Republican Guard along with Iraq’s national command authorities and weapons of mass destruction capabilities as centers of gravity. See: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 94, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 79. Regarding the primacy of the Republican Guard, Schwarzkopf directed, “We must keep on hitting [the] Republican Guard—that’s the quickest way to get though to [Saddam Hussein].” Quoted in Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 56.

¹⁶⁴ Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 3-4.

the principal tasking one of its agents to act on its behalf in a role akin to a subordinate principal relative to the remaining agents. Quite simply, General Schwarzkopf had delegated to the JFACC, General Horner, and by extension a largely Air Force staff, the responsibility for planning and executing the air war. Previous analysis showed that Air Force biases likely played a role in shaping the air campaign, and no more need be added here. Rather, it is fruitful to examine the preferences of the agents in light of the subordinate-principal arrangement.

Understandably, Army and Marine commanders were concerned about the rather elaborate defenses the Iraqis had erected over the course of the coalition's five-month buildup. Separating I MEF, XVIII Corps, VII Corps and coalition forces from their initial ground war objectives were twenty-five Iraqi infantry divisions, totaling as many as 268,000 troops and some 1,000 pieces of artillery, as well as a series of twelve-foot berms, mine belts, and fire trenches dubbed the "Saddam Line."¹⁶⁵ Among the challenges that faced the ground forces, enemy artillery most concerned those with the immediate task of breaching Saddam Hussein's seemingly formidable defenses.¹⁶⁶ Not only were ground commanders focused on frontline Iraqi artillery, but each also worried primarily about that portion of the defense that lay in his particular sector of the battlefield.¹⁶⁷ Quite simply, land component commanders sought to control the orchestration of the bombing campaigns intended to soften the Iraqi defenses in their portion of the battlefield in preparation for the breaching operations they would soon have to undertake. As Third Army commander Lieutenant General John Yeosock put it, "I was the

¹⁶⁵ Regarding Iraqi defensive preparations see Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 109-115, 188 and 349-356, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 162-3. Iraq's WWI-style barrier system was dubbed the "Saddam Line." See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 408. After the war, analysis suggests that intelligence estimates were pessimistic. Due to under-manning and desertions, considerably fewer Iraqi forces manned the frontline by the time of the ground war. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 251.

¹⁶⁶ Eliot A. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, Volume II, Part I, *Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 285, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 219-220.

¹⁶⁷ Diane Putney notes, "...the Corps tactical commanders viewed the battlefield more narrowly, focusing on their own, individual sectors." Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 321.

Army proponent I wanted to shape *my* battlefield.”¹⁶⁸ (emphasis added) Republican Guard forces were, in some respects, a follow-on problem to be dealt with later.¹⁶⁹

The agents’ preferences introduced a key divergent aim with respect to the principal’s intent for attrition of the enemy forces via an air campaign orchestrated by the JFACC.¹⁷⁰ Their myopic attention to the Iraqi frontlines overemphasized the destruction of the conscripted infantry in general, and its supporting artillery in particular, at the expense of the more capable and more important Republican Guard divisions.¹⁷¹ On the eve of the ground war, analysts assessed the capability of all frontline divisions at less than fifty percent, but rated the Republican Guard divisions farther north significantly above that threshold.¹⁷² Indeed, the elite Baghdad, Al Faw, and Special Forces divisions “received far less attention in the air campaign,” and escaped comparatively unscathed.¹⁷³ That the Republican Guard generally proved to be a tougher target for coalition airpower certainly contributed to the variance.¹⁷⁴ Although “kill boxes” in which the Republican Guard forces resided received some of the highest sortie counts during Phase III, it stands to reason that proportionally *more* effort should have gone towards the Republican Guard precisely because these forces were both critically important and more

¹⁶⁸ Yeosock Interview, 8 May 1991, 151.

¹⁶⁹ See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Operations*, 285.

¹⁷⁰ Regarding the JFACC centrality to balance and efficiency, Schwarzkopf remarked to General Boomer, “As we begin to shift attention to the KTO and battlefield preparation, I want you and Chuck Horner to work together to ensure that we strike key Iraqi targets in south-eastern Kuwait. We must continue to utilize the JFACC concept to integrate all available air assets.” Quoted in Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 111.

¹⁷¹ The *Gulf War Air Power Survey* notes that, of the surviving Iraqi equipment, thirty-nine percent of the tanks and sixty percent of the artillery belonged to the Republican Guard. Yet, such equipment comprised only twenty-seven percent and thirteen percent of Iraq’s respective prewar inventories. In addition, the report describes the attrition of the Republican Guard as “below the theater average.” Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 212-213, 218.

¹⁷² Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 354-5. The Pentagon report shows both the attrition metric and the blended assessment of “combat strength” that General Schwarzkopf employed as the ground war approached. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 431-2, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 210-211.

¹⁷³ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 254.

¹⁷⁴ The Republican Guard proved more adept at defensive preparations and deception, which reduced effectiveness. Better air defenses also forced coalition aircraft to higher altitudes, thereby reducing bombing accuracy. See: Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 431, and Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 205, 214, 216-218.

difficult to attack.¹⁷⁵ The results, however, do not reflect this, as capability assessments on the eve of the ground war showed attrition skewed significantly towards the frontline.¹⁷⁶

The efficacy of Phase III suffered as a result of these divergent aims. In seeking to conduct their preferred attrition campaigns, ground commanders undercut efforts to apply the pressure to the Republican Guard for which the situation and the principal's intent called. Although postwar critiques have tended to focus on escape of the elite Iraqi armor, and the Hammurabi division in particular, the failure to capture or inflict sufficient damage on the elite infantry divisions proved equally consequential.¹⁷⁷ These were some the first of the Iraqi forces to depart the theater, indicating their significant value to Saddam Hussein for regime survival, and thus their value as perhaps a significant potential source of the leverage that the coalition sought.¹⁷⁸ Failing to hold Iraq's elite forces at sufficient risk preserved their combat capability, making them worth saving, and thus enabled the cut-and-run strategy that Saddam Hussein later employed. The escape of the Republican Guard helped the Iraqi dictator prop up his regime and proved of significant propaganda value in his defiance of the coalition and attempts to paint the Kuwait debacle as a great victory. Further, failure to inflict enough damage on the Republican Guard heavy divisions meant that they remained a somewhat effective fighting force that Saddam Hussein later used to shield the Iraqi retreat, especially that of his important elite light

¹⁷⁵ Kill boxes were simply geographic areas delineated by map reference grids. Air planners tasked aircraft to search for and strike targets with respect to these geographic areas. *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Operations*, 266-7. Regarding the number of sorties by kill box, see: *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Operations*, 287.

¹⁷⁶ Intelligence on the eve of the ground war supports this assessment, as estimates of Iraqi combat effectiveness varied based upon the *distance from the front*. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 374. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 354-5. Perry Jamieson notes that of approximately 35,000 KTO sorties, roughly 5,600 flew attacks against the Republican Guard. Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 66. Considering that the Republican Guard units generally possessed their full complement Iraq's best troops and equipment (e.g. T-72 vice T-55 tanks), while regular divisions were generally undermanned and lacking in equipment, this distribution seems even more imbalanced. Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 166-169.

¹⁷⁷ Regarding the emphasis of the heavy divisions, see for instance: US News, *Triumph Without Victory*, 402. On the escape of the Republican Guard infantry, see for instance: Scales, *Certain Victory*, 315.

¹⁷⁸ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 251.

divisions.¹⁷⁹ That the Iraqi dictator would order a blocking action and, in effect, sacrifice his armor, particularly the Tawakalna Division, to shield the retreat supports this assessment.¹⁸⁰

Genuine concern for the task ahead seems, to some extent, to have motivated the agents' preferences. Once again, it is difficult to impugn a desire to limit casualties or prevent fratricide. That said, the manner in which the Army and Marine components went about fulfilling their assigned tasks reveals that narrow service perspectives and ulterior motives driven, in part, by service imperatives underlay their actions. Anticipating the start of the ground war, Third Army and its subordinate corps wanted control of fixed-wing aircraft that they could focus on the Iraqi defensive frontline. At the same time, I MEF sought to preserve the autonomy of its organic air power and, likewise, employ it for breaching preparations. Simply put, the land components desired their own dedicated airpower to employ as they saw fit without further coordination. One can trace the differing perspectives among the air and land components regarding control of airpower at least as far back as WWII; and similar issues have been present in every major conventional combat operation thereafter. Full examination of the airpower doctrinal differences that have plagued the United States military is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice to say that in theater warfare, ground component commanders tend to view a given situation from the perspective of their subset of the battlefield, while air component commanders are usually concerned with the application of airpower across the entire area of operations. As in the case of Desert Storm, once ground war becomes imminent, ground commanders desire assurances that

¹⁷⁹ All of the Republican Guard divisions were assessed to have attrition less than fifty percent, and several were assessed at better than seventy-percent combat effective. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 355.

¹⁸⁰ Radio intercepts indicated orders for the Tawakalna Division to move into a blocking position to enable the retreat of the Medina and Hammurabi Divisions. The US 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment decimated the Iraqi unit in the Battle of 73 Easting, but the delay likely aided the Iraqi retreat. Later analysis by the CIA estimated that the engagements bought another day for the Iraqi retreat. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 462, Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 401, Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 269-270, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 390-392.

they will have airpower when they need it.¹⁸¹ Perhaps more importantly, they desire the ability to decide how to employ that airpower to support the land battle. From this perspective, having airpower readily available outweighs the inefficiency of dividing airpower into so-called “penny packets.” Airmen, especially when air assets are comparatively scarce, seek an ongoing optimization of airpower employment—as opposed to distribution—with respect to the entire theater.

The intent here is not to argue for or against one view or the other. Rather, it is simply necessary to point out that the principal tasked the JFACC to plan and execute an air campaign giving full consideration to the larger theater perspective.¹⁸² Whether with intent to gain dedicated airpower or preserve it, the land components shirked by attempting to usurp, however crudely, the authority delegated to the JFACC. As noted, the Army sought to *gain* control of inorganic fixed-wing airpower, and employed a form of information advantage to manipulate bomb damage assessment (BDA) to do so. Sometime during the preparation for Desert Storm, United States Army component commanders and planners seized on the notion that reducing enemy combat *equipment* (tanks, armored personnel carriers, and artillery) by fifty percent equated to diminishing the combat *effectiveness* of enemy units by the same amount. The origin of the conflation is uncertain; but attrition of equipment, nonetheless, became the *de facto* metric that shaped the air war during Phase III of Desert Storm.¹⁸³ To supplement imagery analysis of

¹⁸¹ General Horner observes that this is indeed what motivated the land component commanders in Desert Storm. Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 55.

¹⁸² Regarding the JFACC and a theater-wide perspective for airpower employment, General Schwarzkopf reportedly told his commanders, “Guys, it’s all mine, and I will put it where it needs to be put.” Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 55.

¹⁸³ The origin of the objective to reduce Iraqi *equipment* by fifty percent is unclear. Diane Putney points to a memo by CENTCOM Director of Plans (J5) Rear Admiral Grant Sharp, which listed attrition numbers by equipment category. Putney, *Airpower Advantage*, 183-4. General Schwarzkopf recalled that his direction was for reduction of capability. General Horner recalled after the war that he had suggested the notion of a fifty-percent reduction in capability. See Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 17. The measure of merit seems to have been couched in terms of

equipment destruction, the Army initially would consider mission reports only from A-10 pilots for BDA.¹⁸⁴ Later, after the Air Force improvised the use of laser-guided bombs against Iraqi armor, a technique dubbed “tank plinking,” the Army also accepted video footage from F-111 sorties. Attacks by other platforms, however, received no consideration; nor did this methodology account for less tangible airpower effects.¹⁸⁵ Further, analysts granted only fractional credit for each pilot report or filmed attack.¹⁸⁶ By controlling the assessment of equipment attrition, the Army component could attempt to steer the air component to assign both the type and amount of air assets desired for preparation of the battlefield.¹⁸⁷ General Horner also observed that VII Corps tended to “load their list up with targets that were either not there or targets that I was concerned with, SAM sites and things like that...because they thought they would get more air; there would be more destruction in their corps sector.”¹⁸⁸

The Marines, already in possession of organic fixed-wing air power, took a different tack. As the ground war approached, the Marines began to isolate their organic assets from tasking by the air component and segregate their portion of the battlefield in order to conduct their own air war against the Iraqis on the frontlines. At the outset of Desert Storm, a compromise between the JFACC and I MEF allocated all Marine A-6s and EA-6s, as well as half of their F/A-18s to the JFACC for the overarching air campaign, while the remaining F/A-18s and all AV-8B

capability in CENTCOM’s Operational Order (OPORD) 91-001. See Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ See See Richard B. H. Lewis, “JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation in Desert Storm,” *Airpower Journal* VIII, no. 1 (Spring 1994), Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 209, and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 187. General Horner opined, “This is a prejudice the Army has with the A-10. They think of it as ‘their’ airplane.” Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 45.

¹⁸⁵ Lewis, “JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation in Desert Storm.”

¹⁸⁶ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 209. Fractional credit was a means of accounting for uncertainty. However, the arbitrariness speaks to the ulterior motive.

¹⁸⁷ General Horner observed that the Army seemed to alter the BDA to produce the desired rate of destruction. Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 44-5.

¹⁸⁸ Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 56-7.

Harriers remained dedicated solely to I MEF.¹⁸⁹ As the start of the ground war grew near, the Marines began to shift to an isolated, single-service campaign by manipulating the air tasking order (ATO) and carving out their own airspace. By his own admission, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commander Major General Royal Moore inserted “a shell,” or largely unvarying input, to the ATO such that the Marines, in essence, could control the ultimate use of those sorties.¹⁹⁰ After the war, General Moore recalled, “...only 30 to 40 percent of the missions we flew were for the JFACC taskings. All the rest of the time we were preparing the battle field for [I MEF commander Lieutenant] General Boomer...Only those F-18s, some A-6s and electrics [EA-6] went out and did the JFACC tasking.”¹⁹¹ As the ground war drew closer, the Marines removed their fixed-wing aircraft from JFACC tasking altogether.¹⁹² Further, according to General Glosson, the Marines extended the FSCL in their sector into Kuwait in order to put the Iraqi frontline forces within the airspace controlled by I MEF precisely so they could prepare their own battlefield without coordination with the air component.¹⁹³ I MEF’s movement of the FSCL without coordination at once reflects both a narrow service perspective that made coordination seem unnecessary and a desire to *preclude* such coordination precisely so that the Marines might rely solely on organic assets.

¹⁸⁹ Major General Royal N. Moore, Jr. interview by Colonel Arleigh, 18 March 1991. Typed transcript, 14-15. Marine Corps Oral History collection, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA. See also, Winnefeld and Johnson, *Joint Air Operations*, 119-120 and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 311.

¹⁹⁰ Moore Interview, 18 March 1991, 14. He adds, “What I did to make it work for us—and I think the Navy did the same thing—was write an ATO that would give me enough flexibility to do the job. So I might write an enormous amount of sorties, and every seven minutes I’d have airplanes up doing various things-and I might cancel an awful lot of those. This way I didn’t have to play around with the process while I was waiting to hit a target. I kind of gamed the ATO process.” Royal N. Moore, Jr., “Marine Air: There When Needed,” interview in *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute* 117, no. 11 (November 1991): 63.

¹⁹¹ Moore Interview, 18 March 1991, 14-15. There is some evidence that part of the motivation was also husbanding of resources for the ground war. See Winnefeld and Johnson, *Joint Air Operations*, 120-1.

¹⁹² Gordon and Trainor cite an after-action briefing by General Boomer that recounts I MEF’s effort to incrementally reduce their involvement in the larger air war such that “at twenty-three days, the Marines effectively stopped their ‘participation in the offense air campaign’ directed by Horner and Glosson and concentrated on their own targets.” Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 502-3 note 15.

¹⁹³ Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 189-190.

Having thus found another instance of the agency problem, it is necessary to turn once again to the strategic interaction and the decision calculus of the agent to attempt gain insight as to why the agents elected to subvert the JFACC, as delegated principal, in his attempts to conduct the air war. Agency theory holds that as the gap between the intent of the principal and the preference of the agent grows, the likelihood for the pursuit of self-interest increases. In this case the preference gap was significant. As has been the case virtually since the dawn of powered flight, ground and air commanders disagreed about the proper use of airpower, particularly as the start of the ground war grew near. The likelihood of shirking, and thus the introduction of divergent aims, was high. That the agents did, in fact, operate from narrow service perspectives indicates that either or both of the factors influencing the agents' decision calculus—the likelihood of detection and the structure of rewards and punishment—were such that the principal did not or could not shape the relationship appropriately.

Intrusive monitoring meant a high probability of detection for both the Marines and the Army. As perhaps evidenced by the repeated complaints about its voluminous size and purported inflexibility, the air tasking order (ATO) served as a rather effective means of keeping tabs on the air war.¹⁹⁴ In fact, General Horner noted, "It didn't fly...unless it was in the ATO...the ATO is the Joint Force Air Component Commander...Without the ATO, you don't have the JFACC. With the ATO, you don't have anything but a JFACC."¹⁹⁵ Although the I MEF's physical separation from the JFACC's Riyadh headquarters did raise the cost of monitoring somewhat, as demonstrated by the uncoordinated movement of the FSCL, it is safe to

¹⁹⁴ After the war, Vice Admiral Stan Arthur, commander of Navy forces in the Gulf War critiqued, "As hostilities progressed and key targets had been struck, the ATO proved increasingly unresponsive to rapidly moving events." Quoted in Department of the Navy, *The United States Navy in "Desert Shield" "Desert Storm,"* 59. See also Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 310-312.

¹⁹⁵ Horner Interview, 4 March 1991, 8.

say that I MEF's withholding of sorties was unlikely to go undetected.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, if any component faced intrusive monitoring from *the* principal, General Schwarzkopf, it was the Army component. As noted, he viewed the two-corps Army attack as the main event of the war, and took an active role in its preparation. It is, therefore, also unlikely that Third Army leaders thought their actions might go unnoticed. In light of these facts, the monitoring regime does not explain the failure to shape the principal-agent relationship. Thus, it is necessary to examine the structure of rewards and punishment to gain further insight.

The Omnibus Agreement of 1986 best explains shirking by the Marines.¹⁹⁷ Through various stipulations, it sanctified the notion of an indivisible Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). This compromise over control of theater air assets, in essence, declared that the only viable way to employ Marine Corps combat power is via the integrated MAGTF. Although the agreement contains provision for employment of the Marine air combat element in "support of other components of the JTF [Joint Task Force], or the JTF as a whole," it adds the caveats that only "sorties in excess of MAGTF direct support requirement" would be provided "to the joint force commander."¹⁹⁸ Although General Schwarzkopf had delegated the air war to the JFACC, the Marine Corps *Magna Carta*, in effect, gave the I MEF license to trump any tasking from the air component. As James Winnefeld and Dana Johnson note, the resulting situation amounted to a rehash of the Vietnam-era "'route pack' in all but name."¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ General Moore noted that air component was quick to investigate whenever the Marines failed to fly all of their scheduled sorties. Moore Interview, 18 March 1991, 15.

¹⁹⁷ The Omnibus Agreement refers to language in the 1986 version of Joint Publication 26, which amounted to a compromise between the Air Force and Marine Corps over control of Marine aircraft. Joint Publication (JP) 26, *Joint Doctrine for Theater Counterair Operations*, April 1986. The relevant paragraphs are quoted in Richard C. Murrow and Robert M. Bray, "Marine TACAIR and the 1986 Omnibus Agreement" (thesis, United States Air Force Air War College, April 1990), 2.

¹⁹⁸ Murrow and Bray, "Marine TACAIR and the 1986 Omnibus Agreement," 2.

¹⁹⁹ Winnefeld and Johnson, *Joint Air Operations*, 119.

One cannot understand the actions of Third Army and its subordinate corps without considering a unique twist on the agency problem that could be termed *principal-agent alignment*. Due to the structure of the American military, the joint force commander will necessarily be an officer of a particular service. That General Schwarzkopf shared a common service background with the Army component certainly played a role in the strategic interaction. Third Army's series of accusatory situation reports in the week prior to the ground war are telling. In sum, Army commanders appealed directly to *the* principal, General Schwarzkopf, averring that the ground war faced imminent peril unless the air component acceded to the preferences of the land component with regard to battlefield preparation.²⁰⁰ This amounted to an attempt to bypass the subordinate principal. There seems to have been little consideration for the possibility that the JFACC was executing the air war in accordance with General Schwarzkopf's guidance, which, for example, included direction to eschew nominated targets associated with enemy units *already assessed to have combat effectiveness less than fifty percent*.²⁰¹ The pertinent conclusion is that the Army component assumed, due to service alignment, the principal would necessarily share the agent's point of view, and thus condone the agent's actions. To sum, the structure of rewards and punishment again seemed to favor the service perspective and its inherent imperatives. The resultant struggle for control of air assets undermined efforts to hold the Republican Guard at risk, thereby enabling the cut-and-run strategy by which Saddam Hussein derailed the coalition ground war almost as soon as it began.

Turning to the ground war itself, the principal's seems clear. In word and deed, General Schwarzkopf demonstrated that he intended the two-corps "Great Wheel" in the western Iraqi

²⁰⁰ The relevant excerpts, which cite a perceived lack of influence over target selection, are quoted in Swain, "*Lucky War*," 188-9.

²⁰¹ See for instance Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 244-5.

desert to be the centerpiece of the war.²⁰² Most prominently, Schwarzkopf referred to the Army-dominated attack as the “main event,” designed precisely for the entrapment and destruction of Iraq’s core forces.²⁰³ When the coalition’s focus shifted in September from defense of Saudi Arabia to Iraq’s eviction by force, Schwarzkopf brought in a group of specially trained Army planners, who developed the core of the Phase IV campaign in isolation and under a shroud of secrecy.²⁰⁴ As noted earlier, from that point until the end of the war, General Schwarzkopf devoted the majority of his time and effort to oversight of the planning and orchestration of the hammer-and-anvil operation. Indeed, liberation of Kuwait seems thereafter to have been considered a given, relegating military operations in the east by the Marines and Arab nations to the status of merely a sideshow.²⁰⁵ As evidence of the diminished emphasis, not only did the Marines undertake, with less armor and firepower, a frontal assault into Iraqi defenses not materially different than the single-corps option that leaders in Washington had roundly criticized as overly dangerous back in October, but British forces also lobbied for and won a transfer from the I MEF attack to the VII Corps left hook precisely because they viewed the former and its “official prognosis” for seventeen percent casualties as a “diversion,” and thus devoid of tangible glory.²⁰⁶

²⁰² Swain, “*Lucky War*,” 232, and Scales, *Certain Victory*, 213.

²⁰³ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 453.

²⁰⁴ Swain, “*Lucky War*,” 71-77, Scales, *Certain Victory*, 137, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 123-128.

²⁰⁵ Gordon and Trainor describe an exchange between General Powell and Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in which the Chairman describes the Marine attack as a “fixing action,” averring that there was no need to rush to liberate Kuwait. See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 307-8.

²⁰⁶ It is difficult to reconcile the I MEF plan with guidance given to army planners “that a frontal assault into the teeth of the Iraqi defenses was to be avoided at all costs,” a stipulation that supposedly “everyone understood.” Scales, *Certain Victory*, 111. Compare the graphical depictions of the one- and two-corps plans in Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 357, and Scales, *Certain Victory*, 127, 130. Indeed, the situation likely worsened somewhat as the Iraqis built WWI-style defense in front of the Marines. Lieutenant General Walter Boomer interview by Paul Westermeyer, 27 July 2006. Typed transcript, 19. Marine Corps Oral History collection, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA. On the criticism of the initial “high diddle diddle up-the-middle” one-corps plan, see: Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 141 (quote by Secretary Cheney), Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 361-2, Powell, *My American Journey*, 484-5, Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 380-1, and Woodward, *The*

Despite aggressive lobbying by the Marines for an amphibious assault to help liberate Kuwait, including an 11th hour plea to conduct a landing on the island of Faylakah as a feint, General Schwarzkopf and his superiors denied the Marines' proposal to operate in their traditional doctrinal role as it portended significant casualties and threatened to "destroy Kuwait City in order to save it."²⁰⁷ I MEF commander Lieutenant General Walter Boomer and his subordinate commanders were not consoled by their alternative tasking to "pin down" the Iraqi frontline forces and hold the door open for the pan-Arab forces to march into Kuwait City as it did not square with the Marines' "offensive mindset" that emphasized seizing and holding key enemy territory.²⁰⁸ Upon learning of CENTCOM's plans to employ I MEF as a supporting adjunct in the Army-dominated plan, the official Marine Corps history notes, "The Marines became concerned [and]...went into a surge planning cycle to develop alternative concepts that ensured MarCent's (sic) [Marine Forces, Central Command] use in a more appropriate manner."²⁰⁹ Simply put, the Marines preferred a "real mission."²¹⁰

It has been said that when generals don't know what to do, they do what they know. General Boomer and his planners seemed to struggle to find a suitable plan of attack.²¹¹ Indeed, I MEF overhauled its plan not once, but twice, including a late-game switch to a two-division breach of the Iraqi frontline defenses that delayed the start of ground offensive by three days.²¹² From the start, however, Marine planners focused on one thing—the speedy liberation of Kuwait.

Commanders, 305-6. Regarding the transfer of control of the 1st UK Armoured Division and the British views of the Marine attack, see: Peter de la Billière, *Storm Command: A Personal Account of the Gulf War* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 92-94.

²⁰⁷ General Boomer recalled after the war regarding pressure for an amphibious assault, "there's always that," but had advised General Schwarzkopf that a landing would, "destroy quite a bit of stuff." Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 54. Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 293, 339, and Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 295-304

²⁰⁸ See Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 19, and Cordesman and Wagner, "The Gulf War," 636.

²⁰⁹ Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 20.

²¹⁰ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 161.

²¹¹ Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 22-26.

²¹² Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 35, and Powell, *My American Journey*, 513-4, Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 29.

Indeed, General Boomer noted after the war, “I knew we were going to attack into Kuwait and take it. There was never one microsecond’s doubt in my mind that that’s what we were going to do. We weren’t going to play around with them on the border in some sort of feint fixing attack.”²¹³ In describing the planned blitz to Kuwait city by his 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions in concert with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, the I MEF commander said, “ We will go quickly, we will go violently.”²¹⁴ They did so at the expense of the need to fix the Iraqis in place for the envelopment, in the process introducing a divergent aim that helped to unhinge CENTCOMs plans.²¹⁵

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the I MEF attack into Kuwait was premature and helped to precipitate the Iraqi withdrawal. The Marines’ attack was supposed to set the trap, but, in fact, had quite the opposite effect, akin to a “piston, pushing the Iraqis north before the Army could get to them.”²¹⁶ To be sure, no one could have predicted with any certainty whether the Iraqis would run or fight. That said, considering General Schwarzkopf’s constant worry that they might flee, and given the fact that this was an enemy that had been subjected to nearly six weeks of bombing and had friendly territory behind it, consideration should have been given to the fact that a retreat was at least a possible Iraqi response. Keeping in mind that the efficacy of the overarching strategy depended upon entrapment of the Iraqi forces, particularly the Republican Guard, three options existed with respect to the attack to liberate Kuwait: attack to seize Kuwait City and assume a concomitant fixing effect; or assume that Kuwait’s liberation would be the ultimate result of any action and either attack to block a retreat or delay attacking

²¹³ Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 20.

²¹⁴ Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 36.

²¹⁵ The Marine Corps history of the conflict notes, “As he had all along, General Boomer made it clear that his overriding concern was to prevail in the assault and liberation of Kuwait at the minimum cost of Marine casualties.” Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 35.

²¹⁶ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 362.

and feint until encirclement was all but assured. Attaching a fixing effect to any attack is problematic as it contains an inherent circularity in that such a course of action is effective only if the adversary stays to defend or counterattacks. Granted, the Iraqis had established an elaborate defense and appeared willing to engage. Nevertheless, as actual events demonstrated, merely assuming that they would engage could not guarantee the entrapment. Attacking to establish blocking positions was also problematic, as it could not ensure the entrapment either, again as the campaign aptly demonstrated. Most prominently, the key Republican Guard forces were positioned *in Iraq*, north of the Kuwaiti border and likely beyond the reach of I MEF.²¹⁷ Further, as demonstrated by the Marines' inability to stem the exodus of Iraqi forces inside Kuwait even given the stunning rapidity of the I MEF advance, there likely was nothing the Marines could do should the Iraqis flee as they did.²¹⁸ Part of the rationale for having the Marines initiate the ground campaign lay in the desire to deceive the Iraqis into believing that the thrust into Kuwait was *the* attack, thus preserving the element of surprise for the left hook. Indeed, as evidenced by their withdrawal, the Iraqis did seem to believe the I MEF advance indicated the commencement of the coalition campaign; but, they also appear to have been aware of the attack from the west since they ordered a blocking action, rendering the deception moot.²¹⁹ Indeed, the notion that the coalition could keep under wraps the repositioning of two full army corps to the western desert strains credibility. Thus, the option that had the highest probability of

²¹⁷ See for instance: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 355.

²¹⁸ The Marines breached the Iraq defensive barriers nearly fourteen hours ahead of schedule. Plans had allowed for a full twenty-four hours. See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 453, and Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 365, 370. Anthony Cordesman and Abraham Wagner note, "Iraqi forces faced a much easier task in fleeing north than the Coalition did in sealing off Iraqi forces." Cordesman and Wagner, "The Gulf War," 638.

²¹⁹ See: Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 462, Keaney and Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report*, 70, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 397, and Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 240.

success was precisely that which the CENTCOM planners had proposed—holding the Marine attack or limiting it to feints until the entrapment was assured.²²⁰

Given the incompatibility of the means taken with end sought, it is necessary to conclude that I MEF's planning proceeded without full consideration of the larger strategy and the aims to which it aspired. In their desire to carve out a real mission, Marine planners operated from a narrow perspective in crafting an attack that had more to do with service imperatives than the objectives of the war. For the Marines, the Gulf War was not only about redemption, but also a fight for their own existence.²²¹ Likely anticipating the death knell for amphibious operations—obliquely labeled “attrition warfare” in the postwar account—the Marines had, for some time, been overhauling their doctrine and training to emphasize “mission type orders” and decentralized control, but had not yet had an opportunity to put the new philosophy into practice.²²² Having been denied the ability to operate in their traditional amphibious role, feints and fixing attacks provided no opportunity to demonstrate the legitimacy and relevancy of the Marine Corps. Thus, the Marines were intent on demonstrating their prowess at maneuver warfare in a rapier thrust to seize Kuwait City. As the official Marine Corps history notes, “By rapidly getting his own forces behind the enemy's...defense, [General Boomer] hoped to create the conditions for making surrender...appear inevitable to the Iraqis.”²²³

The planning and execution of operations by I MEF exhibit the characteristics of an agency problem. Analysis has shown that the Marines introduced a divergent aim through the pursuit of service self-interest. CENTCOM's mission guidance to I MEF included at one point a

²²⁰ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 161.

²²¹ General Sir Peter de la Billière, commander of all British forces in Desert Storm, made this interesting observation in his memoirs: “Further, we knew that the Marine Corps were nervous about their own future—as were all the US armed forces—and that they imagined the best way of avoiding cuts would be to win the war against Saddam on their own.” de la Billière, *Storm Command*, 93.

²²² Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 35-36, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 163-4, 290-1.

²²³ Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 36.

task to “block the retreat of Iraqi forces out of Kuwait and Kuwait City” and the Marines’ initial plan included linking with a force planning to land at the Kuwaiti port of Ash Shuaybah, in part, “to prevent Iraqi withdrawal from southeastern Kuwait.”²²⁴ After General Schwarzkopf demurred on the prospect of an amphibious assault, however, the Marines assigned lower priority to their blocking assignment than to their objective of liberating Kuwait City, if the planners considered the former any further at all. Thereafter, Marine planners expressly sought ways to *accelerate* their attack. They first switched from a single breach to separate advances by each division.²²⁵ Further, the 1st Marine Division actually infiltrated Kuwait and began prepping the breach zone two days *before* the official start of the ground war.²²⁶ Understandably, the intent was, in part, to avoid spending undue time in range of any Iraqi firepower that might have remained after coalition bombing. However, the Marines seem to have neglected to give any significant consideration for the alignment of their plan with the overall aims of the ground campaign. In short, no one seems to have considered the potential consequences if things did not unfold according to preconceived notions.

To reiterate, the likelihood for the pursuit of self-interest increases with the growth of the gap between the intent of the principal and the preference of the agent. In this case the preference gap was significant. As evidenced by the strong lobby for an amphibious assault, there was some variance of opinion within the Marine Corps as to what course of action would best bolster service legitimacy and relevancy. It is clear, however, that the Marines desired a

²²⁴ Cordesman and Wagner, *The Gulf War*, 636, and Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 38.

²²⁵ Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 27, and Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 46-7.

²²⁶ Two regimental-sized task forces—some 5,000 marines—from the 1st Marine Division infiltrated Kuwait early. This occurred just as Saddam was given a final ultimatum, regarding which 1st Marine Division Commander Major General James M. Myatt commented, “What we were doing wasn’t irreversible...we could just infiltrate the two regiments back out if Saddam wanted to start his withdrawal.” Major General James M. Myatt interview by Rose-Ann L. Sgrignoli, quote in “Brilliance: James M. (Mike) Myatt, Major General, USMC, Commanding General 1st Marine Division 1990-1992” (thesis, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, March 19, 1998), 13. Available from Marine Corps University Oral History Collection, Quantico, VA. See also, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 346-350.

prominent position in the attack scheme, whatever its final form, and despite the fact that the situation called for a supporting role.²²⁷ In terms of the strategic interaction, the potential for shirking was thus significant. Recall that in order to curb the proclivity to shirk, the principal must shape the relationship to influence the agent's decision calculus. Analyzing the factors that influenced the likelihood of detection and shaped the structure of punishment and rewards helps to reveal why this did not happen.

Given a large preference gap, and considering the criticality of subordinating each operation to the larger purpose, the situation called for somewhat intrusive monitoring to maintain the alignment of the various agents. For the reasons mentioned earlier, the cost of monitoring was already significant. As the bombing campaign continued without signs of an imminent Iraqi collapse, and pressure mounted for a negotiated settlement, General Schwarzkopf came under increasing pressure to begin the ground war.²²⁸ His ability to do so was constrained, however, by delays in the deployment and attack preparations of VII Corps—last minute scrambles that further consumed the CENTCOM chief's limited bandwidth.²²⁹ Further, General Boomer's decision to operate from a forward headquarters rather than from Riyadh further increased the cost of monitoring.²³⁰ After the war, the I MEF commander recalled that while he was in regular phone contact, he travelled to the CENTCOM forward headquarters infrequently and General Schwarzkopf "generally speaking left me alone."²³¹ It is therefore necessary to

²²⁷ Note that the Marines did not have the logistics capability to maintain the long supply lines necessary for the envelopment and thus were not considered for a prominent role in the left hook itself.

²²⁸ General Schwarzkopf notes in his memoirs, "The increasing pressure to launch the ground war early was making me crazy." See Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 441-445.

²²⁹ See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 193-4. VII Corps assembled as a complete force for the first time just one week prior to the start of the ground war. See Swain, "Luck War," 199.

²³⁰ Quilter, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 40.

²³¹ General Boomer notes he flew to Riyadh every "10 to 14 days," but adds that he did not feel neglected. Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 42, 48.

conclude that due to an inadequate monitoring regime, oversight of the Marines' plan was lacking.

Not only did its laxness reduce the probability of detecting the agent's shirking, but the monitoring regime was also, to some extent, irrelevant because but the structure of punishment and rewards was such that pursuit of self-interest was *all but assured*. In the first place, General Boomer was under tremendous pressure from Marine Commandant General Alfred Gray to secure a piece of the action. Throughout the buildup and planning, General Gray took an activist role by adding his own lobby for an amphibious landing, and trying to push his own plans into the theater.²³² At one point, the head Marine even attempted to insert a protégé between the CENTCOM chief and I MEF.²³³ General Boomer survived the "no confidence" vote, but the incident speaks to a structure skewed toward service interests.²³⁴ Further, it seems rather clear in retrospect that General Schwarzkopf, intended to give the Marines opportunity to demonstrate legitimacy and relevancy. Considering that between the blockade, the air campaign and the left hook, each of the other services had ample opportunity for limelight, and taking into account the decision to deny an amphibious landing, Schwarzkopf had little ability to deny the Marines a prominent role in the war. Indeed, quite the opposite occurred; General Schwarzkopf gave the Marines significant leeway to plan and execute the attack into Kuwait as they saw fit, at one point allegedly admonishing his planners to "stop screwing with the Marines" when they attempted to task I MEF with a fixing operation.²³⁵ Indeed, General Boomer recalled telling Schwarzkopf, "General, we're going to take Kuwait," and the CENTCOM chief "didn't have a

²³² Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 173-177.

