

Redefining Relationships: Inserting the Argument for War in Policy, Strategy, and Operations

A Monograph

by

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The argument for war is an important and overlooked criterion when understanding the relationship between policy, strategy, and the operational approach. Failure to appreciate the political nature in war by strategic and operational planners ultimately leads to disaster. Yet, a clear and defined purpose established by the political elite rarely occurs. Because of the nature of the political system, planners regularly are left with the argument for war as meaningful political guidance in formulating strategy and policy and determining an operational approach. Therefore, understanding the argument for war becomes essential. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between the argument for war and the formulation of policy, military strategy, and the operational approach and to answer the question, what is the nature of the relationship between the aforementioned themes? This study investigates three case studies, Kosovo (1999), Iraq (1991), and Afghanistan (2001) to address the research question.

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Abstract

Redefining Relationships: Inserting the Argument for War in Policy, Strategy, and Operations, by MAJ Patrick C. Mulloy, 56 pages.

The argument for war, communicated by the political elite, is an important and overlooked criterion when understanding the relationship between policy, strategy, and the operational approach. Failure to appreciate the political nature in war by strategic and operational planners ultimately leads to disaster. Yet, a clear and defined purpose established by the political elite rarely occurs. Because of the nature of the political system, planners regularly are left with the argument for war as meaningful political guidance in formulating strategy and policy and determining an operational approach. Therefore, understanding the argument for war becomes essential.

The overall purpose of this political science study is to explore the relationships between the argument for war and the formulation of policy, military strategy, and the operational approach and to answer the question, what is the nature of the relationship between the aforementioned themes? The wider significance of this study is to investigate this relationship from an analysis of three case studies, Kosovo (1999), Iraq (1991), and Afghanistan (2001) and contribute to the overall understanding of strategy and policy formulation and military planning.

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Introduction

Since the inception of the American republic, a fundamental domestic and foreign policy goal is articulating why the United States should commit to violence to achieve political objectives. America's revolutionary sentiments partially fomented because of the arguments contained in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, published in 1776. After a series of military defeats, Paine later reignited the revolutionary effort in *The American Crisis* published later the same year. In *Common Sense*, Paine provided a fiery argument for American independence from England, convinced thousands to join the American cause, and helped spread democracy throughout the world.¹ Ever since the Revolutionary War, arguments for war remain central to foreign policy in the United States.

Paine's pamphlets illustrate war's political nature. War is an expression of policy using organized and authorized violence to achieve political aims and advance national interests in accordance with a military strategy. Put another way, "Politics provides strategy its purpose, while strategy provides politics with the way in which that purpose may be realized in practice."² Therefore, military strategists need to vigilantly consider and understand the nature of politics.³ However, war is costly in terms of blood and treasure. War often leaves deep psychological scars on nations and politicians must ultimately answer to their constituents. As a result, it is incumbent on political leaders to construct a case that military action is necessary to advance policy and achieve national objectives. Military strategists interpret this argument to design strategy. In other words, the argument helps provide military strategy its purpose.

¹ James Henretta, *America's History, Volume 1: To 1877* (Boston, MA: Bedford, 2011), 165.

² Colin Gray, *Strategy and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1.

³ United States Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-17, *Strategy* (draft) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017).

Failure to appreciate the political nature of war by strategic and operational planners likely leads to disaster. The nature of the political system regularly leaves planners with the argument for war as vital guidance for formulating strategy and determining an operational approach. Therefore, understanding the argument for war becomes essential. The argument for war, communicated by the political elite, is an essential and overlooked criterion when understanding the relationship between policy, strategy, and the operational approach.

The overall purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between the argument for war compared to policy, military strategy, and the operational approach. The wider significance of this research is to investigate this relationship from an analysis of historical case studies in order to contribute to the overall understanding of policy and strategy formulation as well as military planning.

This study deals primarily with three key terms, the political elite, the argument for war, and strategy. The political elite includes the president of the United States, the secretary of defense, and others from the national command authority. An argument for war is similar to the justification for war. It is a public dialogue led by the political elite regarding decisions to use military force.⁴ This study recognizes and addresses three arguments for war, the realist, the nationalist, and the American values argument. The realist argument points to the importance of defending American security or the security of allies. The nationalist argument cites constitutional duties and obligations, patriotism, and sovereignty. Finally, the American values argument advocates war based on democratic freedom, self-determination, and human rights/responsibility to protect.⁵ The third key term is strategy. The purpose of strategy is to make war usable by the state, providing a metaphorical bridge between policy and military power to

⁴ David Lorenzo, *A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace* (unpublished).

⁵ Ibid.

advance political aims.⁶ Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Planning*, describes strategy as a “prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”⁷ Strategy determines the future condition (ends), how to employ military forces (ways), and identifies the authorities and resources (means). Finally, the third term is an operational approach. The operational approach is the employment of military capabilities through operations. Among others, these include stability, peacekeeping, or an invasion.

The theory of strategy, the inherent connection between policy and strategy, and the concept of the operational approach, provide the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study. A structured framework allows proper investigation of the relationships between policy, strategy, and the operational approach. This theoretical and conceptual construct is used to investigate this study’s hypotheses and research questions.

Two hypotheses and six research questions guide this research for each historical case study. The first hypothesis asserts that the argument for war has a place in the relationship between the policy, military strategy, and the operational approach. Four questions seek to validate this hypothesis. The first question asks, what was the political elite’s argument for the war. The second question asks, what was the political policy that related to the war. The third question asks, what was the military strategy used by planners for the war. Finally, the fourth question asks, what was the operational approach used by military planners for the war.

The second hypothesis claims that when the argument for war changed, it impacted the relationship between policy, military strategy, and the operational approach. Two questions seek to confirm this hypothesis. The first question asks, did the argument for war change, reduce, or

⁶ Colin Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015), 25.

⁷ United States Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), I-5.

maintain its significance over time. The second question asks, does the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained significance.

This study has two limitations. First, it is limited to unclassified documents. Second, this study's research is limited to facilities within geographical proximity to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and to what is available in the public domain. For brevity, this study has two delimitations. It confines the research between the years of 1976 and 2006. Second, it focuses exclusively on policy, strategy, and operational approaches of the United States military.

This research has two underlying assumptions. First, the political object remains fundamentally associated with war. That is, the design of military strategy is unmanageable at worst and incomplete at best without understanding the political aims. Second, a relationship, although largely unexplored, exists between strategy, policy, and operations.

This study is divided into seven sections. Section I, the introduction, includes the background, purpose and significance, theoretical and conceptual framework, research questions and hypotheses, limitations and delimitations, and assumptions. Section II discusses the literature review. Following the literature review, section III outlines the methodology. Section IV transitions to the case studies in chronological order: Iraq (1991), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001). Each tests the hypotheses and addresses the research questions. Section V includes the findings and section VI is the analysis. Finally, this study ends with section VII, the conclusion.

Literature Review

The literature review section presents the rationale for conducting this study. This section begins by exploring prevailing theory regarding strategy and its link to policy in order to develop this study's framework. Following the theory discussion, the next section investigates the conceptual aspects. This includes providing a comprehensive definition of the key terms presented in the introduction. After defining the terms, an empirical analysis examines recent scholarly literature, which includes comparing this study's hypotheses to the literature, and concludes with restating the principal research question.

The theory of strategy provides the theoretical framework for this research and warrants further explanation. No shortage of literature exists on the theory of strategy and it continues to remain an important area of study for military planners who seek to accomplish the political aims. A logical theoretical starting point for understanding strategy in relation to policy begins with Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz understood strategy as "The use of engagements for the object of the war."⁸ Writing in an era that preceded the operational level of war, Clausewitz's concept of strategy resembled operational art. He understood that carefully synchronized engagements ultimately lead to political ends if planned and executed correctly.⁹ Clausewitz wrote, "This gives rise to the completely different activity of planning and executing these engagements themselves, and of coordinating each of them with the others in order to further the objective of the war."¹⁰

The objective of the war is always political for Clausewitz as illustrated through his astute assertion "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation

⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 128.

⁹ William Denn, "Operational Art: How Clausewitz and Isserson Turned American Strategy into Tactical Action," Modern War Institute at West Point, December 30, 2016, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://mwi.usma.edu/operational-art-clausewitz-isserson-turn-american-strategy-tactical-action/>.

¹⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 128.

of political intercourse, carried on with other means.”¹¹ Clausewitz’s use of the word “continuation” provided insight into his thinking on this subject and is relevant to the political elite’s arguments for war. Continuation accentuates that war is not an autonomous act but instead has a binding connection to political behavior.¹² Meaning, war is a violent expression of political rhetoric, a tool to achieve political objectives.¹³

Clausewitz is the most prominent theorist of war, but he is not alone in the claim that politics and strategy remain deeply associated. Many before and after him provided similar arguments. Helmuth von Moltke the Elder claimed war is the violent action of nations to attain or maintain purposes of the state.¹⁴ B.H. Liddell Hart described strategy as “The art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy.”¹⁵ Finally, according to Mao Tse Tung “Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.”¹⁶

Contemporary theory echoes similar positions. Colin Gray, a leading scholar on strategy, devoted an entire book, *Strategy and Politics*, to this subject. He argued politics is the senior partner in its relationship with strategy and that neither strategy nor politics can make sense if considered alone.¹⁷ Gray asserted, “Strategy requires direction that can only be provided by political process” and that “strategy always and everywhere is politics in meaning.”¹⁸ Everett

¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

¹² Thomas Waldman, “Politics and War: Clausewitz’s Paradoxical Equation,” *Parameters* 40, no. 3 (2010): 48-60.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Helmuth von Moltke, *On the Art of War*, trans. and ed. by Daniel J. Hughes (New York: Presidio Press, 1993), 35.

¹⁵ Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1957), 335.

¹⁶ Mao Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 152-153.

¹⁷ Gray, *Strategy and Politics*, 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

Dolman asserted strategy takes an idea into action. Strategy is not about victory but instead it is about change, adaptation, and competing, attaining, and maintaining an advantage.¹⁹

The framework for strategy is through a synchronized approach using the logic of ends, ways, and means. Determining the desired ends comes first. This includes determining the political objectives or the outcomes sought. Identifying and developing the means comes next. This includes recognizing the capabilities required to accomplish the ends. Finally, designing the ways, or how to use the means, comes last.²⁰ Mismatching means to ends or misunderstanding the ways usually results in a failed strategy, “No strategy can be effective,” John Lewis Gaddis has argued, “if it fails to match means with ends.”²¹

Furthermore, national strategy is different from military strategy. National strategy is the use of any or all instruments of national power in support of policy as decided by politics.²² In other words, national strategy goes beyond military strategy and includes economic, diplomatic, and informational strategy. Military strategy, included within national strategy, is defined as the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as decided by politics.²³ It is what this study refers to when referencing strategy. As used in this study, policy and politics hold different meanings. Policy refers to decisions for action (or inaction) as a result of the political process. That is, policy is a product of politics.²⁴ Conversely, politics are the activities associated with the governance of a country or other area. Additionally, this study

¹⁹ Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy* (New York: Routledge Press, 2005), 1, 4, 6.

²⁰ US Joint Staff, JDN 1-17, *Strategy*.

²¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 23.

²² Gray, *The Future of Strategy*, 25.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

recognizes war in the broadest of terms. It is defined as military operations in a foreign country used to advance political goals and is interchangeable with the terms conflict and intervention.

As introduced earlier, this study recognizes three standard arguments for war, each with several sub-categories. They are the realist, the nationalist, and the American values argument. The realist argument primarily encompasses the need for military action to protect the security interests of the United States. The nationalist argument justifies war as a result of constitutional duties and obligations. The American values argument advocates war to protect or advocate American principles. Table 1 outlines an abridged description of the argument for war categories and Appendix A lists the complete descriptions.²⁵

Table 1. Abridged Descriptions of the Arguments for War

| Realist | Nationalist | American values |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Security | Sovereignty | Democracy |
| Deterrence | Majority | Freedom |
| Reputation | Trade | Humanitarian/Human Rights |
| Domino Theory | Patriotism | Peace |
| Credibility | Partisanship | Self Determination |
| Forward Defense | Domestic Benefits | International Order |
| Diplomacy is Futile | Constitutional | |
| Existing Hostilities | | |
| Aggression | | |
| Inadequacy of International Law and Norms | | |

Source: Data from David Lorenzo, *A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace*, (unpublished).

Finally, the operational approach is the employment of military capabilities through operations. A military operation is a set of actions intended to accomplish a task or mission and vary in scope, purpose, and conflict intensity across the range of military operations.²⁶ This study

²⁵ Lorenzo, *A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace*.

²⁶ United States Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), v-4.

recognizes the military operations outlined in Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Operational Approaches

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stability Operations | Invasion |
| Civil Support | Foreign internal defense |
| Foreign Humanitarian Assistance | Counterdrug operations |
| Recovery | Combating terrorism |
| Noncombatant Evacuation | Counterinsurgency |
| Peace Operations | Homeland defense |
| Combating Weapons of Mass destruction | |

Source: Data from United States Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 2011, v-4.

While the scholarship on the theory of strategy is comprehensive, the scholarship exploring strategy and its relationship to policy is significantly less inclusive. Moreover, the literature investigating the combination of strategy, policy, and the operational approach applied to the arguments for war remains non-existent from the literature reviewed and therefore the aim of this research is an attempt to fill that void. Nevertheless, Colin Gray and David Lorenzo’s publications provided foundational research for this study.

Gray wrote extensively on strategy but admitted that scholars have scarcely touched the relationship between strategy and policy.²⁷ He wrote on this relationship, “to my surprise when I looked closely at the existing literature, I discovered that really very little attention has been paid to this most critical of relationships.”²⁸ He operated under three hypotheses. One, that neither strategy nor politics are as well comprehended as they need to be in relation to the other; two, neither strategy nor politics can make sense if considered alone; and three, strategy requires direction that can only be provided by the political process.²⁹ Gray’s research partially addresses this study’s first hypothesis.

²⁷ Gray, *Strategy and Politics*, 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

Gray persuasively explained the reasons why politics must remain the master in its relationship with strategy and why it is the product of the political process. He expressed that war is ultimately about the continuation of politics and that military strategy fails without the consent of policy.³⁰ While Gray's work provided contributions in addressing strategy in relation to policy, it falls short in addressing the broader relationship.

While Gray addressed the literature on strategy and policy, Lorenzo presented the research on the arguments for war. However, Lorenzo, like Gray, became dissatisfied with the existing scholarship. He argued the literature failed to comprehensively categorize the range of arguments. Consequently, Lorenzo selected to focus on the concept of necessity. He moved away from traditional studies of arguments for war that focused on patriotism, fear, threats, and exceptionalism and instead codified arguments that linked policy to military force to achieve a political aim.³¹ He operated under four hypotheses. The first states, "It is the uncompromising nature of arguments insisting upon the necessity of military action which provides the most important complement to the structural advantages government officials enjoy when they propose military ventures." The second states, "The foundations of the debate over war and peace in the United States among political elites are rooted in discussions of important political norms." The third hypothesis states, "While there are many important continuities in arguments and justificatory tactics, proponents have adapted to changing contexts by altering the mix of arguments they use as they interact with their opponents." Finally, Lorenzo's last hypothesis states, "While proponents almost always utilize the concept of necessity and share many of the

³⁰ Gray, *Strategy and Politics*, 40.

³¹ Lorenzo, *A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace*.

same arguments, they differ significantly in the types of military projects they are willing to back.”³² Lorenzo’s four hypotheses, as with Gray, best correlate with this study’s first hypothesis.

Through academic investigation, Lorenzo convincingly argued that proponents of war use legitimations to construct a case for war, that is, military action is necessary for the pursuit of political goals.³³ While Lorenzo provided a valuable assessment, his discussion primarily addressed the proponents themselves and the interaction between them. Therefore, this study’s second hypothesis remains unaddressed.

An examination of the literature illustrated an exhaustive study on the theory of strategy, extensive research on the arguments for war, and limited study on the relationship between strategy and policy. The research that links policy, strategy, and the operational approach to the arguments for war remains unfulfilled. Consequently, a critical question remains, how did the argument for war, articulated by the political elite, influence the development of policy, military strategy, and the operational approach? This is the primary research question for this study.

³² Ibid.

³³ Lorenzo, *A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace*, 173.

Methodology

Clausewitz argued, “Historical examples clarify everything and also provide the best kind of proof in the empirical sciences.”³⁴ With this in mind, this study employs the structured focused comparison methodology. Using this methodology, this study analyzes three case studies to demonstrate the connection between policy, the argument, the strategy, and the operational approach. This section examines the merits of this approach, introduces the case studies, discusses the reasoning for the selection of the case studies, details the research questions and expected answers, and concludes with overviews of the data sources.