²³³ Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 41, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 176.

²³⁴ Referring to a proposal by General Gray for a "second front," Gordon and Trainor note the "plan was dead on arrival, but it amounted to a vote of no confidence by the Marine commandant in the top Marine commander in the field." Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 173. After the war, General Boomer noted General Gray's use of "backchannels" to try to influence things in theater. Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 49.

²³⁵ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 161.

problem with that.”²³⁶ In considering the liberation of Kuwait largely a given, General Schwarzkopf seems not to have realized the potential impact the Marine attack might have on his overall strategy until the Iraqi retreat was already underway. His failure to ensure the alignment of the agent’s operation bordered on abdication of his responsibility as the principal. It was at this point that the delegation began to break down.

As noted earlier, once the Iraqis began their retreat in earnest, the ground campaign became a race. If significant numbers of Iraqi forces were able to evade the coalition hammer and cross the border into Iraq, Saddam Hussein could announce that he had complied with the United Nations resolution to vacate Kuwait, in effect, forcing the coalition to halt the offensive short of its ultimate goal. In doing so, he could avoid a politically costly unilateral surrender. Moreover, the more forces that escaped coalition destruction and entrapment, the more the Iraqi dictator would be able to paint the war’s end as a stalemate, rather than an outright defeat, and the better equipped he would be to undergird his regime. For its part, the coalition desperately needed to close the trap. Given the events already in motion, General Schwarzkopf had two means to attempt to salvage the situation; he could accelerate his ground attack while endeavoring to stem the Iraqi exodus with airpower. Once again, the administration’s unilateral decision to halt the offensive was, in essence, acknowledgement that the coalition had lost the race. It is difficult to say whether it was ultimately possible to close the trap considering the Iraqis’ significant lead. As noted, weather and logistics were further hindrances about which the coalition could do little.²³⁷ One issue, over which the coalition had some measure of influence, however, encumbered the frantic contingency measures. Quite simply, the coalition failed to

²³⁶ Boomer Interview, 27 July 2006, 20.

²³⁷ See: Yeosock Interview, 8 May 1991, 140-1.

slow retreating forces fully, in part, due to ineffective employment of its airpower “hammer” on the last day of the war.

The principal’s intent to entrap and destroy the Republican Guard remained essentially unchanged; the deteriorating situation merely heightened the sense of urgency. General Schwarzkopf thus pursued both courses of action available to him. As the extent of the retreat became evident, Schwarzkopf admonished his Army commanders to execute a “Bobby Knight press” in allusion to the legendary coach’s tenacious basketball tactics.²³⁸ Third Army commander Lieutenant General John Yeosock noted at the time, “The CinC’s [Commander-in-Chief] intent is continuous pressure, no lulls.”²³⁹ Indeed, Schwarzkopf’s instructions to XVIII Airborne Corps commander Lieutenant General Gary Luck to pursue “maximum destruction,” coupled with his incessant hounding of VII Corps commander Lieutenant General Fred Franks to bring the “mailed fist” to bear for the “largest tank battle in military history” demonstrate the CENTCOM Chief’s desire to accelerate his attack in hopes of salvaging the situation.²⁴⁰ As one Army staff officer put it, “CinC’s guidance has changed from deliberate operations to a pursuit.”²⁴¹ Effective use of the air portion of the coalition hammer to slow the retreat was, however, also essential to successful pursuit of the enemy since the Iraqis had a significant head start and factors such as weather and logistics put an upper limit on the Army’s rate of advance. Thus, once the Iraqi retreat became evident, the air component redoubled interdiction efforts after 25 February in an attempt to stem the exodus.²⁴² In sum, although likely focused on the unfolding ground war, General Schwarzkopf looked to both his land and air components to salvage his strategy.

²³⁸ Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 397.

²³⁹ Swain, “*Lucky War*,” 248.

²⁴⁰ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 462-3. Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 395-399.

²⁴¹ Swain, “*Lucky War*,” 252.

²⁴² Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 249.

Once the Army corps had breached the Iraqi defenses with unexpected ease, they found their immediate need of air component support significantly diminished. Indeed, the *Gulf War Airpower Survey* notes the conspicuously minor role close air support (CAS) played in Phase IV of Desert Storm.²⁴³ Since contact with retreating forces was somewhat infrequent and because coalition firepower and tactics proved superior when clashes with Iraqi forces did occur, XVIII and VII Corps preferred to rely largely on organic Apache helicopters for their CAS requirements.²⁴⁴ During the four days of the ground war, for example, nearly a third of planned A-10 CAS sorties went unused.²⁴⁵ Use of Apaches was desirable not only because it served to justify the weapon system itself, but also because it was a means to showcase the “deep attack” portion of the AirLand Battle doctrine upon which the contemporary Army had been built.²⁴⁶ Reliance upon organic assets, in turn, seemed to obviate the need for close ground-air coordination during pursuit of the Iraqi army. Indeed, as the anticipated slugging match devolved into a rout, ground commanders seemed to disassociate the land war from the air component’s efforts altogether. As airmen noted after the war, “The land components appeared overly focused on their individual maneuver, timing and objectives. There was little expression of their role in the big picture.”²⁴⁷

At this point, the Army component introduced the divergent aim of pursuing a single-service fight, which would create a “zone of diminished effectiveness for air power” on the final

²⁴³ See: Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 231, 245-6, 249.

²⁴⁴ On the superiority of coalition firepower, see: Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 248.

²⁴⁵ Robert Pape notes that close air support was “a peripheral aspect of this war,” as over a third of A-10 sorties attacked nothing, and B-52s sent to bomb the frontlines during breaching operations had to be redirected since the ground forces had already cut through the defenses. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 245, and Keaney and Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report*, 110-111.

²⁴⁶ See Tom Clancy and Fred Franks, Jr., *Into the Storm: A Study in Command* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1997), 382. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor describe 101st Airborne Division commander Major General Binford Peay, who orchestrated the XVIII Corps helicopter attacks as an “ardent proselytizer of the Army’s helicopter assault capabilities.” Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 403. See also: Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 247-8.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 132.

day of the war via a largely uncoordinated extension of the FSCL.²⁴⁸ Prior to the kickoff of the ground war, the JFACC and Third Army anticipated a brisk pace of battle and had prearranged movement of the FSCL for each day of the war.²⁴⁹ During the night of 26/27 February, both Army corps apparently deviated from the agreement and extended their sector FSCLs well beyond the frontline of their advance—by as much as 140 kilometers at one point.²⁵⁰ This placed two key interdiction areas within the airspace controlled by the ground commanders. The FSCL in the VII Corps sector, which the Army extended eastward to cover the anticipated tank battle with Republican Guard heavy divisions, also covered the north-south highway leading to Basra, over which Iraqi forces were retreating.²⁵¹ The FSCL in the XVIII Corps sector moved north of the Euphrates river and east to Basra in order to allow Apache helicopters to conduct “deep attacks” in the vicinity of the Hawr Al Hammar causeway and an objective codenamed Engagement Area (EA) Thomas, suspected to contain Iraqi armor.²⁵² This placed a key east-west escape road beyond the Euphrates also within ground-controlled airspace.²⁵³ Finally, the boundaries set by both corps, essentially, added the area in and around Basra itself to a “17,000 square kilometer area” in which fixed-wing aircraft needed the approval of ground forces to conduct an attack.²⁵⁴

The net result of the conflict surrounding the placement of the FSCL was an air component hamstrung in its efforts to stem the flow of retreating enemy forces, which, in turn,

²⁴⁸ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 257.

²⁴⁹ See Richard B. H. Lewis, “Desert Storm—JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation” (monograph, U.S. Army War College, 15 April 1993), 23-4. Also published as Richard B. H. Lewis, “JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation in Desert Storm,” *Airpower Journal* VIII, no. 1 (Spring 1994).

²⁵⁰ Lewis, “Desert Storm—JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation,” 24, and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273.

²⁵¹ Lewis, “Desert Storm—JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation,” 24-25. Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 412.

²⁵² Scales, *Certain Victory*, 303-4, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 411-412, and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273-4.

²⁵³ Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 257-8.

²⁵⁴ Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273-4.

made it even more unlikely that the ground forces could close their trap on the Iraqi army. Extension of the FSCL well beyond the current frontlines of forces in both the XVIII and VII Corps sectors placed the retreating enemy within the airspace controlled by the ground forces even though coalition divisions were not in contact with the Iraqi troops scrambling up the road to Basra and huddled in the extreme southeast corner of Iraq.²⁵⁵ Since there were no forward air controllers anywhere near a position from which they could direct fighter attacks as the rules of engagement dictated, the FSCL essentially precluded operations by fixed-wing aircraft until the situation could be resolved, thereby denying the air arm the freedom of action it needed to help salvage the campaign.²⁵⁶ According to General Glosson, entreaty to General Schwarzkopf rectified the dispute; but, not before the coalition had lost perhaps as many as four hundred attack sorties.²⁵⁷ Postwar analysis would confirm that retreating forces were, in effect, shielded from air attack by this unfortunate situation.²⁵⁸ Indeed, as one observer noted, “The safest place to be was behind the FSCL.”²⁵⁹

The intent here is not to suggest malignant intent among the service components. Rather, several aspects of the manner in which events unfolded on the last day of the war suggest that narrow perspective and pursuit of service imperatives introduced the divergent aim. In the first place, the movement of the FSCL appears to have been a unilateral action. There is some

²⁵⁵ Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273.

²⁵⁶ Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85, Lewis, “JFACC Problems Associated with Battlefield Preparation in Desert Storm,” and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273.

²⁵⁷ General Horner discovered the FSCL movement on the morning of 27 February. At the daily 0900 commander’s meeting, he brought the issue up to General Schwarzkopf, who agreed that the FSCL should be moved to accommodate fixed-wing interdiction. Final resolution of the issue did not come until about 1900 that evening, after a total delay of some fifteen hours. See: Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85, Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 158, Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 257, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War*, 412. Note that weather did hamper interdiction efforts as well. See: Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* Vol. I, 356. General Glosson notes, however, that the weather was, in fact, better on 27 February than it had been the previous three days, yet the sortie count was still lower due to the FSCL issue. Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 275-6.

²⁵⁸ For instance, imagery showed armored vehicles south of Basra as late as 2 March. Scales, *Certain Victory*, 305.

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 258-9.

ambiguity as to who actually ordered and approved the extension.²⁶⁰ What seems reasonably clear is that it caught air component commanders by surprise.²⁶¹ Not only was consideration of the impact to fixed-wing interdiction efforts insufficient, but the FSCL boundary extended beyond what the land component needed since it included interdiction areas that the Apaches *did not intend to attack*. For instance, XVIII Corps sought to send Apaches to attack only the bottlenecks near the Hawr Al Hammar causeway and EA Thomas north of Basra, not the area north of the Euphrates.²⁶² Further, the Army sent attack helicopters to these areas not to seize an objective, but specifically to troll for enemy tanks.²⁶³ Finally, the inclusion of areas beyond the reach of forward air controllers indicates either intent to preclude coordination with the air component, or, more likely, the failure to recognize the need for joint action. The Army's shift to a largely single-service fight mattered little during the first three days of the ground war. Indeed the prearranged FSCL placement seemed to work rather well early in the ground war. However, precisely when the situation called for closely coordinated actions to salvage a

²⁶⁰ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor seem to indicate that the FSCL movement originated with the corps commanders, which is entirely plausible since they were the ones overseeing the helicopter operations in question. The *Gulf War Airpower Survey* attributes the decision to the "Army forces." Perry Jamieson describes an exchange between watch officers in the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) during the night of 26/27 February regarding attempted coordination of the FSCL. After the war, General Franks recalled that "General Schwarzkopf personally moved the FSCL in to the Gulf in our [VII Corps] and north of the Euphrates in XVIII Corps sector." Gordon and Trainor note simply that "CENTCOM clarified the boundaries," and after the war General Schwarzkopf recalled being largely unaware of the dispute over the FSCL. Richard Swain adds, "Ultimately, CENTCOM took over the setting of the FSCL." See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 411-413, Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 257, Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 158, Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 341, and Swain, "Lucky War," 228.

²⁶¹ General Horner recalled that he "hit the ceiling" when he arrived at his headquarters on 27 February and learned of the situation. Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85. General Glosson recalled his own similar surprise. Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 273-4.

²⁶² Cohen, et al, *Gulf War Air Power Survey: Effects and Effectiveness*, 257, and Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 411-412.

²⁶³ Apparently the 101st Airborne Division proposed to airlift a brigade into the area north of Basra. The plan never made it past General Luck, the XVIII Corps commander. After the war, General Schwarzkopf said that he was unaware of the plan at the time. See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 403-4, 406-7. The objective thus became to hunt Iraqi armor, which met with limited success. See: Scales, *Certain Victory*, 303, 305, Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 412, and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 274. After the war, General Horner remarked on the poor efficiency and limited effectiveness of interdiction by the helicopters saying, "They wanted some kill boxes for their Apaches...They would reserve these kill boxes for a long time and then not use them. Then finally they would put the Apache in there at the last minute." Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 86.

deteriorating situation, the Army component acted in a manner that belied joint intent.²⁶⁴ As the race converged on Basra, coordination became *all the more critical*. The Army component's failure to do so, largely as a result of service self-interest, amounts to shirking.

The conflict regarding placement of the FSCL during the final day of the war resembles the strategic-interaction characteristic of the agency problem. The manner in which events transpired indicates that a preference gap existed. To put it plainly, the agent sought a largely single-service fight when the situation called for synergistic joint operations. This divergent aim led to inadequate coordination that hampered efforts to interdict retreating Iraqi forces. The intent is not to argue that airpower might have saved the day. Previous analysis has shown that several factors contributed to the failure to deliver suitable leverage. Service imperatives merely compounded the situation. That said, it is again fruitful to examine the monitoring regime and the structure of rewards and punishment to gain further insight into the decision calculus that led to pursuit of service self-interest. In doing so, it is necessary to keep in mind the subordinate-principal arrangement that General Schwarzkopf created by appointing a JFACC. Granted, doctrine provides that the ground commander has the authority to set the FSCL.²⁶⁵ However, common sense dictates that effective coordination is a cornerstone of jointness. Quite simply, the FSCL extension should have been the product of a full consideration of its attendant impacts to both land *and* air component operations.

²⁶⁴ General Horner's perspective is certainly that of an airman, but speaks to the issue of coordination, and the perceived lack thereof: "The problem I had was teaching the Army that they must coordinate with the air commander. It's in the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] definition that the Army would unilaterally change the FSCL...The Army tends to fight in isolation. They tend to ignore working with other forces...The Army had trouble with the FSCL...because it meant that if they were going to send helicopters over [the Euphrates], they have got to coordinate with me. They don't like to do that...they think I am getting into their business. They expect me to coordinate with them, but they don't want to coordinate with me...[B]ut you have got to have coordination to execute and avoid duplication and fratricide." Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85-6.

²⁶⁵ General Horner, in fact, acknowledged this. Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85.

It is unlikely that the agent expected its actions to go unnoticed. To begin with, the FSCL is effective only if all relevant combat units know its location. Thus, at some point a movement of the FSCL had to be disseminated to tactical forces. In the process, air component commanders were sure to learn of the change. This is, in fact, precisely what happened. Apparently during the night of 26/27 February, movement of the FSCL was a topic of debate in the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC)—the command and control node that served to facilitate air support for the ground forces.²⁶⁶ Generals Horner and Glosson both learned of the situation upon their arrival at the air component headquarters on the morning of 27 February.²⁶⁷ Further, as noted earlier, General Schwarzkopf's monitoring of his Army component was undoubtedly intrusive. After the war, General Yeosock recalled Schwarzkopf's proclivity to reach down to the corps level in dealing with Army forces, a sentiment echoed by other commentators.²⁶⁸ This was particularly true during attempts to accelerate the ground attack. Thus, the only plausible conclusion is that Army commanders were either unaware of the potential impacts to fixed-wing operations or unconcerned by any such impediments. This, in turn, made coordination seem either unnecessary or undesirable. In the extreme, placement of the FSCL in such manner could be viewed as the agent's attempt to obviate the need for coordination.²⁶⁹ In sum, the agent's assessment of the probability of detection does not offer appreciable insight into the agent's decision calculus.

In examining the structure of rewards and punishment, the alignment of the principal and agent is, once again, an important consideration. In prodding his ground commanders to press the attack, the CENTCOM chief likely gave the impression that he was, in effect, ordering them

²⁶⁶ See, for instance: Jamieson, *Lucrative Targets*, 158.

²⁶⁷ Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 85, and Glosson, *War with Iraq*, 271-2.

²⁶⁸ Yeosock Interview, 8 May 1991, 143, 152. Swain, "Lucky War," 331, 340-1.

²⁶⁹ Horner Interview, 4 March 1992, 86.

to use any means necessary to ensure that *ground forces* engaged the Republican Guard. It stands to reason that General Schwarzkopf was under considerable pressure to ensure that XVIII Corps, which had been in the desert since the beginning, and VII Corps, which had been deployed to theater at great expense, saw a significant amount of action.²⁷⁰ XVIII Corps was already close to, if not beyond, the pace its logistics train could support. The only way it could hasten its attack was to reach deep with helicopters. For its part, VII Corps sought to create “a death zone...that extended from the forward tanks...all the way to the Persian Gulf.”²⁷¹ In this case, not only did the structure of rewards and punishment fail to include meaningful sanction for shirking, but also seems to have *incentivized* the pursuit of service imperatives.

Summary

In preparing for and executing the Phase IV ground campaign, doctrinaire, self-interested Army, Air Force and Marine components pursued their own agendas at the expense of unified effort. To be sure, none sought to court failure. Each, however, thought it alone knew best how to win. Agent preferences derived from narrow service perspectives clashed with the principal's intent and, indeed, with the requirements of the situation. The resulting divergent aims undermined the efficacy of military operations, and in the process, enabled Saddam Hussein's cut-and-run strategy and unhinged the coalition plan as well as subsequent attempts to salvage it. Once again control of information proved a means for the agent to manipulate the strategic interaction. Monitoring costs also contributed to instances of insufficient oversight, while pressure from a parent service skewed the structure of rewards and punishment such that the decision calculus of the agent favored shirking. The analysis also shows that a common service bond likely caused the Army component to infer alignment of the principal with agent

²⁷⁰ At least one set of commentators suggests that General Schwarzkopf also sought to secure a portion of glory for the Army. Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 405, 511 note 3.

²⁷¹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 341.

preferences, thereby giving the appearance of reduced probability for sanction. Indeed, principal-agent alignment may have made it seem as though no preference gap existed. The notion of a “subordinate principal,” the JFACC, also added complexity in the form of a nested agency problem that likely produced some ambiguity in the relationship among the agents. To be clear, in no way is the intent here to argue that any one service alone derailed the efforts. Rather, agency analysis shows that service self-interest produced disunity and a divergence of aims despite the existence of ostensibly unified command.

Conclusions

Having largely avoided the most egregious of Vietnam’s failures, the United States military put on a dazzling display of tactical prowess and high-tech mastery in Desert Storm. Yet, unity of effort proved as elusive in the deserts of Southwest Asia as it was in jungles on the other side of the continent. Not surprisingly, service self-interest was alive and well. A hierarchy heralded for its adherence to the tenet of unified command was unable to overcome the enticement of service imperatives. As agency theory would predict, the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and indeed the entire unification struggle, had surprisingly little impact in this regard. Ostensibly clear responsibility and authority, at least in terms of official command channels, seemed to matter little in the final analysis.

Application of the agency framework aptly demonstrated that joint command and control suffers from all the challenges inherent in any act of delegation. In particular, as an analysis tool agency theory proved effective at revealing the mechanisms by which service self-interest, at times, is able to overcome the purported integrative effects of unified command. The introduction of divergent aims, all but assured by the pluralistic nature of the American military, helped to unhinge CENTCOM’s strategy. Due to functional specialization by warfighting

domain, General Schwarzkopf relied on a varying mixture of service capability to fight a joint battle. Due to a narrow perspective each service sought to fight the war in its own image and do so in manner that served, in part, to bolster institutional legitimacy and relevancy. As expected, the decision calculus governing the pursuit of self-interest, and thus divergent aims, proved to be dependent on the joint force commander's ability, and in some cases his desire, to shape the strategic interaction. Where monitoring was inadequate in the face of a significant preference gap, shirking flourished, particularly when the structure of rewards and punishment slanted toward the respective service.

Perhaps the best way to conclude is to note just how little had actually changed since WWII had presented the American military its first test of the joint age. Indeed, although the circumstances of Desert Storm were unique, the issues that soiled joint warfighting in the Persian Gulf, whether clamoring for service-edifying glory or squabbling over control of forces, were largely the same as those found in the battle for Europe and the island campaigns of the Pacific nearly fifty years earlier.

CHAPTER SIX

A BREAKDOWN IN KOSOVO

Agency and Efficacy in Operation ALLIED FORCE

Many times I found myself working further down into details than I would have preferred, in an effort to generate the attack effectiveness against the ground forces that I knew we needed.

General Wesley K. Clark¹
Supreme Allied Commander Europe

Introduction

Perhaps because it embodied a stellar battlefield triumph but less conclusive political aftermath, Desert Storm cast a long shadow over United States foreign policy and, in turn, the military endeavor. The stunning defeat of the Iraqi Army at once largely erased the stigma of Vietnam and fully restored the military to prominence in American statecraft. On the whole, the performance at the tactical and technical levels vindicated the efforts of reformers during the 1970s and 1980s. The services, however, each formed a different image of the triumph. Not surprisingly, each took distinct, and decidedly service-oriented, lessons from the conflict. As a result, each service went about correcting perceived deficiencies and institutionalizing successes that supported its image of war.

The Gulf War proved a temporary impediment to the drive for a peace dividend following the end of the Cold War. At the same time, however, there was significant impetus to retool for the new era. The services thus faced immense pressure to both cut spending and overhaul their organizations, training, and equipment to adapt to a dynamic and uncertain world. As defense dollars dwindled, the services renewed their rivalries, and lessons from the fight to liberate Kuwait ultimately served as fodder in the ensuing budget battles. Rather than promote

¹ Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 245.

jointness, as perhaps proponents of Goldwater-Nichols suggest, Desert Storm, paradoxically, may have been more effective in driving the services apart.

Despite the drawdown, the United States armed forces increasingly would become the tool of choice for the president and his advisors. Perhaps a victim of its own success, the military became a central figure in enacting the policy of engagement that dominated the 1990s. Thus, there would be little respite for the services. In addition to a *de facto* commitment to contain Saddam Hussein and protect the Iraqi Kurds and Shiites from his wrath, American forces would have leading roles in stemming the humanitarian crises that accompanied the violent dissolution of former Soviet satellites in the Balkans. Throughout these interventions, political leaders would prove highly sensitive to American casualties, collateral damage, as well as domestic and world opinion, in many respects due to the expectations created by the conduct of the Gulf War. Familiar frictions at service and civil-military seams would also resurface as American engagement reached its apex in Operation ALLIED FORCE—NATO's showdown with Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic in 1999.

The antecedents of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) war against Serbia are manifold and complex.² Suffice to say that by 1998, nationalist furor of the type that precipitated the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia into its constituent republics earlier in the decade once again threatened stability in the Balkans.³ For some time, the ethnic Albanians that, in effect, lay claim to the Serbian province of Kosovo, had sought independence akin to that

² Regarding the roots of conflict in Kosovo, see: Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2000).

³ Karl Mueller provides a succinct, yet insightful analysis of Yugoslavia's disintegration noting, "As...revolutionary forces strengthened, leaders...who recognized the potential power of ethnic and religious pride and hatred eagerly kindled those emotions, as wartime leaders have often done before. In short, ethnic relationships in Yugoslavia did not simply burst into flames: rather, incendiary ethnic fuel was thrown onto the fires of regional and class conflict. Karl Mueller, "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia: Strategic Causes, Effects, and Responses," in Robert C. Owen ed., *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Effective Campaigning* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2000), 1-12. For more details see, for instance: Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

which former Yugoslav republics Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia possessed.⁴ Not surprisingly, Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic refused to consider Kosovo's liberation since he viewed the province not as a separate entity in a crumbling federal republic, but, rather, as an integral part of Serbia.⁵ In fact, the dictator had risen to power on a swell of nationalism fueled, in part, by ethnic tension between Serbs and Kosovo's Albanian majority.⁶ Over a decade, Milosevic stripped the province of its autonomy and installed a puppet government in attempts to bring it to heel.⁷ Amid increasing repression, Kosovar Albanians began to resist Serbian rule forcefully, forming the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to actively oppose Milosevic and the military and paramilitary forces he employed to implement his policies.⁸ As the KLA insurgency gained strength, Serbian strong-arm tactics entered a spiral of escalating brutality during the spring and summer of 1998.⁹ Seeking to avert the tragedy that had befallen Bosnia, a consortium of diplomats from six nations—known simply as the Contact Group—sought a negotiated end to the violence.¹⁰ By the fall of 1998, talks had succeeded in producing

⁴ Over the course of the 1990s, the former Yugoslavia had disintegrated, leaving only Serbia and Montenegro as constituent parts of the newly designated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Serbia included the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. William M. Arkin, "Operation Allied Force: 'The Most Precise Application of Air Power in History,'" in Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen eds., *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1, 29 note 2. See also: Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 8-9.

⁵ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 9, 37.

⁶ Mueller, "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia," 7-8, and Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo" (monograph, Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2000), 3. Ethnic Albanians constituted roughly ninety percent of the Kosovo's population. See: Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 31 January 2000), 1.

⁷ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 8, and Mueller, "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia," 8.

⁸ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 10-11, and Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 4, 6.

⁹ The Defense Department's official report notes, "...discrimination turned into systematic violence against the Kosovar Albanians." Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 2. See also: Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 27-8, and Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 6-7.

¹⁰ The Contact Group derived from the 1992 London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and included France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 6, 11. Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon note, "Milosevic and his

little more than a temporary ceasefire.¹¹ During the respite, the two sides merely gathered themselves for a resumption of hostilities the following spring.¹² When Serb forces renewed offensive operations in January of 1999 by devastating the town of Racak, and killing at least 45 civilians in the process, United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright noted, “spring has come early to Kosovo.”¹³

Prior to the Racak massacre, NATO military involvement in the crisis was largely peripheral and designed only to “demonstrate allied resolve.”¹⁴ As violence in Kosovo escalated, alliance members sought to prevent spread of the conflagration as a growing tide of refugees threatened to overwhelm the comparatively poor neighboring republics of Albania and Macedonia, and further fan the embers of latent Albanian nationalism.¹⁵ To undergird the

fellow Serb extremists had already displayed their true colors earlier in the decade in Bosnia, where at least 100,000 people, mostly Muslims and Croats, had been killed.” Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 12. United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged resolute action saying, “We are not going to stand by and watch Serb authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia...History is watching us. In this very room our predecessors delayed as Bosnia burned, and history will not be kind to us if we do the same.” Quoted in Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 24.

¹¹ The essence of the agreement, at least on the part of Milosevic and the Serbs, was to reduce Serbian forces to pre-crisis levels while proceeding with negotiations for a permanent end to conflict in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions to that effect. The Yugoslav president also agreed to admit an unarmed Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) team supplemented by aerial surveillance to monitor compliance. See Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 47-49, and Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo,” 9-10 as well as U.N. Security Council, 3868th Meeting. “Resolution 1160 (1998) [The Letters from the United Kingdom (S/1998/223) and the United States (S/1998/272)]” (S/RES/1160). 31 March 1998, U.N. Security Council, 3930th Meeting. “Resolution 1199 (1998) [The situation in Kosovo (FRY)]” (S/RES/1199). 23 September 1998, and U.N. Security Council, 3937th Meeting. “Resolution 1203 (1998) [The situation in Kosovo]” (S/RES/1203). 24 October 1998.

¹² In November, 1998, Supreme Allied Command in Europe, United States Army General Wesley Clark told NATO governments, “At this very time both the KLA and the Serbs are re-arming and preparing for confrontation again.” Quoted in Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 60.

¹³ Quoted in Barton Gellman, “The Path to Crisis: How the United States and Its Allies Went to War,” *The Washington Post*, 18 April 1999, A31.

¹⁴ For more details on NATO actions during the prelude to war, see Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 31-37. Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 2.

¹⁵ By October 1998 Serbian forces had evicted an estimated 300,000 Kosovars from their homes. With winter fast approaching, some 50,000 were thought to be hiding in the surrounding mountains. Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 23. Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo”, 7. Ivo Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon note, “With Albanians living in at least four countries (Albania, Greece, Macedonia, and Yugoslavia), anything that stoked Albanian nationalism could be highly destabilizing for Kosovo’s neighbors.” Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 9, 31. See also: Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 3.

stability of the region, NATO leaders began to explore a number of military options ranging from shows of force to air strikes, and even forcible ground invasion of Serbia.¹⁶ Only a few military exercises ever left the planning stage, including flyovers by combat aircraft intended to deter expansion of violence by demonstrating “NATO’s capability to project power into the region.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, NATO’s heightened activity added a measure of threat to diplomatic efforts that, by autumn, seemed to persuade Milosevic to suspend his attacks.¹⁸ The Racak incident, however, proved something of a last straw for the international community and a turning point for NATO. The Contact Group organized a last-ditch effort to negotiate a peaceful end to the crisis, while NATO’s governing North Atlantic Council ordered Secretary-General Javier Solana to prepare an airstrike campaign to be executed in the event that negotiations failed.¹⁹

Although the opposing sides had not yet reached a formal agreement, the resulting Rambouillet talks between the Kosovars and Serbs seemed to be productive until Serb negotiators abruptly ended the meeting on 19 March, just as Yugoslav Third Army (VJ) and Serbian Interior Ministry Police (MUP) forces massed on the Kosovo border.²⁰ On 20 March, Milosevic’s forces began Operation Horseshoe—a full-scale ethnic cleansing designed to purge

¹⁶ Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 3-4, and Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 33-4, 42.

¹⁷ Operation Determined Falcon in June of 1998 sent some eighty warplanes over Albania and Macedonia on a flight path that took them within fifteen miles of the Yugoslav border. Quote by NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana. Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 32. See also: Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo,” 7.

¹⁸ Heightened activity included preparatory orders for airstrikes by NATO’s governing North Atlantic Council (NAC) intended “to demonstrate allied resolve.” Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 2.

¹⁹ Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 2, Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment* (Arlington, VA; RAND, 2001), 8, and Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 2.

²⁰ The Rambouillet Talks consisted of two separate meetings. The sides first met in Rambouillet, France 6-23 February to craft an interim agreement that neither side signed. Talks resumed in Paris on 15 March, at which point the Kosovars signed an agreement that seemed to provide for their protection as well as a path to autonomy. The Serbs walked out largely over the issue of foreign peacekeeping troops on Yugoslav soil. By the time of the walkout, nearly one-third of Yugoslavia’s military forces were poised to “invade” Kosovo. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 8-9, Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo,” 11-12, and Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 83-84.

Kosovo of the troublesome ethnic Albanians and crush the KLA.²¹ In retrospect, it is clear that the Serbian dictator had changed his strategy from repression to expulsion, and agreed to talks only as a stalling tactic to enable final preparations for his brutal campaign.²²

A Delicate Consensus

In the spring of 1999, continued post-Cold War ethnic strife in the Balkans thus came to a rather unpleasant climax as Yugoslav military forces drove a steady stream of battered refugees from their homes and villages in Kosovo. Images of families—women and children, in particular—fleeing on foot with nothing but the clothes they happened to be wearing at the time, together with chilling accounts of atrocious human rights violations sparked an international outcry. This at last prompted NATO to add military force to the international sanctions and negotiations intended to convince Serbian nationalists to abandon their campaign to reclaim the Albanian-dominated province.²³ For the first time in its fifty-year history, NATO would engage in sustained combat operations—operations of a type for which it had neither organized nor trained. This fact accounts for the timid start, halting efforts, and generally steep learning curve that came to characterize Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF) from its opening salvo on 24 March 1999. Indeed, many, if not all, of the challenges that inhere in war by committee were on display in the alliance's "ugly win."²⁴

A full accounting of the political wrangling that attended the seventy-eight-day war on behalf of displaced Kosovars is beyond the scope of this study. For the present purposes, it is

²¹ Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 2-3, and Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 12.

²² Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 9. Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon note that Milosevic had recognized that "the KLA was probably becoming too strong and too popular within ethnic Albanian society for him to defeat using classic counterinsurgency techniques...[and] chose to expel much of the civilian population instead." Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 13, 112.

²³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1160, in essence, called for an arms embargo to prevent the resupply of war material to Yugoslavia. U.N. Security Council, Resolution 1160 (1998), paragraph 8. On media coverage of the tragedy motivating action, see: Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 173.

²⁴ Adapted from the title: Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*.

necessary only to make two key observations. To begin with, intervention in what some considered a matter internal to a sovereign state seemed to exceed the NATO charter as an alliance for the *defense* of Western Europe, thus making it exceedingly difficult to forge the necessary consensus for *offensive* military action.²⁵ Member nations agreed, in principal, that the crisis merited action, but establishing suitable legal basis for commitment of NATO forces proved a significant hurdle.²⁶ The clearest mandate for armed intervention was a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for the use of force by the international community akin to that which sanctioned the 1991 Gulf War. Russia and China had made it clear, however, that they would veto any such proposal, rendering the option moot.²⁷ Further, any NATO operations in the former Eastern-bloc had the potential to sour relations with Russia, making legitimacy essential.²⁸ Coming so soon after the genocide that engulfed Bosnia, the hauntingly similar trajectory portended by events in Kosovo thus provided the rationale for NATO to pursue “alternative dogma to justify actions necessitated by the humanitarian crisis.”²⁹ As French president Jacques Chirac noted, presence of a dire “humanitarian situation constitutes a ground that can justify an exception to a rule, however strong and firm it is.”³⁰ In sum, the exigency of the situation proved enough to bring the reluctant alliance members onboard without explicit mandate from the United Nations.

²⁵ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 36-7. As noted, there seemed to be no discord over nibbling at the margins of the problem via exercises and shows of force. Direct involvement was an altogether different matter.

²⁶ Ivo Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon organize the sentiments into the “‘Catholic camp’ (France and Italy),” which required United Nations mandate, but could be swayed by “exceptional circumstances;” the “‘Lutheran camp’ (including Britain and, later, Germany),” which argued that a crisis “overwhelming in nature” demanded an emergency response; and the “agnostic,” in reference to the United States, which considered United Nations mandate neither “sacrosanct nor absolute.” Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 45.

²⁷ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 44.

²⁸ Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 4.

²⁹ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 45.

³⁰ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 44-5. As the United States Defense Department put it, “FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] military and police forces committed serious and widespread violation of international law, and used excessive and indiscriminate force.” Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 10.

The other pertinent point is Allied Force was as much about the legitimacy and relevancy of NATO as the plight of the beleaguered ethnic Albanians. Indeed, the Defense Department's official report on the war noted, "Milosevic's conduct leading up to Operation Allied Force directly challenged the credibility of NATO, an alliance that has formed the bedrock of transatlantic security for 50 years."³¹ More fundamentally, however, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought inescapable questioning of the need to maintain the elaborate defense partnership. NATO had certainly proven its worth during the Cold War by providing a measure of cohesion to the West in general, and Western Europe in particular. The continued lack of a viable threat or concrete mission would make such solidarity difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the decade of violence that engulfed the Balkans certainly threatened the stability of Europe to some extent, and thus likely motivated several of NATO's member nations to push the alliance into the peacekeeping business. Thus, one cannot overlook the fact that conflict in Kosovo served as a ready-made policing mission upon which the alliance seized as a means to undergird its existence.³² Events impelled wary member nations to act; and once they became involved, the future of the alliance hung in the balance. Maintaining harmony within NATO, therefore, became a key, and perhaps dominant, concern during the course of the war.³³

³¹ Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 4.

³² See, for instance: James Kurth, "First War of the Global Era: Kosovo and U.S. Grand Strategy," in Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen eds., *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 74-77

³³ Benjamin Lambeth notes, "All planning, moreover, took for granted that NATO's most vulnerable area (or 'center of gravity') was its continued cohesion as an alliance." Lambeth, *NATO's Air War Over Kosovo*, 12.

Meandering Strategy

Given the international indignation over treatment of Kosovar Albanians, halting the Serb's cleansing campaign was high on the list of NATO priorities.³⁴ Establishing a coherent strategy for the operation, however, bedeviled alliance leaders. From the outset, a ground invasion proved "a bridge too far" for NATO.³⁵ In this respect, the United States was a reluctant leader as President Clinton had decided early on that he would not send ground troops, effectively precluding a land campaign against the Serbs.³⁶ Thus, the war was destined to be a coercive action to convince Milosevic to abandon Kosovo, vice a campaign to forcibly evict his forces.³⁷ Further, by default, airpower became the coercive instrument of choice.³⁸ At the outset of hostilities, NATO initially approved only a measured bombing campaign against Serbian air defenses, which purported to "show resolve," but approached "tokenism" to such extent that it had the opposite effect.³⁹ Not only did Milosevic decline the "invitation" to negotiate, but he

³⁴ In announcing NATO's actions, President Clinton remarked, "We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive." President William J. Clinton, "Address to the Nation on Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 24 March 1999). NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana echoed this sentiment saying, "We are doing our best to stop the killing which is taking place at this very moment in Kosovo." Secretary-General, Dr. Javier Solana (transcript, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Press Conference, 25 March 1999).

³⁵ United States ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke quoted in Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 53.

³⁶ During the 1998 buildup to war, President Clinton conveyed the prevailing sentiment regarding commitment of American ground forces, "I can assure you the United States would not support these options." Quoted in Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 55. He reiterated his opposition during his address announcing the commencement of airstrikes saying, "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war." President William J. Clinton, "Address to the Nation on Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets," 24 March 1999.

³⁷ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War Over Kosovo*, 12-13.

³⁸ Analyst Anthony Cordesman notes, "NATO's analysis of the size of the land forces required to defeat the Serbian army during 1998 had called for a massive intervention by nearly two corps of land troops. This convinced virtually every member that the cost was too high both in terms of money and potential casualties. At the same time, over-enthusiastic diplomats had concluded that a NATO show of diplomatic unity would be enough to force Serbian acceptance, or that only limited numbers of politically symbolic air and missile strikes would be required if diplomacy failed." Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 15-16.

³⁹ The prevailing view held that the duration of the operation would be short since Milosevic was sure to resume negotiations once he "understood" that NATO was serious about its threats of force, as evidenced by a limited airstrike. Initial plans called for only two days of bombing followed by a pause, and estimates held that such a campaign would last ten to twelve days, at most. Later iterations of the plan for the air war would include three phases of attacks against an expanding target set. Due to the "quick war assumption," NATO essentially had approved only the first phase. See: Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 23,

also intensified his cleansing campaign.⁴⁰ All told, it would take the alliance eleven weeks to stumble upon an effective combination of targets and bombing intensity to complement international diplomatic efforts.

Politics thus undoubtedly played a significant role in constraining and shaping the NATO bombing campaign. To wit, it seems clear that political leaders did not intend to forcibly oppose the actions of Serbian military forces from the air. Instead, they hoped to convince Milosevic to resume negotiations regarding the future of Kosovo via a measured attack disturbingly reminiscent of the gradualism that plagued the early air war in Vietnam. To be fair, the fact that Milosevic responded to threats of air attack in the fall of 1998 likely gave credence to the notion that merely upping the ante a bit would bring the Serbs back to the negotiating table. However, when the initial bombing failed to sway the recalcitrant dictator, NATO's political leaders found themselves unprepared to conduct a sustained operation and embarked on a halting process of improvising an alternative strategy.

For his part, Slobodan Milosevic sought to capitalize on NATO's indecision and seemingly delicate cohesion. Once Operation Horseshoe began, Serbian forces executed their mission with vigor, evicting nearly 500,000 Kosovars in little more than two weeks.⁴¹ Clearly, he doubted NATO's ability to muster the consensus necessary for meaningful action, and

Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 18, 91-96. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War Over Kosovo*, 10-14, Arkin, "Operation Allied Force," 2-4, and Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 16-17.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Lambeth notes, "These attacks...caused no serious inconvenience for the Serbs. On the contrary, the gradually mounting intensity of the air war merely allowed the Serbs to adjust to a new level of pain, while pressing ahead with what they had planned all along: to redouble their effort to run as many ethnic Albanian civilians as possible out of Kosovo and thus be able to take an unobstructed shot at the KLA once and for all." Lambeth, *NATO's Air War Over Kosovo*, 24. Anthony Cordesman adds, "NATO's phased battle plan was totally unrealistic and relied on a remarkable degree of passivity from a force already involved in ethnic cleaning." Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo," 18.

⁴¹ Estimates of the total number of displaced ethnic Albanians varies. All told, upwards of 800,000 sought refuge in neighboring republics. Several hundred thousand were forced from their homes, but remained in Kosovo. By 5 April, refugees in Albania and Macedonia totaled 500,000. On 6 April, Milosevic declared a disingenuous "cease-fire," having completed the bulk of the evictions. Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 3, 112.

certainly the likelihood that it could do so before he could make the expulsion of ethnic Albanians largely a “fait accompli, to change the demographics of Kosovo.”⁴² When the alliance did, in fact, decide to take action, its tepid initial efforts did not convince the Serbian dictator to return to negotiations, but, instead, conveyed weak resolve such that the emboldened Serb “military and police appeared to be waging...a ‘scorched earth campaign’ to crush the Kosovo separatist challenge once and for all.”⁴³ At that point, Milosevic merely needed to ride out the storm while waiting for NATO to lose its appetite for the conflict and wash its hands of the whole affair.

Although NATO’s reluctance to escalate contributed to early ineffectiveness and tested the alliance’s resolve, constant tension over the proper approach to coercion from the air, most notably within the American command chain, also contributed to the meandering strategy.⁴⁴ Throughout the war, sharp disagreement existed among United States military commanders regarding the Serbian dictator’s true center of gravity.⁴⁵ To some extent, the debate was an echo of that which characterized the development of the Gulf War air campaign. One view held that Yugoslav military and police forces in Kosovo provided the most immediate leverage. The other contended that only attacks on strategic targets, such as key infrastructure, would threaten the Milosevic regime directly, and thus offered the more-effective inducement. In short, the

⁴² General Wesley K. Clark quoted in Thomas W. Lippman and Dana Priest, “NATO Builds Forces for 24-Hour Airstrikes,” *The Washington Post*, 30 March 1999, A1.

⁴³ Lippman and Priest, “NATO Builds Forces for 24-Hour Airstrikes.” United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) commander General John Jumper noted, “Then there was...abiding belief...that the campaign will last two nights and that after two nights, Mr. Milosovic (sic) would be compelled to come to the table. It didn’t work out that way. What we saw was a solidification of the political will to intensify.” General John P. Jumper, “Operation Allied Force: Strategy, Execution, Implications” (address, Eaker Institute Colloquy on Aerospace Strategy, Requirements, and Forces, Washington, DC, 16 August 1999).

⁴⁴ In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Clark later noted, “There simply was no consensus on the part of the nations to lay in place the full array of military options.” Quoted in Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 4.

⁴⁵ “Outwardly, the Western alliance maintained unity and fought...a ‘step-by-step, systematic and progressive’ campaign. But the view from within was different. Among the commanders, there were sharp divisions and frustrations.” Dana Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy,” *The Washington Post*, 21 September 1999, A1.

collective United States command chain could not come to consensus on either a denial or punishment campaign.⁴⁶ As a result, NATO proceeded “to do a little of everything” to no great effect until the alliance assembled sufficient resources to conduct round-the-clock bombing of sufficient intensity to cow Milosevic.⁴⁷ The net result was success; but the outcome was never assured. The longer the campaign dragged on, the more likely became collapse of NATO’s fragile consensus.⁴⁸ Were the alliance to fall short of its objectives, the prospects for the continued collaboration of member nations seemed less than favorable. Thus, not only did the internecine feud in the American command chain likely hamper the efficacy of the campaign, but, in turn, also imperiled NATO itself. Fortunately, recognition of the war’s importance to the future of the alliance provided the necessary resolve to continue muddling through the ponderous trail-and-error process of finding a politically acceptable means to end the ethnic violence.⁴⁹ In early June, Milosevic and the Serb parliament agreed to international demands for the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo and the admission of an international peacekeeping force. By August, most of the displaced Kosovars had returned to their homes.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ This is Robert Pape’s taxonomy from: Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996). See also: David E. Johnson, *Learning Large Lessons: The Evolving Roles of Ground Power and Air Power in the Post-Col War Era* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2006), 83.

⁴⁷ Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 6.

⁴⁸ William Arkin notes, “Moreover, [General Wesley K.] Clark and his commanders faced the unwelcome prospect of conducting a military campaign of indeterminate length, with political restrictions on their use of air power, and a seemingly irrevocable prohibition on the use of ground forces.” Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 9.

⁴⁹ Most notably, in late April, a NATO summit in Washington, DC marking the fiftieth anniversary of the alliance proved a turning point. Leaders emerged from the meeting with a set of concrete conditions for ending the bombing campaign. These conditions, in essence reiterated the demands of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, but, nonetheless, indicated coalescence of both will and purpose. See: Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 8-9, and Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 137-140.

⁵⁰ Regarding the provisions of the “ten commandments,” see Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 173-4. The Serbs signed the formal agreement on 9 June, which allowed eleven days for the re-deployment of Yugoslav forces. NATO suspended bombing at that point, and declared a formal end to the war on 20 June, as the last of the VJ and MUP forces departed Kosovo. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 60-61. By August 1999, an estimated ninety percent of the ethnic Albanian refugees had returned to Kosovo. Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo,” 327.

The Agency View: Delegation's Two-Edged Sword

Postwar accounts of the stormy relationship between Army General Wesley Clark, the Commander-in-Chief of the United States European Command (CINCEUR), and his air component, led by Air Force Lieutenant General Michael Short, reveal an archetypal strategic interaction between a principal and its agent.⁵¹ As noted, political constraints had effectively proscribed a land campaign, largely limiting NATO to a single mode of attack through the air. Much as it had in Desert Storm, the United States Air Force *de facto* planned and led the Allied Force air campaign. From the outset, Clark and Short clashed over the proper target set for allied bombing. The difference of opinion, which derived from both the service affiliations of the actors as well as their unique vantage points as principal and agent, produced simmering discontent. As one senior American commander noted, “There was a fundamental difference of opinion at the outset between General Clark, who was applying a ground commander's perspective . . . and General Short as to the value of going after fielded forces.”⁵² At the same time, however, General Clark, as the top commander, operated with a decidedly broader perspective than his air commander regarding the imperative for alliance cohesion.⁵³ As time wore on, “NATO commanders at 13 bases across Europe watched with growing discomfort during daily video conferences,” as tension boiled over into open conflict between the principal and agent, which brought “increasingly transparent passive-aggressive rebellion” on the part of

⁵¹ See, for example: Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.” General Clark was “dual-hatted,” meaning that his position depended upon the perspective from which viewed. In the NATO chain he was Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), indicating his position as the alliance’s senior military commander. As the remainder of the analysis focuses on issues within the American military, the narrative employs General Clark’s title in the United States command chain.

⁵² Vice Admiral Daniel Murphy, commander of all naval forces in Allied Force, quoted in Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁵³ William Arkin comments, “Among army officers, a belief that wars are ultimately decided on the ground is an article of faith. But if Clark was affected by service bias, other matters also weighed heavily on his thinking. He, and not General Short, was directly responsible for translating political guidance into operational plans. He, not his air commander, appreciated how fragile and tentative was the consensus within the alliance in support of any military action.” Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 5.

the latter.⁵⁴ In attempting to understand the formulation and implementation of strategy for the air war, agency theory provides a useful framework to guide examination of this strategic interaction and the resultant impact on the conduct and outcome of Allied Force.

The manner in which the conflict unfolded forced allied leaders to develop strategy as they executed the air war. NATO, via some forty iterations over the course of the yearlong crisis, had actually planned a serial air campaign of three phases, which bore stark contrast to United States Air Force doctrine that had grown out of the lessons of Desert Storm.⁵⁵ Planners designed the first phase to establish air superiority and degrade adversary command and control. Phase 2 aimed to attack Serb forces and their lines of supply and reinforcement. Phase 3 attacks would expand the campaign to all of Serbia, including the capital of Belgrade. In principal, NATO had approved the plan. However, in conjunction with the Rambouillet talks, the North Atlantic Council had only “handed the keys for Phase I” to Secretary-General Solana.⁵⁶ General Clark abided by none of the existing plans, opting instead to merge them into a hybrid option of short duration.⁵⁷ Due to the overriding belief that *any* bombing would bring the Serbs back to negotiations in short order, NATO’s political leaders had bothered to review and approve only ninety of the proposed targets, limiting the list to air defenses and largely insignificant fixed

⁵⁴ See: Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy,” and Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 190-1.

⁵⁵ At the time of the ostensible “ceasefire” in the fall of 1998, two plans existed. The “U.S. only” Nimble Lion plan “would have hit the Serbs hard at the beginning,” striking some 250 targets throughout Yugoslavia. The North Atlantic Council actually approved Concept of Operations Plan (CONPLAN) 10601, which entailed a “gradual, incremental, and phased approach.” The latter, particularly Phase 1, served as the basis for Allied Force. Note that 10601 included a Phase 0 for force deployment/buildup and a fourth phase for force redeployment. In addition, to the formal plan, NATO developed a quick-reaction cruise missile strike—Limited Air Response—that eventually merged with Phase 1 as well. See: Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 7-8, Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 11-12, 199, Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 3-4, and Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 33-34.

⁵⁶ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 14, and Cordesman, “The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo,” 18.

⁵⁷ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 199.

army installations.⁵⁸ As noted, once Milosevic declined to follow the script, NATO found itself in a lurch. During the process of seeking a course of action to salvage the situation, a gulf opened between the intent of the principal and the preference of the agent.

Throughout the war, General Clark intended to devote the primary weight of the effort to bombing Serbian forces deployed within Kosovo proper. Stemming the tide of refugees was a large part of his motivation, as well as a stated objective for the alliance.⁵⁹ To expel the ethnic Albanians, Milosevic had sent into Kosovo his state police along with the Yugoslav Third Army—a conventional force totaling 40,000 troops as well as 2,500 tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery pieces.⁶⁰ The general populace of the wayward province was largely unarmed; but, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which amounted to an organized and armed insurgent force, necessitated Serbia's commitment of significant military combat capability. General Clark considered Serbian forces the center of gravity not only due to their inherent value to the Slobodan Milosevic, but also because they served, in part, as the engine of ethnic cleansing.⁶¹ In his postwar memoir, he writes, "I found myself reiterating our priorities again and again. 'You must impact the Serb Forces on the ground.' 'Do you understand that attacking the Serb forces on the ground is my top priority?' 'We're going to win or lose this campaign based on how well

⁵⁸ General Short later recalled, "I kept getting instructed, "Mike, you're only going to be allowed to bomb two, maybe three nights. That's all Washington can stand, and that's all some members of the alliance can stand. That's why you've only got 90 targets. This will be over in three nights." Lieutenant General Michael C. Short interview for the documentary, *War in Europe: NATO's 1999 War Against Serbia Over Kosovo*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html> (accessed 13 April 2012). See also: Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 13.

⁵⁹ President Clinton remarked, "Our objective in Kosovo remains clear: to stop the killing and achieve a durable peace that restores Kosovars to self-government..." President William J. Clinton, "Remarks on the Situation in Kosovo" (news conference, Washington, DC, 22 March 1999).

⁶⁰ Arkin, "Operation Allied Force," 14.

⁶¹ In his memoir General Clark recalled, "He [Milosevic] couldn't stand to have these forces seriously hurt." Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 242. In a postwar interview, General Clark noted, "[Bombing Serb forces] was very important politically, and it was very important militarily. These forces were the agents and the support of the ethnic cleansing." General Wesley K. Clark interview for the documentary, *War in Europe: NATO's 1999 War Against Serbia Over Kosovo*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html> (accessed 13 April 2012).

we go after the ground targets.”⁶² After the war, General Short recalled that General Clark’s “No. 1 priority, which he expressed to me every day on the [video-teleconference session], was the fielded forces in Kosovo.”⁶³ This is not to suggest that CINCEUR opposed striking a broader target set.⁶⁴ As the top commander, Clark himself actually pushed to expand the bombing campaign, and, in fact, aggressively lobbied political leaders for approval to strike strategic targets favored by the air component.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, he viewed denial of the adversary’s military capability and freedom of action as the primary, and most effective, means of coercing the Serbian Dictator.

Despite airpower’s impressive attrition of the Iraqi army and subsequent rhetoric about single-handedly defeating a field army, the Air Force had attached significant value to the Gulf War strategic air campaign. In the interval between conflicts, the architects of Instant Thunder had refined the underlying intellectual concepts, influencing significantly the thinking of fellow airmen in the process. The notions of “the enemy as a system,” “parallel attack” and “targeting for effect” had come to dominate Air Force thinking by the time of Allied Force. Desert Storm thus played a prominent role in shaping the preference of the agent for a bombing campaign to strike at the “head of the snake on the first night” rather than playing with its tail.⁶⁶ General Short demonstrated this strong influence in evoking Instant Thunder’s seminal underpinnings to assess the prospects of coercing Milosevic via attacks on fielded forces: “I never felt that the [Serb] 3rd Army in Kosovo was a center of gravity. And body bags coming home from Kosovo

⁶² Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 245.

⁶³ John A. Tirpak, “Washington Watch: Short’s View of the Air Campaign,” *Air Force Magazine* 82, no. 9 (September, 1999): 43.

⁶⁴ For example, General Clark reportedly called for punitive strikes in response to the Racak massacre in January 1999. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 14.

⁶⁵ See, for instance: Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁶⁶ Lieutenant General Michael C. Short quoted in Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 27. Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

didn't bother [Milosevic], and it didn't bother the leadership elite [in Belgrade]."⁶⁷ To this Air Force airmen added the astute, if somewhat obvious, observation that conditions in the Balkans were considerably less favorable for an attrition campaign similar to Phase III of Desert Storm.⁶⁸ Most prominently, the Serbs had not erected a static defense in the open desert, but were dispersed over terrain inhospitable to bombing and intermingled with the civilian populace and infrastructure. For General Short and his planners, the attractive targets lay throughout Serbia proper, and particularly in downtown Belgrade. In sum, the agent favored a punishment campaign designed to bring the war home to the Serbians, and thereby threaten the Milosevic regime directly.

Due to its preference for strategic attack, the agent introduced a divergent aim in advocating a distribution of bombing weighted significantly, if not totally, in favor of infrastructure and regime targets. Rather than the denial campaign targeting Serbian fielded forces intended by the principal, the air component lobbied for, or perhaps demanded, "sustained parallel operations" directed at the very heart of Serbia itself.⁶⁹ This target set included many of the same categories found on the Instant Thunder list, such as electrical power production, integrated air defenses, command and control nodes, as well as transportation infrastructure such as bridges.⁷⁰ After the war, General Short offered a succinct summary of his desire: "Milosevic and his cronies would have [woken] up the first morning asking what the hell was going on."⁷¹

⁶⁷ Tirpak, "Washington Watch: Short's View of the Air Campaign," 43.

⁶⁸ Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Ryan noted that neither General Short "nor anyone else in the Air Force believed that air power could stop directly the door-to-door infantry thuggery that was driving the Kosovars from their homes. Nor could air power directly stop the slaughter and war crimes that were taking place in isolated villages." General Michael E. Ryan, "Remarks at the Air Force Association National Convention" (speech, Air Force Association National Convention, 14 September 1999).

⁶⁹ Michael C. Short, "An Airman's Lessons from Kosovo," in John Andreas Olsen ed., *From Manoeuvre Warfare to Kosovo?* (The Royal Norwegian Air Force Academy, 2001), 266.

⁷⁰ After the war, General Short noted, "The first step in any air campaign is knocking down what we call the Integrated Air Defense System, the IADS. After that, we recommended that we go after what we believed to be the strategic target set in Belgrade—the power grid, lines of communication, as they effected Belgrade, the river

Clearly, the potential for shirking was high in Allied Force, as a significant gap existed between the preference of the agent and the intent of the principal. To wit, following admonition from CINCEUR that “the jewel in the crown is when those B-52s rumble across Kosovo,” General Short supposedly retorted, “You and I have known for weeks that we have different jewelers.”⁷² That NATO did, in fact, devote the preponderance of bombing sorties to attacks on Serbian forces and equipment in Kosovo indicates that the agent was not fully successful in pursuing its preference.⁷³ In general, however, the air component fell significantly short of enthusiastic working. Precisely where on the continuum of working and shirking its behavior lies is, however, a matter for some debate. There is no compelling evidence to support accusation that anyone in the air component flagrantly disobeyed a direct order from the principal.⁷⁴ That said, evidence does suggest that the agent’s behavior could be construed as a failure to pursue the principal’s intent with the diligence required by the agency theory definition of working. For example, despite Clark’s urging to have aircraft “get down amongst them” to improve effectiveness in hunting ground forces, General Short initially refused to allow allied fighters below 15,000 feet over Kosovo because he believed attacking Serb fielded forces was a

bridges, the traffic patterns into and out of Belgrade, . . . and at least six to eight military command centers in Belgrade.” Short, PBS Frontline interview for the documentary, *War in Europe*.

⁷¹ Lieutenant General Michael C. Short quoted in Don D. Chipman, “General Short and the Politics of Kosovo’s Air War,” *Air Power History* 49, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 32.

⁷² Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁷³ Of more than 28,000 munitions, “a full one-third were general-purpose Mk 82 unguided bombs dropped by B-52s and B-1s during the war’s final two weeks,” meaning they were not employed against strategic targets. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 64. William Arkin adds, “While 3,000 to 5,000 weapons fell on ‘strategic’ targets in Serbia and Montenegro, the great majority of NATO weapons were dropped in Kosovo, the majority of those against mobile forces.” Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 25.

⁷⁴ Dana Priest notes, “Short never disobeyed an order from Clark, but his body language—slumped in his chair, arms folded, scowling—sometimes reflected his discontent.” Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.” After the war, General Short recalled, “I did my best to persuade my boss to go in a different direction, but he said no. So I felt that it was my job to do what he asked me to do.” Short, “An Airman’s Lessons from Kosovo,” 269. William Arkin offers an opposing view: “Within the high command, General Clark...was unable to get his subordinate, General Short, to follow orders, and then he failed to relieve Short when he refused to do so.” Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 28.

“strategic dead end,” and not worth the risk.⁷⁵ There also seems to have been liberal interpretation of the meaning of “fielded forces,” as considerable effort went into attacking Serb aircraft on the ground—clearly adversary forces, but ones which neither played a significant role in the cleansing campaign nor posed a serious threat to coalition fighters once Milosevic chose to hunker down.⁷⁶ Further, General Short’s alleged grouching and generally unpleasant demeanor during video teleconference meetings with General Clark represents a form of passive resistance by the agent akin to foot-dragging.⁷⁷ Perhaps more overt was the Air Force’s public campaign, in effect, to lobby for intensified strategic attack, which certainly crossed into the realm of usurping the principal’s decision-making authority, and thus represents the clearest example of shirking.⁷⁸ Suffice to say, at nearly every opportunity, the agent strained against its perceived yoke and tirelessly lobbied for the campaign that best suited its image of success.

That the agent did not pursue its proclivity to a greater extent must then be attributed to its decision calculus, and, in turn, to the principal’s efforts and ability to shape the strategic interaction. For a number of reasons, the probability of the principal detecting any shirking by the agent was quite high. Most notably, Allied Force, though longer in duration, was much smaller in scale than Desert Storm, and essentially involved a single campaign by a single component, making the monitoring task considerably easier. Further, technology advances in the form of video teleconferencing and network interconnectivity vastly improved the speed and quality of long-distance communication, thereby reducing the cost of monitoring significantly.⁷⁹

On the debit side, the physical separation of headquarters and the lack of staff integration served

⁷⁵ Tirpak, “Washington Watch: Short’s View of the Air Campaign,” 44. See also: Short, “An Airman’s Lessons from Kosovo,” 263-4.

⁷⁶ Arkin, “Operation Allied Force,” 18.

⁷⁷ Benjamin Lambeth notes, “Short would be seen ‘slumping back in his chair folding his arms in disgust, and mentally checking out.’” Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 191.

⁷⁸ Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁷⁹ Michael W. Kometer, *Command in Air War: Centralized Versus Decentralized Control of Combat Airpower* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2007), 127, 160-164. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 216-218.

to offset some of that reduction.⁸⁰ In addition, General Clark certainly devoted significant energy and effort to management of the alliance along the politico-military interface, likely reducing his monitoring bandwidth to some extent.⁸¹ On the whole, however, monitoring was unquestionably intrusive. The amount of resistance that remained in the strategic interaction must therefore be attributed to the influence of rewards and punishment on the agent's decision calculus.

General Short seems to have believed rather strongly that the “more compelling and lucrative targets” lay in “Serbia proper.”⁸² With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that his assessment was largely correct. In the first place, with respect to the cleansing, “most of the damage had been done before we ever started attacking targets on the ground,” Short noted after the war.⁸³ At that point, the Yugoslav Third Army dispersed and went into hiding, leaving the paramilitary police forces to purge the remaining ethnic Albanians house by house. As General Clark's successor, Air Force General Joseph Ralston, later put it, ““The tank, which was an irrelevant item in the context of ethnic cleansing, became the symbol for Serb ground forces.”⁸⁴ Further, Short's counsel to Clark that attacking Third Army was a “high level of effort, high risk and low pay-off operation,” in which the air component “did not expect to do very well” was also accurate.⁸⁵ As evidenced by the modest attrition relative to the effort applied, there was no way for airpower to make a sizeable impact on Serb forces in the field given the unfavorable

⁸⁰ General Clark operated from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium, while General Short's Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) resided in Vicenza, Italy.

⁸¹ General Clark points out, “...I operated in both worlds. As SACEUR I had more than purely military responsibilities—I was a close adviser to Secretary General Solana on the overall policy and strategy of NATO's effort in the Balkans, [and] had frequent discussion with NATO ambassadors and ministers...It was the nature of the job to engage both levels within NATO.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 244. Dana Priest notes, “With the ready smile of a politician, Clark is one of the rare generals who thrives at the diplomatic-military axis.” Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁸² Tirpak, “Washington Watch: Short's View of the Air Campaign,” 44, and Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁸³ Tirpak, “Washington Watch: Short's View of the Air Campaign,” 43.

⁸⁴ Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁸⁵ Short, “An Airman's Lessons from Kosovo,” 264.

conditions that existed, such as poor weather, adverse terrain, and dispersal of the adversary.⁸⁶ Not only did Short correctly assess airpower's ineffectiveness in denying the Serb's cleansing campaign, but he was also accurate in his prediction that Slobodan Milosevic would not respond to whatever meager attrition NATO might be able to inflict on the Yugoslav Third Army. Perhaps the most compelling evidence that punishment proved more influential is the Serbian dictator's own postwar revelation that he capitulated for fear of "even more massive bombing" of Belgrade that would cost "a great number of lives."⁸⁷

While essentially correct in his appraisal of the military situation, Short failed to account for other attendant interests—nor did he give Clark credit for doing so. Regardless of its prospects for ultimate success, an air war to deny Serbia its cleansing campaign formed the basis of NATO's mandate for action.⁸⁸ Ignoring the Yugoslav Third Army was not an option. Further, given the reluctance with which several member nations approached even this seemingly worthy cause, attacking Belgrade on the first night with "incredible speed and incredible violence," as General Short desired, was simply out of the question.⁸⁹ Responding to early pressure from Washington for attacks on Serbia's electrical infrastructure, Clark pleaded, "Please don't break NATO over this. If we blow up a couple of transformers, without NATO approval, some of the Allies may walk away from this thing."⁹⁰ CINCEUR "didn't need any convincing about

⁸⁶ The Pentagon's official after-action report lists a final tally of 93 tanks, 153 armored personnel carriers, and 389 artillery/mortar tubes destroyed—less than one-third of Third Army's total complement. Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 86. After the war, General Short recalled that weather "just kicked our butts for the first 45 days. Many pilots had to return with their bombs, and some nights most missions were called off due to the weather." Tirpak, "Washington Watch: Short's View of the Air Campaign," 45. See also: Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 27.

⁸⁷ Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), xvii.

⁸⁸ General Clark notes, "For my part, I was pushing for success against the ground forces, an effort that I considered the top priority of the campaign. It was a political, legal, and moral necessity. The world was watching as the Serb military was creating the refugees." Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 241.

⁸⁹ Short, "An Airman's Lessons from Kosovo," 260.

⁹⁰ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 240.

strategic targets,” but NATO certainly did.⁹¹ In essence, Clark needed time to build NATO resolve for upping the ante against Serbia. While pushing too hard seemed to threaten alliance cohesion, perceived lack of effort and effectiveness would also prove fatal to the campaign, and the alliance, in turn.⁹² Without the direct experience of Vietnam, some NATO countries pushed for breaks in the bombing. Early on, Clark found himself fending off such proposals, prodding his subordinates, “I don’t want to let the perception get started that we’re not doing much so we can have a pause.”⁹³ In short, the air campaign had to “become increasingly relevant to the situation on the ground” or face “risk of being paused indefinitely.”⁹⁴ Put another way, Clark understood that he needed to demonstrate activity by striking the targets for which he had approval, while he prodded the alliance to apply more resources and expand the scope of the campaign.⁹⁵ Agency theory posits that the principal, by virtue of its position in the hierarchy, should ultimately prevail, whether right or wrong, in dictating the ultimate course of action. Not only did General Short not recognize this prerogative, he notes, “I did everything I could to oppose what I thought was bad guidance.”⁹⁶

In his memoir, Clark admitted his knowledge of the air component’s shirking: “Compared to the whole-hearted Air Force work against the strategic targets, there was an inertia in adjusting and innovating to attack the Serb military machine Kosovo...Problems with weather, with massing aircraft, or with the threat from Serb antiaircraft systems always seemed more

⁹¹ General Clark notes, “In the meantime I kept the pressure upward, seeking to get approval for the strategic target sets.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 249. Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁹² Clark adds, “If we didn’t continue to seek approvals, the air campaign would simply wither away irresolutely.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 249.

⁹³ Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁹⁴ Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

⁹⁵ See: Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 199.

⁹⁶ Paul C. Strickland, “USAF Aerospace-Power Doctrine: Decisive or Coercive?” in *Aerospace Power Journal* XIV, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 19.

troublesome when the object was to attack the ground forces.”⁹⁷ Since it is implausible that Short expected to avoid detection, his continued resistance can only mean that the principal’s perceived or actual ability to punish was limited. Indeed, that Clark did not impose some type of sanction is incredible to the point of bewilderment, especially for anyone who has commanded or supervised. The most likely explanation for the inaction is that CINCEUR feared the resultant effect on the alliance’s consensus for war. Relieving his air commander would belie the solidarity and effectiveness Clark was portraying to the alliance’s political leaders. As long as he could limit the discontent to a simmer, he could reduce the likelihood of the fissure in the American command chain becoming fodder upon which reluctant allies could base the withdrawal of their support. Put another way, other issues, part and parcel to coalition warfare, loomed larger for Clark.⁹⁸ It is also important to note that the general was himself under significant scrutiny from Washington and *leaders of his own service*, and reportedly clashed with superiors at various points during the war.⁹⁹ This also likely proved influential in his dealings with his air component. Further, since the Air Force seemed to be nearly of one mind, any replacement for Short would almost assuredly approach the war from the same doctrinal mindset,

⁹⁷ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 245.

⁹⁸ In his memoir, Clark recalled, “As the top military commander, I would be held responsible for the military success or failure in the NATO Operation. Thus I was deeply involved in the process that gave me the orders that I then had to execute...But some of my American subordinates just didn’t agree. It was a strictly ‘professional’ disagreement...I found myself, doing a lot of explaining about what was happening at the political level, as though my subordinate commanders would agree with me if they understood what I understood.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 245.

⁹⁹ General Clark pushed for planning of a ground invasion despite the reluctance of nearly everyone in the command chain. See, for instance: Dana Priest, “A Decisive Battle That Never Was,” *The Washington Post*, 19 September 1999, A1. Illustrating clashes with his Army brethren, General Clark recalled, “Despite U.S. military resistance, the Apache attack helicopters were deployed to Albania...Though the *Army and the Joint Chiefs succeeded in blocking their use in battle*, the force conveyed a power image of a ground threat...” (emphasis added) Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 165, 246-7, 425 (quote). Perhaps most telling is Clark’s truncated command tour, about which Andrew Bacevich and Eliot Cohen note: “...the conclusion of NATO’s first significant war found the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Wesley Clark, ending his tenure not with a victory parade, but with an unceremonious summons to leave his position early...(to make room for a loyal lieutenant of the secretary of defense)” Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen, “Introduction: A Strange Little War,” in Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen eds., *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), x.

in effect, rendering null the primary purpose for the change. There are also indications that United States Air Forces in Europe commander General John Jumper was heavily involved in the campaign and thus provided *de facto* top cover.¹⁰⁰ In relieving Short, CINCEUR would thus have been indicting by extension a fellow four-star general, albeit one of another service.

Since he could not sanction, Clark micromanaged to bend the air war to his vision for a denial campaign “attacking [Milosevic’s] forces on the ground...to run him out of Kosovo.”¹⁰¹ His intrusiveness, however, exceeded monitoring and demonstrated a penchant for delving into the minutiae of airspace control, tanker allocation, weapon selection, and impact points for laser-guided bombs.¹⁰² Where he could not gain compliance, he bypassed; for example, tasking the Navy—which possessed “the most flexible assets”—outside of the Air Tasking Order (ATO) planning cycle, thereby circumventing his air component.¹⁰³ Further, the deployment, at Clark’s request, of twenty-four Apache attack helicopters, known as Task Force Hawk, must be viewed as an attempt to fight the type of war that the air component, NATO, and indeed the United States, could not or would not fight.¹⁰⁴ Target generation and approval, however, perhaps best illustrates the disconnect between CINCEUR and his air component. Clark, at one point, set a

¹⁰⁰ See: Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 171, Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 191, and Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

¹⁰¹ Clark, PBS Frontline interview for the documentary, *War in Europe*.

¹⁰² Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 245, Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 191, and Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

¹⁰³ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 237, and Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew With Divide Over Strategy.”

¹⁰⁴ General Clark notes, “I knew that their participation wasn’t totally welcomed by my own command...some of my commanders had begun to state that the Apaches would detract from the ongoing air operations. These were the voices of conventional air power. In war, the art is to focus as much combat power as possible at the decisive point. One of these decisive points was the destruction of the Serb ground forces, and the Apaches could help us here, I knew.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 278. In the event, the Apaches faced the same operational challenges that hamstrung fixed-wing aircraft. Due to their greater vulnerability to anti-aircraft fires, the helicopters faced higher risk and thus saw no action in Allied Force. For further details regarding Task Force Hawk, see: Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 147-158. Perhaps to bolster the notion that imminent ground invasion helped induce Milosevic’s capitulation, the Defense Department after-action report notes, “It is a misimpression that the Task Force Hawk deployment merely involved 24 Apache helicopters. In fact, Task Force Hawk was an Army Aviation Brigade Combat Team.” Department of Defense, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report*, 42.

goal of identifying five thousand targets, which he later reduced to two thousand after planners argued that such a high number was unrealistic.¹⁰⁵ As a result of attempts to fill the quota, many targets had “little true military justification” and the war devolved into a “campaign by target-list management” for the purpose of “communication by detonation.”¹⁰⁶ Clearly, Clark attached some value to strategic targets; but punishment in Belgrade served only to set conditions for battle with the ground forces in Kosovo. In other words, defeat of the Yugoslav Army remained his image of success throughout the war, and he attempted to force a decisive clash of forces. In doing so, he imposed his service-derived bias, largely discarding the counsel of his air commander, who seems to have provided a rather cogent and upfront assessment of the prospects for a denial campaign. General Clark directed the preponderance of effort—beyond what was needed to keep the alliance committed—to an ineffective hunt for fielded forces, not only contributing to the incoherence of the strategy, but also undermining the efficient conduct of the air campaign. Ironically, Clark recognized the “reliving of old tensions” between soldier and airman, but, nonetheless, wanted the “Air Force to make a difference in the fight on the ground.”¹⁰⁷ In going to such great lengths to conform the operation to his vision—admittedly, made necessary by a shirking agent—he, in effect, reversed the delegation.

In the final analysis, the alliance survived its test; Serb forces departed Kosovo, making way for the return of ethnic Albanians under the protection of an international peacekeeping force. Breathing a collective sigh of relief, NATO could label its first war a victory. After the

¹⁰⁵ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 199-201. General Clark notes, “I wanted to expand our target base to some 2,000 targets. It was large round number...And I was pushing the targeteers to think broadly, to formulate plans to target the forces dispersed along the border with Hungary, the equipment in the garrisons...the bridges and networks Milosevic was using to transfer fuel around the country.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 250-1. All told there were on the order of 900 targets on NATO's list. William M. Arkin, “Smart Bombs, Dumb Targeting?” in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 56, no. 3 (May/June 2000): 49.

¹⁰⁶ Arkin, “Smart Bombs, Dumb Targeting?” 48, and James A. Kitfield, “Another Look at the Air War That Was,” *Air Force Magazine* 82, no. 10 (October 1999): 42.