Structured focused comparison methodology is a systematic comparison where the requirement for structure and focus apply equally to all cases. The method is “structured” in that the research questions are asked for each case to standardize the data collection. The method is “focused” in that it only deals with specific aspects of the case study.³⁵ This presents advantages and disadvantages. The first advantage is the methodology’s wide use and acceptance in the political science field. A majority of scholars endorse the structured focused comparison methodology, citing its use as a powerful analytic tool.³⁶ As the name of the method implies, it strives to reduce research bias by equally distributing the research questions throughout the cases. The inventors of the methodology, Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, believe this approach allows researchers to arrive at an unyielding conclusion and draw appropriate findings.³⁷

³⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 170.

³⁵ Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 67-72.

³⁶ Katya Drozdova and Kurt Gaubatz, “Structured, Focused Uncertainty: Information Analysis for Multi-Method Comparative Case Studies,” in *Political Methodology Committee on Concepts and Methods Working Paper Series*, accessed December 30, 2017, <http://administration.conceptsmethods.org/Files/WorkingPaper/PM%2025%20Drozdova%20Gaubatz.pdf>, 2-3.

³⁷ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 67-72.

However, the methodology had some disadvantages, primarily that it relies on valid research questions. Flawed research questions equate to flawed and inaccurate findings. Moreover, some scholars criticize the linearity of the method, arguing it takes a reductionist approach that results in unintentionally leaving out meaningful factors.³⁸ Regardless of these criticisms, this approach is a proven methodology for reducing cognitive bias, comparing in-depth historical examples, as well as arriving at a balanced and standardized assessment.

Because of the complexity involved in identifying and understanding relationships, especially something as multifaceted as war, this study uses three historical case studies to add depth and breadth. This is an attempt to eliminate false-positives between identified concepts while simultaneously illuminating the correct relationships. Additionally, three case studies allow the research to expand across multiple eras in American history and presidential administrations. Finally, several case studies allow for an investigation of multiple types of conflicts across the range of military operations. While using numerous case studies enables breadth across scale, one disadvantage is it reduces depth within the analysis of the case study itself.

Working chronologically, this study examines the wars in Iraq (1991), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001). In addition to the reasons outlined above, these cases were chosen for a variety of factors. First, these conflicts took place in the post-Vietnam era with an all-volunteer army.³⁹ This distinction is necessary for a study about relationships. The American army transitioned from an organization in distress during the Vietnam War era to an organization of exceptional military competence that continues today.⁴⁰ Second, the selected conflicts took place

³⁸ Drozdova and Gaubatz, "Structured, Focused Uncertainty: Information Analysis for Multi-Method Comparative Case Studies," 2-3.

³⁹ Conscription for the American military ended on July 1, 1973, when President Richard Nixon requested the Department of Defense to eliminate the draft.

⁴⁰ Suzanne C. Nielsen, "An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army's Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations," *The Letort Papers*, U.S. Army War College, September 2010, vii.

after the creation of the United States Army's Training and Doctrine Command. This organization added an additional level of professionalism and "To an unprecedented degree, [Training and Doctrine Command] was able to ensure that changes in personnel policies, organizations, doctrine, training practices, and equipment were integrated and mutually reinforcing."⁴¹ Finally, these conflicts occurred after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, arguably the most critical war in the second half of the twenty-first century as it related to American army doctrine, training, and procurement.⁴²

The following expounds on the structured questions that guide this study and the answers this research expects to discover. The first hypothesis asserts the argument for war has a place in the relationship between the policy, military strategy, and the operational approach. Four questions relate to this hypothesis. The first question asks, what was the political elite's argument for the war. This question seeks to establish, define, and explain the political elite's argument for war. This research expects to find one or two standard political arguments that matches each case study examined to help define relationships.

The second question for the first hypothesis asks, what was the political policy that related to the war. If military strategy is the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as decided by politics, then understanding policy, albeit in broad terms, is critical. This question addresses policy that preceded the war unless the war continued under multiple administrations. This study expects to discover a correlation between policy and the argument, specifically that the political elites refer to published policy when crafting arguments for war.

⁴¹ Nielsen, "An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army's Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations," vii.

⁴² Saul Bronfeld, "Fighting Outnumbered: The Impact of the Yom Kippur War on the U.S. Army," *The Journal of Military History* 71, no. 2 (April 2007): 466.

The third question for the first hypothesis asks, what was the military strategy used by planners for the war. This question seeks to address the particular military strategy used by planners to fulfill the political aims of the stated war. This question is necessary to establish a relationship between the argument and the strategy. This research expects, over the examination of three case studies, to identify linkage between strategies and arguments. In other words, if the same argument is employed multiple times across political administrations, the arguments tend to have similar military strategies.

Finally, the fourth question for the first hypothesis asks, what was the operational approach used by planners. This question seeks to establish a relationship between the argument and the operational approach. Similar to question three, this is an important question for establishing patterns. This research expects to categorize certain operational approaches to particular political arguments.

This study's second hypothesis asserts that when the argument for war changed, it impacted the relationship between policy, military strategy, and the operational approach. Two research questions seek to validate this hypothesis. The first question asks, did the argument for war change, reduce, or maintain its significance over time as it related to the strategy and operational approach. The second question asks, does the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained its significance. Both these questions seek to address the importance of time in relationship to the argument. This study expects to discover duration has a significant impact on the strategy and the operational approach. This study expects the research to illustrate that the longer the war, the less significant the original argument becomes to military planners. A renewed argument is required, followed by a new strategy and operational approach.

This study derives data from various sources. These include official United States Government reports from the Congressional Research Service, the Center for Military History,

and the Joint History Office. Additionally, this study derives data from several academic journals such as *Political Science Quarterly* and *Journal of International Affairs*. Finally, this study references reputable published and unpublished books, which provide background and aid in synthesis.

In summary, this section evaluated the structured focused comparison methodology and explained why it is the most appropriate method for case study analysis. Additionally, this section articulated the justification for the selected case studies. It posited that the post-Vietnam era army possessed the doctrine and professionalism. Further, the span of multiple case studies allows for depth and breadth of research data. Finally, this section further clarified the research questions and overviewed the data sources. The next section analyzes the case studies starting with Iraq.

Case Studies

The following section explores three case studies in order to show the relationship between the policy of war, the argument for war, the strategy of war, and the operational approach to war. The case study section provides the evidence for the analysis and findings. Part one of two of this section begins with a synopsis of each conflict. This includes the origins of the crisis, the timeline, the principle actors, the initial objectives, and the outcomes.⁴³ Part two addresses the structured focused questions.

Iraq - 1991

After success in Panama, President George H.W. Bush and his administration immediately faced another crisis. The Republic of Iraq's political and military leader, Saddam Hussein, attacked Kuwait in August 1990, violating Kuwait's sovereignty and international norms. Ultimately, the United States led coalition defeated Hussein and restored global order. Like all wars, a complex set of geopolitical events led to Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait and H.W. Bush's decision to defend it.⁴⁴ Boundary disputes, historical ethnic rivalries, economic and political ambitions, and nationalism all contributed to the tension that resulted in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

Two years before the Kuwait invasion, Iraq fought Iran for nearly eight years in the 1980s. This conflict left Iraq economically weak but militarily hardened. Years of fighting weakened the state's oil industrial base, damaging its economic wealth and international standing. This reluctantly forced Iraq into a position of economic dependence on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and accordingly increased the political resentment between the states. Fearing that Iraq would

⁴³ The case study section is not intended to provide comprehensive history or tactical actions. It only addresses what is relevant to study's research. Reference the citations for further reading.

seek to regain its strategic position of advantage, both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia feared an invasion. This fear, combined with Hussein's notorious claims to Kuwaiti territory and his bellicose rhetoric, placed Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in a vulnerable position.⁴⁵

On August 2, 1990, Hussein transformed his rhetoric into action as Iraqi tanks crossed the Kuwaiti border in pursuit of oil fields and access to the Persian Gulf. The United Nations condemned the invasion citing that it violated Kuwait's sovereignty and that it threatened the stability of the Middle East. Armed with a United Nations mandate, the United States formed a twenty-eight-member coalition commanded by United States Central Command's General Norman Schwarzkopf. In less than two months, Schwarzkopf decisively defeated Hussein's military in an impressive multinational and joint operation.⁴⁶

What was the political elite's argument for the war? H.W. Bush used all three argument classifications to justify war with Iraq. Predominately, he used an American values argument with the sub-categories of international order and peace. Before the first American bomb dropped, the H.W. Bush administration referenced the need to reestablish peace and world order as a primary justification for committing Americans to combat. For example, in January 1991, H.W. Bush said that America is "ready to use force to defend a new order emerging among the nations of the world -- a world of sovereign nations living in peace."⁴⁷ H.W. Bush also used a sub-category of the realist argument - diplomacy is futile. Secretary of State James Baker, in coordination with Arab nations, went to great lengths to resolve the conflict diplomatically with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq `Aziz. At every opportunity, `Aziz rejected Baker's demands, leading H.W. Bush

⁴⁵ Frank Schubert and Theresa Kraus, eds., *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm*, Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1995.