¹⁰⁷ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 243-4.

operation, analysts offered a variety of explanations for Milosevic's capitulation. Airpower advocates quickly rallied around the notion of "immaculate coercion" from the air.¹⁰⁸ Such rhetoric prompted others to back the claim that "planning and preparations for ground intervention were well under way by the end of the campaign...this, in particular, pushed Milosevic to concede."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, not long after the conflict, the services began "drawing on Kosovo's supposed lesson in their procurement requests."¹¹⁰ Less partisan commentators pointed out that, had "Russia not joined hands with NATO in the diplomatic endgame...Milosevic might have found doors through which to escape...despite the aerial punishment."¹¹¹ In truth, all of these factors combined to present "Serbia with certain defeat, a defeat that neither Russia nor anyone else would save [it] from. As soon as that became apparent to him, Milosevic accepted the loss of Kosovo and concentrated on strengthening his power base at home."¹¹² The proportional contribution of each factor is unknowable. What is clear, however, is that the bombing campaign was the centerpiece of the coercive effort, and American military leaders failed to employ a coherent strategy for the application of airpower. Further, pursuing simultaneous denial and punishment campaigns diluted both efforts until NATO amassed sufficient resources to enable an effective level of intensity.¹¹³ The intent here is not to argue that the result might have been different if a particular viewpoint had prevailed. Rather, in

¹⁰⁸ Chipman, "General Short and the Politics of Kosovo's Air War," 32. Former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Michael Dugan averred, "For the first time in some 5,000 years of military history—5,000 years of history of man taking organized forces into combat—we saw an independent air operation produce a political result." Quoted in Kitfield, "Another Look at the Air War That Was," 40.

¹⁰⁹ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 425. See, for instance: Earle H. Tilford, Jr., "Operation Allied Force and the Role of Air Power," *Parameters* XXIX, no. 4 (Winter 1999-2000).

¹¹⁰ Daniel L. Byman and Matthew C. Waxman, "Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate," in *International Security* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 6.

¹¹¹ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 184.

¹¹² Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 199-200.

¹¹³ By the time of Milosevic's capitulation, NATO had doubled the number of aircraft devoted to the war. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 33. It is important note here that this is precisely the tough decision that Gulf War leaders also avoided. In Desert Storm, profligacy of force essentially obviated the necessity for choice.

this case, analysis shows that both principal and agent contributed to the collapse of the agency relationship, thereby demonstrating delegation's potential to cut in opposing directions.



CHAPTER SEVEN

A GREAT IMPROVISATION IN AFGHANISTAN¹

Agency and Efficacy in Operation ANACONDA

When the first shot was fired, the plan—by and large—had to be dramatically adjusted early on.

Major General Franklin L. Hagenbeck²
Commander, Coalition Joint Task Force Mountain

Introduction

Arguably, the Gulf War itself, and certainly the United State's ongoing presence in Southwest Asia in its aftermath, contributed to the precipitous rise of terrorism, and al Qaeda in particular. Likely but one factor among many, Desert Storm set the stage for the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the resulting Global War on Terrorism. No longer content to rely on containment and a defensive strategy, the president would elect to take the fight to Osama bin Laden and his band of radicals in Afghanistan. Thus, while still attempting to digest the lessons of the war in Kosovo, the United States military leapt to action as part of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), retaliating against al Qaeda terrorists and their Taliban abettors in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The endeavor would include an unorthodox rout of Afghanistan's ruling theocracy and culminate with an effort to mop up the remnants of al Qaeda: Operation ANACONDA.

Having discussed in the opening chapter what has become the defining battle of OEF's Phase III "Decisive Combat Operations," it is perhaps best to start with the aftermath of the

¹ Subtitle inspired by the title of Stacy Schiff's account of Benjamin Franklin's diplomatic mission to France during the American Revolution: Stacy Schiff, *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005); and by Elaine Grossman's "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?" *Inside the Pentagon* 20, no. 34 (19 August 2004).

² Quoted in Quoted in Grossman, "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?"

controversial encounter in the Shah-i-Kot valley of northeastern Afghanistan.³ In an interview given to the journal *Field Artillery*, Army Major General Franklin Hagenbeck, the commander directly responsible for the execution of Operation ANACONDA, incited a significant interservice imbroglio with some “ill-formed comments” that contained intimations, if not outright accusations, that the Air Force had failed to provide timely and adequate air support to troops on the ground.⁴ Blindsided, Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper commissioned Task Force Enduring Look to examine the operation in detail.⁵ The study group produced a thoroughly researched rejoinder challenging the basis for several of the allegations and attributing the valid issues it uncovered to a “shortfall...in planning between the air and land component.”⁶ Meanwhile, Army Major Mark Davis created a small firestorm of his own with a thesis that blamed “unclear and overlapping command authorities and responsibilities” for “problems in air and ground integration.”⁷ There is no need to revisit the debate in detail; the analyses touched on key issues, but the affair devolved into finger pointing, however polite, and largely missed the fundamental failure and its root causes. Put another way, with only structural and largely normative prescriptions to guide inquiry, the studies could clearly identify only that which should have happened. Case in point, the Enduring Look report notes that the land

³ On the phases of OEF, see: Tommy R. Franks and Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (2004; repr., New York: Reagan Books, 2005), 269-272.

⁴ The interview with General Hagenbeck: Robert H. McElroy and Patricia Slayden Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” in *Field Artillery* HQDA PB6-02-4 (September-October 2002), 5-9. Further allegations came in a conveniently positioned, companion article by General Hagenbeck’s fire support coordination officer: Lieutenant Colonel Christopher F. Bentley, “Afghanistan: Joint and Coalition Fire Support in Operation Anaconda,” in *Field Artillery* HQDA PB6-02-4 (September-October 2002), 10-14. Quote from Rebecca Grant, “The Echoes of Anaconda,” in *Air Force Magazine* 88, no. 4 (April 2005): 46.

⁵ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror: America’s Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 208.

⁶ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective* (Washington DC: Headquarters United States Air Force, 2005), 120.

⁷ Major Mark G. Davis, “Operation Anaconda: Command and Confusion in Joint Warfare” (master’s thesis, Air University, 2004), 3, 21. A full three years after it was written, the Department of Defense released to the public only a heavily redacted version of the monograph, which is available from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. See also: Elaine Grossman, “Army Analyst Blames Afghan Battle Failings on Bad Command Set-Up,” in *Inside the Pentagon* 20, no. 31 (29 July 2004).

component should have notified the air component of its intent earlier, and “clear and frequent contact between the right elements of the staffs of the two components” was needed.⁸ Without an organizing framework within which to arrange them, the key aspects of the causal chain—the *why* and *how*—of such a breakdown do not stand out.

At the risk of flirting with tautology, had the battle gone according to plan, there would have been no animosity between the services and, therefore, no impetus for such intense scrutiny. Clearly, the operation did not unfold as envisioned. In his memoirs, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) chief General Tommy Franks, overall commander of the OEF military effort, chalked things up to yet another plan that “didn’t survive first contact with the enemy.”⁹ This assessment, however, borders on gross understatement. In reality, a rather complete incompatibility between problem and solution existed before the first shot of the battle. Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Mountain—the designation that General Hagenbeck’s force-conglomerate eventually bore—prepared an elaborate plan for the wrong foe, and, in turn, the wrong fight.¹⁰ Since this faulty concept of operation drove nearly every other decision regarding the mission and its conduct, virtually all of the problems that beset Anaconda came as a direct result of this fundamental mismatch. The original plan not only failed to survive first contact with the enemy, but CJTF Mountain quickly scrapped it altogether and improvised a new plan in

⁸ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 114.

⁹ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 379.

¹⁰ Sean Naylor provides a concise description of the setup, about which he writes, “The job of lashing this Rube Goldberg organization into a cohesive fighting force fell to Hagenbeck.” Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (2005; repr.; New York: Berkley Caliber Books, 2006) , 87-89. See also: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 167-8.

the heat of battle.¹¹ After the operation, General Hagenbeck conceded, “We had to sort through a number of things to make all that happen.”¹²

Missing the Mark

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM marked the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism with military operations designed to “disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime.”¹³ By the time coalition forces launched the subordinate Operation ANACONDA, major combat operations were thought to be largely complete.¹⁴ After a bit of a slow start, Afghan forces consisting of allied tribal warlords from the northern provinces—the Northern Alliance—aided by coalition special operations forces and air power, met with stunning success in November of 2001.¹⁵ The repressive, terrorist-friendly Taliban theocracy collapsed suddenly, and coalition forces captured Afghanistan’s major cities in rapid succession, including the capital of Kabul on 13 November.¹⁶ The defeated adversary, particularly al Qaeda terrorists, fled to the rugged mountains adjacent to the Pakistani border—an eminently defensible hideout used to great effect by the mujahedeen in

¹¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Richard B. Myers summed things up saying, “Thank goodness for the bravery of those soldiers that we were able to take the fight to the enemy and be successful here.” Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 9.

¹² Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

¹³ President George W. Bush “Address to the Nation Announcing Strikes Against Al Qaida Training Camps and Taliban Military Installations in Afghanistan” (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 7 October 2001).

¹⁴ Richard Kugler notes, “By December 22, U.S. officials were attending a reception in Kabul celebrating the victory and installation of a new pro-American government under Hamid Karzai.” Richard Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Adaptation in Battle* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2007), 3. Rebecca Grant, *The Afghan Air War* (Arlington, VA: Aerospace Education Foundation, 2002), 24. General Hagenbeck later recalled, “We thought we’d gotten there at the tail end of the war in Afghanistan, and we weren’t [going to] see much action.” Quoted in Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 61.

¹⁵ The Taliban movement originated within the Pashtun ethnic majority that controlled much of the southern portion of the country and the central government. The Northern Alliance brought together numerous anti-Taliban factions, primarily the Tajiks and Uzbeks of the provinces bordering the former Soviet satellites to the north. For a brief description, see: Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 16.

¹⁶ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 15.

their guerrilla war with the Soviets during the 1980s.¹⁷ With the enemy remnant on the run, the focus began to shift to Phase IV stability operations as the Afghan Interim Authority headed by Hamid Karzai began to build a new government.¹⁸ Thus, the military operations of December 2001 and early 2002 sought to target the lingering “puddles of resistance” that might regroup and threaten the fledgling administration.¹⁹

By January 2002, intelligence indicated significant enemy activity in a valley between the Arma and Shah-i-Kot mountain ranges of the Khowst-Gardez region bordering Pakistan, and some suspected preparations for an al Qaeda spring offensive, perhaps directed at Kabul.²⁰ Since this area was thought to be the last bastion for terrorists remaining inside Afghanistan, military leaders sensed the “culminating point” of Enduring Freedom.²¹ Most, however, did not expect significant opposition.²² In the face of the Northern Alliance onslaught, al Qaeda had taken to

¹⁷ See: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 369, 380, Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 163, Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 5, and Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

¹⁸ General Franks set the intent for Phase IV: “Establish capability of coalition partners to prevent the re-emergence of terrorism and provide support for humanitarian assistance efforts.” Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 271-2. The Air Force study notes: “By the beginning of 2002, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM was trying to move from Phase III ‘Decisive Operations’ to Phase IV, where the emphasis would be on security assistance to the new interim Afghan government.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 17.

¹⁹ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 163-165. Quote from Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 13. See also: Grant, *The Afghan Air War*, 22, 24.

²⁰ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld commented, “...their [al Qaeda’s] goal is to reconstitute, to try to throw out the new interim government of Afghanistan, to kill coalition forces, and to try to regain the ability to use Afghanistan as a base for e terrorist operations...We intended to prevent them from doing that.” Quoted in Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 164. The remote villages of the Shah-i-Kot valley, which “had long provided a natural redoubt for case-hardened fugitives of all types” were a “natural collection point for the Taliban and al Qaeda forces.” Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 163, and Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 19.

²¹ Sean Naylor writes, “These men had known nothing but victory in Afghanistan, and now the opportunity to take a huge step toward completing the destruction of Al Qaida appeared to present itself.” Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 64, 87. After the war, General Franks said of the battle, “...the last al Qaeda sanctuary in Afghanistan had been destroyed.” Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 381.

²² The concept of operations as outlined in the Anaconda operations order hinged on the notion that “...once the operation began, the expectation was that much of the al-Qaeda would flee—by any means possible...the immediate objective would be supporting senior leader security and infiltration. After that, some of the main body would establish defensive positions designed to inflict U.S. casualties or try to take U.S./Coalition prisoners of war. Then, at some point, they would exfiltrate and regroup as conditions permitted.” Summary provided in: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 31.

flight, and the rag tag Taliban forces were “regularly bought off,” often surrendering or switching sides without a fight.²³ Further, based upon enemy reactions to earlier coalition “mopping up” actions, Anaconda planners anticipated at worst a small number of reluctant adversaries who would either flee or capitulate without much of a fight.²⁴ During the December battle at Tora Bora—a known al Qaeda hideout further north in the White Mountains—a few terrorist fighters had essentially shielded a larger body of their compatriots fleeing to the ungoverned tribal regions of western Pakistan.²⁵ In early January, coalition attacks in the vicinity of the al-Qaeda terrorist training camp at Zhawar Kili met with a similar response.²⁶ Thus, when designing Anaconda, planners sought to encircle a reluctant enemy suspected to be lying low in the remote villages of the Shah-i-Kot valley.²⁷ In military parlance, the plan called for a hammer-and-anvil setup designed to block escape routes and employ an advancing force to squeeze the enemy into a killing zone; hence, the operation’s vivid title.²⁸ Orders tasked

²³ See Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Lessons of Afghanistan: Warfighting, Intelligence, Force Transformation, Counterproliferation, and Arms Control” (monograph, Center for Strategic and International Studies, August, 2002), 19. Based upon this experience, one Army officer noted, “What we thought was that we were going to have to deal with a lot of civilians on the battlefield, and that we might have to take a lot of prisoners, and we thought that these guys had families with them. And so we wanted to be prepared to do a little crowd control, maybe do some searches, flex-cuff some people and detain some people for a little while -- just for a couple hours until we could sort through who was a bad guy and who wasn't.” Quoted in Elaine Grossman, “Left in the Dark for Most Anaconda Planning, Air Force Opens New Probe,” *Inside the Pentagon* 18, no. 40 (3 October 2002).

²⁴ On the shift to “mopping up on a grand scale,” see: Grant, *The Afghan Air War*, 24. The CJTF Mountain order for the operation included an estimate of the enemy intention: “As in Tora Bora, fighters will attempt to exfil [exfiltrate] through severe terrain into ratlines [visible escape routes in the lower Shahi Kot valley] toward Pakistan,” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 32.

²⁵ See, for example: Rebecca Grant, “Tora Bora,” in *Air Force Magazine* 94, no. 12 (December 2011): 52-55, and Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 17. Air Force Special Operation Command chief Lieutenant General Maxwell Bailey later noted that the enemy had “clearly changed their strategy to one of survival. They ceased resistance.” Quoted in Grant, “Tora Bora,” 55.

²⁶ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 4.

²⁷ See: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 33-4, and Grant, *The Afghan Air War*, 25. After the battle, General Hagenbeck related, “It was anticipated that the bulk of enemy forces would be down in the tri-village area in the valley, and that there would a number of them, but small numbers, [on] the higher ground. So the blocking forces...were going to take out those anticipated few numbers of enemy and block the escape routes going into Pakistan. That was the idea.” Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

²⁸ As one description put it: “We knew the choke points, so the intent was to get our forces around this piece of land and then gradually work up the LOCs [lines of communications] until we made contact...to kick the hornet’s

conventional infantry forces from the Army's 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne Divisions to block the mountain passes to the east, while Afghan forces trained and advised by special operations troops were to enter the valley from the west and south to seize the floor of the mountain enclave and eradicate the adversary.²⁹

After a delay for poor weather, Anaconda began in earnest on 2 March 2002.³⁰ In the event, CJTF Mountain forces did not encounter the proverbial fish-in-a-barrel shooting exercise they expected, but, rather, met a determined foe that had, in effect, laid a trap.³¹ As Army infantry troops attempted to secure their assigned "blocking position" objectives on the slopes to the east of the valley, they immediately came under attack by mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire from the adversary's "robust defenses."³² At various points along the mountain range, terrorist fighters had established key firing positions high on the jagged slopes, replete with machinegun nests, pre-ranged mortar pads, and large weapons caches.³³ In effect, al Qaeda fighters surprised the coalition with their own killing zones, having zeroed their sights on many

nest...and then walk up the road carefully." Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 31-33.

²⁹ For graphical representation of the operations area as well as the plan of attack, see diagrams in: Richard B. Andres and Jeffrey B. Hukill, "Anaconda: A Flawed Joint Planning Process," in *Joint Forces Quarterly* 47 (Fourth Quarter 2007), 139, Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 4. James A. Kitfield, "To the Top of Takur Gar," in *Air Force Magazine* 94, no. 7 (July 2011): 52-53. Note, in this instance, the Afghan forces were no longer the battle-hardened fighters from the northern provinces, but rather, local militia dubbed the "Eastern Alliance." Their involvement was deemed necessary to differentiate between enemy fighters and local Afghans. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 177, Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 11, and Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 45.

³⁰ Initially, the operation was to kick off on 28 February, but forecasts for low ceilings prompted a two-day slip. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 26, 55.

³¹ One Army officer noted, "It turns out we ran into the hard-core, fanatical guys. So we didn't really see that coming." Quoted in Grossman, "Left in the Dark for Most Anaconda Planning, Air Force Opens New Probe."

³² An infantry Sergeant Major added, "The picture intel [intelligence] painted was just a little bit different than the actual events happening on the ground." Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 63, 65. For a graphical representation of the blocking positions, see: Andres and Hukill, "Anaconda: A Flawed Joint Planning Process," 139, and Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 34.

³³ General Hagenbeck commented, "We found mortar base plates that were cemented in, allowing the al Qaeda [sic] to move tubes easily in and out of the caves." Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, "Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 5.

of the ridges and hilltops on which CJTF Mountain had planned to establish its anvil.³⁴ To make matters worse, the Afghan force proved a reluctant hammer, demurring when the fighting seemed heavier than expected.³⁵ The first day's situation report noted that "hard-core elements, sensing success against Coalition forces, perceive no need to exfiltrate at this time," and cited the use of "traditional Mujaheddin hit and run tactics;" for all intents and purposes, Anaconda, as originally conceived, was dead on arrival.³⁶

The fight quickly became a "set-piece battle" in which al Qaeda sought to bloody the coalition's nose, while CJTF Mountain scrambled to salvage the situation.³⁷ Spurred, in part, by the loss of four Army Rangers, two Air Force airmen, a Navy SEAL, and two helicopters during a hellish fight to take the southernmost objective atop the Takur Ghar ridge (codenamed *Ginger*), the coalition switched to a systematic process of identifying enemy positions and directing airstrikes to obliterate them.³⁸ Fighting that was supposed to last at most seventy-two hours

³⁴ "They already had registered their mortars on the key pieces of terrain and other features throughout the valley." Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, "Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 5.

³⁵ General Franks noted that, following a suspected mortar attack (later attributed to an inadvertent fire from an AC-130 gunship), "the determination was made by that Afghan force that they needed to pull back a few kilometers, regroup, get new vehicles, organize themselves and so forth, which they did." Quoted in Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 7, 61-2. See also: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 179.

³⁶ Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 65. General Franks notes, "The enemy fought with fierce determination. It became clear on day three that al Qaeda intended to win the battle—or die in place. They were eager to engage Coalition forces at close quarters rather than suffering precision bombing from unseen planes, as they had in previous weeks." Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 380.

³⁷ Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, "Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 5. After the battle, General Hagenbeck revealed that enemy forces "were sending out messages that this was the fight that they had been waiting for because they thought it was going to be a replica of the fight with the Soviets where they had bloodied them badly. So they were calling for a jihad against the Americans. And they were infiltrating people in daylight hours, spread out [so] that [they] didn't present themselves as big targets." Quoted in Grossman, "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?"

³⁸ Regarding the battle for what later came to be known as "Roberts Ridge," in honor fallen Navy SEAL Neil Roberts, see, for example: Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 72-78, Kitfield, "To the Top of Takur Gar," and Grant, "The Echoes of Anaconda," 52. Regarding the change in tactics, Rebecca Grant notes, "The other change entailed fighting al Qaeda in place instead of blocking and trapping them as they fled, as expected from their behavior at Tora Bora. The new approach relied far more on US forces and on airpower to help draw out al Qaeda." Grant, *The Afghan Air War*, 26. General Hagenbeck recalled, "The ground forces would pin [enemy forces] down, and then the Air Force or Navy planes could come in and drop the ordinance and kill them. And that became very effective. But that took two or three days to sort out. And it was done not by guys like me sitting up in some headquarters. That was guys in the air and

dragged on for over a week.³⁹ Once the coalition had leveled the villages (from which civilians had wisely fled) and silenced most of the al Qaeda weapons, Afghan forces made their way into valley to round up any remaining terrorists.⁴⁰ On 16 March, CJTF Mountain reported that within the Shah-i-Kot valley, a “true enemy threat no longer exists,” bringing the operation to a close.⁴¹ Senior commanders quickly labeled Anaconda “an unqualified and absolute success” in which “the coalition won one of the most lopsided victories in the history of warfare” by “killing several hundred hard-core, mid-level al Qaeda.”⁴² Hyperbole aside, the operation did succeed in securing the valley. That the coalition achieved this objective not in seventy-two hours, but fourteen days, suffering in the process over eighty casualties, including eight American deaths, attests to the margin by which the plan had missed the mark.⁴³

A Patchwork Quilt

Once again, a question begs: How could the coalition have misjudged the situation so thoroughly and, in turn, been largely unprepared for the type of battle it had to fight? Two key features of the manner in which the operation came together help point the way toward an answer. To begin with, it is necessary to note that the design for Anaconda derived from what

guys on the ground figuring out how to get at those guys. That's what happened.” Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

³⁹ There was a pervasive mindset that the operation would not last long. See: Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?” Grant, “The Echoes of Anaconda,” 47, and Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 83. In fact initial guidance from CENTCOM directed that the operation be “swift (<72 hours) and decisive.” See Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 21-22.

⁴⁰ Regarding bombing of the villages, see: Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 8, and Grant “The Echoes of Anaconda,” 50. US Army forces “took their final objectives on 10 March 2002 and Afghan military forces with their embedded SOF teams entered and cleared the Shahi Kot valley a few days later.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 11.

⁴¹ Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 98.

⁴² First quote by General Franks in Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 381. Second quote by General Hagenbeck in Grossman, “Army Analyst Blames Afghan Battle Failings on Bad Command Set-Up.” General Franks also added, “Operation ANACONDA sought to clear the enemy in that valley area and in those hills and succeeded in doing so where many operations in history had not been able to get that done.” Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 4.

⁴³ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 380-381.

might best be called planning by accretion. As intelligence began to note signs of increasing enemy activity in the Khowst-Gardez region, another “mopping up” operation started to take shape as a hunter-killer action involving special forces and air power, much like those which had characterized a significant portion of OEF to that point.⁴⁴ Concurrently, there was, however, a move afoot to involve conventional forces, not only Afghans along the lines of the Northern Alliance model, but also for the first time, a limited number of United States Army light ground units.⁴⁵ As the planning initiatives merged in early February during meetings among the various entities, the concept evolved into the outlines of the classic hammer-and-anvil strategy described earlier, by which planners hoped to entrap and destroy the enemy.⁴⁶ For a plan already shaping up to be a challenging endeavor in rough terrain and harsh conditions, the necessity of blocking the mountain passes through which al Qaeda might escape also seemed to call for helicopter air assaults to seize key pieces of terrain, adding significant additional complexity.⁴⁷

This rather dramatic transformation of the strategy behind Anaconda took place over a relatively short period of time. A CENTCOM fragmentary order (FRAGO) had initiated the

⁴⁴ General Mikolashek later recalled, “We followed our guiding principles. This [would] be an unconventional operation, and the main effort [would] be AMF [Afghan military forces].” Quoted in Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 46-7. The Air Force’s official report notes special operations forces “came up with a plan, which was not much different than what [they] had been doing for the previous few months, essentially building engagement zones, special engagement zones in this case, around that area.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 22. See also: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 166.

⁴⁵ Sean Naylor discusses such plans being developed for the event that the Northern Alliance offensive stalled, and describes efforts by the 10th Mountain Division to push up the chain a plan for operations in the Shah-i-Kot valley. Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 11-12, 47-8. A battalion of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) had arrived in Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan back in December. Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 10.

⁴⁶ The various entities met in Kabul and at Bagram Airfield during the week of 6-13 February to hash out the concept of operations, which they briefed to General Mikolashek on 17 February. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 22-26, 31-34,

⁴⁷ The official commander’s intent called for “nonlinear simultaneous operations in noncontiguous areas of operations.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 5. This job would fall primarily to the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), which had recently deployed to Kandahar. Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 10. There was no other feasible way to get soldiers to the blocking points except “air assault, the 101st’s raison d’être.” Or as one of the division’s officers noted, “The mission had the 101st written all over it.” Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 62. See also: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 31-34.

planning process in early January.⁴⁸ As noted, however, the disparate aspects of the plan did not coalesce until early February. When first briefed to the Combined Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC) Lieutenant General Paul Mikolashek on 17 February, Anaconda was still largely a concept of operations that required significant refinement, including, at Mikolashek's direction, coordination for fixed-wing air support.⁴⁹ Yet, for execution, planners set an aggressive target date of 28 February, leaving precious little time to finalize the plan, train the Afghan forces, conduct rehearsals, and reconnoiter the battlefield.⁵⁰

Given the rapid evolution of the plan, it is somewhat difficult to trace the development of command arrangements. Nevertheless, a brief review of the key aspects suggests that a second key factor contributing to the coalition's difficulties was a struggle to find the right home for overall command of the operation; hence, later accusations of a dysfunctional command chain.⁵¹ CENTCOM had not established a land component until mid-November, when the war took its dramatic turn and leaders anticipated the transition to Phase IV of the campaign.⁵² Although efforts thereafter fell under the purview of the CLFCC, General Mikolashek, initial planning for Anaconda occurred, more or less simultaneously, under the leaders of four separate entities—Task Force *Dagger*, special operations forces working northern Afghanistan; Task Force *K-Bar*, special operations forces working southern Afghanistan; 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), which later became Task Force *Rakkasan*; and the headquarters of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), which served as the staff for General Hagenbeck in his role

⁴⁸ See: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 165, and Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 20-22.

⁴⁹ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 22, 25-26.

⁵⁰ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 26.

⁵¹ This is the primary argument Davis offers in his thesis: Davis, "Operation Anaconda."

⁵² This occurred on 20 November 2001, and the CFLCC became the supported commander for all land operations. Davis, "Operation Anaconda," 21. See also: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 17, 46. General Mikolashek notes, "...we were making the transition into what the Army does, which is sustained land operations." Quoted in Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 52.

as Mikolashek's in-theater representative, or CFLCC-Forward.⁵³ The latter two units of conventional Army forces had been deployed primarily for the purpose of defending coalition bases of operation. A light infantry battalion of the 10th Mountain Division guarded Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan, from which Task Force *Dagger* staged operations, while the 3rd Brigade *Rakkasans* had relieved a United States Marine contingent at Kandahar, performing a similar function for Task Force *K-Bar*.⁵⁴ Since the task of clearing the Shah-i-Kot valley initially seemed to call for another instance of combined action by special operations and Afghan forces aided by coalition air power, command of the operation initially fell to the Army Colonel heading Task Force *Dagger*, since his forces had been the primary architects of the Northern Alliance's triumphant campaign.⁵⁵

In mid-February, as the complexity of the plan ballooned, General Mikolashek elected to task General Hagenbeck, the CFLCC-Forward, to oversee the planning directly.⁵⁶ The 10th Mountain Division commander hurriedly deployed to Bagram, the dilapidated airfield from which coalition forces would launch Anaconda, in order to coordinate the disparate efforts.⁵⁷ As the hammer-and-anvil strategy, with its centerpiece air assault, came to the fore, the relative

⁵³ Regarding the task forces consisting of special operations forces, see: Davis, "Operation Anaconda," 21-22, and Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 14-15. Regarding the various planning efforts, see: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 11, Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 12-13, Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 165-166, and Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 7-9. Benjamin Lambeth notes that General Hagenbeck portrayed the "disparate and often highly compartmented pockets of U.S. activity focused on the Shah-i-Kot valley as a collection, in effect, of individual component commanders reporting directly to General Franks." Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 166. One officer involved in the planning noted, "each one of the task forces had been looking at this area, 70 square miles, for six weeks. The tasker came down for each of the task forces to come up with a plan, how we would handle this concentration, this puddle...of al-Qaeda." Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 22.

⁵⁴ All told, the forces amounted to about 600 infantry. Note that these conventional Army units deployed without armor or artillery due to CENTCOM's desire to maintain a small footprint, though they would later add 8 Apache helicopters. Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 10. See also: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 165, Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 55-59, and Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 51.

⁵⁵ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 165, and Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 47.

⁵⁶ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 24, and Naylor, *Not A Good Day to Die*, 59-60.

⁵⁷ The move occurred during the week of 13-20 February. See Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 24.

emphasis shifted to place conventional ground forces in the primary role.⁵⁸ At that point, CENTCOM established CJTF Mountain as the umbrella organization for the operation, and officially elevated command of Anaconda to General Hagenbeck.⁵⁹ It bears mention that this designation came very late in the process, and included no component organizations other than those task forces that had taken part in the planning effort to date.⁶⁰ Note also that the CFLCC-Forward staff, which thus became the hub of the effort, was little more than a stripped-down *division* headquarters.⁶¹ To sum, General Hagenbeck, aided by a skeletal Army-centric staff, took over a patchwork quilt of operations at the eleventh hour, leaving precious little time to stitch together a complex battle plan. The evolution of Anaconda thus suggests that the difficulties in execution stemmed, in part, from a delegation problem—a situation tailor-made for analysis within the agency framework. Examining the operation from this perspective helps put events into a recognizable cause-effect chain that sheds some light on the symptomatic coordination, command, and control issues highlighted in existing studies.

The Agency View: Dangers of Over-Delegation

Cutting to the heart of the matter, Anaconda represented a major shift in the mode of operation for Enduring Freedom—a shift for which the coalition, as it turns out, was systemically unprepared. To that point in the conflict, combat had taken one of two forms. On the one hand, special operations forces embedded with Afghan units had provided offensive firepower in preparation for and in support of attacks essentially planned and led by the Northern Alliance.

⁵⁸ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 167-8.

⁵⁹ This move gave General Hagenbeck command authority over all of the forces involved in Anaconda except Task Force 11, which conducted covert reconnaissance and strikes against so-called “high value targets,” and, of course, the Afghan forces. Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 8.

⁶⁰ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 168.

⁶¹ Davis, “Operation Anaconda,” 32. Richard Kugler notes that General Hagenbeck had with him only half of his normal headquarters complement, and did not have either of his assistant division commanders to help with operations and support. He was able to get two one-star general officers assigned, but they lacked “continuity and experience with 10th Mountain operations.” Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 8, and Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 91.

As the official Air Force report notes, “...there was more ground-controlled interdiction than true close air support” and such requests “came *in advance* of Northern Alliance troop movement” rather than in situations with troops in contact with the enemy.⁶² (italics original) On the other, highly decentralized operatives would also reconnoiter suspected terrorist enclaves and call in air strikes at opportune moments—a situation one observer likened to “a bunch of guys on lily pads floating around shark-infested waters.”⁶³ In any event, since these operations rarely, if ever, intersected, there was little need for close coordination between the numerous entities. Further, the air component and the various special operations forces on the ground in Afghanistan had become accustomed to an effective, if non-standard, means of controlling theater air power that put ground controllers essentially in direct contact with *the* air operations center (AOC) rather than a tactical-level air support operations center (ASOC).⁶⁴ This comfortable arrangement would prove insufficient once “the concept of operations for Anaconda had grown from a low-profile SOF operation into a major conventional ground advance into an ill-defined threat environment,” and a different cast of characters found themselves in “a complex, non-linear battle that demanded full integration of Joint forces—and, to the frustration of all, revealed some Joint warfighting stress points.”⁶⁵

Nevertheless, there is no reason to suspect that General Franks, as the principal, envisioned anything less than a fully coordinated, joint plan when he approved Anaconda during

⁶² Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 44.

⁶³ Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 44.

⁶⁴ As the Air Force’s official report explains, “Army and Air Force doctrine called for setting up an ASOC to deconflict and assign priorities to air support requests from ground forces. A typical ASOC was attached to an Army Corps—a force of roughly three divisions. The CFACC allocated sorties for CAS and pushed them into the airspace; the CAS sorties could then be used by the ASOC to meet Corps tasking. In a conventional battle, CAS aircraft entering the corps area would first contact the ASOC. Then, the ASOC would ‘rack and stack fighters and send them out where they need to go, by ourselves, on our radios...’” Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 41.

⁶⁵ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 170. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 3.

a 26 February video-teleconference with his commanders.⁶⁶ Perhaps most obviously, he directed Generals Mikolashek and Hagenbeck to “think *joint*” and “think inter-service reliance” when preparing the plan.⁶⁷ Further, he admonished his combat leaders to “meet each other in a personal way” after he noted some “uncomfortable general officers on those VTC [video-teleconference] screens,” foretelling some of the troubles that lay ahead.⁶⁸ As he relates in his memoirs, General Franks noted a plan “with lots of moving parts” and prodded those about to lead the operation to “put em’ together like a watch.”⁶⁹ Given the comparatively trouble-free interaction between components that had characterized the execution of Enduring Freedom to date, he quite reasonably expected more of the same. Over the past five months, the command-and-control setup had proven flexible enough to manage a highly decentralized fight in a rather fluid battlespace. The success of this arrangement no doubt had conditioned the CENTCOM chief to expect that his subordinates would take the necessary steps to include all of the relevant entities in the planning effort. Put another way, General Franks assumed that his senior commanders would see to all of the details, and had no reason to believe otherwise. After the battle, Air Force General T. Michael Moseley, the air component commander during Anaconda, arrived at the same deduction: “all were expected to coordinate complex operations not only with those under their command but also with other components outside their command.”⁷⁰ He notes, “I believe Gen. Franks led everybody to this conclusion: The joint force commander [i.e. Franks] establishes the environment for the component commanders to interface with each other and execute their task.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Davis, “Operation Anaconda,” 85, and Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 378.

⁶⁷ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 378.

⁶⁸ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 378.

⁶⁹ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 378.

⁷⁰ Grossman, “Army Analyst Blames Afghan Battle Failings on Bad command Set-Up.”

⁷¹ General T. Michael Moseley, quoted in Grossman, “Army Analyst Blames Afghan Battle Failings on Bad command Set-Up.”

For a given theater command arrangement, agency analysis normally treats the functional or service components as the nominal agents. In the case of Anaconda, due to the evolution of strategy and the difficulty in finding the best place to vest command authority, CJTF Mountain, in effect, served as the primary agent. Put another way, save for final approval, CENTCOM and the CFLCC delegated the majority of the decisions to General Hagenbeck and his staff planners. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that, during the prelude to Anaconda, this agent was not attuned to the principal's intent for a fully coordinated effort. As the Air Force takes great pains to point out in its official report on the operation, a decided *lack* of component interaction characterized most of the planning effort.⁷² Three planning shortfalls illustrate the practical implications resulting from neglect of inter-component coordination. To begin with, CJTF Mountain relied upon organic intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) collection such as tactical probing operations and Predator remotely piloted systems, as well as overhead satellite imagery and sketchy human intelligence to build its picture of the enemy, even though the air component had better access to all-source intelligence, including dedicated multi-spectral sensor platforms.⁷³ In the event, the air component did not have time to implement a fully effective collection plan to help gauge enemy strength in the area, pinpoint enclaves, or map activity. As a result, soldiers found not the 150-200 reluctant adversaries they expected, but

⁷² The CFACC, General Moseley, notes, "...if you exclude a component from the planning and you exclude a component that will provide the preponderance of support, logistic and kinetic, then you will have to live with the outcome of this not playing out very well." Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 114.

⁷³ Bentley, "Afghanistan: Joint and Coalition Fire Support in Operation Anaconda," 11-12. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 225-226. Grant, "Echoes of Anaconda," 49. The Air Force report notes, "The air component already had a track record of providing detailed analysis of sites in Afghanistan. Earlier in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Global Hawk was used with an InfraRed sensor to locate men, animals and campfires of al-Qaeda forces around Mazar-e-Sharif and Tora Bora." Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 29.

upwards of 1000 zealous fighters.⁷⁴ Nor did they have good foreknowledge of enemy defensive positions and preparations. Additional ISR may not have afforded perfect clarity, but it certainly would have helped establish more realistic expectations.⁷⁵ As General Moseley later noted, “We could have set the stage for this much better...we could have gone up and just parked over the top of this place and the bad guys would have never known you’re there and then just surveyed the whole thing.”⁷⁶

Because there was limited opportunity for anyone outside the core group to examine the plan with an unbiased eye, the notion that fighting would be light and of short duration initially also went largely unchallenged. As a result, some rather basic logistical considerations seem to have been brushed aside. Case in point: planners apparently made no arrangements to airlift additional fuel and ammunition to Bagram in the event fighting lasted beyond the anticipated seventy-two hours. In an environment where “truck drivers attempting to supply folks over the road [had a] life expectancy [that] was very limited,” General Moseley observed, “Everything that goes into Afghanistan is flown in. So how much water do you need, how much additional food do you need, how much fuel do you need, how much bullets [sic]. When do you need it?”⁷⁷ The air operations center (AOC) director, Major General John Corley added, “The requirements were not defined in advance of the operation for the air component with regards to logistics. Nor were they ever defined or refined throughout the conduct of the operation, despite the fact that we made continual engagements, attempting to get what would be the logistics requirements.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 168. Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 6. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 28.

⁷⁵ See: Andres and Hukill, “Anaconda: A Flawed Joint Planning Process,” 137.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 29.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁷⁸ Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

Further, given that planners expected some amount of fixed-wing close air support, it is surprising that CJTF Mountain initially made few, if any, arrangements during the planning effort for command and control of tactical air power.⁷⁹ As noted, until the start of Anaconda, operations in Afghanistan had employed a non-standard system for control of tactical airpower, having executed much of the war successfully without an air support operations center to oversee coordination between air and ground forces.⁸⁰ Yet, the rules of engagement for air strikes were somewhat restrictive, and the airspace in which close air support would occur was “extremely constrained,” making air-ground coordination critical.⁸¹ Due to the desire to limit the military footprint in Afghanistan, and since its mission was originally force protection, 10th Mountain Division deployed without its assigned Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS)—the division-level air-ground specialists that could assume the functions of an ASOC, when necessary.⁸² To understand the implication, it is necessary only to grasp the fact that, uncorrected, the situation would have placed on ground controllers—that is, those embedded with troops in contact with the enemy, of which there were eventually more than thirty—the burden for prioritizing attacks and deconflicting aircraft.⁸³ Normally, the ASOC manages the airspace and parcels attacking

⁷⁹ CJTF Mountain did request a division-level air liaison officer (ALO). Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 173.

⁸⁰ For a detailed description see: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 41-50.

⁸¹ Quote by Major General John Corley in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 39. General Moseley noted that his team was stuffing airplanes into an area the size of the Battle of Chancellorsville in the American Civil War surrounded by mountains towering to 11,000 feet. Other complications included civilian airways intersecting the airspace. See: Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 195-196, 213. Regarding the rules of engagement, see: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 40.

⁸² Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 173.

⁸³ As the Air Force’s official review notes, “...the delivery of CAS [close air support] in the battlespace now depended directly and exclusively on the judgment of ground controllers.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 50. On the density of ground controllers, General Moseley notes, “We could have deconflicted the air space much better, because I believe you know from reading some of this that that battlespace is about as big as the Battle of Chancellorsville, and inside that battlespace were 37 or so ground controllers. Well, 37 divided into the area of the Battle of Chancellorsville gives you about a mile or a mile-and-a-half square area for each of those ground parties. And so how then do you move that much air to do close air support when each [enlisted controller] has only got about one square mile, or six to nine thousand square feet of space? The airplane has to fly through multiple cylinders to get to that one controller. How do you horizontally deconflict, and

aircraft out to meet requests for close air support, leaving ground forward air controllers (GFAC) only the task of directing the planes to the proper targets. General Moseley noted, “The bigger issue here is there was never an opportunity to orchestrate and figure out what was needed. Had we known this was going to go on we would have stood up a full ASOC and moved [the people] to Bagram a week or two weeks ahead of this and then conducted a set of rehearsals.”⁸⁴

Fortunately, somewhat effective monitoring by the principal and his component commanders detected at least some of the gaps in the plan with sufficient time for planners to rectify several of the deficiencies, if only in part. General Mikolashek’s direction to make contact with the air component proved fortuitous as airman quickly recognized the potential for heavy reliance upon air power of all kinds and leapt into action. General Corley notes that once the air component learned fully of the plan, “heaven and earth moves from that moment forward. We stop essentially doing what we should have been doing in Iraq [no-fly zone enforcement] to try to throw everything, everybody, everyone we can,” including ISR platforms, into the Anaconda effort to prepare for the battle.⁸⁵ As a result, in a comparatively short interval, analysts were able to identify or confirm twenty-two enemy locations and discover some forty caves.⁸⁶ Further, where logistics requirements were unknown or unspecified, the air component made an educated guess and “pushed and forced capacity in there.”⁸⁷ After the battle, Corley recalled, “Since I couldn’t find out how much fuel they wanted, [and] since they couldn’t tell me what fuel storage they had, I just found airplanes and I flew fuel bladders into Bagram. And then what I started doing was flying KC-130 Marine aircraft in there to provide fuel. I brought in

how do you vertically deconflict moving the air into that confined space?” Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁸⁴ Quoted in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 54.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁸⁶ Andres and Hukill, “Anaconda: A Flawed Joint Planning Process,” 137, and Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 185.

⁸⁷ Quote by AOC director Major General John Corley in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

airplanes that were in-theater C-17s, put them into Bagram, pumped the fuel out of their wings [and] into the fuel bladders on the ground, took [the C-17s] off of Bagram, put them up on air tankers, and spiraled them back into Bagram.”⁸⁸ General Hagenbeck would later acknowledge the criticality of this effort, noting that his forces “could not have even attacked on the delay, 2 March, without that fuel.”⁸⁹ Recognizing the potential need for close air support (CAS), the air component scrambled to cobble together a makeshift ASOC. As one observer noted, resourceful airmen “immediately begged, borrowed and stole every available air liaison officer (ALO) and enlisted terminal air controller (ETAC) in theater and set up a small CAS cell at Bagram that later transitioned to a full-up ASOC.”⁹⁰ Though they would initially struggle with the volume of requests and a postage-stamp-sized battlespace into which they had to stuff the responding aircraft, close air support proved effective and turned the battle around without losses, though there were some close calls between aircraft.⁹¹ In sum, initiative and herculean effort headed off some of the glaring issues that threatened the operation. It is, however, safe to say that the agent had effectively introduced a divergent aim by failing to bring to bear soon enough during planning the full array of stakeholders, viewpoints and available tools, leaving the plan’s underlying premise largely unchallenged.

Although it may be tempting to speculate about intent to purposely preclude a large airpower involvement given the central role the air component had played in Enduring Freedom to date, the evidence suggests that General Hagenbeck acted largely from a perception that he

⁸⁸ Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁸⁹ Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁹⁰ Matthew D. Neuenswander, “JCAS in Operation Anaconda—It’s Not All Bad News” in *Field Artillery HQDA* PB6-03-3 (May-June 2003): 3.

⁹¹ An early situation report revealed tension in the CJTF Mountain headquarters: “CFLCC-Fwd struggles to defeat the Operation ENDURING FREEDOM mindset of DMPI-level [designated mean point of impact] data required to employ air delivered munitions in the close battle.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 67-68. Neuenswander, “JCAS in Operation Anaconda,” 2.

had the matter well in hand, making extensive coordination largely unnecessary.⁹² A narrow perspective to be sure, but he seems to have considered the task well within the capability of his organic forces. For instance, he saw no need for a large preparatory bombing since he expected light resistance, perceived a battlefield devoid of “fixed targets,” and desired an element of surprise.⁹³ As he later recalled, the CJTF Mountain commander expected a herding exercise in which “the anticipated array of targets on the ground...were believed to be spread across the battlefield in this very steep rugged terrain, which did not lend themselves for large displays of air power.”⁹⁴ Further, in response to postwar criticism that he failed to insist on adding artillery to the mix, Hagenbeck noted that wargaming had shown that CJTF Mountain had “enough combat power to achieve victory” leaving him no “feasible or reasonable argument to go back up the chain to General Franks and say, ‘I need more of this or more of that.’”⁹⁵ After the battle he added, “I went ahead and jumped my...main [command post] up to Bagram...on the 17th—11 days before D-Day. That’s when I got my first briefing on courses of action. We laid out the troops and other assets available, and I knew we could accomplish the mission.”⁹⁶ Planners had, in fact, expected the air component to provide limited fixed-wing support, but considered the

⁹² Citing an Air Force briefing, Mark Davis writes, “For Airmen, Anaconda was a clear case of the Army attempting to prove that it ‘could go it alone’ without their support.” Davis, “Operation Anaconda,” 3. Benjamin Lambeth writes, “Some Air power partisans suggested that a desire for an impressive showing by the land component before the end of hostilities, after allied air power had done so much of the heavy lifting during the preceding five months, lay at the center of than land component’s decisionmaking.” Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 204. The Air Force’s review notes that “OPSEC and ‘maintaining organic capability’” made the system less open. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 29, 118. More precisely, General Hagenbeck believed sufficient coordination was ongoing, recalling, “At that level [i.e. of his staff], they were not bringing any issues to me that made me believe that there were an major disjoints.” Quoted in Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁹³ General Hagenbeck later noted, “After Operation Anaconda, I was asked why I didn’t have a bombing campaign in the Shah-e-Kot (sic). The answer is, again, because of the rugged terrain, the cave complexes and the limited target sets—air campaigns are most effective against ‘fixed’ targets.” Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 7. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 186.

⁹⁴ Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁹⁵ Quoted in Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 131. Note that CENTCOM imposed the exclusion of artillery in light of a desire to maintain a low conventional profile to prevent the impression that the American Army was invading Afghanistan.

⁹⁶ Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 6.

company of eight Apache attack helicopters on hand sufficient for most close air support requirements.⁹⁷ By his own admission, General Hagenbeck had assumed that his air liaison officer (ALO) would make the necessary arrangements for this limited air support.⁹⁸ Until prompted by General Mikolashek to make contact with the CFACC, it had not occurred to General Hagenbeck or his staff that a wider array of expertise might be needed in the planning effort. In other words, rather than seeking a meeting of minds in order to benefit from the perspective and expertise of airmen when crafting the operation—as the principal expected—CJTF Mountain merely sought to inform the air component of the role to which it had *already been assigned*.⁹⁹

In order to understand the discordance of the agent's mindset with respect to decisions made on behalf of the principal, it is necessary to examine some key conditions that existed during the buildup to Anaconda. Having recently arrived in theater and noted the apparent “downshifting” of the war, the conventional Army forces uniformly “wanted to be part of the fight” and relished the opportunity take part in the upcoming operation.¹⁰⁰ By his own admission,

⁹⁷ The Air Force review notes that “the OPORD and related briefings spent very little time on air support and when they did, the main concern was with AC-130 [special operations gunship] overwatch of key areas and with the role of Apache helicopters and the CH-47s that would be delivering troops.” See: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 6, 34. Regarding the Apache attack helicopters, General Hagenbeck had nothing but fulsome praise, commenting, “The Apaches came as close to ‘one shot, one kill’ as you can get.” Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 7. It is worth noting that Apaches “sent on a sweep of the objective area at the start of Anaconda were hit so many times by enemy fire that only three came through in flyable condition. [General] Hagenbeck had to send out an emergency call for help to Marine Corps AH-1 Cobra helicopters at sea on USS *Bonhomme Richard*.” Grant, “Echoes of Anaconda,” 47.

⁹⁸ General Hagenbeck noted, “Air power was not ignored in the planning: it was integral to our fight. I talked to my ALO [air liaison officer] when he was there, [and] I had my fire support officer...working with him...I’m working through my staff, and telling them directives, and I’m getting, in essence, a thumbs-up.” Grossman, “Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?”

⁹⁹ Note that Generals Mikolashek and Hagenbeck later admitted that neither spoke directly to the CFACC regarding the operation until the final video-teleconference briefing to General Franks on 26 February. Davis, “Operation Anaconda,” 82, 86.

¹⁰⁰ First quote from Grant, *The Afghan Air War*, 24. General Hagenbeck quoted in Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 61.

General Hagenbeck recalled his troops' "chomping [sic] at the bit to do something."¹⁰¹ The desire to preempt a spring offensive by al Qaeda magnified this sense of urgency. As noted, coalition leaders attributed significant probability to some type of attack on the fledgling interim government around the time of the Islamic New Year in late March; hence, an eagerness to deliver a decisive blow to what was thought to be al Qaeda's last sanctuary in Afghanistan.¹⁰² That said, Anaconda planners, and the CJTF Mountain staff in particular, held "the firm belief" that the terrorist organization would not put up much of a fight; therefore, the encounter would be brief and devoid of heavy combat.¹⁰³ General Hagenbeck later described the mindset: "If history proved itself, as it had up the [that] point on a smaller scale, there would not be initial fighting...That was the kind of basic premise that it was going to be when [the battle plan] was established."¹⁰⁴ Finally, one cannot understand the design of Anaconda without reference to the perceived failure to nab Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora. A review of that battle is beyond the scope of this analysis; suffice to say, the lesson for the ground forces was that a lack of "boots on the ground" allowed a significant portion of al Qaeda leadership to slip away into the Pakistani hinterland.¹⁰⁵ To sum, CJTF Mountain approached the operation with a perceived need for

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 12. After the battle, General Hagenbeck recalled, "Part of what was driving my thinking was, 'We need to get after these guys and kill them or capture them, sooner than later.'" Quoted in Grossman, "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?"

¹⁰² The Islamic New Year fell on 21 March. According to one special operations troop, planners "knew that the Khowst-Gardez area had entrenched al-Qaeda. To make it even more tempting, "there was very strong suspicion that this [was] where UBL [Usama (sic) bin Laden] was, because this is where the palace guard was." See: Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 22-23, 25.

¹⁰³ Grossman, "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?"

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Grossman, "Anaconda: Object Lesson in Ill Planning or Triumph of Improvisation?"

¹⁰⁵ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 17. Army officers involved in the Tora Bora affair noted a "lack of firepower and maneuver to do all things for all people in Afghanistan," and a "disconnect between mission and assets allowed to be available to do the mission." Quoted in Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 21. Rebecca Grants notes of the Tora Bora battle, "Osama bin Laden's trail went cold right as al Qaeda's leadership, being pummeled by airpower, appeared to be trapped in a mountain fortress...But the next time allied forces engaged a significant concentration of al Qaeda terrorists, in Operation Anaconda, CENTCOM was determined that US ground forces would lead the way." Grant, "Tora Bora," 52, 55.

expediency, a preconceived notion of enemy capability and intent, as well as a blinkered view of the forces and tactics required.

Applying the agency framework, the existence of this significant preference gap necessitates consideration for the influence of service self-interest or a narrow service-oriented perspective on the formulation and implementation of strategy. Although a narrow perspective was clearly at play, it seems a bit inapt to label the actions of the agent as shirking. Rather, this is precisely the approach one might expect from a *tactical-level commander and staff* planning an assigned mission within the context of an overarching strategy and battle plan. When he assumed command of Anaconda, the CJTF Mountain chief, in effect, ceased operating as CFLCC-Forward—that is, as the representative of the land component—and reverted, along with his staff, to the comfortable roles of a *division commander and division-level headquarters*. From that point, CJTF Mountain became absorbed in the tactical details of planning a complex ground scheme of maneuver to seize objectives within a designated area of responsibility—precisely the mission normally given to a division. In effect, the CFLCC became the corps-level headquarters to which CJTF Mountain apparently left all operational-level concerns.

From this perspective, General Hagenbeck's concerns, and later complaints, are thus not just those of a ground commander, they are consistent with the mindset of a *tactical* ground commander. His criticism of the close air support provided by the air component is illustrative. What amounts to dissatisfaction with technology at the point of application and *tactical* doctrine, while certainly germane, betrays an utter lack of comprehension of the initiative and effort that went into filling *operational* gaps in CJTF Mountain's plan.¹⁰⁶ Take for instance the critique that “the Air Force had to work through airspace management—aircraft were stacked up to the

¹⁰⁶ In the interview that precipitated the whole dispute, General Hagenbeck referred, for example, to the technical challenges of providing coordinates for GPS-guided JDAMs (joint direct attack munition). Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 8.

ceiling and could only be flown in, in a few numbers.”¹⁰⁷ The intimation that the frequency and density of fixed-wing attacks was insufficient necessarily implicates the plan and its presumption that battle in the Shah-i-Kot valley would not lend itself to “large displays of air power.” Stating the obvious then, Anaconda required significant involvement by the air component—certainly more than had been anticipated. In fact, the makeshift ASOC stuffed an uncomfortable, if not dangerous, number of aircraft into the “extremely constrained” area.¹⁰⁸ To be sure, the experience generated numerous lessons; by and large, however, issues such as the initial lack of predefined reference points for deconfliction of aircraft and orchestration of bombing runs indicate the absence of adequate forethought during the planning phase.¹⁰⁹ Missing in the general’s critique is any recognition that such a volume of close air support, however roughly executed, was only within the realm of possibility *because the makeshift ASOC existed*. That those who orchestrated the first chaotic round of airstrikes felt they had “accomplished a historic victory,” only to be berated shortly thereafter for a perceived dearth of close air support, speaks volumes about the disconnect.¹¹⁰

The intent here is not to diminish the efforts or accomplishments of anyone who ventured into the “hornet’s nest.” Rather, the analysis leads to the inescapable conclusion that, fundamentally, *Anaconda was an operational-level endeavor planned at the tactical level of war*.

To be fair, both the Air Force after-action report and the thesis by Mark Davis allude to this

¹⁰⁷ Hagenbeck interview in McElroy and Hollis, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” 8.

¹⁰⁸ The Air Forces after-action review notes, “The task for Airmen was to keep aircraft available when ground controllers had requests, and to funnel multiple strikes into a tiny ground battle area without causing mid-air collisions.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 91. After the battle, tales of “chaos over the battlefield” emerged, including revelation of at least one near mid-air collision. Neuenswander, “JCAS in Operation Anaconda,” 2, and

¹⁰⁹ See, for instance: John M. Jansen, et al, “JCAS in Afghanistan: Fixing the Tower of Babel,” in *Field Artillery HQDA PB6-03-2* (March-April 2003): 22-30.

¹¹⁰ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 67-68.

point.¹¹¹ However, lacking a suitable framework, neither analysis gives proper weight to the revelation, nor do they trace the problem to its root cause, citing instead either poor command structures or a simple failure to coordinate with other components. Both miss the fact that CENTCOM, and the CFLCC in turn, had effectively handed to CJTF Mountain a decidedly different type of mission with significant requirements at the operational level of war that were outside the field of regard, and indeed often beyond the capacity, of a tactical commander and his staff. As noted, monitoring detected some of the issues at the eleventh hour, but the failure “to open the aperture on this so that more people are involved in a process like this, so that the right sets of questions can be asked earlier,” left the operation’s core assumptions unchallenged.¹¹² By that point, frenetic activity could not overcome the presumptions that underlay the entire plan.



¹¹¹ The Air Force report observes, “Operation ANACONDA began without a shift in the mindset for operations in theater.” Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 115. Mark Davis writes, “Maj Gen Hagenbeck and his small staff were tasked to perform a mission that required extensive integration at the operational level of war, a function that a division headquarters is not doctrinally manned, trained, nor equipped to conduct.” He also quotes the official report by the Joint Center for Lessons Learned: “CJTF MTN [Mountain] performed some missions that doctrinally would be given normally to a larger, more capable, operational-level headquarters.” Davis, “Operation Anaconda,” 73.

¹¹² Quote by General Moseley in Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective*, 120.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A HARMONY OF INTERESTS IN IRAQ

Agency and Efficacy in the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

Every member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff signed up to this plan and the way it was executed from the first day, and they'll be signed up to the last day...General Franks' component commanders signed up to this plan as it was changed over time, and as it finally came down to be the one we went to war with.

General Richard B. Myers¹
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
1 April 2003

Introduction

After more than sixteen months of preparation, the United States' much-anticipated second showdown with Saddam Hussein began in earnest on the morning of 20 March 2003 with a hastily assembled "regime decapitation" strike intended to assassinate the elusive dictator.² Acting on a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) tip that Saddam and his sons would be gathering, President George W. Bush had ordered a salvo of twenty-four cruise missiles and airstrikes by two F-117 stealth fighters aimed at the suspected meeting location within the Dora Farms complex in the southern suburbs of Baghdad.³ Shortly after the attack, the president publicly

¹ Department of Defense, "DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers" (press conference, Washington, DC, 1 April 2003). Transcript available at: <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2229> (accessed 21 May 2012).

² Quote from Tommy R. Franks and Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (2004; repr., New York: Reagan Books, 2005), 451. At 2001 hours on 17 March, following a meeting with the leaders of allied countries, President Bush issued an ultimatum saying, "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing." This deadline would expire at 0400 on the morning of 20 March in Iraq. President George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on Iraq," (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 17 March 2003). The United States began planning for the Iraq War in late 2001. On November 21 of that year, the Joint Staff, acting on order from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, ordered CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks to begin updating war plans for Iraq by requesting a new "commander's estimate" of the force required to overthrow Saddam Hussein. See: Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack: The Definitive Account of the Decision to Invade Iraq* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 5, 30-31, and Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 21-23.

³ For more on the Dora Farms strike, see: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 450-461, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 164-181. For a graphical depiction of the site's location, see: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, xvi.

announced the commencement of Iraqi Freedom: “On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war.”⁴ The intelligence impelling the strike proved faulty, and United States forces would not capture Saddam Hussein until December of 2003.⁵ Nevertheless, the Iraq War was on, and shortly thereafter, an onslaught of coalition ground and air forces began a lightning dash to capture the seat of the regime’s government.⁶ “Speed kills...the enemy,” averred CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks, and his war plan called for ground forces to bypass Iraq’s southern cities in order to pursue maximum rate of advance to Baghdad.⁷

As his forces maneuvered briskly northward along Highway 8 toward the Iraqi capital, Lieutenant General William “Scott” Wallace, commander of the United States Army V Corps,



⁴ President George W. Bush, “Address to the Nation on Iraq,” (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 19 March 2003). Though the Dora Farms strike coincided with the expiration of the deadline, the official start of the war—D-Day—had actually been set for 19 March in Iraq. On schedule, the evening prior to the strike, special operations forces had begun covert preparatory actions, also known as Phase II shaping operations. A-Day, marking the planned start of the air war with the bombing of strategic targets, had been set for the evening of 21 March. The land campaign was then to kick off the morning of 22 March. See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 164-165, and Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom Through 01 May 2003* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 86, 90-91.

⁵ See, for instance: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 463, Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 177, Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (2006; repr. New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 262, and John Keegan, *The Iraq War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 4.

⁶ General Franks and his commanders on the ground had advanced the start of the conventional ground war by approximately twenty-four hours, to the morning of 21 March in Iraq. Indications that the Iraqis were beginning to sabotage oil wells as they had in the Gulf War, likely in response to the Dora Farms strike and the president’s subsequent announcement. Lieutenant General T. Michael Moseley, who commanded the air component, indicated that he could not accelerate the timeline for the highly choreographed air strikes on short notice. Thus, the strategic air campaign began as planned later on 21 March. See: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 90-95, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 166-168.

⁷ He added, “Our speed of advance would not only kill the enemy, it would save Coalition lives. This was an important operational principle: By striking hard and fast, our units would disrupt the Iraqis’ ability to react effectively...The key is speed...We are going to *win* this fight—and we’ll do it by getting inside the enemy’s decision cycle.” (italics original) Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 466. General Wallace later noted, “We never had any intention of fighting in those southern cities, because we felt that would put us at a disadvantage; so we intended to bypass them.” James A. Kitfield, “Attack Always,” interview of Lieutenant General William Wallace, 6 May 2003. Transcript located at: <http://www.govexec.com/defense/defense-beat/2003/05/attack-always/14015/> (accessed 1 May 2012).

had a profound sense that something was amiss.⁸ Having anticipated light resistance, and to some extent, a liberator's welcome until they crashed into the Iraqi Republican Guard, Wallace and his soldiers were a bit shocked by the incessant guerrilla-style attacks of paramilitary fighters clad in civilian clothes, who "charged American tanks and Bradleys" in "light trucks with .50 caliber weapons."⁹ "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against, because of these paramilitary forces," remarked the V Corps commander matter-of-factly to reporters embedded with his combat units.¹⁰ To the east, the Marines of Lieutenant General James Conway's I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) also found the fighting tougher than expected.¹¹ Intense fighting early on, such as that which met the Army 3rd Infantry Division [Mechanized] near the town of As Samawah, also impeded the drive through the town of An Nasiriyah by the Marines' Task Force Tarawa. Thus was raised a specter of doubt about the wisdom of proceeding on to Baghdad without first dealing with the unanticipated threat to

⁸ The attack plan placed V Corps in the west, roughly paralleling the Euphrates River. For depiction of the routes taken by ground forces, see, for instance: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 30, Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 470, Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, xviii, and Keegan, *The Iraq War*, 144.

⁹ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 311. Paramilitary included the Saddam Fedayeen partisans, Al Quds local militia, and Ba'ath Party militia. The United States Army history of Iraqi Freedom notes, "...the Fedayeen and other paramilitary forces proved more of a threat than anyone had expected. While the paramilitaries were always considered part of the enemy capabilities, the intelligence and operations communities had never anticipated how ferocious, tenacious, and fanatical they would be...they did disrupt operations in An Nasiriyah and As Samawah and inflicted the first startling casualties of the war." An infantry company commander noted, "We were expecting jubilation, not RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades]!" One headquarters officer added, "We underrated the irregulars. They were fierce, but not too bright. They were evil men who deserved to die." Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 85, 101-102, 265.

¹⁰ The general added, "We knew they were here, but we did not know how they would fight." See: Jim Dwyer, "A Gulf Commander Sees a Longer Road," *The New York Times*, 28 March 2003, A1, and Rick Atkinson, "General: A War Likely; Logistics, Enemy Force Reevaluation," *The Washington Post*, 27 March 2003, A1. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor note, "As the V Corps rumbled north, Scott Wallace still considered the Republican Guard to be the main enemy, the threat of chemical weapons in the Karbala Gap to be the greatest danger, and the capture of Baghdad to be the principal objective. But the Fedayeen attacks were becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. None of the fighting so far had dampened the Fedayeen's ardor to do battle with the Americans. If anything, the Fedayeen seemed more emboldened than ever." Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 282.

¹¹ General Conway noted these "hardheads" were conducting a "deliberate defense," and provided one of the first assessments that the size of the coalition forces was perhaps "inadequate" for the task. Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 310.

the coalition's increasingly vulnerable supply lines posed by irregular forces such as the fanatical Saddam Fedayeen.¹²

A perhaps serendipitous “mother of all sandstorms” effectively impeded the advance beginning on the night of 24-25 March.¹³ The combination of irregular attacks and three days of atrocious weather provided sufficient impetus for a brief interlude to allow the coalition to regroup before its final push into Baghdad.¹⁴ To deal with the attack on lines of communication, the Coalition Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC), Army Lieutenant General David McKiernan, elected to release to V Corps his reserve force, which consisted of elements of the 82nd Airborne Division.¹⁵ The 82nd joined with the 101st Airborne Division to take on the task of securing the towns of As Samawah and Al Najaf, from which the Iraqi paramilitary had been staging attacks.¹⁶ The commitment of the theater reserve together with the subsequent addition of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment to patrol the area between the towns, allowed the 3rd Infantry Division, which spearheaded V Corps attack, to focus its attention on the advance to

¹² Paramilitary attacks forced the 3rd Infantry Division to divert onto Highway 28 to bypass As Samawah, while elements of the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry screened the advance during two days of fighting. Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 123-126. General Wallace would later comment, “we had to adjust to (Saddam Hussein's) paramilitary (forces), which were more fanatical and more aggressive than we expected...The adjustment that we made was to actually fight and have a presence in some of these urban areas that we had not really planned to do. We planned to bypass them.” Lieutenant General William Wallace interview by Steven Komarow in “General Recounts Key Moments in Baghdad's Fall,” *USA Today*, 14 April 2003. Task Force Tarawa was the World War II-inspired moniker for the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, which represented only a portion of the Marine contingent. Major General James Mattis' 1st Marine Division was the core of I MEF. See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 234-259. For more on the battle for An Nasiriyah, see: Nicholas E. Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond: U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2003* (Washington DC: United States Marine Corps History Division, 2007), 65-78.

¹³ Regarding the blinding “shamal,” see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 150-151, and Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 495-496. 101st Airborne Division commander, Major General David Petraeus recalled, “It was like a tornado of mud.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 125.

¹⁴ On the effect of weather, see: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 501-502. After discussions with Generals Wallace and Conway, who also worried about their tenuous line of communication, Coalition Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC) Army Lieutenant General David McKiernan ordered an “operational pause” of “several days,” which he describe as “time to clean up...before we commit...to the Baghdad fight, because once we commit to the Baghdad Fight, we cannot stop.” Quoted in Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 84. See also: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 209-210, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 304-311. The United States Army's account of the Iraq War suggests, “The decision to focus combat power on the LOCs [lines of communication, or supply routes] was critical—arguably *the* decision of the ground campaign.” (italics original) Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 209

¹⁵ According the official Army history of the operation, General McKiernan viewed this as “the most important decision he made during the war.” Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 210.

¹⁶ Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 209, 212-219.

Baghdad.¹⁷ Further, during this time, airpower not only assisted efforts to subdue irregulars, but also inflicted significant damage on Republican Guard units as they repositioned to meet the coalition advance.¹⁸ By 1 April, the race to Baghdad was on again.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the outlines of a bitter insurgency that would later engulf the “Sunni Triangle”—the region north and west of Baghdad in which many regime faithful lived and operated—were already visible far to the south.²⁰

The plan to take the Iraqi capital involved gaining control of Iraq’s major civilian airport southwest of Baghdad to serve as a base of operation, which elements of the 3rd Infantry Division accomplished during operations on 3-4 April.²¹ In addition, Army units in the west and marines to the east planned to secure a number of key objectives on the outskirts in order to

¹⁷ The 2nd ACR is a lightly armed reconnaissance unit. It had already been scheduled to take part in the operation, but General McKiernan requested that CENTCOM accelerate its deployment. Lead elements of the unit would begin to join the operation approximately a week later. See: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 210, 219-221.

¹⁸ Regarding the opportunity provided by the poor weather, see: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 501-503. Assessing that the coalition advance had slowed due to the weather and attacks by irregulars, and after learning that Turkey had refused to allow the United States Army 4th Infantry Division to stage from its territory, denying the coalition a second front in the north, the Iraqis repositioned the Republican Guard to establish a “red line” defense south of Baghdad. The air component would hammer the Republican Guard day and night for seven straight days in preparation for the “Battle of Baghdad,” which Anthony Cordesman notes “involved a series of relatively small battles rather than a climactic encounter.” Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), 77-87, 94-96, Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 255-257, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 320-324, 345-347.

¹⁹ Both 3rd Infantry Division commander Major General Buford Blount and 1st Marine Division commander Major General James Mattis were “unhappy” with the pause and expressed eagerness to resume the advance as soon as possible. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 318-321, 347-8, and Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 83-88. Reflecting on the pause order, Mattis would later recall that directing his marines to withdraw to a more defensible position was “one of the toughest orders [he]...ever had to give to an assault battalion that had taken ground [and] lost men doing it.” Quoted in Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 83.

²⁰ This area included Fallujah, “home to an estimated forty thousand former Baathist Party operatives, intelligence officials, and Iraqi army officers who should have been expected to defend their interests vigorously,” as well as Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit. After the war, 82nd Airborne Division commander Major General Charles Swannack would note, “This part of the Sunni Triangle was never assessed properly in the plan.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 138.

²¹ For a description of the airport seizure, see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 299-310, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 355-360. There was some discussion within V Corps about which division was best suited for the task. General Blount, 3rd Infantry division commander, pushed Wallace: “Sir, we trained for this...We prepared for this...We’re ready for this. We need to go now.” Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 301. The Marine Corps history of the Iraq War notes, “The Coalition placed considerable emphasis on seizing the airport, both as a symbol and a useful piece of real estate.” Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 92.

surround the city.²² With the primary objective isolated, coalition forces then planned to conduct armed raids to draw out and eliminate the enemy, hopefully avoiding a bloody block-by-block slugfest.²³ On 5 April, the first of these “Thunder Runs” met with somewhat encouraging results.²⁴ Although the target of nearly constant attack from automatic weapon fire, rocket-propelled grenades, and other weapons which disabled a Bradley fighting vehicle and an M-1 tank, Task Force 1-64 Armor of the 3rd Infantry Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team had run the gauntlet from the intersection of Highways 1 and 8 south of the city to the renamed Baghdad International Airport.²⁵ The Iraqis, apparently thinking they had successfully fended off a coalition attack, quickly spun the story for propaganda, causing at least one American commander to rethink the raiding strategy.²⁶ Having proven the ability to maneuver and fight with an armored formation in downtown Baghdad, 2nd Brigade Combat Team commander Colonel Dave Perkins quickly drew up plans for a bolder “Thunder Run” that ultimately

²² General McKiernan described the plan as one to “isolate Baghdad, establish an outer cordon which controls movement in and out of the city” and “a series of forward operating bases.” Quoted in Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 89-90. See also: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 282-283. For a graphical depiction, see: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, xxiv, and Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 288.

²³ See: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 331-332. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor describe the plan: “Then, the Americans would run raids in and out of the city, using mechanized infantry, armor, helicopters, SOF [special operations forces], psychological operations units, and support from the Air Force to attack command centers and other carefully selected targets. Over time, it was assumed that the cohesion and combat capability of the Iraqi defenders would fracture to the point that Baghdad could be occupied at acceptable cost. Wallace [V Corps commander], in essence, would pick and poke at the regime until it collapsed.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 374. Of note, the Marines were not “eager to set up...bases around the...city and raid into it and back out at any point.” Major General James Mattis quoted in Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 92.

²⁴ The Army history notes, “It was unclear whether Baghdad was a trap, a clever ruse, or a hollow shell. When 3rd ID [Infantry Division] seized and cleared the airport, one of the two sites everyone agreed would be heavily defended, the troops answered part of the question. Baghdad looked difficult, but it did not look like Grozny [1994-1995 site of heavy Russian losses at the hands of Chechen rebels]. Taking the airport made the armored raids—the “Thunder Runs”—feasible in the minds of the senior commanders and their staffs.” Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 335-336

²⁵ There were also several casualties, including one soldier killed in action. For details on the first “Thunder Run,” see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 340-346.

²⁶ Broadcasts by Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, also known as “Baghdad Bob,” claimed, “They fled. The American louts fled. Indeed, concerning the fighting waged by the heroes of the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party yesterday, one amazing thing really is the cowardice of the American soldiers. We had not anticipated this.” The Army history notes that 2nd Brigade Combat Team commander, Colonel Dave Perkins, “was satisfied with the tactical performance of his troops, he was not sure the message they were sending was the right one. He was disturbed with the information and perception implications of the raid.” Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 347.

succeeded in seizing “Objective DIANE” at the center of the city.²⁷ On 7 April, Perkins’ soldiers dashed to the parade grounds surrounding the Republican Palace and set up a defensive position.²⁸ After repelling an Iraqi counterattack on the morning of 8 April, the Americans were in Baghdad to stay.²⁹ Although fighting continued as Army and Marine units progressively closed their vise on the city, organized resistance by Iraq’s regular forces largely melted away; for all intents and purposes, the battle for Baghdad was over.³⁰ Although Saddam Hussein remained at large, the symbolic end of his regime came on 9 April when the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines helped seemingly jubilant Iraqis topple the deposed dictator’s likeness in Firdos Square.³¹ The Euphoria, however, would not last long. Lawlessness and looting soon engulfed Iraq; and with stunning rapidity, the hard-hitting Global War on Terrorism devolved into a quagmire that would tie up the American military in Iraq for another eight years.

Object Lesson

It is perhaps best to view the major combat operations of Iraqi Freedom as a second phase of the Global War on Terrorism begun in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.³² In addition to the attendant mix of grief and outrage, the “Pearl Harbor of the 21st century” created or reinforced two key perceptions within the administration of George W.

²⁷ The intent was apparently for another “limited-objective” attack to reach two key intersections further into the city and then withdraw. Perhaps to the surprise of his superiors, Colonel Perkins continued all the way to the city center. Assessing that Perkins could defend the position, Generals Wallace and Blount agreed that the troops would remain overnight, and longer, if feasible. See: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 347-350.

²⁸ The second “Thunder Run” was a complex battle that also involved efforts to secure key intersections along the route of advance in order to establish lines of communication that would allow the units to hold their position in downtown Baghdad. For details, see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 347-374, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 390-410.

²⁹ See: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 372-374.

³⁰ For a brief summary of the fall of Baghdad, see: Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 95-96.

³¹ The Marine Corps history provides a succinct description of the scene. Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 101-102.

³² President Bush later recalled his immediate reaction upon being informed of the attacks: “They had declared war on us, and I made up my mind at that moment that we were going to war.” Quoted in Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 15. Regarding “phases,” see: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 18-19.

Bush.³³ In the first place, the terror attacks demonstrated that the tit-for-tat approach taken by the Clinton administration had been ineffectual in confronting an increasingly aggressive al Qaeda.³⁴ Standoff bombing, such as the 1998 cruise missile attack on the organization's training camp in Afghanistan, had appeared to emboldened Osama bin Laden and his band of radicals, as a definite trend of increasing audacity marked the progression from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing through the destruction of Khobar Towers in 1996, the targeting of the USS *Cole* in 2000, and the 11 September attacks, in particular.³⁵ More fundamentally, however, the unbroken string of aggression suggested that, as the target of a determined terror campaign, the nation was largely indefensible.³⁶ Much the way law enforcement cannot anticipate or intercept every potential crime, the opportunities for terror seemed too numerous and varied for a defensive strategy.³⁷ Certainly the United States could and did implement measures to frustrate the aims of

³³ Excerpt from the personal journal of President George W. Bush quoted in Dan Balz and Bob Woodward, "America's Chaotic Road to War: Bush's Global Strategy Began to Take Shape in First Frantic Hours After Attack," *The Washington Post*, 27 January 2002, A1.