⁴⁶ Anthony Tucker-Jones, *The Gulf War: Operation Desert Storm 1990-1991* (South Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword, 2014).

⁴⁷ George H.W. Bush, "Radio Address to the Nation on the Persian Gulf Crisis," January 5, 1991, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2596>.

to declare on the eve of war, “The conclusion is clear: Saddam Hussein continues to reject a diplomatic solution.”⁴⁸ Finally, the justification for war falls in the nationalist argument classification under trade. The H.W. Bush administration rejected any course of action that left Hussein in a dominant position in the oil rich Persian Gulf, a position that might provide him the opportunity to manipulate the economies of the West.

What was the political policy associated with the conflict? Before Iraq invaded Kuwait, the H.W. Bush administration’s policy toward Baghdad operated under two false assumptions. First, the administration believed that the Iran-Iraq war left Iraq militarily fatigued and that they would be unable and unwilling to engage in war in the foreseeable future. Second, that diplomacy could alter Hussein’s foreign policy to align with American interests.⁴⁹

National Security Directive 26 codified these weak assumptions. The Directive aimed to normalize relations between Washington and Baghdad with the goal of promoting stability in the Gulf and the Middle East. It also encouraged closer economic ties by having American firms invest in Iraqi reconstruction efforts as well as through Washington economic aid packages. Finally, the policy directive established relationships with the Iraqi military through exchanges and military arms sales.⁵⁰ It was not a policy crafted to deter a belligerent actor but a typical bilateral policy crafted to promote American interests.

What was the military strategy and operational approach used by planners? H.W. Bush had four goals for the war: to withdraw all Iraqi forces from Kuwait, to restore Kuwait’s legitimate government, to reestablish the security and stability of the Persian Gulf, and to protect

⁴⁸ George H.W. Bush, “The President’s News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis,” January 9, 1991, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2605>.

⁴⁹ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Generals War* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 11-12.

⁵⁰ Zachary Karabell and Philip Zelikow, *Prelude to War: US Policy Toward Iraq 1988-1990* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 7-8.

American citizens.⁵¹ General Colin Powell, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, translated these goals into military objectives and helped determine the operational approach. These included plans to attack command and control nodes, to destroy the Iraqi Republican Guard forces, to disrupt key infrastructure, and to prevent further Iraqi aggression.

Two noteworthy operations conveyed the operational approach. The immediate problem planners faced centered on the security of Saudi Arabia. The national security team grew concerned Hussein might turn his forces south and continue to consolidate economic gains. Operation Desert Shield served as the defense stance operation designed to defend Saudi Arabia and to build the force in the Gulf. Conversely, Desert Storm complemented Desert Shield as the offensive stance operation, which included an air and ground campaign.⁵²

The ground campaign rested mainly on the Powell Doctrine, which was a plan built around a massive land force designed to achieve a decisive and violent victory. Desert Storm consisted of an extensive bombing campaign designed to degrade Iraqi military capability, followed by a land offensive to destroy the Iraqi army.

To accomplish these operations, a coalition of twenty-eight nations contributed to the war. Two Army Corps, XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps, and I Marine Expeditionary Force, made up the main American ground forces. XVIII Airborne Corps comprised of four divisions and VII Corps comprised of five divisions, each included brigades of aviation and artillery. I Marine Expeditionary Force consisted of two divisions and robust aviation.⁵³

⁵¹ George H.W. Bush, "Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait," August 8, 1990, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 10, 2017, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-8-1990-address-iraqs-invasion-kuwait>.

⁵² Colin Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 472.

⁵³ Ronald Mazzia, "Forces Committed," *Military Review* LXXI, no. 9 (September 1991): 80.

Did the argument for war change, reduce, or maintain its significance over time and did the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained its significance? The argument for war maintained its significance for the duration of the war and the operational approach did not change. H.W. Bush's address to Congress on the cessation of conflict demonstrates the arguments for war maintained its significance. H.W. Bush repeated his primary justification for war, which is the need to establish peace and international order. H.W. Bush also claimed the victory meant "a new world [order] coming into view. ... A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home for all nations." Finally, he also called for the American public to invest in the economy now that the "fear and uncertainty caused by the Gulf crisis" is over.⁵⁴

Kosovo - 1999

Starting in the early 1990s, a series of peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention operations occurred under President William Clinton. These included operations in Haiti in 1994 and Bosnia in 1995. Military operations in Kosovo occurred in 1999 when the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization raised the Kosovo Protection Forces to stop the ethnically fueled violence in the region.⁵⁵

Conflicts ignited by ethnic tensions often present the most complex explanations for the onset of war and Kosovo was no exception. The Balkan region has a volatile history, which reignited after the collapse of communism and the emergence of nationalism and self-determination. Yugoslavia, and the autonomous region of Kosovo, rapidly became center stage in the post-communist era. The conflict primarily centered on Kosovo's independence from Serbia

⁵⁴ George H.W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict," March 6, 1991, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2767>.

⁵⁵ Cody Phillips, *Operation Joint Guardian* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007).

starting in 1981. The Albanians, who demographically dominated Kosovo, demanded independence, while the Serbs demanded re-centralization. In 1989, the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic promised to restore control over Kosovo and violence rapidly ensued.⁵⁶

Diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the question of independence, resulting in the formulation of an ethnic Albanian Kosovo Army in 1996. Responding to attacks orchestrated by the Kosovo Army, Milosevic systematically organized the deliberate ethnic cleansing of Albanians within Kosovo. In the months preceding the arrival of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Serbian forces killed thousands of Kosovars and expelled hundreds of thousands more from Kosovo. By 1999, the Clinton administration and the greater international community faced a full-blown crisis.⁵⁷

In response to the Serbian killings, thirteen countries under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization conducted an intense air campaign called Operation Allied Force that lasted seventy-eight-days. The air campaign ended on June 10, after Milosevic allowed the entry of peacekeepers into Kosovo and agreed to withdraw Serbian forces from the province. Operation Joint Guardian and the Kosovo Force started the next day.

What was the political elite's argument for the war? The initial argument for war regarding Kosovo falls exclusively in the American values category. Protecting and promoting human rights, peace, self-determination, and international order, all under the classification of the American values argument, justified initial entry into the conflict. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization received its mandate from the United Nations on June 10, 1999, which cited the need for intervention "to resolve the grave humanitarian situation in Kosovo," to protect the self-

⁵⁶ Phillips, *Operation Joint Guardian*.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

autonomy of Kosovo, and to restore order and peace.⁵⁸ In April, Clinton referenced the same argument, “The crisis in Kosovo represents a fundamental challenge to the values for which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has stood since its foundation: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.” He also stated, “Peace and humanity will prevail in Kosovo. The refugees will go home; they will have security; they will have their self-government.”⁵⁹

Clinton’s initial argument for intervention essentially remained consistent in succeeding administrations. President George W. Bush’s administration had an apparent disinterest in the Kosovo mission; yet, the administration maintained the Clinton argument. However, after declaring Kosovo independent in 2008, the self-determination argument for maintaining the Kosovo Force became largely irrelevant. With the self-determination question solved, President Barack Obama’s administration continued the argument for maintaining peace and protecting human rights but he also simultaneously reduced the mission.

What was the political policy associated with the conflict? Although the argument for the Kosovo Force remains consistent within the political elite throughout three presidential administrations, the policy towards the region differs somewhat. Clinton’s decision for intervention is best explained not by specific policy on Kosovo, but by foreign policy that emerged in the post-Cold War era. Clinton saw the possibility of achieving a new world order that followed the era of bipolarity where the world embraced American values. The Clinton doctrine of “engagement and enlargement” captured this vision: engagement of internationalism and the enlargement of American values. The policy called for intervention to halt regional

⁵⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Council Resolution 1244, June 10, 1999, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://administration.nato.int/kosovo/docu/u990610a.htm>.