³⁴ Bob Woodward notes, "Bush believed Clinton had been risk-averse. He had used cruise missiles to attack bin Laden in Afghanistan in 1998 after al Qaeda had bombed two American embassies in East Africa. During the Kosovo war, he had limited U.S. involvement to an air campaign, still spooked by the disastrous mission in Somalia in 1993 when 18 U.S. soldiers died in a fierce urban firefight." Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 26.

³⁵ President Bush later noted, "The antiseptic notion of launching a cruise missile into some guy's...tent, really is a joke. I mean people viewed that as the impotent America...a flaccid...kind of technologically competent but not very tough country that was willing to launch a cruise missile out of a submarine and that'd be it...It was clear that bin Laden felt emboldened and didn't feel threatened by the United States." Quoted in Woodward, *Bush at War*, 38. Bob Woodward attributes this view to Vice President Cheney as well. See: Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 30. The 1998 cruise-missile attack was ostensibly intended as reprisal for terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and also struck suspected terrorist sites in Sudan. See, for instance: Paul West, "U.S. Strikes at Terrorism: Cruise Missiles Hit Targets in Sudan and Afghanistan," *The Baltimore Sun*, 21 August 1998. Rebecca Grant provides a succinct summary of terrorist attacks and the policy leading up to the attacks of 11 September. Rebecca Grant, *The Afghan Air War* (Arlington, VA: Aerospace Education Foundation, 2002), 3-5.

³⁶ In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush declared, "I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch; yet, it must be and it will be waged on our watch. We can't stop short. If we stop now, leaving terror camps intact and terrorist states unchecked, our sense of security would be false and temporary." President George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union" (speech, Washington, DC, 29 January 2002).

³⁷ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who had served as a Middle East envoy for President Ronald Reagan during the time period of the 1983 attacks on the Marine barracks in Beirut, averred, "The key thought about this is that you cannot defend against terrorism. You can't defend at every place at every time against every technique. You just can't do it, because they just keep changing techniques, time, and you have to go after them. And you have to take it to them, and that means you have to preempt them." Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 34.

al Qaeda, such as increasing intelligence collection and tightening controls at points of entry to the nation. Nevertheless, al Qaeda, unchecked, would doubtless find a way to strike again. The need for offensive operations followed as the natural conclusion; the only way President Bush could safeguard the nation, which he considered his “sacred and solemn duty,” was to take the fight to the enemy.³⁸

In the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the imperative for the United States was, first and foremost, to deliver an unambiguous message to perpetrators of terrorism.³⁹ This initial “phase” of the offensive campaign would thus necessarily require targeting al Qaeda directly.⁴⁰ With the support of the ruling Taliban theocracy, al Qaeda leadership had taken sanctuary in Afghanistan, making the impoverished nation home base for the terror network and thus the logical focus for the United States’ initial efforts.⁴¹ On 20 September, President Bush issued an ultimatum to the Taliban: “Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of Al Qaida who hide in your land. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These

³⁸ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 27, 152. The president declared, “Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge.” President George W. Bush, “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York” (speech, West Point, NY, 1 June 2002).

³⁹ Addressing the nation, President Bush declared, “Our war on terror begins with Al Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” President George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11” (speech, Washington, DC, 20 September 2001).

⁴⁰ Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld remarked, “The only way to deal with that kind of a problem is to liquidate or root out those terrorist networks.” Donald H. Rumsfeld Interview with Charles Gibson, ABC Good Morning America, 2 October 2001.

⁴¹ Rumsfeld added, “This adversary is different. It does not have any of those things. It does not have high-value targets that we can go after. But those countries that support them and give sanctuary do have such targets. The terrorists do not function in a vacuum. They don’t live in Antarctica. They work, they train and they plan in countries. They’re benefiting from the support of governments.” Donald H. Rumsfeld, “DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld” (news conference, Washington, DC, 18 September 2001).

demands are not open to negotiation or discussion.”⁴² To which he added, “The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.”⁴³ Perhaps not surprisingly, the Taliban promptly rejected the ultimatum, and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, led by the American military, followed shortly thereafter.⁴⁴

Early on, the United States could muster a bombing campaign not materially different from the Clinton-era reprisals deplored by the administration as little more than pin pricks. To that point, the United States had devoted little, if any, attention to Afghanistan. Thus, CENTCOM, the combatant command to which military responsibility for the campaign fell, had no war plans on hand for such a scenario, and deployment of ground troops would take time.⁴⁵ Fortunately, the United States quickly found an eager ally in the Northern Alliance—tribal warlords from the northern provinces that, to date, had met with only middling success in their collective effort to challenge the Taliban. The embedding of United States special operations forces helped meld this small, but reasonably effective, ground force with devastating fires from coalition air power to form a juggernaut that turned the situation around in dramatic fashion. As noted, the capital of Kabul fell little more than a month after the start of the operation.⁴⁶ Starting from scratch, the United States had effected the ouster of the Taliban, scattered al Qaeda leadership, and overseen the installation of an Interim Authority headed by Hamid Karzai in just

⁴² President George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11.”

⁴³ President George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11.”

⁴⁴ See, for instance: Tyler Marshall, “Afghanistan Spurns U.S. Ultimatum: Taliban Will Protect bin Laden,” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 September 2001. President George W. Bush “Address to the Nation Announcing Strikes Against Al Qaida Training Camps and Taliban Military Installations in Afghanistan” (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 7 October 2001).

⁴⁵ See, for instance: Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 5-6, and Woodward, *Bush at War*, 43.

⁴⁶ Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Air Power Perspective* (Washington DC: Headquarters United States Air Force, 2005), 15. Enduring Freedom began on 7 October 2001. President George W. Bush “Address to the Nation Announcing Strikes Against Al Qaida Training Camps and Taliban Military Installations in Afghanistan.”

seventy-six days.⁴⁷ It remained only to consolidate gains and stabilize the new government. The message to the perpetrators was unambiguous: the United States had declared war on al Qaeda, and future terror attacks would meet with a disproportionate response.

Arguably, the campaign in Afghanistan had proved a fairly effective opening to the offensive Global War on Terrorism. As soon as things turned in the coalition's favor, however, the Bush administration began to look ahead to the next phase of the war on terrorism. Enduring Freedom had, in part, thinned the ranks of al Qaeda, and scattered the remnant of its leadership, rendering the terror network ineffective, at least for the moment. Nevertheless, given the opportunity, al Qaeda would, no doubt, attempt to up the ante.⁴⁸ Thus, state sponsors of terrorism, particularly those with access to or aspirations for weapons of mass destruction, remained worrisome and problematic.⁴⁹ President Bush needed to deliver a pointed message to these nations as well.⁵⁰ From this imperative emerged the doctrine of preemption. In his 2002 address to the West Point graduating class, the president remarked, "In the world we have entered the only path to safety is the path of action...Our security will require all Americans to be forward looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our

⁴⁷ Karzai's installation as head of the Interim Authority occurred on 22 December 2001. See: Richard Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Adaptation in Battle* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2007), 3.

⁴⁸ The president remarked, "The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us or to harm us or to harm our friends, and we will oppose them with all our power." President George W. Bush, "Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York."

⁴⁹ Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith described Rumsfeld's thinking on the matter: "The idea was, of course, to go after Al Qaeda. But punishment was not the issue...Rumsfeld understood that the problem is not dealing with one organization in one place. It would not be solved by fighting Al Qaeda inside Afghanistan. It was a bigger problem. His mind ran immediately to the extra danger of the nexus of terrorism and WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. We were not going to solve this problem by focusing narrowly on the perpetrators of 9/11. Rumsfeld wanted some way to organize the military action so that it signaled that the global conflict would not be over if we struck one good blow in Afghanistan." Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 10.

⁵⁰ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor indicate Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld pressed this point. See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 18-19.

liberty and to defend our lives...All nations that decide for aggression and terror will pay a price. We will not leave the safety of America and the peace of the planet at the mercy of a few mad terrorists and tyrants. We will lift this dark threat from our country and from the world.”⁵¹ In short, a sweeping shift of policy, akin to President Truman’s declaration of the Cold War’s defining containment doctrine in 1947, proclaimed that the US would attack to effect regime change in order to prevent the virulent threat of terrorism married with weapons of mass destruction.⁵² Rhetoric alone, however, would not do. The United States needed to provide an object lesson, and Saddam Hussein’s Iraq headed a very short list.

Although President Bush also implicated the “rogue nations” of North Korea and Iran in his declaration of a modern “axis of evil,” evidence shows that he had his sights on Iraq from the start—to some extent, even before the 11 September attacks.⁵³ Saddam Hussein was the fruit perched lowest on the regime-change tree, and thus a natural choice, for several reasons. To begin with, the United States had already made removal of the Iraqi dictator its stated policy. In

⁵¹ President George W. Bush, “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.”

⁵² President Truman declared, “The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement [specifically, the provision for WWII’s liberated nations to determine their own form of government], in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments...I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” President Harry S. Truman, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey” also known as “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine” (speech, Washington, DC, 12 March 1947). Bob Woodward notes of the president’s West Point address, “The goal was no less than to change the American mind-set the same way it had been changed at the beginning of the Cold War.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 131-132.

⁵³ In his 2002 State of the Union address, the president declared, “North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom. Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror...States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.” President George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” 29 January 2002. Regarding the president’s predisposition to confront Iraq, see, for instance: Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 1-4, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 12-15.

1998, the Congress had passed the Iraq Liberation Act, authorizing funds to train and equip “Free Iraq Forces.”⁵⁴ President Clinton signed the bill, but did not seriously pursue the option of creating an insurgent army for the pursuit of Saddam’s overthrow.⁵⁵ In effect, the political framework for action already existed. Further, although his link to terrorism was not particularly strong, the Iraqi dictator had produced and employed chemical weapons in the past, and had a well-known, rather long history of pining for nuclear weapons.⁵⁶ Not only was Saddam Hussein thought to be dangerous if left unchecked, but more than a few, perhaps most conspicuously Vice President Cheney, were also weary of “containing” Iraq.⁵⁷ A decade of policing no-fly

⁵⁴ In 1998, the Project for a New American Century, wrote to President Clinton to propose regime change in Iraq declaring, “The policy of ‘containment’ of Saddam Hussein has been steadily eroding over the past several months. Diplomacy is clearly failing...[and] removing Saddam Hussein from power...needs to become the aim of American foreign policy.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 17. The growing chorus calling for a new approach to Iraq prompted the passage of the legislation, which provided up to \$97 million for use in aided Iraqi opposition forces “to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein” and “promote the emergence of a democratic government.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 10,70, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 13-14. See also: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 71.

⁵⁵ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor note, “Eager to protect his right flank, Clinton signed it, though he had no intention of arming Iraqi insurgents and starting a proxy war.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 13. See also: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 421.

⁵⁶ Regarding the weak linkage between Saddam Hussein and terrorism in general, and al Qaeda in particular, former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft noted, “The only thing that Osama and Saddam Hussein have in common is they hate the United States. Saddam is an anti-clerical socialist. With all of Saddam’s capabilities there are very few terrorist footprints.” Quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 159. He later wrote, “It is beyond dispute that Saddam Hussein is a menace...But there is scant evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist organizations, and even less to the Sept. 11 attacks. Indeed Saddam’s goals have little in common with the terrorists who threaten us, and there is little incentive for him to make common cause with them.” Brent Scowcroft, “Don’t Attack Saddam,” in *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 August 2002, A12. President Bush made these comments regarding Saddam Hussein’s pursuit and use of weapons of mass destruction during his 2002 State of the Union address: “The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out the inspectors.” President George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, 29 January 2002.

⁵⁷ “For much of the last century, America’s defense relied on the cold war doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply, but new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence—the promise of massive retaliation against nations—means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.” President George W. Bush, “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.” The president later noted that the terrorist attacks altered his view of “Saddam Hussein’s capacity to create harm” and that “all his terrible features became much more threatening. Keeping Saddam in a box looked less and less feasible. He had used weapons of mass destruction in the past. He has created incredible instability in the neighborhood.” Quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 27. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 13.

zones over the country had been a drain, and placed a heavy burden on the United States military in particular; thus, ending the “frustrating, low-grade, undeclared war with Iraq,” ongoing since the 1991 Gulf War was eminently desirable.⁵⁸ In addition, the fact that the United States had a substantial presence in the region to conduct the patrols made the deployment of forces less problematic. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, most, if not all, expected an easy fight.⁵⁹ Although the United States military had made relatively short work of Iraqi forces in 1991, it spent the interim period addressing many of the issues that marred the performance, taking important steps such as improving all-weather precision attack through the addition of GPS-guided munitions.⁶⁰ Though Saddam Hussein’s SCUD missiles and chemical weapons would remain a concern until the opening battles of the war, virtually no one believed that the Iraqi military had actually improved during a decade marked by heavy economic sanctions.⁶¹

As with any military endeavor, the 2003 campaign to topple Saddam Hussein must ultimately be judged for its support of national policy. For the purposes of this study, it is neither necessary nor desirable to debate whether or not the endeavor suited the interests of the United States. Nor is it within the present scope to address the process that arrived at the doctrine of

⁵⁸ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 9. Ricks, *Fiasco*, 13-15, 17-18.

⁵⁹ Bob Woodward attributes the genesis of this assessment largely to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 21.

⁶⁰ The CENTCOM J-3, or Deputy for Operations, Major General Gene Renuart assessed the situation: “We had many more precision weapons. We’d been flying over Iraq for twelve years and had substantially degraded their air defenses. We had good ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], and so good situational awareness of their ground forces.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 34. See also: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 476-477.

⁶¹ General Franks notes in his memoirs, “All-source intelligence indicated that Republican Guard and SSO [Special Security Organization] troops arrayed around Baghdad were holding WMD [weapons of mass destruction], and we could expect them to use those weapon as we closed the noose on the capital—unless we got there before the Iraqis were ready.” Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 466. For his assessment of the Republican Guard, see: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 348-349. At one point Franks, recalling his tour as an assistant division commander in 1st Cavalry Division during the Gulf War, remarked, “You know, I fought these people before. I took my measure of them. I’m not worried.” Quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 115. Franks’ predecessor, Marine General Anthony Zinni noted, “We watched [Saddam’s] military shrink to less than half its size from the beginning of the Gulf War until the time I left command, not only shrinking in size, but dealing with obsolete equipment, ill-trained troops, dissatisfaction in the ranks, a lot of absenteeism. We didn’t see the Iraqi as a formidable force. We saw them as a decaying force.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 13.

preemption, to include any political maneuvering that inhered. Rather, it is necessary only to note that the President tasked CENTCOM to lead military operations to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Further, for preventative regime change in Iraq to be an effective object lesson to other potential or active state sponsors of terrorism, the war had to come off without a hitch. More specifically, much like Gulf War a decade earlier, Iraqi Freedom required a rapid, decisive military campaign followed by a relatively expeditious, unencumbered disengagement. Thus, on the eve of war, President Bush conferred with his military commanders, asking them, in turn, to confirm that they had everything they needed to win. After each replied that he did, the short pep rally ended with a rhetorical flourish officially ordering the commencement of combat operations: “For the peace of the world and the benefit and freedom of the Iraqi people, I hereby give the order to execute Operation Iraqi Freedom. May God Bless the troops. We’re ready to go. Let’s win it.”⁶² With the benefit of hindsight, the meaning of “winning” was a bit ambiguous.

Losing the Peace

Although in some respects an “accidental victory,” arguably the campaign that carved up the Republican Guard, planted the American flag in downtown Baghdad, and drove Saddam Hussein into hiding was, in many respects, an incredible feat, perhaps more impressive than the 100-hour war of 1991.⁶³ Despite the chorus of recriminations that rang out during the operational pause early in the drive to the Iraqi capital, a force less than half the size of that employed in Desert Storm “liberated” Iraq in just twenty-one days, its speed and decisiveness

⁶² Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 378-379. See also: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 431.

⁶³ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor title their chapter on the 7 April “Thunder Run” by Colonel Perkins’ 2nd Brigade Combat Team “The Accidental Victory,” alluding to the surprise bid for the city center by the 3rd Infantry Division units, and the unanticipated rapidity with which organized resistance collapse as a result. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 390.

drawing comparisons to the German Army's during the blitzkrieg to Paris in 1940.⁶⁴ In this regard, coalition forces unquestionably won the military battle for Baghdad, and did so in a fashion that ensured other alleged terror-sponsoring states would have to take notice. Deposing Saddam Hussein was, however, only part of the mission, and, in retrospect, perhaps the part least in doubt.⁶⁵ Despite a purported disdain for the interventionist foreign policy of the 1990s, and "nation-building" in particular, the Bush administration had, in a relatively short time period, undertaken two disparate wars to effect regime change in distant countries.⁶⁶ Regardless of the manner by which the president and his advisors seem to have convinced themselves otherwise, forcible regime change is *by definition* a nation-building project of the highest order.⁶⁷ When the

⁶⁴ News of the pause "shook the Pentagon." Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 317. Retired Gulf War commanders General Barry McCaffrey (24th Infantry Division) and Lieutenant General Thomas Rhame (1st Infantry Division) concluded that the pause demonstrated "there should have been a minimum of two heavy divisions and an armored cavalry regiment," and "we would have been much better off if we had another heavy division on the ground, and an armored cavalry regiment to deal with this mission in the rear." Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 119. Regarding the fracas, General Franks later remarked, "...some officers in the Pentagon—and the TV generals—were complaining that the Coalition didn't have *enough* troops on the ground to start the war. These 'strategists' obviously wanted a rerun of Desert Storm...more than a few...pundits were ready to declare the campaign lost, the plan irreparably flawed." (italics original) Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 475, 505. Regarding the relative size of the Gulf War and Iraq War forces, as well as comparison to the German campaign of 1940, which Iraqi Freedom purportedly replaced as the "gold standard of excellence" and made "fabled generals such as Erwin Rommel and Heinz Guderian seem positively incompetent by comparison," see: Max Boot, "The New American Way of War," in *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July/August 2003). Air component commander Lieutenant General Moseley reportedly reflected, "I've got mixed emotion about this. We've conquered a country today and for the first time we started it." His aide corrected: "Iraq had been 'liberated.'" The general replied, "You're right. That's a better way to describe it." Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 433.

⁶⁵ Jeffrey Record notes, "The military overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime was never in doubt as long as America's political will to win prevailed. Iraqi's (sic) military forces were doomed to defeat by an acute inferiority in every qualitative index of military power, including morale, discipline, training, doctrine, weaponry, organization, and intelligence." Jeffrey Record, *Dark Victory: America's Second War Against Iraq* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 90. Regarding qualitative overmatch, see also: Patricia Kime, "Speed, 'Jointness' Not Seen as Key Elements of U.S. Win: War College Rep Says Technologies, Iraqi Ineptness, Were Prime Factors," in *Sea Power* 46, no. 12 (December 2003), and Stephen D. Biddle, et al, "Toppling Saddam: Iraq and American Military Transformation" (monograph, US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, April 2004).

⁶⁶ Candidate George W. Bush remarked during a debate, "I hope that they [European nations] put the troops on the ground [in Kosovo], so that we can withdraw our troops and focus our military on fighting and winning war." Televised debate, October 12, 2000. Transcript available at: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec00/for-policy_10-12.html (accessed 8 May 2012). He also declared himself a "clear-eyed realist" in criticism of Clinton-era commitments to Somalia and the Balkans. Record, *Dark Victory*, 26. Shortly after his inauguration, the president reportedly remarked to a United States commander in Kosovo, "We've got to get you out of here." Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 14.

⁶⁷ One assessment noted, "Rebuilding Iraq is an enormous task. Iraq is a large country with historic divisions, exacerbated by a brutal and corrupt regime. The country's 24 million people and its infrastructure and service

crowd of Iraqis rushed the fallen statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square, the larger war for Iraq was, in effect, just beginning.

Having “broken” the erstwhile adversary nation, Secretary of State Colin Powell’s famous, if erroneously attributed, “Pottery Barn” rule applied—the United States now “owned” the task of reconstructing Iraq.⁶⁸ Quite simply, to walk away, leaving the cleanup to someone else, was never an option. Once the regime collapsed, the United States had no other choice but to see the job through to conclusion. In the first place, a weak and fractured Iraq would only serve to destabilize the Middle East and Southwest Asia, which is likely the primary reason President George H. W. Bush had eschewed regime change and its attendant entanglements during the United States’ first round with Saddam Hussein.⁶⁹ Perhaps more importantly, leaving Iraq in shambles or installing an illegitimate puppet regime would only serve to undermine

delivery mechanisms have suffered decades of severe degradation and under-investment.” Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 525.

⁶⁸ Bob Woodward, noting, “Privately, Powell and [Deputy Secretary of State Richard] Armitage called this the Pottery Barn rule: You break it, you own it,” attributed the notion to Secretary of State Powell, who cautioned the president, “You will become the government until you get a new government. You are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people. You will own all their hopes, aspirations, and problems. You’ll own it all.” Quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 150. The idea actually originated with Thomas Friedman who wrote in his column: “The first rule of any Iraq invasion is the pottery store rule: You break it, you own it. We break Iraq, we own Iraq—and we own the primary responsibility for rebuilding a country of 23 million people that has more in common with Yugoslavia than with any other Arab nation.” Thomas L. Friedman, “Present at...What?” *The New York Times*, 12 February 2003. Powell later explained: “It was shorthand for the profound reality that if we take out another country’s government by force, we instantly become the new government, responsible for governing the country and for the security of its people until we can turn all that over to a new, stable and functioning government. For me the rule is all about personal responsibility; when you are in charge you have to take charge. The rule has nothing to do with Pottery Barn or any other store.” Quoted in Tony Capaccio and Roxana Tiron, “Colin Powell Says Iraq ‘Blot’ Teaches Need for Skepticism,” *Bloomberg News BusinessWeek* 4 May 2012 <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-05-03/colin-powell-says-iraq-blot-teaches-need-for-skepticism#p1> (accessed 8 May 2012).

⁶⁹ Jeffrey Record writes, “When the [George H. W. Bush] administration looked at Saddam Hussein, it saw an Arab Hitler, but when it looked at a march on Baghdad, it saw a desert Vietnam—an Arab quagmire in which disintegrated central political authority in Iraq mandated an open-ended U.S. occupation of the country as an alternative to Iranian intervention.” Record, *Dark Victory*, 2. Secretary of State James Baker later recalled the “overriding strategic concern” with deposing Saddam Hussein was “to avoid what we often referred to as the Lebanonization of Iraq, which we believed would create a geopolitical nightmare.” James A. Baker, III, and Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 435.

further the credibility of the West in the eyes of Arab nations in the region.⁷⁰ At the same time, however, the United States needed to ensure that the government replacing Saddam Hussein was not just friendly and cooperative, but that it also upheld the democratic ideals of the President Bush's lofty prewar rhetoric.⁷¹ Put another way, the object lesson that the United States sought depended not only on a convincing military campaign, but also on the establishment of a legitimate, pro-American regime that could maintain an effective balance of power in the region. The success of the latter task rested wholly upon the effectiveness of Phase IV "Stability Operations."⁷²

Although specific assessments of the adequacy of preparation for the postwar period vary over a spectrum from marginal to woefully inadequate, the general consensus among commentators is that the United States fumbled its immediate postwar task.⁷³ In retrospect,

⁷⁰ Commenting on potential Arab backlash in response to expansion of the 1991 Gulf War, Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh aver, "Taking Baghdad could have led to a political quagmire in that any imposed replacement for Saddam could well have been perceived as yet another brutal interference by 'Western imperialism in their domestic affairs.'" Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 413.

⁷¹ After meeting with other coalition leaders for the "Atlantic Summit," President Bush released a statement saying, in part, "In these circumstances, we would undertake a solemn obligation to help the Iraqi people build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbors. The Iraqi people deserve to be lifted from insecurity and tyranny, and freed to determine for themselves the future of their country. We envisage a unified Iraq with its territorial integrity respected. All the Iraqi people—its rich mix of Sunni and Shiite Arabs, Kurds, Turkomen, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and all others—should enjoy freedom, prosperity, and equality in a united country. We will support the Iraqi people's aspirations for a representative government that upholds human rights and the rule of law as cornerstones of democracy." President George W. Bush, "Statement of the Atlantic Summit: A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People" (press release, 16 March 2003). In announcing the start of the war, the president remarked, "We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, for their great civilization, and for the religious faiths they practice. We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people." President George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on Iraq," (radio and television address, Washington, DC, 19 March 2003).

⁷² Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 393.

⁷³ For instance: "The coalition's success in joint warfare was not matched by its success in conflict termination, peacemaking, and transition to nation building...Many of the problems and limitations...during and after the war...were the result of U.S. failure before the war to plan properly for conflict termination." Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 496-496. "The transition to peace and nation-building in Iraq did not get off to a good start. With the cessation of major combat operations it quickly became clear that the administration had paid far more attention to planning the war than it had to planning the peace." Record, *Dark Victory*, 117-118. "From late spring to midsummer 2003 was a time of meandering and drift for the U.S. occupation of Iraq. It took months for incorrect assumptions to begin to be discarded and for commanders to recognize that large numbers of US. Troops were going to be in Iraq for some time." Ricks, *Fiasco*, 149. According to Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, "Bush received a comprehensive briefing on the postwar plans for Iraq on March 10 and 12, 2003, barely a week before the

officials charged with oversight of Iraq's reconstruction made some questionable decisions in the aftermath of the regime's collapse, such as summary disbandment of the Iraqi army and indiscriminate de-Ba'athification of the government bureaucracy.⁷⁴ These actions were, however, largely outside of the military's purview and, to some extent, merely served to exacerbate a situation already dire in its implications for the success of the endeavor. A widespread lack of basic security permitted lawlessness and chaos to flourish, and allowed regime fanatics and extra-national terrorists to occupy the power vacuum created by Saddam Hussein's fall.⁷⁵ Whatever goodwill may have existed among the Iraqi people in the wake of his overthrow soon evaporated in a cloud of fear and suspicion as jubilation quickly gave way to bewilderment at the deteriorating situation.⁷⁶ Given Saddam Hussein's strategy to entrust a significant portion of Iraq's defense to irregular forces, an insurgency may have been unavoidable. The failure to

war...The war planning took about eighteen months. The postwar planning began in earnest only a couple of months before the invasion. Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Tommy Franks spent most of their time and energy on the least demanding task—defeating Saddam's weakened conventional forces—and the least amount on the most demanding—rehabilitation of and security for the new Iraq.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 503. A far more blunt assessment: “In just three months the world has witnessed a dizzying blur of events that neatly captures the paradox of US power at the start of the 21st century. America's far from concluded engagement with Iraq has demonstrated both the superpower's staggering prowess at winning wars and its equally remarkable ineptitude at securing the peace. Twenty-one days of shock and awe that featured textbook performances of high-technology weaponry, strategic genius and soldierly professionalism have been followed by 75 days in which American civilian administrators and hapless soldiers have stumbled and bumbled around Iraq like under-motivated Keystone Cops.” Gerard Baker, “With troops under fire and the costs mounting, does the US have the will for the long haul in Iraq?” in *Financial Times* (London Edition), 30 June 2003, 17.

⁷⁴ See, for instance: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 158-166. “The combination of all these moves—a prolonged foreign occupation that was built on de-Baathification, dissolution of the military, and economic upheaval—radically undercut social stability and built opposition to the American presence.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 165.

⁷⁵ Anthony Cordesman notes, “The fact remains, however, that many of the problems the United States encountered were caused by the failure of it and its allies to provide adequate security, prevent looting, and take immediate action to ensure continuity of government.” Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 494.

⁷⁶ “Reports of carjackings, assaults and forced evictions grew...adding to an impression that recent improvements in security were evaporating. Fires burned anew in several Iraqi government buildings and looting resumed at one of former president Saddam Hussein's palaces. The sound of gunfire rattled during the night; many residents said they were keeping their children home from school during the day. Even traffic was affected, as drivers ignored rules in the absence of Iraqi police, only to crash and cause tie-ups.” Peter Slevin, “Baghdad Anarchy Spurs Call For Help; Iraqis, U.S. Officials Want More Troops” in *The Washington Post*, 30 June 2003, A1.

provide a modicum of security, however, created “a climate of continuing violence” in the immediate aftermath, making the nation a tinderbox through which it quickly spread.⁷⁷

A study at the United States Army War College completed shortly before the invasion, contained a warning about the difficulties that would certainly inhere in Saddam’s forced ouster: “Iraq has a strong tradition of instability and violence in resolving political disputes. The instability was brought under control and violence institutionalized only after Saddam Hussein achieved power and established a regime of unprecedented brutality. Pre-Saddam instability may emerge in the aftermath of the dictator’s removal.”⁷⁸ After reviewing major reconstruction efforts dating to WWII, the study authors developed a phased approach for the “military occupation” of Iraq, replete with a lengthy list of specific tasks for armed forces.⁷⁹ “Secure the state” headed the list of critical postwar tasks since virtually every other reconstruction effort depended upon basic physical security.⁸⁰ In its absence, for instance, looting devastated the country far more than the carefully orchestrated military campaign. As one observer noted, “Iraqi government infrastructure, oil equipment and even nuclear research sites were just stripped bare. As a result, we are not just starting at zero in Iraq. We are staring below zero.”⁸¹ To make matters worse, lawlessness and widespread violence hampered the delivery of

⁷⁷ Quote from Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 504. Gulf War veteran retired Army Major General William Nash noted, “The stability of liberated areas is clearly an issue. The post war transition has to begin immediately in the wake of the attacking forces.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 120. One commentator remarked, “It’s so elemental from looking at dozens of conflicts; you can’t do anything without security.” Quoted in Peter Slevin and Vernon Loeb, “Plan to Secure Postwar Iraq Faulted; Pentagon Ignored Lesson from Decade of Peacekeeping, Critics Say,” in *The Washington Post*, 19 May 2003, A1.

⁷⁸ Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Challenges and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 2.

⁷⁹ Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 2.

⁸⁰ Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 3. Jeffrey Record notes, “Since order was *the* precondition for the accomplishment of all other occupation tasks, the failure to establish it in Baghdad and other parts of the country delayed implementation of such critical jobs as restoring electricity, providing potable water sources, and distributing humanitarian relief supplies.” Record, *Dark Victory*, 120.

⁸¹ Thomas L. Friedman, “Bad Planning,” in *The New York Times*, 25 June 2003, A25.

humanitarian aid and impeded efforts to repair infrastructure and restore basic services.⁸² With disquieting prescience, the authors of the reconstruction study had cautioned, “The possibility of terrorism being directed against occupation forces probably will increase over time, and even a small number of terrorists can be expected to create serious problems for an occupation force. A popular uprising against U.S. troops is much less likely than a terrorist campaign, but is still possible if the occupation is poorly managed.”⁸³ Indeed, whatever deterrent message the dazzling campaign to take Baghdad might have provided to state sponsors of terrorism was quickly drowned out by the United States’ “poorly managed” occupation, which failed to win the peace as decisively as the war had been won.

The Agency View: The System Worked⁸⁴

By most accounts, it seems rather clear that the coalition, and the United States in particular, had insufficient troops on the ground to stabilize Iraq in the immediate aftermath of combat operations.⁸⁵ Further, those troops were neither trained nor prepared for the chaotic

⁸² A news story shortly after the president’s 1 May declaration of the end of combat operations summed up the problem: “Violence...has frightened Baghdad residents and severely handicapped reconstruction since the Hussein government collapsed April 9 in the face of a U.S. invasion. Bank managers have remained too frightened to open their doors. Police officers have not returned to street patrols because they, too, are frightened. Foreign aid groups and investors have expressed reluctance to put employees or capital at risk. Until there is security, Iraqis and American advisers have insisted, there can be no postwar rebirth.” Peter Slevin, “Hussein Loyalists Blamed for Chaos: U.S. Commander Vows to Step Up Baghdad Patrols,” in *The Washington Post*, 14 May 2003, A1. One aid worker lamented, “The violence is escalating. We have restricted staff movement for their own safety. What does it say about the situation when criminals can move freely about the city and humanitarian aid workers cannot?” Quoted in Slevin, “Baghdad Anarchy Spurs Call for Help.”

⁸³ Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 2.

⁸⁴ Subtitle inspired by Leslie H. Gelb and Richard K. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1979). Acknowledgement goes to Dr. Jim Forsyth for the guidance and mentorship to arrive at this key revelation.

⁸⁵ Virtually all accounts of the war and its aftermath highlight the dearth of troops. For instance: “In military terms, in April and May, the U.S. military lost the initiative—that is, it stopped being the side in the conflict that was driving events, acting at the time and place of its choosing...the Pentagon’s leadership failed to adjust, most notably by sending more troops.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 146-148, and “But after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003, the requirements were reversed: mass, not speed, was the requisite for sealing the victory...To gain control of the Sunni Triangle and pursue the Fedayeen, Baath Party militia, and enemy formations before they had a chance to catch their breath, rearm, and regroup, the United States needed more boots on the ground.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 500. Others struck the same chord. Former CENTCOM commander General Anthony Zinni noted, “When the statue came down, that moment, we could have done some great things. The problem is, we had insufficient forces to

policing action they faced.⁸⁶ One commentator summed up the requirement: “To effect regime change, U.S. forces must be positively in control of the enemy’s territory and population as rapidly and continuously as possible.”⁸⁷ The party line among critics holds that the coalition was initially unable to provide the security necessary to win the peace, in part, because CENTCOM failed to plan for Phase IV, or had given the postwar period far less attention than the plan to take Baghdad, if planners had considered it at all.⁸⁸ While the relative weight of effort certainly seems to have favored planning for combat operations, this line of reasoning is misleading.⁸⁹

secure and freeze the situation and capitalize on that moment.” Major General John Baptiste, who command the Army’s 1st Infantry Division during its time in Iraq, noted, “We set ourselves up for what happened when we violated two principles that are absolutely fundamental for success. One is unity of command. The other is mass.” Both quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 146-147.

⁸⁶ V Corps commander General Wallace reflected, “I give no credit to the politicians for detailed Phase Four (the reconstruction of Iraq) planning. But I don’t think that we, the military, did a very good job of anticipating [that] either.” Lieutenant General William Wallace interview for the documentary, *The Invasion of Iraq*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System’s Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/invasion/interviews/wallace.html> (accessed 11 May 2012). “I remember looking through the sights on my tank at people and trying to determine if they were hostile or not,” recalled a young platoon leader, who did not confront looters because “it was not our mission at the time.” A general officer recalled, “I was on a street corner in Baghdad...watching some guys carry a sofa by—and it never occurred to me that I was going to be the guy to go get that sofa back.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 150, 152.

⁸⁷ Frederick W. Kagan, “War and Aftermath,” *Policy Review* 120 (August and September 2003): 27.

⁸⁸ A review led by former defense secretary James Schlesinger concluded: “In Iraq, there was not only a failure to plan for a major insurgency, but also to quickly and adequately adapt to the insurgency that followed after major combat operations.” James R. Schlesinger, Harold R. Brown, Tillie K. Fowler, and Charles A. Horner, *Final Report of the Independent Panel To Review DoD Detention Operations* (Arlington, VA: Independent Panel To Review DoD Detention Operations, August 2004), 11. Interestingly, some of the harshest criticism of “higher headquarters”—i.e. CENTCOM—along these lines originated within the Army. The 3rd Infantry Division after-action report noted: “Many of the issues...resulted from the lack of a plan for Phase IV operations. 3ID (M) [3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized)] transitioned into Phase IV SASO [stability and support operations] with no plan from higher headquarters. There was no guidance for restoring order in Baghdad, creating an interim government, hiring government and essential services employees, and ensuring the judicial system was operational.” US Army Third Infantry Division (Mechanized), “After Action Report Operation IRAQI FREEDOM,” (report, July 2003), 281. Available online at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2012). Isaiah Wilson, a planner with the 101st Airborne Division who later served on the Army’s Operation Iraqi Freedom Study Group, remarked, “In the two or three months of ambiguous transition, U.S. forces slowly lost the momentum and the initiative they had gained over an off-balance enemy...what we were calling at the time, Phase Four Transition—we had clear concept plans for that—but nothing resembling what we call in the military, what we consider and define as an operationalized plan where...those concepts are fleshed out, and...resources are put against the tasks that are required to bring about the full completion of a campaign.” Quote from: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 149 and Lieutenant Colonel Isaiah Wilson interview by Maria Hinojosa for Public Broadcasting System’s *NOW on the News*, 19 January 2007. Transcript available at: <http://www.pbs.org/now/news/303-transcript.html> (accessed 11 May 2012).