⁵⁹ William Clinton, “Joint Statement on Kosovo,” April 23, 1999, Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://administration.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PPP-1999-book1/pdf/PPP-1999-book1-doc-pg607.pdf>.

aggression, to stop threats to the stability of states, to defend human rights, and to protect American interests.⁶⁰

Bush inherited the Kosovo operation in 2000, less than a year into its mission. The Bush administration stayed committed to peace in the Balkans and support for the Kosovo Force, but for the most part, Kosovo remained a distant policy issue.⁶¹ However, in 2002 he supported the “standards before status” policy that set Kosovo on the path to state sovereignty. Finally, in February 2008 the United States recognized Kosovo as an independent state.⁶²

The Obama administration continued to recognize an independent Kosovo but also withdrew direct American support in the Kosovo Force mission. In 2012, the administration declared the end of international supervision of Kosovo but maintained its support for the European Union brokered Serbia-Kosovo peace talks.⁶³

What was the military strategy and operational approach used by planners? Clinton and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization set the initial objectives for the conflict in 1999: to end the ethnic violence, to withdraw the Serbian military from Kosovo, to safely return the refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and to build a political framework for the self-governance of Kosovo.⁶⁴ From these political objectives, Operation Joint Guardian had five objectives: one, restore peace; two, enforce the terms of the Resolutions and Military Agreements; three, establish

⁶⁰ William Clinton, “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement,” The White House, February 1996, accessed December 9, 2017, <http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/-/nss1996.pdf?ver=2014-06-25-121234-233>.

⁶¹ David Phillips, *Liberating Kosovo* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 140-141.

⁶² Julie Kim and Steven Woehrel, *Kosovo and US Policy: Background and Current Issues*, Congressional Research Service Report No. RL31053 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), accessed January 3, 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL31053.pdf>.

⁶³ Steven Woehrel, *Kosovo: Current Issues and US Policy*, Congressional Research Service Report No. RS21721 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), accessed January 5, 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21721.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Clinton, “Joint Statement on Kosovo.”

a safe and secure environment for refugees; four, establish a secure environment to permit international organizations to operate; and five, support local governance.⁶⁵

Mentioned previously, Operation Allied Force occurred before Kosovo Force's official establishment. Between March 24 and June 9, 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, led by the United States, conducted a seventy-eight-day air war against Milosevic to stop the human rights abuses in Kosovo. Originally, the operational approach called for an air war alone to force Milosevic to capitulate.⁶⁶ Although ultimately successful in compelling Milosevic to concede, a ground invasion was eventually required which resulted in the second aspect of the operational approach. In June 1999, 50,000 peacekeepers, commanded by British Lieutenant General Mike Jackson, worked to accomplish these ends.

Did the argument for war change, reduce, or maintain its significance over time and did the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained its significance? Although each administration since Clinton supported the requirement to uphold American values in Kosovo, the argument for war reduced over the course of three administrations. Clinton provided the original and most compelling argument for war. Bush inherited the conflict and largely ignored Kosovo and did not provide any additional arguments; yet, he did declare Kosovo independent which indicated the legitimacy of Clinton's argument. Obama directed a gradual American and international withdrawal in Kosovo and reduced the rhetoric of peacekeeping further.

The operational approach changed as the argument faded and as the situation improved. Clinton's administration, working with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, oversaw a massive bombing campaign. Although it was not originally intended, the bombing campaign was

⁶⁵ Phillips, *Operation Joint Guardian*, 19.

⁶⁶ Benjamin Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001).

followed up with 50,000 troops from thirty-eight countries. The ground force had an immense task that ranged from deterring aggression to civil affair projects.⁶⁷ By 2008, at the end of the Bush presidency, the number decreased to approximately 14,000 from thirty-four countries. Under Obama in 2016, only approximately 4,600 troops from thirty-one countries continued to operate in Kosovo. Additionally under Obama, the mission reduced in scope to “contribute towards maintaining a safe and secure environment in Kosovo and freedom of movement for all;” a departure from the robust mission in 1999.⁶⁸

Afghanistan - 2001

The last war reviewed is the 2001 Afghan war. President George W. Bush launched Operation Enduring Freedom to destroy the terrorist group that planned the simultaneous attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. For the next sixteen years, operations in Afghanistan have evolved from conventional to counterinsurgency warfare. Because the duration of the Afghan war lasted through several administrations, the policy, the argument, the strategy, and the operational approach evolved several times. For brevity, this study addresses the structured focus questions at the start and at the end of the Bush and Obama administrations.

Tracing the antecedents of the September 11, 2001 attacks is no small task. Nevertheless, considering John Lewis Gaddis’ principle of diminishing relevance, the Soviet withdrawal in the late 1980s provides a rational starting point. The Soviet abandonment of Afghanistan left behind a fragmented communist Afghanistan regime led by Najibullah Ahmadzai. However, before Najibullah could consolidate his base, his regime collapsed alongside the Soviet Union’s in 1991.

⁶⁷ Phillips, *Operation Joint Guardian*, 75.

⁶⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO’s Role in Kosovo,” last modified March 9, 2017, accessed December 2, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

What ensued was a military and political power struggle in Afghanistan. Ultimately, through civil war and coercion, the Taliban emerged as the brutal power broker by the mid-1990s and remained so until 2001.⁶⁹

Osama bin Laden also founded al-Qaeda in the geopolitical post-Soviet Afghanistan disorder. Bin Laden, taking advantage of the Taliban's radical interpretation of Islam, found in Afghanistan a perfect fertile ground to develop a transnational terrorist organization. Bin Laden, opposed to what he perceived as American imperialism on Muslim land, particularly Iraq and Saudi Arabia in 1991 and Somalia in 1992, planned and conducted several attacks against American interests. Soliciting little response from the West, he orchestrated the September 11 attacks and received an overwhelming international military response.

Within weeks of the invasion, the Taliban fell and fled across the border to Pakistan. Hamid Karzai led the formation of a government and the coalition retook the major power centers of Kabul and Kandahar City. By 2002, operations switched from offensive to security centric for the purpose of consolidating gains and building the Afghanistan army. By 2003, senior leaders in Afghanistan recognized that the character of the war had evolved into a counterinsurgency.

What was the political elite's argument for the war? The Bush administration initially relied on a nationalist argument to justify war but quickly turned to elements of both the realist and the American values arguments. Americans demonstrated extreme enmity against the Taliban after the 2001 attacks. A Gallup poll taken in October that year "showed that Americans favor the use of ground troops by more than a four-to-one margin."⁷⁰ Additionally, Americans exhibited

⁶⁹ Donald Wright, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-September 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 17-21.

⁷⁰ David Moore, "Eight of 10 Americans Support Ground War in Afghanistan" *Gallup News Service*, November 1, 2001, accessed December 9, 2017, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/5029/eight-americans-support-ground-war-afghanistan.aspx>.

displays of patriotism, promoting Bush to capitalize on the sentiment for the war.⁷¹ With the realist and American values argument, Bush cited the need to defend freedom and democracy. Stopping aggression and defeating an opponent that attacked America provided the main justification. In a September 20, 2001 speech, Bush captured many of these arguments and outlined how and why America would respond. He said, “enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country ... freedom itself is under attack” and “I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.”⁷² Summarized, Bush labeled the war as the opposition of good versus evil and of freedom versus tyranny.

By the end of Bush’s presidency in 2008, the nationalist argument no longer provided the main justification for war. Although undertones of support for democracy and freedom under the nationalist category remained, the argument took a backseat to the realist and American values arguments. Although Afghanistan did not reach the level of unpopularity the 2003 Iraq war did, Bush largely lost the majority and patriotism argument under the nationalist category.⁷³ Partly resulting from a resurgent Taliban in the mid-2000s, the justification for war now rested on the realist and American values argument.

As often required from new administrations when inheriting war, the American public needed renewed justification for the Afghan War. Two months into his presidency, Obama outlined a realist and American values argument stating the Afghan war “is a cause that could not

⁷¹ Sarah Spring and Joseph Packer, “George W. Bush: An Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” *Voices of Democracy* 4 (Fall 2009): 120-131.