⁸⁹ Planning for the invasion, in some form or fashion, had been ongoing since the fall of 2001. The “Iraq Postwar Planning Office,” headed by retired Army Lieutenant General Jay Garner, officially stood up on January 20, 2003. See: Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York: Simon and Schuster; 2006), 112.

One can arrive at the notion of negligence in planning for stability operations only from the perspective of hindsight—that is, with the knowledge that the actual situation required more of the troops than they were prepared to provide.⁹⁰ That professional military planners would neglect Phase IV, intentionally or otherwise, is implausible and does not stand up to scrutiny. It is more appropriate to say that the United States, and CENTCOM in turn, planned for the *wrong* Phase IV—an altogether different indictment.

Arguably, there were two views of the situation that would confront the coalition in effecting the ouster of Saddam Hussein. In the first, optimistic view, the coalition would kill, capture, or set to flight the Iraqi dictator and his cronies. Once that happened, the Iraqi military would formally surrender, but remain more or less in control.⁹¹ Together with jubilant Iraqi civilians, the adversary soldiers would thank the coalition for lifting the weight of oppression and commit to building a new, better Iraq.⁹² In the second, decidedly pessimistic view that had prevailed since Desert Storm, regime change in Iraq required a war to subdue and occupy an unstable, decrepit nation of more than twenty million people united only by the oppressive hand of an authoritarian regime, many of whom were not necessarily fond of the West.⁹³ In general, the course of war and its aftermath defies prediction. Policy and planning must, however, be based upon some assessment of the conditions one expects to encounter. With the benefit of

⁹⁰ Thomas Ricks alleges, “Franks and his staff would spend over a year figuring out how to take down a reeling, hollow regime, and give almost no serious thought to how to replace it. They would focus almost all their energies on the easier of the two tasks, with disastrous consequences for the U.S. position in in postwar Iraq.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 33.

⁹¹ According to Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, “The Bush administration was not only confident that it would quickly defeat the Iraqi military but also counted on Iraqi forces to work under American supervision and even to help police the occupation.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 105

⁹² See, for instance: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 21, 74.

⁹³ The invasion plan on the shelf at the time of the 11 September attacks called for more than 400,000 troops to “freeze things in place,” and estimated an occupation of as long as ten years based upon CENTCOM’s assessments of Iraq’s fragility. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 26. Brent Scowcroft averred that invasion of Iraq “very likely would have to be followed by a large-scale, long-term military occupation,” and “could turn the whole region into a cauldron, and thus destroy the war on terrorism.” See: Scowcroft, “Don’t Attack Saddam,” and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 47. Even Secretary Rumsfeld considered a troublesome postwar environment at least possible. Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel; 2011), 480-481.

hindsight, it is clear that the pessimistic view of postwar Iraq was more accurate.⁹⁴ Clearly, additional troops, trained and prepared for peacekeeping, would have helped.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the more optimistic, and indeed antithetical, assessment that Iraqis *in toto* would greet the coalition as liberators dominated.⁹⁶ If the expectation, however idealistic and perhaps contrary to experience, is a short combat operation that merely unhinders a fully functioning country, then a dearth of foot soldiers and minimal planning for maintenance of law and order make sense.⁹⁷ Quite simply, the enterprise became convinced that a large peacekeeping force was unnecessary.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Much as the Army War College reconstruction study had warned, “pre-Saddam instability” emerged “in the aftermath of the dictator’s removal.” Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 2.

⁹⁵ A RAND report concluded that U.S. forces “were largely mechanized or armored forces, well suited to waging major battles but not to restoring civil order. That task would have been better carried out, ideally, by military police or, acceptably, by light infantry trained in urban combat.” Quoted in Michael R. Gordon, “Army Buried Study Faulting Iraq Planning” in *The New York Times*, 11 February 2008. Major General Carl Strock, an Army Engineer and the deputy on the postwar team, noted, “We simply did not have enough forces for a city of six or seven million. The forces were stretched too thin and the troops on the ground often did not understand the significance of the stuff they were guarding.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 469.

⁹⁶ General Strock described the expectation for a “*Wizard of Oz* moment” after “the wicked dictator was deposed” in which “throng of cheering Iraqis would hail their liberators and go back to work under the tutelage of Garner’s postwar organization and its teams of advisers attached to the Iraqi ministries—in some cases, no more than a single individual.” Allegedly, the CIA had been so confident of a warm welcome that someone proposed passing out American flags for the Iraqi’s to wave as the troops rolled by. Marine Major General Rusty Blackman recalled, “At first, it was going to be American flags, and then it was going to be Iraqi flags. The flags are probably still sitting in a bag somewhere. One of the towns where they said we would be welcomed was Nasiriyah, where the Marines faced some of the toughest fighting in the war.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 136-7, 463. Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz, after meeting with the Iraqi diaspora in the United States, remarked: “I am reasonably certain that they will greet us as liberators, and that will help us keep requirements down. We don’t know what the requirements will be. But we can say with reasonable confidence that the notion of hundreds of thousands of American troops is way off the mark.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 98.

⁹⁷ National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice recalled, “The concept was that we would defeat the army, but the institution would hold, everything from ministries to police forces. You would be able to bring new leadership but we were going to keep the body in place.” Regarding infrastructure, General Strock recalled, “Our whole focus on our reconstruction effort was really not to go in and fix this country, but to fix what we broke. And we sort of made the assumption that the country was functioning beforehand. I had a dramatic underestimation of the condition of the Iraqi infrastructure, which turned out to be one of our biggest problems.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 150, 463.

⁹⁸ Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz testified in response to suggestions that large numbers of troops might be required, “There has been a good deal of comment—some of it quite outlandish—about what our postwar requirements might be in Iraq. Some of the higher end predictions that we have been hearing recently, such as the notion that it will take several hundred thousand U.S. troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq, are wildly off the mark...it is hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam’s security forces and his army—hard to

From this perspective, the relative paucity of troops and lack of preparation appear to stem not from negligence, but rather from faulty assumptions. If one expects a benign environment, then a large peacekeeping force is unnecessary, and planning for a rapid “transition to civil authorities” after the fall of Baghdad is eminently prudent.⁹⁹ In fact, in a benign environment, a large residual military presence would be wholly undesirable, as the presence of tanks and armed soldiers connotes occupation rather than liberation.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, had actual conditions matched the ideal, considerable laurels likely would have accrued to planners for their prescience. The intent here is not to absolve commanders and planners for failure to set the conditions for winning the peace. Rather, to uncover the cause of the inefficacy, it is necessary to ask the correct question. Thus, instead of seeking to determine why planners failed to plan for Phase IV (which was not the case), inquiry must aim to uncover why the planners were so far off the mark with regard to assessment of the postwar environment.¹⁰¹

At the policy level, the Iraq War is conspicuous for the lack of divergence from the sanguine expectations for the postwar environment. Several raised concerns, but no one seriously challenged this central premise. For example, former CENTCOM commander General Anthony Zinni and Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki subscribed to the pessimistic

imagine.” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 98. Rumsfeld echoed his subordinate’s assessment, describing the notion of a large peacekeeping force as “ludicrous.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 103.

⁹⁹ The Schlesinger report noted, “The October 2002 CENTCOM war plan presupposed that relatively benign stability and security operations would precede a handover to Iraq’s authorities.” James R. Schlesinger, et al, *Final Report of the Independent Panel To Review DoD Detention Operations*, 11. Franks assumed a quick handoff to the State Department, which would oversee the reconstruction. See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 68.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the Army War college study on postwar reconstruction makes this very point: “U.S. forces therefore need to complete occupation tasks as quickly as possible and must also help improve the daily life of ordinary Iraqis before popular goodwill dissipates. Even the most benevolent occupation will confront increasing Arab nationalist and religious concerns as time passes.” Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 2. Franks’ successor General John Abizaid put it more bluntly, “We are an antibody in their society...It would be crazy to keep the U.S. government in charge for too long.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 163.

¹⁰¹ Phase IV was, for example, a topic at one of CENTCOM’s many commander’s conferences dedicated to war planning. CENTCOM planned a two- to three-month “stabilization” period followed by an eighteen- to twenty-four-month “recovery” period, making “maximum use of Iraqi resources” such as the police and military to allow U.S. forces to drawdown rather quickly. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 68, 520. See also: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 110.

viewpoint, highlighting in testimony the difficulties inherent in Saddam's overthrow, as well as the large number of troops that would be necessary to stabilize the country upon his fall.¹⁰² Both were cast as unimaginative and trapped by anachronistic thinking, quickly marginalizing their influence.¹⁰³ Among members of the Bush cabinet, Secretary of State Colin Powell seems to have been the lone dissenter, not necessarily arguing against the endeavor, but definitely urging the president to take a clear-eyed look at the difficulties that were sure to inhere in the invasion of Iraq.¹⁰⁴ Commentators portray Powell as an outsider in the process until he finally endorsed the prevailing view.¹⁰⁵ The rest either ardently advocated the move or declined to raise any substantive objection. Notable among the proponents of invasion was Vice President Cheney, who, as Secretary of Defense during the 1991 Gulf War, was far more skeptical of the prospects.¹⁰⁶

The course of this classic case of groupthink is rather straightforward.¹⁰⁷ A potent mix of outrage and idealism spawned the doctrine of preemptive regime change. Confronted with two diametrically opposed assessments of the aftermath, toppling Saddam Hussein to serve as an object lesson in support of this *declared national policy* appeared a profitable venture only from the idealistic perspective. Put another way, the decision to invade Iraq was inextricably tied to

¹⁰² See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 26, 102, and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 50-51, 86-87, 96-100.

¹⁰³ See, for instance: Andrew J. Bacevich, "Trigger Man," in *American Conservative* 4 (6 June 2005), 11-14.

¹⁰⁴ Bob Woodward describes Powell's meeting with Bush in August 2002, during which he cautioned that the war would "suck the oxygen out of everything." Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 148-153. See also: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 71-72.

¹⁰⁵ Powell and his deputy Richard Armitage lamented that they spent much of the run up to the war "in the refrigerator." Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 149. See also: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 39, 502.

¹⁰⁶ Making the rounds on television news shows, Cheney remarked confidently, "My belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 151. On Cheney's reversal, see also: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 50.

¹⁰⁷ All of Irving Janis' seven "major defects in decision-making" can be found in the prelude to the Iraq War as a result of a "concurrence-seeking tendency that interfered with critical thinking" and led to failure "to work out contingency plans to cope with foreseeable setbacks that could endanger the overall success of the chosen course of action." Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1982), 9-10.

the notion that the endeavor would be relatively trouble-free.¹⁰⁸ Although blindingly tautological in *post facto* analysis, this circular logic propelled the process. Suggestion that either overthrowing the regime or building a new Iraq would be difficult inherently questioned the notion of guaranteed success.¹⁰⁹ This, in turn, undermined the case for Iraq as an object lesson, and ultimately challenged the course of action the president had effectively already chosen.¹¹⁰ The only way to reconcile the situation was to discard the conflicting viewpoint and ignore evidence contrary to the chosen path.¹¹¹ Quite simply, preemptive regime change, object lessons for state sponsors of terror, and the invasion of Iraq were inextricably enmeshed. For the military, this meant that the notion of a benign postwar environment was, in effect, inseparable from the assignment to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Undergirded by the notion of a weak adversary and idealistic assessments of prospects for the peace, the planning effort iteratively

¹⁰⁸ One general later recalled, “The people around the president...*knew* that postwar Iraq would be easy and would be a catalyst for change in the Middle East. They were making simplistic assumptions and refused to put them to the test...because they already had the answer, and they wouldn’t subject their hypothesis to examination.” (italics original) Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 99.

¹⁰⁹ For instance, General Shinseki’s troop estimate “amounted to a broad attack on Wolfowitz’s entire approach to the Middle East.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 98. As Andrew Bacevich notes, “Given that the requisite additional troops simply did not exist, Shinseki was implicitly arguing that the U.S. armed services were inadequate for the enterprise. Further he was implying that invasion was likely to produce something other than a crisp, tidy decision... ‘Liberation’ would leave loose ends. Unexpected and costly complications would abound.” Bacevich, “Trigger Man.”

¹¹⁰ A RAND report commissioned and allegedly “buried” by the Army observed: “Building public support for any pre-emptive or preventative war is inherently challenging, since by definition, action is being taken before the threat has fully manifested itself. Any serious discussion of the costs and challenges of reconstruction might undermine efforts to build that support.” Gordon, “Army Buried Study Faulting Iraq Planning” A recurring theme runs throughout commentary on Iraqi Freedom that the invasion was from the start a foregone conclusion. CIA intelligence officer Paul Pillar noted, “It was certainly clear fairly early in 2002 to just about anyone working in intelligence on Iraq issues that we were going to war, that the decision had essentially been made...There was a natural bias in favor of intelligence production that supported, rather than undermined, policies already set.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 134. See also: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 48,51, 67.

¹¹¹ General Garner, originally the head of the reconstruction team, later recalled, “Politically, we’d made a decision that we’d turn [control] over to the Iraqis in June [of 2003]. So why have a Phase IV?” Quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 110. Anecdotes abound in which various commanders, planners, and analysts predict with great accuracy precisely the events that would later transpire during the invasion and its aftermath. One example of this involves the notion of relying on the Iraqi police. “It’s like Panama,” a CENTCOM intelligence officer told General Garner, head of postwar reconstruction, referring to the disappearance of the local police forces in the wake of the 1989 operation to topple Manuel Noriega. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 118-119.

whittled the size of the invading force down from the Gulf War-style, armor-laden juggernaut for which CENTCOM's on-the-shelf war plan called.¹¹²

Hinging the plan for Iraqi Freedom on favorable projections and best-case assumptions, however, occasioned an enormous amount of risk given the magnitude of the endeavor, as actual events aptly demonstrated.¹¹³ Nevertheless, commanders and planners seem to have subscribed to such optimistic assessments rather readily. This was an extraordinary about-face for a traditionally risk-averse military with a seemingly inexorable penchant for presuming the worst in virtually all situations. The acceptance of risk in this manner is perhaps even more remarkable given that the military had spent the better part of the past decade attempting to quell cauldrons of discontent in various spots around the globe—including *Iraq*. Put another way, during the planning and execution, those who would ultimately suffer the consequences if things did not go as planned did not or could not mount an effective challenge to the prevailing view; nor did they introduce a compelling alternative perspective. This subtly changes the central question, making the situation ideal for analysis via the agency framework: Why did the military, and CENTCOM in particular, align with the idealistic viewpoint and maintain this alignment to the point of failure, even though doing so was, arguably, completely out of character?

The major combat phase of Iraqi Freedom is also conspicuous for its lack of substantive divergent aims. There were numerous inefficiencies that likely hindered efficacy to some degree. The Army and Marines fought two distinct battles to reach and take Baghdad, in essence, dividing Southern Iraq and the Iraqi capital along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, respectively.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Regarding Operational Plan 1003-98, see: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 26.

¹¹³ As Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage put it, "We had an extraordinarily high-risk strategy." Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 70.

¹¹⁴ For a description of the plan for actually taking control of the city, see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 331-332, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 79-80. For graphical depiction of the V Corps-I MEF boundaries see: Fontenot, et al, *On Point*, 48, 296. Major advances within the city are depicted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, xxvi.

As a result, the planned siege was somewhat uncoordinated.¹¹⁵ Further, the Army and Marines employed significantly different control measures for tactical air support, imposing additional workload on the air component, and increasing the risk of fratricide.¹¹⁶ Placement of the FSCL by V Corps to enable deep attack by its Apache helicopters hindered fixed-wing attacks to some extent.¹¹⁷ Once again, the air component commander would not have unfettered control over all of the assembled air power. In fact, in terms of jointness, when viewed from this perspective, Iraqi Freedom seems to have been an insignificant departure from Desert Storm. Interestingly, no one seemed to mind, and finger pointing among the services was muted, if not absent altogether. More importantly, such issues were not the cause of a major inefficacy as they were in 1991. In other words, service self-interests did not undermine a campaign that ultimately accomplished its objective rather handily by taking Baghdad and, in effect, deposing Saddam Hussein in short order.

Arguably, the plan aligned with the Marines' preferences rather well. A hard-charging attack utilizing combined-arms maneuver warfare to seize territory was wholly in line with their doctrine and mindset. Although listed as a supporting attack, the fact that I MEF would be going to Baghdad meant the Marines would have the prominent role denied them in the Gulf War. In agency parlance, the preference gap was narrow, and the Marines worked enthusiastically. The Navy appears to have been largely indifferent. There would be no significant blockade or other maritime combat operations. Nonetheless, in addition to making a significant contribution to the

¹¹⁵ Jeff Vandenbussche notes that the Marines refused to task-organize under V Corps for the final push into Baghdad, citing a desire to maintain the integrity of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). Jeffrey L. Vandenbussche, "Centering the Ball: Command and Control in Joint Warfare" (masters thesis, Air University School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2007), 6.

¹¹⁶ Vandenbussche, "Centering the Ball," 6, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 323.

¹¹⁷ See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 323, and, Vandenbussche, "Centering the Ball," 6.

air campaign with its TLAMs, the Navy would get three carrier battle groups into the action.¹¹⁸ Further, following their success in Afghanistan, Navy special operations forces would also make a significant contribution to the Iraq war.¹¹⁹ In short, the role carved out for maritime forces provided sufficient incentive for the Navy to work.¹²⁰ The Air Force was not entirely happy with the ultimate decision to forego a preparatory bombing campaign.¹²¹ However, due to the fact that the air component already controlled much of the Iraqi airspace, and had, in fact, been conducting a systematic air campaign for the better part of a year, there was little fodder to mount a substantive challenge to the decision.¹²² Further, General Franks permitted the air component to plan a “shock and awe” attack on Baghdad and the regime, to be executed once the ground war was underway.¹²³ Its preferences largely met, the Air Force worked as well.

Alignment with the principal’s intent does not, however, explain satisfactorily working by the Army or the muting of friction between the services. The Army was not confident that it had enough troops and firepower for the mission.¹²⁴ On the whole, Soldiers preferred to deploy a larger force and conduct a more methodical campaign. Two factors explain why the Army worked in the face of this preference gap. In exchange for acquiescence on the makeup of forces it would employ as well as the overall outline of plan, General Franks granted the land component—for all intents and purpose the Army—significant leeway in determining the tactics

¹¹⁸ See: Walter J. Boyne, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: What Went Right, What Went Wrong, and Why* (New York: Forge; 2003), 173-174, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 175.

¹¹⁹ See, for instance: Boyne, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 123.

¹²⁰ Additional contributions are outlined in: Boyne, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 134-137.

¹²¹ For instance: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 45, 89.

¹²² Responding to increasing Iraqi attacks on aircraft patrolling the southern no-fly zone, in June 2002, CENTCOM began a systematic campaign to degrade Iraqi command and control capabilities. Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 139. General Moseley would later remark, “We became a little more aggressive based on them shooting more at us, which allowed us to respond more...It provided a set of opportunities and options for General Franks” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 69-70, and Michael R. Gordon, “After The War: Preliminaries; U.S. Air Raids In '02 Prepared For War in Iraq” in *The New York Times*, 20 July 2003.

¹²³ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 439-440, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 208-212.

¹²⁴ Thomas Ricks describes an “unhappy Army” planning for war. Major General James Thurman, McKiernan’s deputy in the land component, put it succinctly, “We wanted more combat power on the ground.” Ricks, *Fiasco*, 68, 74-76.

to employ within those confines.¹²⁵ In short, the principal had employed a common control technique in giving the agent purview over the *how* in exchange for allegiance to the *what*. This is the same basic technique used by the Department of Defense in building its budget.¹²⁶ The department provides each of the services a spending cap representing its portion of the obligation authority, but leaves the decisions about how to spend that portion to the service. This technique also helps explain the absence of debilitating rivalry. Franks allowed the services a measure of autonomy in less significant areas, but ones that, nonetheless, played to service self-interests and imperatives.¹²⁷ For example, he permitted the continued practice of maintaining disparate component headquarters, and employed technology, such as video teleconferencing, to stitch them together.¹²⁸ In return, the services, in effect, allowed CENTCOM to dictate how and where their efforts would fit together. The net result was an effective monitoring regime that Franks reinforced with threat of sanction. He warned, “The childish behavior we saw in Afghanistan will not be repeated.”¹²⁹ His *de facto* firing of General Mikolashek, the land component commander in Afghanistan and McKiernan’s predecessor, provided an apt object lesson.¹³⁰

The image that emerges is a principal with tight control over its agents. General Franks kept a close hold on the overall plan, orchestrating a large portion of the effort at CENTCOM headquarters. He dictated the overall outline of the plan and the size of the force. Having done so, he and his planners effectively carved out specific roles for the services and components that not only contributed to the attack, but also expressly aligned with each of their preferences and,

¹²⁵ According to Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, in the final analysis, *Cobra II*, as the plan for the ground invasion came to be named, was largely the product of land component planners. See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 79-80, 93-94.

¹²⁶ This is at once “restricting the scope of delegation” and employing the concept of “slack.” Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 2003), 76-78.

¹²⁷ Peter Feaver notes, “Autonomy is slack without a monetary dimension.” Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 78.

¹²⁸ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 92.

¹²⁹ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 93.

¹³⁰ See: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 30, 44, 75.

ultimately, fulfilled service imperatives. The clearest example of this is taking on the inefficiencies associated with the side-by-side Army and Marine attacks in order to grant each service a prominent role. Further, Franks established an intrusive monitoring regime, and backed it with effective threat of punishment. It is also worth noting that Franks was famously disdainful of the service chiefs, and actively sought to proscribe their influence in the planning and execution of the war via backchannels.¹³¹ In sum, the principal adeptly managed nearly all aspects of the agency relationship to promote alignment and ensure that shirking would go neither undetected nor unpunished. As a result, there was scant opportunity for the agent to pursue divergent aims. This leads to the inescapable conclusion that General Franks had subscribed to the notion of a benign postwar environment that required comparatively little of the military, and found it necessary to expend considerable effort to ensure the alignment of his subordinates.

To discern General Franks' mindset, and, thereby, the genesis of his intent for the campaign, it is necessary to open the aperture of the analysis to include the strategic interaction between the CENTCOM commander and his principal, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Although not the primary level of analysis for this study, briefly examining the situation from the viewpoint of Franks as an agent provides crucial insight. Without question, General Franks worked enthusiastically for Rumsfeld. The secretary's monitoring was also unquestionably

¹³¹ Consider this excerpt from his memoir: "Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan had been nitpicked by the Services Chiefs and the Joint Staff, and I did not intend to see a recurrence of such divisiveness in Iraq. Paul Wolfowitz was a friend and I new he would spread the word around the E-Ring [of the Pentagon] that Tommy Franks wasn't about to be treed by Chihuahuas while he was trying to orchestrate what had shaped up to be the most complex and fully integrated joint-service military operation in history." Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 440. General John Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff, noted Franks' "palpable" disdain for the service chiefs, recalling, "He would come in there all tight-jawed about having to explain to the chiefs what his plan was and would bristle when we offered our experience with him. He resented the input." Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 47.

intrusive, and he has been compared, unfavorably, to Robert McNamara in this regard.¹³² General Franks, however, summarily dismissed the notion of excessive friction between them, saying, “He was pushing me, and it satisfied me greatly.”¹³³ Not only was shirking unlikely to go undetected, but Rumsfeld’s willingness and ability to punish were also readily apparent from his threatened firing of Vice Admiral Scott Fry, his alleged *de facto* firing of Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, and his bypassing of Admiral Vern Clark for the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹³⁴ In fact, lack of civilian control of the military was one of the primary deficiencies Rumsfeld’s aimed to correct during his tenure.¹³⁵ Thus, it is quite reasonable to expect few instances of the agent shirking to pursue divergent aims, which is largely the case.

Rumsfeld’s effective shaping of the strategic interaction, however, does not necessarily account for the ardor with which General Franks approached the task of paring down the invasion force. Thus, it is necessary to conclude that the agent’s preference aligned with the intent of the principal. The conventional wisdom holds that Rumsfeld’s agenda included

¹³² See, for instance: Max Boot, “The Worst” book review of Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, found at: <http://www.tnr.com/book/review/known-unknown-donald-rumsfeld> (accessed 9 May 2012), and Maureen Dowd, “Simply the Worst,” in *The New York Times*, 13 February 2011.

¹³³ Quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 7.

¹³⁴ Regarding Admiral Fry, then the director of the Joint Staff, see: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 7. Regarding General Shinseki and the “leak” of the name of his successor some sixteen months prior to the end of his tour as Army Chief of Staff, see: Ricks, *Fiasco*, 69. In his memoir, Rumsfeld denies the allegation. Nevertheless, his decision to bring General Peter Schoomaker out of retirement must be seen as a no-confidence vote for the Army leadership, writ large. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 455-456, 653, and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 157. Regarding Admiral Clark and his “bridge burning” dustup with Rumsfeld, see: Woodward, *State of Denial*, 66-70.

¹³⁵ See, for instance: Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 17. Rumsfeld writes in his memoir: “The U.S. Secretary of Defense in not a super General or Admiral. His task is to exercise leadership and civilian control over the Department for the Command-in-Chief and the country. Control wasn’t what a lot of people had in mind, however. I quickly faced what successive secretaries of defense have faced: a powerful set of forces known as the iron triangle—a network of entrenched relationships among the military and civilian bureaucracies in the Defense Department, the Congress, and the defense industry. With more or less permanent positions, those in the iron triangle knew that the secretary of defense and the department’s political appointees of either party were temporary. They could delay and simply wait out policies they did not favor.” Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 219. Andrew Bacevich describes Rumsfeld’s approach: “heap lavish public praise on soldiers in the ranks while keeping the generals and admirals on an exceedingly short leash.” Bacevich, “Trigger Man.”

“transformation” of the military to rid the services of their Cold War weapons and mindsets.¹³⁶ By this line of reasoning, he dictated the comparatively small size of the invasion force in order to demonstrate that the military could fight with fewer, lighter forces than it thought necessary, at once demonstrating and justifying military transformation. This argument continues by alleging that Franks was himself a “maverick reformer,” implying that he was complicit in pushing for a smaller force, in effect, to demonstrate transformation for transformation’s sake.¹³⁷ Much like the notion of negligent planners, the idea that a cabinet official and a senior military commander would gamble the president’s policy, and indeed the credibility of the nation, simply to make a point is not entirely palatable.

While a desire to denude the services of purported anachronisms was likely influential, the course of events does not square with the view that Rumsfeld, and Franks in turn, seized on Iraqi Freedom as a laboratory for transformation. In retrospect, they certainly touted the campaign as a successful demonstration, but at the time both were motivated by *time* not necessarily the absolute size of the force.¹³⁸ Both Rumsfeld and Franks were smarting from the inability to put together a credible ground-force option in time for Enduring Freedom, and were, thus, anxious to avoid a repeat.¹³⁹ Moreover, the political climate surrounding the invasion of

¹³⁶ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor harp on this point. See, for instance: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 8, 499. See also: Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 6-7.

¹³⁷ Woodward goes on to aver that Franks “deplored the leaden, unimaginative ways of the military.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 5.

¹³⁸ In response to Franks’ initial “Commander’s Concept,” Rumsfeld remarked, “After initial air strikes, the ground-force buildup takes an inordinate amount of time.” Later, encouraged by efforts to shorten the deployment and the length of subsequent phases, he continued to push for a “realistic consideration of timing. What are the various timelines? How long do you project each phase to last?” Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 331,363. See also: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 50.

¹³⁹ Bob Woodward writes, “It had been a brutal 72 days since 9/11 for Franks. There had been not even a barebones war plan for Afghanistan, and the president had wanted quick military action. Rumsfeld had been the strongest proponent of ‘boots on the ground,’ a commitment of U.S. military ground forces. But the first boots on the ground had been a CIA paramilitary team on September 27—just 16 days after the terrorist attacks. This had driven Rumsfeld to the brink. It took another 22 days before the first U.S. Special Forces commando team arrived in Afghanistan. For Rumsfeld, each day had been like a month, even a year...He had pounded Franks very hard with increasing fury.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 6.

Iraq effectively precluded an overt six-month buildup of forces akin to that which preceded Desert Storm.¹⁴⁰ Further, the deterrent value of preemption generally, and the efficacy of invading Iraq as an object lesson in particular, hinged on demonstration of the ability “to strike at a moment’s notice in any dark corner of the world.”¹⁴¹ Hence, until the president officially went public with United States’ war aims by seeking United Nations endorsement based upon the threat posed by Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction, no one could say with certainty when the military would need to be ready for action. Thus, it was necessary to be able to deploy rapidly and execute on short notice.¹⁴² Put another way, time was the dependent variable in the equation requiring minimization; the size of the force, particularly the number of ground troops and the amount of heavy equipment, was the only independent variable Franks could manipulate effectively to shorten the timeline.¹⁴³ The deployment timeline drove the planning effort.

General Franks’ focus on time is readily apparent in that he presented each evolutionary version of his war plan in terms of the interval to deploy and the length of the phases, and not necessarily from the perspective of the absolute size of the force.¹⁴⁴ The *Generated Start*, meaning CENTCOM would deploy everything it needed before starting the war, was the 90-45-90 plan in terms of days to deploy, days to prepare the battlefield, and the length of major

¹⁴⁰ The president worried that a lengthy buildup would “fuel unrest in the Arab world.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 48.

¹⁴¹ Bush, “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York”

¹⁴² The president told Franks, “If this goes a long time...it’s going to be problematic. It’s going to have to go however long it’s going to go, but I just thought I’d say that.” In interviews, the president recalled his thinking: “...as Tommy [Franks] planned, I wanted him to understand some of the nuances, or understand issues in a nuanced way. The worst thing a president can do is to say, Oh, no, the war plan must conform to a political calendar.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 122. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor also note that the president was “nervous about the long lead time to deploy forces and wanted some way to compress it.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 32.

¹⁴³ Powell reportedly told associates that CENTCOM briefings were largely deployment plans and that planners seemed to be fixated on cutting the timeline for deploying the forces. Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 70.

¹⁴⁴ In his initial pitch to the National Security Council, Franks does not have firm estimates, but realizes the that time is the key dependent variable as evidence by his presentation of options in timeline format, listing the duration of various phases as “X days.” See: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 351-352.

combat operations, respectively.¹⁴⁵ By tweaking assumptions to reduce the size of the force necessary, Frank's planners had halved the six-month deployment required by the existing war plan for Iraq, but Franks thought the ninety-day deployment was still too long.¹⁴⁶ Franks noted "a rapid force deployment enhances our military capability on Iraq's borders, and also assists in placing diplomatic pressure on Saddam's regime."¹⁴⁷ To further reduce the deployment time, Franks offered the *Running Start*, or 45-90-90 plan, which began with forty-five days of air strikes and operations by special forces while the ground forces deployed and allowed up to 180 days to fight to Baghdad and oust Saddam Hussein.¹⁴⁸ Over the course of the planning effort, CENTCOM quietly made various preparations in anticipation of war, including slipping significant forces into theater.¹⁴⁹ In effect, the United States would conduct a yearlong preparatory phase "under the CNN line."¹⁵⁰ As a result, planners could offer a third or *Hybrid* option, the 5-11-16-125 plan.¹⁵¹ Given five days notice, CENTCOM would complete deployment of a "start force" in eleven days and commence a sixteen-day air campaign during which another roughly 20,000 troops would be brought to theater.¹⁵² Troops would continue to flow during the estimated 125 days of additional combat operations. After the president's decision to seek United Nations sanction for the invasion, the pressure for a short deployment lessened somewhat, and CENTCOM was able to build up a substantial portion of the planned

¹⁴⁵ See: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 370, and Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 98-99.

¹⁴⁶ OPLAN 1003-98, CENTCOM's existing war plan called for "troop levels of at least four hundred thousand, which would require a very visible six-month force build-up." Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 349. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 83.

¹⁴⁷ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 390.

¹⁴⁸ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 389.

¹⁴⁹ Beginning in early 2002, CENTCOM began building infrastructure and pre-positioning equipment and supplies in theater. See: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 366.

¹⁵⁰ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 70.

¹⁵¹ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 416.

¹⁵² Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 68, and Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 416.

force.¹⁵³ As a result, the force with which CENTCOM went to war was akin to that of the *Generated Start* plan.¹⁵⁴ McKiernan's land component would still have forces in the deployment pipeline when the war kicked off. The overall size of the force, however, remained largely unchanged; the coalition would merely start the war with more forces. Put another way, the coalition could have been in even worse shape heading into Phase IV if the smaller initial force of the *Hybrid* and *Running Start* plans had met with the same "catastrophic success" as the somewhat larger force that actually raced to Baghdad.¹⁵⁵

To effect this rather dramatic reduction, CENTCOM planners had, in truth, crafted a rather innovative plan. Eschewing a large preparatory bombing campaign and commencing the land campaign before all of the ground forces had even assembled in order to compress the timeline was a significant departure from the Desert Storm model that arguably still influenced, and perhaps dominated, military thinking. To cut the absolute size of the force to less than half of that called for in the existing war plan and to justify beginning the war with only part of the planned force, planners had to modify existing assumptions and take on additional ones. The most prominent of these was the assumption that military involvement in Phase IV would be minimal and relatively brief. In short, trading size for time forced Franks and his planners to embrace the notion of a benign postwar environment that readily could be transferred to the oversight of civilian authorities. Given the nature of his strategic interaction with Rumsfeld,

¹⁵³ The president eventually elected to seek international sanction for use of force based upon Saddam Hussein's recalcitrance with respect to existing resolutions regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. No later than this point, and likely well before, the United States' intentions for war with Iraq were known. The president began the bid with an address to the General Assembly on 12 September 2002, declaring, "With every step the Iraqi regime takes toward gaining and deploying the most terrible weapon, our own options to confront that regime will narrow." President George W. Bush, "Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City" (speech, New York, 12 September 2002).

¹⁵⁴ The land component began the invasion with approximately 170,000 troops. The Army's 4th Infantry Division, consisting of another 15,000 troops and their equipment, was to join the fight from the north. Turkey, however, refused to permit the troops to launch an attack from its soil. Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 428-429, 500-501.

¹⁵⁵ Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 392, and Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 479.

Franks clearly had to be leery of speaking out against the prevailing view. The more compelling argument is, however, that the idealistic viewpoint helped Franks solve his problem; thus, he embraced it seemingly without question. That General Franks was not motivated by the size, and thus did not fully subscribe to Rumsfeld's purported notion of transformation, is evidence by the fact that, over the course of planning, *the final aggregate size of the force never varied*. In each version of CENTCOM's plan, if the fighting took as long or longer than anticipated, the number of ground forces would grow to roughly 250,000. In short, Franks maintained a hedge in that the deployment pipeline would be filled such that the total number of ground forces would continue to grow unless orders were given to "off-ramp" those forces, presumably when deemed no longer necessary.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, CENTCOM was preparing to fight with roughly half the 380,000 forces previously considered the absolute minimum for the endeavor.¹⁵⁷

General Franks' image of success also never varied throughout the planning and execution of Iraqi Freedom. As far as he was concerned, the military mission essentially ended with the fall of Saddam Hussein, which he was convinced would happen as soon as the Iraqis realized they could not stop the coalition from setting up camp in their capital.¹⁵⁸ The notion of a benign postwar environment only lent additional credence to his mindset. With a small, light force, however, CENTCOM had but one viable way to take Baghdad—speed. In essence, coalition forces had to make a lightning dash to establish a presence in the capital, and then demonstrate the ability to defend their foothold, thereby occupying Iraqi from the inside out akin

¹⁵⁶ Franks notes in his memoirs, "The Generated and Running Starts and the Hybrid Concept all project Phase III ending with a maximum of two hundred and fifty thousand troops in Iraq." Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 393, and Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 103.

¹⁵⁷ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 26-27.

¹⁵⁸ In his memoir, Franks summed up his mindset noting, "I'm a warfighter, not a manger," and describing his message to the government bureaucracy: "*You pay attention to the day after and I'll pay attention to the day of.*" (italics original) Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 441, 531. Donald Rumsfeld notes in his memoirs, "Franks admittedly had little enthusiasm for setting up a postcombat government or dealing with the related tangle of bureaucratic and interagency issues." Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 485.

to the children's game *king of the hill*. Crafting the modern day blitzkrieg to Baghdad, in essence, became the overriding focus of the planning. Even after the United States' war intentions became public knowledge, thereby relaxing deployment constraints and allowing for a larger force to begin the campaign, Franks maintained his focus on the rate of advance of the forces. In execution, Franks would obsess over a new monitoring tool, Blue Force Tracker, which gave him near-real-time information on the location and movement of his forces.¹⁵⁹ This took intrusive monitoring to a new level, thereby ensuring that any deviation from his desired tempo, and thus from the ultimate objective, would not go unnoticed for long.¹⁶⁰ To sum, the deployment timeline drove the size of the force. The size of the force, in turn, drove tactics.