⁷² George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” September 20, 2001, George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

⁷³ George W. Bush initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003. He argued that the alleged possession and manufacture of weapons of mass destruction by the Iraqi Government called for the United States to intervene to protect American security interests. No weapons of mass destruction were found.

be more just. . . . The world cannot afford the price that will come due if Afghanistan slides back into chaos or al-Qaeda operates unchecked.”⁷⁴

While this argument remained central to the Obama administration throughout his presidency, the rhetoric took a more tranquil tone towards the end. Security under the realist argument persisted at the end of his presidency but became associated with stringent troop withdrawal timelines that undermined the argument. Additionally, Obama cited the need to improve the competency of the Afghan Security Forces and the Afghan government.

What was the political policy associated with the conflict? Before the war in Afghanistan, the foreign policy of America in general terms involved preventing the rise of a hostile rival power and global diplomatic interaction to preserve American interests.⁷⁵ That changed after the attacks. Combatting terrorism rose immediately to a top foreign policy issue.⁷⁶ Killing or capturing terrorists and holding states accountable that harbor terrorists encapsulated the policy of the Bush administration. The now infamous neoconservative ideological “War on Terror” combined with the democratization of the Middle East embodied the policy towards Afghanistan.

The 2002 National Security Strategy expressed Bush’s post-September 11, 2001 policy, which centered on three themes. The concept of preventative war comprised the first point and essentially stated the United States would strike a sovereign state or non-state actor before they attacked the United States. Unilateral action was the second theme. Finally, the last theme centered on global democratization and freedom. Published after the Afghanistan war started, the

⁷⁴ Barack Obama, “A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan,” March 27, 2009, Barack Obama Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 15, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/03/27/a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

⁷⁵ Stephen Biddle and Peter Feaver, “Assessing Strategic Choices in the War on Terror,” in *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*, ed. Beth Bailey and Richard Immerman (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 101.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

National Security Strategy nevertheless captured the policy considerations the Bush administration considered when debating the initiation of the Afghan war.⁷⁷

Towards the end of the Bush administration, policy towards Afghanistan largely stayed consistent with the 2002 National Security Strategy but the tone softened on democratization and took a less contentious tenor. Policy centered foremost on security but also on governance, reconstruction, and counter-narcotics. In particular, support to governance became a major foreign policy issue by the end of the Bush term.⁷⁸ Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, summarized the foreign policy towards Afghanistan in 2008, "We recognize that democratic state building is now an urgent component of our national interest. And in the broader Middle East, we recognize that freedom and democracy are the only ideas that can, over time, lead to just and lasting stability, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq."⁷⁹

Although Obama viewed Afghanistan as the "good war" (as opposed to the 2003 Iraq "bad war"), the administration entered office in 2009 with the policy objective of ending the war in Afghanistan. Obama intended to continue to combat terrorism (especially al-Qaeda) and promote democracy but limit the scope of both those endeavors as compared to his predecessor. Strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships, with a concentration on Pakistan, comprised his foreign policy towards Afghanistan. The 2009 strategic review on Afghanistan eventually caused the creation of a new strategy that resulted in increased troop numbers but also called for an aggressive transition timeline.

⁷⁷ Gary Gregg and Mark Rozell, *Considering the Bush Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 185.

⁷⁸ Richard Boucher, "US Policy in Afghanistan," Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, February 14, 2008, accessed December 10, 2017, <https://20012009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/2008/103437.htm>.

⁷⁹ Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest: America Realism for a New World," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008, accessed November 16, 2017, <https://administration.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2008-06-01/rethinking-national-interest>.

What was the military strategy and operational approach? The public demand for an immediate response to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon was profound and resulted in hastiness. No long-term viable campaign plan materialized regarding the future of Afghanistan.⁸⁰ The result was a surprisingly rapid overthrow of the Taliban followed by the Taliban insurgency.

The initial political aims of the Bush administration included: one, bring Osama bin Laden to justice; two, degrade the al-Qaeda network; and three, degrade the terrorist groups with global reach. General Tommy Franks translated these aims to the military ends of destroying al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, removing the Taliban from rule, killing or capturing Osama bin Laden, and providing humanitarian aid.⁸¹

The original 2001 operational approach called for unconventional warfare supported by air attacks and followed up with a conventional attack in the spring. Central Intelligence Agency operatives and unconventional military units, including the 5th Special Forces Group, inserted into Afghanistan within weeks after September 11, 2001. They joined the Northern Alliance to fight the Taliban regime and try to kill or capture bin Laden. Simultaneously, conventional military units (primarily elements of the 10th Mountain Division) built combat power in Uzbekistan, north of Afghanistan. These conventional units would eventually follow up the unconventional operations to consolidate gains, train the Afghan National Army, and conduct humanitarian operations.⁸²

At the end of the Bush administration in 2008, the war evolved into a counterinsurgency effort. Beyond the initial military objectives in late 2001 and into 2002, the Bush administration

⁸⁰ Wright, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-September 2005*, 40.

⁸¹ Wright, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-September 2005*, 42-45.

⁸² *Ibid.*

“did not conduct a rigorous internal strategic review or produce a formal written strategy ... the war in Afghanistan largely took a back seat, in terms of leadership time and attention, and resourcing, to the [2003] war in Iraq.”⁸³ Regardless, the informal strategy focused on stabilizing the post-Taliban reality. In a September 2008 speech, Bush outlined new objectives while announcing a “quiet surge” of 3,500 Marines and North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allies. Bush designed this surge “to provide security for the Afghan people, protect Afghanistan’s infrastructure and democratic institutions, and help ensure access to [essential] services.”⁸⁴ With no overarching United States goals and objectives, it would be up to the incoming administration to determine Afghanistan’s strategy and operational approach.

Upon inauguration, Obama ordered a strategy review to determine how to proceed in Afghanistan. Obama announced his strategy in March 2009 that included the deployment of an additional 21,000 American forces. Furthermore, he defined his ends, “to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan.” His strategy committed the United States to “promoting a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan.”⁸⁵ Obama’s strategy also included emphasis on Afghan military training, increasing the size of the Afghan Security Forces, and improving the bilateral relationship with Pakistan.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates replaced General David McKiernan with General Stanley McChrystal in 2008 to implement this new strategy. McChrystal subsequently issued his

⁸³ Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Operations, and Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service Report No. R40156 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40156.pdf>.

⁸⁴ George W. Bush, “Remarks at the National Defense University,” September 9, 2008, George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=78620>.

⁸⁵ Bowman and Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*.

military strategy assessment, which included four aspects. First, support for governance must be just as necessary as security. Second, he suggested raising the strength of the Afghan Security Forces to approximately 400,000 forces while increasing cooperation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Afghan Forces. Third, he prioritized the military and diplomatic efforts across Afghanistan. Finally, he stressed the need to change the operational culture to focus more on the interaction with the population.⁸⁶

Although strategic dialogue ensued between the civilian leaders and military professionals regarding the ways of the strategy, Obama decided on an integrated McChrystal counterinsurgency approach. In December 2009, Obama announced a 30,000 troop surge while maintaining his March 2009 war goals. His announcement, however, included a timeline for withdrawal. By the end of 2009, Obama's strategy preserved an offensive character, a focus on counterinsurgency, and increased emphasis on governance.

From 2009 to 2016, five Army officers commanded in Afghanistan, resulting in multiple strategy reviews. By 2016, Obama declared the combat mission in Afghanistan had ended and troop drawdowns dominated any strategy conversation. The administration shifted away from nation building to a strategy that put a premium on getting troops redeployed. Troop reductions also coincided with a mission reduction. Obama affirmed, "our forces are now focused on two narrow missions: training and advising Afghan forces, and supporting counterterrorist operations against the remnants of al-Qaeda as well as other terrorist groups."⁸⁷ As a result, the operational approach transitioned from counterinsurgency to tailored support of the Afghan forces and conducting only the most critical counterterrorism operations.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on Afghanistan," July 6, 1016, The Obama White House Archives, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/06/statement-president-afghanistan>.

Did the argument for war change, reduce, or maintain its significance over time and did the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained its significance? Bush's argument changed over time, going from a nationalist argument in 2001 to a realist and American values argument by 2008. Obama's argument changed over time as well. The realist argument reduced its significance over time and indirectly resulted in a condensed mission with an increased focus on troop reduction. Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism remained the primary operational approach in Afghanistan throughout the Obama administration but with emphasis on training and supporting the Afghan forces.

The case studies explored the policy, argument, strategy, and the operational approach in the military operations in Iraq, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Armed with this evidence, it is now appropriate to explore the relationships between these aspects. The next section provides the findings and analysis from the examination of the case studies.

Findings

Based on the evidence, this section compares the answers of the research questions to each case study, and when appropriate, is presented in table format. The case study section addressed the research questions within the case study only. This section compares the research questions to each case and summarizes the answers to the research questions.

Question one asked, what was the political elite’s argument for war and illuminated two takeaways. First, the political elite rarely provided an argument for war that fit in a single category. With the exception of Kosovo, the political elite invoked more than one argument for war and more than one sub-category under a particular argument classification. However, in all three cases a dominant argument stood apart from the others. Two, in all three case studies examined, various sub-categories under the American values argument dominated the argument for war and was the primary argument in two of the three (Kosovo and Iraq). This revealed the political elite relied on the American values argument over others. An element of the realist argument revealed itself in four of the five cases and was the primary argument in two of them. Table 3 outlines the answer to research question one.

Table 3. Summary of Research Question One

| | Iraq (1991) | Kosovo (1999) | Afghanistan (2001) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Primary Argument | American values | American values | Nationalist |
| Sub-Categories | International order and peace | Protecting and promoting human rights, instilling peace, self-determination international order | Patriotism |
| Secondary Argument 1 | Realist | None | Realist |
| Sub-Categories | Diplomacy is futile | None | Aggression |
| Secondary Argument 2 | Nationalist | None | American values |
| Sub-Categories | Trade | None | Freedom, democracy |

Source: Created by author.

Question two asked, what was the political policy that related to the war. Policy towards Iraq prior to the initiation of hostilities included: normalize relations between Washington and Baghdad, invest in Iraqi reconstruction efforts, and establish relationships between the Iraqi military through exchanges and sales. The policy towards Kosovo evolved under three administrations. Clinton advanced a liberal world order through his “engagement and enlargement” policy that envisioned a world that embraced American values. Bush, for the most part, did not enunciate a clear policy aside from his “standards before status” policy that led to Kosovo’s sovereign status in 2008. Finally, Obama, similar to Clinton, maintained a policy of American values but a definitive policy regarding Kosovo remained largely absent. Finally, policy in Afghanistan, like Kosovo, depended on the administration. Bush’s policy, prior to September 2001, centered on preventing the rise of a hostile rival power and cementing America as a global hegemon. After September 2001 the “war on terror” and democratization of the Middle East dominated policy formulation. By the end of Bush’s term the policy of nation building and governance emerged as the central policy theme. Ending the war became the leading policy objective for Obama but the administration also continued the policy of combating terrorism, promoting democracy, and creating an effective Afghan army while downplaying nation building.

Question two illuminated the connection between policy and war. For the wars that started and ended in one administration, a clear link between policy and the cause for war (including the argument) occurs. This makes sense considering Clausewitz’s maxim that war is an extension of policy. If, however, a presidential administration inherits a conflict (like Bush did with Kosovo and Obama with Afghanistan), Clausewitz’s truism appears less relevant. The conflicts in Kosovo and Afghanistan represent vacillating policy as administrations changed and policy faded or failed to materialize altogether. This has an impact on war. Meaning, the war no longer clearly reflects an extension of policy by the original policy maker and instead reflects an

immature policy or changing policy from the new administration. This increases the war's duration and possibly its character.

Question three asked, what was the military strategy used by planners for the war. The broad evaluation of the military strategy in the three case studies illustrates two takeaways. One, looking at strategy in isolation of the argument, policy, and operational approach across the three case studies, few, if any, patterns emerge. Factors including war duration, political administration preferences and level of acceptable risk, unilateral versus multinational coalitions, and multilateral involvement, all affected strategy formulation and implementation. Second, while all the wars involved strategy, rarely did the ends drive the ways and means. Rather, it was the ways and means that often drove the ends. Instead of being presented prior to conflict, political guidance on ends emerged progressively and continued to emerge and change throughout. Table 4 outlines the answer to research question three.

Table 4. Summary of Research Question Three

| | Iraq (1991) | Kosovo (1999) | Afghanistan (2001) |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| Ends | Attack command and control capability, destroy the Iraqi Republican Guard forces, destroy key infrastructure, and prevent further Iraqi aggression | Restore peace, enforce the terms of the Resolutions and Military Agreements, establish a safe and secure environment for refugees, establish a secure environment to permit international organizations to operate, and support local governance | Destroy Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, remove the Taliban from rule, kill or capture Osama bin Laden, and provide humanitarian aid |
| Ways | Defense stance operation (Desert Shield) & offensive stance operation (Desert Storm) and an overall concept of a decisive, quick, and violent campaign | Seventy-eight day air war followed by a ground invasion and a peacekeeping mission | Unconventional warfare supported by air attacks followed by a conventional attack in the spring of 2002 |
| Means | XVIII Airborne Corps, VII Corps, I Marine Expeditionary Force, a twenty-eight member Coalition, and units from the Air Force and Navy | 50,000 peacekeeping multi-national force | 10th Mountain Division, the Central Intelligence Agency, and Special Forces (primarily 5th Group) |

Source: Created by author.

Question four asked, what was the operational approach used by military planners for the war. Question five and six asked, did the argument for war change, reduce, or maintain its significance over time and did the military strategy and operational approach change as the argument changed, reduced, or maintained significance. Table 5 presents the summary of research question number four and Table 6 outlines research questions five and six.

Based on the evidence examined, if the argument changed, or even reduced significance, so did the operational approach and strategy, evident through examination of Kosovo and Afghanistan. In both cases, multiple operational approaches and strategies reacted to the political elite's argument for war. Wars that initiate and terminate under one political administration did not require a new argument. Put differently, while the operational approach and strategy evolved

and considered emergent aspects, administrations did not have to consider new arguments. Iraq illustrated how the H.W. Bush administration articulated a single argument resulting in a single strategy and operational approach. Similar to how administrations change policy upon taking office, administrations also changed the argument for the war when inheriting conflict. This provoked a renewed investigation of the strategy and operational approach beyond policy implementations.

Table 5. Summary of Research Question Four

| | Iraq (1991) | Kosovo (1999) | Afghanistan (2001) |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Primary Operational Approach | Invasion | Invasion | Invasion |
| Secondary Operational Approach #1 | Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction | Foreign Humanitarian Assistance | Counterinsurgency |
| Secondary Operational Approach #2 | None | Peace Operations | Civil Support |

Source: Created by author.

Table 6. Summary of Research Question Five and Six

| | Iraq (1991) | Kosovo (1999) | Afghanistan (2001) |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Argument Change? | No | Yes | Yes |
| Argument Reduce Significance? | No | Yes | Yes |
| Argument Maintain Significance? | Yes | No | No |
| Did the operational approach and/or strategy change? | No | Yes | Yes |

Source: Created by author.

Analysis

This section synthesizes the research questions in order to determine the validity of the hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated the argument for war has a place in the relationship between the policy, strategy, and the operational approach. The evidence supports this hypothesis. Overlooked in the theory regarding war, the argument for war belongs among policy, strategy, and operational approach when considering how war is informed. The theoretical linear sequence of policy, strategy, and operations are largely unrealistic and best viewed as an organic interrelationship.⁸⁸ A principal component in this organic interrelationship is the argument for war. In each case study, the political elite's argument proved to be an essential requirement in the formation of strategy and operations and not a trivial requirement demanded from democratic leaders. The evidence reveals two conclusions. One, a correlation existed between the policy and the argument for war, and two, the argument helped inform the ends of the strategy.

In all three case studies a link surfaced between policy and the argument. In regards to Kosovo, the policy informed the argument. In the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, the opposite occurred and the argument facilitated the policy. In the Kosovo case, Clinton's policy of "engagement and enlargement" translated to a Wilsonian dogma of internationalism and the global amplification of American principles. Consequently, Clinton presented an American values argument to justify intervention in Kosovo, which correlated to Clinton's democracy and human rights policy.

While policy associated with Kosovo informed the argument, in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq the argument formed the policy. Bush's policy before the September 2001 attacks appeared to prioritize preserving American global interests through ballistic missile defense systems and isolating rogue states like North Korea. Radical Islamism was not a high priority

⁸⁸ Richard Betts, "Is strategy an illusion?" *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 5-50.

policy issue.⁸⁹ Almost immediately after the attacks, Bush framed his policy through his argument. Days after the attack he vowed to fight terrorism in the name of freedom and security and soon after the “global war on terror” policy transpired, defining the first half of his presidency. As an American values argument surfaced as the primary argument late in his administration, the policy (albeit ill-defined) shifted to reflect this change.