Benign expectations for the war came into unpleasant contact with reality shortly after troops crossed the border into Iraq. Without question, the attacks by irregulars were harbingers of the insurgency to come. Arguably, however, General Wallace was the sole commander who truly understood the implications. His push for an operational pause to bring more forces into the fight represents the only significant emergence of a divergent aim in the conflict. General McKiernan, the land component commander, and General Conway, the I MEF commander, in essence, supported "a little focus change" regarding the "tempo" of the advance in order to deal with the irregular attacks on lines of communication.¹⁶¹ Wallace's comments to reporters, however, belie his confidence in the overall plan. Implicit in his remarks is the understanding that the "enemy" was no longer just the Republican Guard, but now included an unknown

¹⁵⁹ Franks describes Blue Force Tracker generally and in action in his memoirs: Franks and McConnell, *American Soldier*, 446-448, 515-516.

¹⁶⁰ General McKiernan noted, "Blue Force Tracker drives the CINC [Commander-in-Chief, i.e. Franks]." Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 314.

¹⁶¹ General McKiernan later described the situation: "So there was some debate on [the] tempo of operations, which ultimately the commander has to sort out and make a decision." Lieutenant General David McKiernan interview for the documentary, *The Invasion of Iraq*. Transcript available at the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/invasion/interviews/mckiernan.html> (accessed 11 May 2012). See also: Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 304,

number of fanatical partisans.¹⁶² The issue was larger than merely the vulnerability of his supply lines. He clearly intuited that the war would not be won until the irregulars had been subdued. In recommending the coalition wait for the 4th Infantry Division to come ashore and join the fight, he was advocating a significant shift in the plan—one that called for more forces and a more methodical approach that put eyes on the postwar period.¹⁶³ Franks, however, considered the irregulars a pittance, mere “crust work” on the way to Baghdad.¹⁶⁴ In truth, they were largely inconsequential to the coalition’s efforts to reach the capital city. Irregular forces were, however, *the* concern with respect to securing the whole of Iraq. Wallace’s defection met with a swift and harsh response from Franks.¹⁶⁵ Only intercession by McKiernan, who promised to resume the advance in earnest as soon as the supply lines were secure, spared the V Corp commander from an unceremonious departure.¹⁶⁶ In sum, even when confronted with contrary indications, General Franks continued to see the capture of Baghdad as the primary measure of success and aggressively managed the strategic interaction with his subordinates to maintain their alignment.

Agency theory posits the principal has the right to be wrong. With respect to the situation they expected to find in Iraq, principals at each level of analysis indeed missed the mark by a rather wide margin. Once again, national policy and whatever dysfunction that may have contributed to it are beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the period from November of 2001 until April of 2003 must be viewed as an eighteen-month effort to manage divergent aims at various levels in order to maintain focus on the pre-ordained policy of regime change in Iraq.

¹⁶² Wallace confided to McKiernan, “I am not sure how many of the knuckleheads there are.” Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 310.

¹⁶³ Expressing his concern were the coalition unable to subdue the Fedayeen in the South, General Wallace lamented, “I don’t know where we go from there.” General McKiernan replied, “That’s when we wait for the 4th ID [Infantry Division] and the 3rd ACR [Armored Cavalry Regiment].” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 304, 311-312.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 325.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor argue, “Franks interpreted Wallace’s remarks to the press as nearly disloyal, a repudiation of Franks’ insistence that the war be “fast and final.” Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 312.

¹⁶⁶ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 311-314, 324-326.

In this respect, the system worked. Once again, the task to topple Saddam Hussein was virtually inseparable from the notion of a benign postwar environment. The civil-military strategic interaction was such that General Franks, in reality, had scant opportunity to challenge the prevailing view. Quite simply, he had to produce *a* solution or face dismissal. The central challenge was assembling the necessary force in an acceptable timeframe. General Franks, and his planners in turn, thus spent the entire prelude to war attempting to devise a plan to take Baghdad with a comparatively smaller, lighter ground force, failing to give due regard for the inherent risk. By strictly controlling the strategic interaction, Franks focused the entire enterprise on crafting a tactical-technical solution for a logistical problem—the deployment timeline. He aligned his components, however readily or reluctantly, with the planning framework by creating a harmony of interests that largely fulfilled each service’s imperatives and image of success. When a divergent aim surfaced during execution, Franks quickly suppressed it.

The major combat operations of the Iraq War have been hailed as the apotheosis of joint warfighting. In truth, the race to Baghdad was an impressive showing, and as General Wallace later remarked, “Well, it’s hard to argue with success.”¹⁶⁷ Their key imperatives largely fulfilled, the services also managed to avoid tarnishing the feat by haggling over the residual inefficiencies. On the other hand, the aftermath was an unmitigated disaster. In the chaos, the joint force’s magnificent performance dissolved into irrelevancy and CENTCOM’s brilliant plan quickly became an almost insurmountable liability that nearly undermined the entire endeavor. If ideal jointness amounts to harmonizing service interests and pasting over seams with still more liaisons, all to engender battlefield integration, then the United States military has indeed arrived.

¹⁶⁷ Wallace interview in Kitfield, “Attack Always.”

Otherwise, the absence of strategy and a rather rapid and thorough descent into operations and tactics are the ultimate hallmarks of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.



CHAPTER NINE

BEYOND JOINT

Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

Whatever force might be at our disposal, we should expend it at the highest profit.

Major-General J.F.C. Fuller¹
1926

Introduction

Lest there be claims that Desert Storm was an anomaly or merely an immature instantiation of the Goldwater-Nichols vision of jointness, service viewpoints and imperatives continued to influence the efficacy of multi-service combat operations throughout the period under study. In examining the efficacy of military action in contemporary conflicts, the case studies presented herein reaffirm the finding that the agency problem is a significant, if not central, element of joint command and control. More specifically, management of the strategic interaction between principal and agent has substantial bearing upon the effectiveness and efficiency of any given multi-service endeavor. Note that there is no intent to claim that agency accounts for or explains all sources of inefficacy in major combat operations. Indeed, this study focuses expressly on the role of service self-interest and the ability of the principal to engender unity of effort in a pluralistic system. That said, the inherent challenges of delegation are almost certain to have some influence on any given joint endeavor. Therefore, the agency framework is a valuable lens that can provide substantial insight.

The case studies also demonstrate the applicability of the agency framework over a wide range of conditions. Variance along several axes, such as the scope of conflict and the composition of forces, suggests that the tool readily scales to suit the situation under scrutiny.

¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (London; Hutchinson and Co., 1926), 202.

Further, the methodology adapted easily to a wide spectrum of conditions within each component of the agency relationship—the preference gap, monitoring, and rewards/punishment. For instance, agency proved useful in analyzing both Allied Force, in which a large and seemingly irreconcilable preference gap existed, and Iraqi Freedom, in which the principal intentionally played to service imperatives to engender harmony of interests. The agency framework also proved enlightening at the extremes of the monitoring spectrum. In Anaconda, over-delegation permitted a *de facto* principal, unprepared to assume such a role, to retreat into the comfort of a service viewpoint. In Allied Force, the principal, faced with a significant divergent aim by a shirking agent, and shackled by an inability to shape the strategic interaction in any other way, resorted to micromanagement, thereby hampering efficacy and contributing to the breakdown of the agency relationship. The analysis also highlights the powerful influence of rewards and sanctions. Wielded judiciously, as in Iraqi Freedom, they proved very effective in controlling divergent aims. When proscribed, as in Allied Force, their absence compromised the principal's ability to shape the agent's decision calculus in the presence of a large preference gap.

To reiterate, efficacy—effectiveness *and* efficiency—can be the only complete and suitable measure of merit for the continuation of American policy by more violent means. Despite effusive plaudits from its progenitors, the Goldwater-Nichols Act has not engendered the efficacy required of the services in the joint age. The effectiveness of United States forces on the battlefield is undeniable. Each of the services is unchallenged in its primary combat domain. Their individual and collective ability to project precise and devastating violence, seemingly at will, is all but unquestionable. Thus, almost by default, the American military is, at least for the moment, virtually untouchable. But, this seeming invincibility is more the product of qualitative overmatch than idyllic integration and synergy. Although the interoperability issues that

arguably impelled the 1986 reorganization have been largely overcome, inefficiencies abound, consuming blood, treasure, and time. Perhaps more importantly, effectiveness in translating battlefield victory into long-term success by making tactical and technical prowess serve the broader aims of policy has remained elusive. In the final analysis, it seems that unification has failed to put the American military's joint house in order.

Sources of Disorder

Given an adequately trained and properly equipped joint military force, which the American military appears to be, *command and control* is the means by which combat is made to serve the aims of policy. To review, management of violence for the security of the state is the primary task for the commander of that joint force. The commander's first imperative is to *command*, or formulate strategy that links military means with the desired political ends. In implementation, that strategy must also fulfill the commander's second imperative to *control*, or maintain the coherence of decentralized operations within and between warfighting domains. Put another way, the efficacy of major combat operations by a joint force is a function of the vision for the endeavor and adherence to that vision by the various components of the force.

As noted at the outset of this study, joint command and control is frustrated by the inherent pluralism of the American military establishment. When the services operated with relative autonomy, the fact that each had a unique slant on combat, and indeed on the purpose of war itself, mattered little. Formulation and implementation of joint strategy was decidedly underdeveloped, if not nonexistent, for much of that period. Further, mutual cooperation sufficed whenever the services' duties happened to intersect. With the advent of the joint age, however, the services in isolation could no longer protect all of America's interests, and jointness by gentlemen's agreement proved wholly inadequate. An expeditionary force necessitated by

empire, and the bona fide threat to the homeland posed by air power required real strategy to ensure the security of the nation. Devising real strategy created real requirements that invariably clashed with the nation's traditional parsimony in resourcing its military. In the ensuing battles for scarce resources, service personalities hardened into calculated self-interest.

In conceiving a unified theater command to address the challenges of service self-interest, leaders placed great faith in the tenet of unity of command. In essence, the unification struggle that began after Pearl Harbor and ostensibly culminated with passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was a quest for the ideal-type organization that elevates military professionalism over service imperatives. A hierarchy that subordinates self-interested service components to a commander with the appropriate responsibility and authority was thought sufficient to engender the desired efficacy. As noted, this is a wholly structural and normative approach that merely prescribes a utopian, and arguably unattainable, setup. Further it did nothing to address the core issue—the services' disparate views of war and their attendant visions of victory.

With only the structural, normative prescription offered by the principle of unity of command to guide inquiry, the inefficacies of joint command and control proved puzzling. Again, on the surface, unified command *should* work. Subordination and hierarchy should subject service self-interest to the professional norms of the military. Fealty to the commander ought to prevail over service imperatives. Since a cursory examination of contemporary conflicts suggests that service viewpoints continued to exert considerable influence even following the purported triumph of Goldwater-Nichols, the conclusion that other factors are at play in joint command and control becomes inescapable. Enter agency.

Componency in a unified theater command must be viewed as a delegation based upon functional specialization. As noted, because the services are experts in the application of combat

power in their respective domains, and because the capabilities they possess are tailored expressly for that domain, a joint force commander, in effect, must “hire” the services to fight a war. In general, delegation brings with it the inherent, and perhaps unavoidable, problems of agency. “Hiring” an agent to perform a function that one desires not to perform or lacks the expertise to take on opens the door for the introduction of divergent aims. In particular, the joint force commander’s reliance upon the expertise of service components means that principal and agent likely will have different perspectives on what ought to be done in any given situation. Specialized expertise offers the agent an information advantage that permits masking pursuit of a preferred course of action that diverges from the principal’s intent. In essence, componency is a forced delegation that merely repackages pluralism and invites service imperatives into joint command and control.

The agency framework provides the analytical tools to overcome the limited perspective of the structural, normative prescription. In the first place, agency readily exposes the service self-interest motivating the pursuit of divergent aims. For instance, during Desert Storm, in attacking infrastructure, airmen sought a decisive victory for airpower; in skewing bombing efforts towards the front lines, soldiers desired the unfettered ability to shape their own battlefield; and in racing to Kuwait City, marines hoped for a prominent contribution to the campaign. Again, none of these interests can be considered inherently “bad,” nor should their pursuit by the components be construed as an attempt to subvert the campaign. Rather, they are a natural byproduct of a pluralistic system. Perhaps more importantly, the agency framework points toward the presence of material factors, and thus provides the lexicon to describe the mechanism by which service imperatives at times override the professional norms embodied in the tenet of unity of command.

The agency framework suggests, and analysis indeed confirms, that unified command, as a *de facto* delegation, entails the strategic interaction between principal and agent that accompanies all acts of delegation in some varying degree. When self-interest or a narrow service viewpoint suggests an alternative course of action, the agent must decide whether to align with the principal's intent or pursue a divergent aim. When this preference gap is large, analysis confirms that, absent any other influence, the service imperative will override norms. To curb this tendency, the joint force commander as principal must employ means other than an implicit appeal to professionalism in order to influence the agent's decision calculus. The key components of this calculus are likelihood of detection and expectation of sanction. The relative influence of these variables is determined by the principal's monitoring regime and the structure of rewards and punishment, respectively. On each side of the "equation," the principal and agent must weigh costs and benefits in light of each's observations and expectations of the other. Put simply, joint command and control is an exercise in managing a strategic interaction in which professional norms are but one factor governing the behavior of the components.

Given a significant preference gap, analysis shows that inadequate monitoring or a system of rewards and punishment slanted in favor of service interests permits, and perhaps encourages, shirking by the agent. Whether the result of laxness on the part of the principal, as in Anaconda, or skillful exploitation of an information advantage on the part of the agent, as in Desert Storm, low probability of detection engenders a sense of autonomy. Actual or imagined, autonomy naturally leads to pursuit of divergent aims. As Allied Force aptly demonstrated, however, even intrusive monitoring, which virtually precludes any possibility of undetected shirking, cannot alone guarantee alignment. When the structure of rewards and punishment proscribes the principal's ability to sanction the agent for shirking, divergent aims can still

undermine efficacy. Of particular relevance is the case in which the value of rewards offered or the severity of punishment threatened by the agent's parent service exceeds that of the joint force commander. To sum, material factors, such as costs and benefits, driving a strategic interaction between principal and agent, have significant bearing upon joint command and control and, in turn, the efficacious continuation of American policy.

A Little House Cleaning

The agency framework has shed new light on the major combat operations of the modern era of joint command and control. It is important to note, however, that the focus of this study is not on the conflicts themselves. There is no intent, for instance, to pass judgment regarding the specific outcomes of those conflicts; nor is it to comment on alternative courses that events might have taken, even though such implications certainly accompany the application of the framework in the process of "reverse engineering" the outcomes. Further, it is important to note that there is no intent to suggest *particular* improvements to the conduct of the wars, though such counterfactual prescriptions perhaps also inhere in each "empirical critique." Rather, the focus is on the broader commentary that the analysis provides regarding the state of joint command and control and its role in the efficacious continuation of American policy. Simply put, the desire is to treat root causes rather symptoms. Perhaps the most immediate benefit of the analysis is the realization that agency, while not a difficult concept to grasp, involves a complex strategic interaction that necessarily defies a simple solution such as rearranging boxes on an organizational chart. At the same time, the agency framework provides a straightforward structure within which to conceive and order recommendations for the improvement of joint command and control.

Agency analysis suggests that a principal detriment to efficacious continuation of policy by a joint force is the divergence of aims. Given the foundational role of strategy in the management of violence, ensuring that its formulation and implementation fulfills both the *command* and the *control* imperatives is key to improving efficacy. As noted, battlefield performance is not the primary issue, at least for the moment. Inefficiencies still detract, but effectiveness, in the sense of securing a desired policy outcome, suffers when joint command and control fails to maintain the alignment of combat operations in the face of a significant preference gap. Before delving into recommendations for improving the ability of the joint force commander to manage strategic interactions with the components, a point is in order regarding the preference gap.

In two of the conflicts analyzed in this study, the agents arguably assessed at least part of their respective situations more accurately than the principle. General Short, though perhaps biased in favor of strategic attack, seems to have provided his principal a sound appraisal of the slim prospects for a denial campaign against the Serbian army in Allied Force. Admittedly, General Clark was juggling in a larger milieu. Nevertheless, he failed to give due regard to the expert evaluation of his agent indicating that his strategy was perhaps potentially inadequate, if not outright fatally flawed. A similar situation arose during Iraqi Freedom. As noted, General Wallace seemed to intuit that the incessant irregular attacks by Iraqi paramilitary forces cast significant doubt on the notion that defeating the Republican Guard and “occupying” Baghdad would produce the desired outcome. He seemed to grasp more readily than the principal the fact that the military’s job would not be complete until *all* of the opposing forces had been subdued. His call for a pause and more forces was, in fact, a call for a different strategy. General Franks summarily dismissed the concerns of his agent in the field and aggressively suppressed the

discordant view, presumably because it did not square with his image of success for the campaign. These are instances of the classic “decision trap” of “overconfidence in [one’s own] judgment” in which a decision-maker fails “to collect key factual information” by being “too sure of [one’s own] assumptions and opinions.”²

The lesson for commanders of a joint force is that shirking and divergent aims can be a warning flag that indicates a potential blind spot for the principal. Due to the forced delegation of competency, the joint force commander necessarily relies on the agents for their respective expertise. To not give careful and thoughtful consideration to that advice, particularly when strongly held by the agent, is potentially perilous, as the case studies aptly demonstrate. Note also that laxness or undue deference to the agent and over-delegation are also unwise, as the Desert Storm and Anaconda case studies highlight. Here there is a parallel to Eliot Cohen’s commentary on and prescription for civil-military relations in *Supreme Command*.³ The formulation and implementation of strategy requires an effective “unequal dialogue,” in which “both sides [express] their views bluntly...and not once but repeatedly;” but the agent, following that full airing of concerns, ultimately recognizes the principal’s ultimate prerogative.⁴ It is essential to note that this speaks not only to the importance of discerning the reason for and nature of a preference gap, but also to judicious use of the monitoring function that detects its accompanying divergent aim.

Without question, the high-speed data transmission and ubiquitous network interconnectivity brought by the communications revolution has lowered the cost of monitoring by an order of magnitude just over the time period encompassed by the conflicts analyzed in this

² J. Edward Russo and Paul J. H. Schoemaker, *Decision Traps: The Ten Barriers to Brilliant Decision-Making and How to Overcome Them* (1989; repr New York: Fireside; 1990), 73.

³ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (2002; repr. New York: Anchor Books; 2003).

⁴ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 209.

study. General Franks, for instance, had far better instantaneous situational awareness regarding the progress of Iraqi Freedom than General Schwarzkopf had of Desert Storm, the latter's lack thereof arguably contributing to the chaotic culmination of the 100 Hour War. Quite simply, with tools such as Blue Force Tracker and video teleconferencing, a joint force commander can keep extremely close tabs on the components, and when a subordinate's actions do not match expectations, that commander can deliver a long-distance dressing down as if the two were in the same room. Nevertheless, the maintenance of separate component operations centers is an impediment to the principal's monitoring function. The genesis and evolution of the Air Force's air operations center (AOC) helps illustrate the problem.

In Desert Storm, the "Black Hole" planners aptly demonstrated the value of operational-level expertise in orchestrating the air campaign. It was, however, largely an *ad hoc* solution. The Air Force refined the concept of an AOC following the Gulf War and incorporated it into the institutional thinking of the service. Throughout much of the 1990s, the AOC did not exist in peacetime. It soon became apparent that waiting until the outbreak of hostilities to stand up such a function relegated operational planning to a proverbial "pickup game." This realization provided impetus to treat the AOC as a "weapon system" akin to an aircraft, tank, or ship, with all of the attendant requirements related to organizing, training and equipping, to include standing facilities and appropriate manning.⁵ This introduced a bit of circularity, perhaps by design. If the AOC exists then it makes sense to employ it in time of war. Indeed, stewardship virtually requires that it be put to use, thereby providing compelling justification for the Air Force to run the air component. Other services followed suit in devising operations centers, most

⁵ Michael W. Kometer, *Command in Air War: Centralized Versus Decentralized Control of Combat Airpower* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2007), 100-102.

notably the Navy's maritime operations center. By the time of Iraqi Freedom, CENTCOM and its three components had established operations centers in four disparate locations.⁶

The net, and perhaps intended, effect is a comfortable distancing of the components from one another and from the joint force commander, since maintaining separate operations centers serves to make component, and thus service, lanes very distinct. This necessarily impedes inter-component coordination as perhaps Anaconda best demonstrates. Though a tactical focus dominated, causing much of the plan's shortcomings, the overhead costs of coordinating with a distant AOC likely contributed to CJTF Mountain's failure to bring the full array of planning resources to bear. This consideration led General Moseley to establish the air component coordination element (ACCE), a team headed by Major General Daniel Leaf, inside the land component headquarters during Iraqi Freedom.⁷ Exchange of still more liaisons is inherently inefficient and does not make for joint organizations, despite any rhetoric to the contrary. Perhaps more importantly, maintaining separate operations centers at the component level segments planning and execution by domain, and, for all intents and purposes, by service as well. This necessarily exacerbates the disparity of expertise between the principal and its agents from different parent services.

The implications for the principal's monitoring function are twofold. As reliance upon the agent increases—that is, delegation becomes even more of a necessity than an efficiency measure—the more control a principal must relinquish. In agency parlance, the situation forces the principal to increase the scope of the delegation beyond that which it might otherwise consider desirable. As noted, scope of delegation—in essence, how tightly the principal holds

⁶ Franks' located his headquarters in Qatar. The land component headquarters resided in Kuwait. The air operations center remained at Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia. The maritime component operated from Bahrain. See, for instance: Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 92.

⁷ Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 141-2.

the reins—is a primary determinant of the intrusiveness of the monitoring regime, and, in turn, the ability to detect and managing shirking. Similarly, further disparity in expertise also abets the agent’s information advantage since the situation places even more control over the collection and interpretation of data in the hands of the agent. The enhanced ability to mask divergent intent and actual shirking thus perhaps invites micromanagement of the kind that characterized Allied Force.

To put the point plainly, the majority of the expertise, manpower, and infrastructure necessary for the management of combat operations remains fragmented at the component level. In its current conception, the combatant command headquarters and its associated joint operations center (JOC), together fulfill more of an administrative role and an almost *post facto* integration function. For instance, in each of the conflicts studied herein, the joint force commander spent a significant, and in some cases inordinate, amount of time overseeing the deployment of forces, perhaps at the expense of strategy formulation. A truly joint JOC—that is, one that assembles the requisite cross-section of capability, manpower, and infrastructure—addresses the problems associated with this inversion of expertise, making it worthy of further consideration. Jeffrey Vandebussche makes just such a recommendation in a master’s thesis entitled *Centering the Ball: Command and Control in Joint Warfare*.⁸ Other than his study, criticism of separate headquarters has centered on the current construct’s inhibition of face-to-face leadership. Vandebussche’s conclusions along with the findings of this study provide more concrete implications that suggest a fruitful course of action. In particular, an enhanced JOC would improve the principal’s monitoring function while shifting the administrative burden to the service components as force providers. In addition, collocation would eliminate overhead

⁸ Jeffrey L. Vandebussche, “Centering the Ball: Command and Control in Joint Warfare” (masters thesis, United States Air Force Air University, 2007).

such as the exchange of liaisons as well as inefficiencies such as disparate systems for control of tactical air support. There are certainly tradeoffs associated with a more centralized approach, such as presenting an attractive target to the adversary. Nevertheless, agency analysis suggests that the scope of delegation in a joint theater command merits careful examination.

Agency analysis also suggests that the structure of rewards and punishment requires further consideration. Arguably, Iraqi Freedom demonstrates that the principal can, in fact, effectively sanction an agent. Further, judicious use of rewards, such as the granting of some amount of “slack” to the agent, can engender alignment of the agent’s efforts with the principal’s vision despite the presence of a preference gap. In sum, the principal can influence the agent’s decision calculus, and thereby gain a measure of control over the introduction and pursuit of divergent aims. Nevertheless, taken together, the case studies show that the influence of such measures and their ultimate success is highly dependent upon the particulars of the situation. As Desert Storm and Allied Force demonstrate, when the relative influence of the agent’s parent service exceeds the principal’s in shaping the decision calculus, shirking flourished. In other words, as long as the structure of rewards and punishments favors service imperatives, the joint force commander’s ability to manage the strategic interaction is destined to be uneven.

In *Winning the Next War*, Stephen Rosen argues that senior officer promotion is a key determinant of military innovation.⁹ New doctrine or a new weapon system, for instance, gains significant traction only when its adoption includes a path to flag rank. The mechanization of the United States Army is illustrative. Earlier in their careers, Generals Eisenhower and Patton returned to the infantry and cavalry, respectively, after forays into tanks, in part because the

⁹ Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (1991; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

former offered better prospects for promotion.¹⁰ The implication for joint command and control is that sway over senior-officer promotions bears significantly upon the structure of rewards and punishment in the agency relationship. At present, such control lies primarily, and indeed almost exclusively, with the services. The Goldwater-Nichols Act mandated a minimum of one joint tour as a prerequisite consideration for promotion to flag rank. The intent of the measure was to incentivize broader experience in joint service, rather than to give joint institutions a direct say in promotions. Nevertheless, it further demonstrates the recognition of senior officer promotion as both a reward and, by its denial, a sanction. With respect to a theater command, the principal's lack of influence in this regard must be viewed as an impediment to the ability to shape the strategic interaction of the agency relationship. Currently, the joint force commander can only tinker at the extremes of the punishment-reward spectrum by altering the scope of the delegation or threatening dismissal. The former option is necessarily limited in its influence; the latter carries significant risk for any ongoing combat endeavor, often making it a costly option. In sum, providing joint institutions, particularly the joint force commander, additional say in the promotion of flag officers should be considered carefully in any future efforts to improve joint command and control.

What Unification Hath Wrought

Improving the principal's ability to shape the strategic interaction is destined to be an imperfect solution. To grasp this fact, one need only consider the implications of Iraqi Freedom for the current conception of jointness. As noted, the system worked rather well in terms of the agency problem. General Franks was very successful in shaping the interaction with his agents in order to circumscribe, detect, and suppress divergent aims. In fact, the setup was an exemplar

¹⁰ See, for instance: David E. Johnson, *Fast Tank and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army 1917-1945* (1998; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 75

of the unified command prescribed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. A very compact chain of command ran from the president through the defense secretary to the commander in the field. This is not to say that no other entities or factors influenced the decision-making process. The service chiefs were, however, largely sidelined. Even the chairman and the Joint Staff played a decidedly minor role, in stark contrast to Desert Storm in which General Powell was a central figure. Further, Franks reigned supreme, seemingly possessing all of the requisite responsibility and authority. Yet, despite idyllic unity of command, efficacy still suffered. As noted, the battlefield saw a dazzling display of tactical and technical prowess, but the military failed to deliver the intermediate security necessary to secure the broader aims of policy. One could argue that the policy itself was flawed and destined to disappoint. Nevertheless, the failure to establish a necessary precondition for that policy precludes absolving the military of any responsibility for the inefficacy. Perhaps more to point, the structural, normative approach—that is, unification—has nothing to offer the would-be reformer in this regard other than an indictment of abject incompetency, which is unlikely and an unhelpful allegation, at any rate, since it merely implicates the entire military establishment.

The inescapable, and arguably obvious, conclusion is the military strategy was itself the principal liability. The pertinent question asks why CENTCOM arrived at such a flawed premise in spite of a seemingly idyllic setup. Agency points to a rather straightforward answer. In Iraqi Freedom, management of the strategic interaction became the focus. Quite simply, the principal expended great effort on the *control* imperative likely at the expense of the *command* imperative. The notion of toppling Saddam Hussein by dashing to Baghdad with a comparatively small force generated little further debate once Franks summarily dismissed the alternative. The task then became to ensure alignment with the *de facto* and inadequately scrutinized strategy. Simply put,

the principal failed at the primary task of matching military means to political ends—again, the first imperative of a commander. More specifically, the military did not devise a suitable means to achieve the aims of policy. With the benefit of hindsight, it is unlikely that the military could have devised a suitable strategy. The rather unpleasant destination of this line of reasoning is that the military was ill suited to the task and the whole endeavor was inadvisable from a military standpoint. Those tasked to do so, however, did not effectively provide such counsel.

A brief review of the manner in which CENTCOM went about devising and orchestrating stellar tactical-technical integration on the battlefield is enlightening. As noted, General Franks played to service interests by allowing each to fulfill prominent service imperatives in order to incentivize component buy-in. He expressly carved out roles that would provide each service with adequate organizational self-actualization. Perhaps to avoid undermining such self-actualization, and certainly to avoid undue scrutiny and any attendant opprobrium from the principal, the components pasted over the seams of componency with technology and additional liaisons, and downplayed the residual inefficiencies in the setup. This harmony of interests that ultimately precipitated a dysfunction of the whole has been hailed as the *exemplar of jointness*. This can only mean that the very concept of jointness is itself flawed.

Counting the Cost

As currently defined, *joint* simply means the involvement of more than one service.¹¹ Arguably, *multiservice* would be a more apt moniker. Favored among implied meanings, however, is that of a synergistic force, more potent than the sum of its parts. Indeed, the military establishment often wields the term to conjure an image of battlefield prowess. Nevertheless, the imprecision of the definition leaves significant room for interpretation in the formulation and

¹¹ From joint doctrine: “Connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate.” Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010 as amended through 15 July 2011, 187.

implication of strategy. This is not to say that joint forces accrue no benefit from their interactions. Rather, analysis suggests that synergy is often a secondary concern since the joint force commander will accept significant inefficiency in order to carve out roles for each of the services. Rather than a combination of capabilities in the proper proportions to maximize overall efficacy, the composition of the joint force is a delicate balance designed to demonstrate the legitimacy and relevance of each service. This approach is inherently inefficient, carrying with it unavoidable seams in some areas and overlap in others. Further, as the analysis shows, it can be ineffective as well. That the services chose to mute their criticisms of each other during an after Iraqi Freedom, even though the campaign contained all of the traditional inter-service frictions, suggests that they have finally learned that getting along means getting ahead. Anaconda likely provided the final shove into joint “log rolling,” since the poor performance and subsequent finger pointing tarnished everyone’s image. Thus, for Iraqi Freedom, the components established an archetype of the “negotiated environment” Barry Posen describes in *The Sources of Military Doctrine*.¹² In essence, each of the services agreed to support the other’s imperatives, bringing to fruition the jointness prescribed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Although focused on effectiveness rather efficacy in many instances, all of the services obviously desire success. After all, it is difficult to bolster institutional legitimacy and relevancy without it. Success, however, is currently meaningful only in terms of service imperatives. Only that which contributes to a service’s legitimacy and relevancy can be considered a worthwhile venture. By extension, only a venture deemed worthwhile for all can be considered a truly joint endeavor. Conversely, a venture that does not have adequate multiservice participation is inherently “unjoints.” Institutional legitimacy and relevancy, however, are only meaningful

¹² Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (1984; repr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 54.

within the respective service's concept of war. Put another way, each service has a distinct vision of victory and thus image of success. No coherent joint vision of victory exists. Nor is there an image of success for a joint force other than battlefield triumph that fulfills each service's particular imperatives. In short, lacking is the overarching theory of war for the joint age—one that provides a unifying vision to guide the formulation and implementation of strategy by a joint force. As a result, jointness is merely the cobbling together of disparate, and times contradictory, service theories and frameworks. In the joint age, combat domains have essentially merged into a large complex battlespace, but the concepts for control of and warfighting in that battlespace remain segmented by domain.

As noted in the opening chapter, this is not a new revelation. Admiral J. C. Wylie and Kenneth Allard, among others, highlight the lack of an overarching framework to serve as a guide for the United States military in the joint age.¹³ Agency analysis has helped to close the cause-effect loop in order to link this shortfall clearly to the formulation and implementation of joint strategy, thus highlighting the ultimate cost in terms of efficacy in the continuation of American policy. Simply put, joint command and control lacks the framework and lexicon necessary to develop and articulate coherent strategy in the joint age. Perhaps more importantly, America's pluralistic military has been largely unable to craft and clearly articulate a vision for its role in modern statecraft. It seems that managers of violence have only a necessarily fragmented, inefficient, and at times ineffective, mosaic of service viewpoints to offer policy makers.

¹³ J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (1967; repr. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989), and C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

The Central Dilemma

Stitching together an inherently “unjointed” system is exceedingly difficult, as this analysis aptly demonstrates. The inefficacy that ultimately results from the failure to do so, however, demands that a better way be sought. Two options exist. In the first place, the American military could go the way of the proverbial “purple service” by merging the military departments, and creating a joint general staff with a single chief as its leader. A committee led by Senator Stuart Symington, for all intents and purposes, proposed this very option in 1960.¹⁴ It proved politically untenable then, and is likely no more palatable in today. More importantly, however, it likely would eliminate a highly desirable facet of the current pluralistic system. Some amount of creative competition, the byproduct of the clashing of service views, attends the current establishment. Arguably, this competition has been instrumental in deriving the tactical and technical prowess that has given the United States the qualitative overmatch it now enjoys. Quite simply, the services are exceedingly good at organizing, training, and equipping forces. The central dilemma thus becomes re-envisioning jointness without undermining the current dominance on the battlefield.

To find the path ahead, it is first necessary to look inside the military departments. Each of the services is, to some extent, an aggregation of heterogeneous capabilities. The Air Force has fighters, bombers, tankers, and transports, not to mention its space capabilities. The Army has its primary combat branches. The Navy boasts surface and subsurface warships in addition to its carriers and aviation assets. The Marines field a powerful air-ground team. This is not to say that there are no intra-service frictions. In the Air Force, for instance, the various pilot communities have strong opinions, and are often quick to point out each other’s shortcomings.

¹⁴ Edgar F. Raines, Jr. and David R. Campbell, *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Evolution of Army Ideas on the Command, Control and Coordination of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1942-1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 98-100.

Yet, by and large, the specialists in these varied capabilities readily unite behind their respective service's overarching vision. Quite simply, the theories of war that undergird each service provide an unifying framework within which each capability can be made to support the service's image of success. What's more, this approach brings such order without necessarily undermining the qualitative contribution of each capability. It is, admittedly, not a perfect system. To be convinced of this, one need only consider the post-Cold War neglect of bombers by the Air Force. Nevertheless, this brief review further emphasizes that the key to solving the present dilemma lies in the power of a unifying vision.

It seems unlikely that such a vision can be crafted simply through a meeting of minds. The very problems that currently undermine joint strategy would invariably derail such an effort. Indeed, extant joint doctrine, itself a hodgepodge of service viewpoints, provides a glimpse of the likely result. Put simply, the structural, normative approach has run its course and likely taken jointness as far as it can, perhaps in the wrong direction. The alternative is a constructivist approach. Social construction is a complex topic, the exposition of which is beyond the scope of this study.¹⁵ Suffice to say, it is essentially an evolutionary approach in which various stakeholders "construct" reality over time. The process is perhaps best illustrated by a review of the construction of the service's theories of war. The American military is pluralistic because the services, particularly the Army and the Navy, crafted over time unique visions of military power and its role in policy as they executed broad, ongoing missions to meet particular needs with respect to the security of the nation and its interests. In short, whether patrolling the frontier or protecting sea lanes and overseas shipping, practical day-to-day missions provided the Army and the Navy unique experiences. In the process, each service took on a unique personality that

¹⁵ For more on social construction see, for instance: Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch eds., *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (1987; repr. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989).

continued to evolve over time. Myriad influences thus formed within each service a powerful theory of war and a relatively clear vision of its role in securing the nation.

A Place to Start

A way to move beyond the current conception of jointness is to construct a new one. With the constructivist example provided by the services as a guide, the place to start is with an ongoing, multiservice mission that, in effect, forces the services to move in the direction of an overarching theory of war that helps better define the role of joint military power. Wars are, of course, key inputs; but, to date, they have proven too fleeting to generate lasting momentum in this direction. At first glance, it seems that the Global War of Terrorism has placed the special operations communities from each service in just such a situation. The lessons therein merit close consideration and additional study. Joint basing initiatives as well as joint training venues and curricula are steps in the right direction. Admittedly, the constructivist approach is neither quick nor easy, and its implementation requires further consideration and study. It is also impossible *a priori* to glimpse the end product. True efficacy, however, depends on crafting a unifying vision of victory as a foundation for joint command and control. Only then will the United States realize the deserved return on its military investment.

A final point is in order. The intent herein has been to provide a balanced assessment of joint command and control, and to suggest a potentially fruitful path toward greater effectiveness and efficiency in joint combat operations. Nevertheless, the conceivable, and perhaps valid, charge is that these conclusions and recommendations are based upon the parochial views of the officer of a *particular* service. If such a charge is indeed valid, then it merely serves as further evidence of the very problem that officer has attempted to illuminate.

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