Similar to Afghanistan, the argument for the 1991 Iraq war also informed policy. Before hostilities, America maintained a benevolent view towards Iraq. However, after Hussein’s attack on Kuwait the benign policy transformed to malign policy against the aggressor. About a month after the attack, H.W. Bush addressed Congress and the American people and outlined a new foreign policy. He described a world order “freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world ... can prosper and live in harmony.”⁹⁰ Ultimately, the argument for action against Hussein’s Iraq formulated the administrations new perspective on foreign policy.

Second, the argument, in addition to the policy, provided information to inform the ends. That is, before the ends were officially determined the argument revealed critical aspects of the ends that planners used to inform their approach. Hindsight often falsely uncovers a linear relationship between ends, ways, and means as the Huntington model suggests.⁹¹ More accurately, however, ends are determined through strategic discourse, or what Eliot Cohen

⁸⁹ Melvyn Leffler, “September 11 in Retrospect,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://administration.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2011-08-19/september-11-retrospect>.

⁹⁰ George H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit,” September 11, 1990, George H.W Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 12, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2217>.

⁹¹ The model argues for separating military professionals from politics, providing clear ends up front, and “objective” civilian control of the military. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957).

described as an “unequal dialogue.”⁹² A part of this unequal dialogue is the argument. Although all three cases revealed evidence of how the argument played a substantial role in shaping ends, Iraq proved the most significant.

When Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, it placed H.W. Bush’s national security team in planning turmoil. Beyond protecting American interest and allies, the Principals Committee of the National Security Staff disagreed on how the United States should respond militarily. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney met with Powell the day after the invasion to initiate the discussion on military options. Cheney suggested replacing Hussein and restoring Kuwait’s sovereignty as the foremost objectives while Powell remained pessimistic over a military-centric solution.⁹³ A few days after that conversation, the National Security Council met and Powell bluntly asked the Council, “if it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait” and pressed H.W. Bush for guidance on the definitive military ends. However, the meeting ended with no clear decree.⁹⁴ Although Powell’s question remained unanswered, H.W. Bush appeared ready only to support defending Saudi Arabia and the planning team planned accordingly.⁹⁵

However, a few days later H.W. Bush’s argument for war provided the guidance in part that Powell requested in the National Security Council meeting. On August 5, H.W. Bush publicly announced that Hussein’s occupation of Kuwait “would not stand” which consequently altered how Powell advanced the strategy and operational approach.⁹⁶ Powell recalled he

⁹² Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 209.

⁹³ Michael R. Gordon, and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals’ War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 33.

⁹⁴ Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 463.

⁹⁵ Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals’ War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, 317.

⁹⁶ George H.W. Bush, “Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait,” August 5, 1990, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2138>.

“received a new mission” based on H.W. Bush’s argument which transformed the focus of the operation to include an offensive phase.⁹⁷

In the midst of a series of United Nations Security Resolutions in the ensuing days, H.W. Bush advanced his argument on August 8 that continued to influence strategy and operations. Consuming language from the Resolutions, he mentioned four objectives publicly before officially articulating them to his national security team.

First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime. And third, my administration, as has been the case with every president from President Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad.⁹⁸

H.W. Bush continued to state these objectives through his argument, to both the public and Defense employees. Twelve days after his argument the publication of the National Security Directive 45 communicated to the planning team what was already communicated through his argument.

The second hypothesis stated when the argument for war changed it impacted the relationship between and within policy, strategy, and the operational approach. The evidence supports the hypothesis. Previously alluded to in the findings section, if the argument changed or reduced significance so did the operational approach and strategy. Put differently, if an administration inherited a conflict the argument to maintain that conflict in some form changed which altered the strategy and operational approach. The case studies of Kosovo and Afghanistan exemplify the validity of this hypothesis.

⁹⁷ Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 467.

⁹⁸ George H.W. Bush, “Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia,” August 8, 1990, George H.W Bush Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2147>.

Kosovo initiated under the Clinton administration and continued under presidents Bush and Obama. Clinton's policy in the region and well as his American values liberal agenda led him in part to take action against Milosevic. In the approximate year and a half the Kosovo operation transpired under the Clinton administration, the policy, strategy, and operational approach aligned under Clinton's American values argument. That changed when Bush assumed office in 2001. Although the argument maintained an American values perspective, the argument faded under Bush, which impacted the strategy and operational approach.

Many aspects affected the Kosovo mission. One overlooked aspect is the diminishing argument Bush and Obama had regarding the conflict. Bush largely ignored Kosovo as a major policy issue, which only amplified after the wars started in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Under the Bush and later Obama administrations, American units involved in Kosovo steadily declined. Starting in 2003, active duty soldiers stopped deploying to Kosovo altogether. In addition, only thirty percent of the original 1999 Kosovo force remained in Kosovo by 2008. Additionally, as the argument progressed (really regressed) the operational approach went from an air campaign and ground invasion in 1999 to a diminishing peacekeeping force.

While the threat of a wider war spreading across Europe, as Clinton feared, sharply reduced within a few years, Afghanistan remained a threat to American interests throughout both Bush and Obama's administrations. Yet, both administrations' argument for war differed as well as their strategy and operational approaches.

A day after the September 2001 attacks, General Tommy Franks assumed, as Central Command's Commander, that the Secretary of Defense would ultimately approve two ends, destroy al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime, although Franks remained unsure.⁹⁹ Bush, riding a wave of American enmity towards al-Qaeda that immediately followed the attacks,

⁹⁹ Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 251.

clarified some of Franks' assumptions when he used a nationalist and realist argument to justify war. Citing that American values and America's security were at stake in a public speech less than ten days after the attacks, Bush mentioned various aspects that later turned into the initial ends. These included bringing bin Laden to justice, destroying al-Qaeda, and providing humanitarian aid.

The passionate argument for war quickly translated into a powerful American invasion of Afghanistan. Using a combination of unconventional and conventional military and civilian means, American forces quickly overwhelmed the Taliban. Despite not capturing bin Laden, coalition forces found mission success at unparalleled speed. By 2003, the initial argument for war changed to reflect these new realities. In public speeches throughout 2002-2003, Bush spoke of securing Afghanistan's future, protecting military gains, and preventing the rise of the Taliban or other hostile forces.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, operations in 2003 reflected this. Major combat operations largely ended, replaced by support to governance and training Afghan forces. Additionally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's commitment to Kabul increased from a few thousand to nearly fifty thousand troops.¹⁰¹

When Obama assumed office in 2009, he changed the argument for war, which changed the war itself. Obama's realist and American values perspective continued from the Bush era but with a different focus. Increasing the size of the Afghan army and promoting an accountable government along with defeating enemies within Afghanistan affected the strategy and operations. Obama deployed an additional thirty thousand soldiers but remained committed to ending the war. He provided three major arguments for war that impacted operations each time.

¹⁰⁰ "Policies of the Bush Administration, 2001-2009," George W. Bush White House Archives (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010).

¹⁰¹ George W. Bush, "Face Sheet: 2008 NATO Summit," April 2, 2008, George W. Bush Library and Museum, accessed December 9, 2017, <https://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/04/20080402-1.html>.

The first in December 2009 when he ordered the Afghanistan surge and placed a time constraint on commanders, the second in June 2011 when he called for the withdrawal of tens of thousands of troops and changed the mission from combat to support, and finally in December 2014 when Obama declared the combat mission in Afghanistan had ended. In each speech he argued for the war's merit and each argument impacted strategy and the operational approach in terms of troop levels, mission, and timelines.

As the case study, findings, and analysis section demonstrated, the argument is a critical component in the traditional relationship of policy, strategy, and operational approach. The findings and analysis section uncovered how policy impacted the argument in Kosovo while the argument impacted the policy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, Iraq illustrated how the argument provided input to the ends. Finally, Kosovo and Afghanistan presented when the argument changed it impacted the relationship between strategy and the operational approach. The next section provides the conclusion.

Conclusion

Hew Strachan points out that “only rarely does war fulfill the ideal objectives of the side that initiates it. Policy in wartime therefore has to reflect the nature of war itself, and to be embedded in it.”¹⁰² However, as argued, the relationship goes deeper. Policy in wartime also reflects the political elite’s argument as well as the nature of the war. This conclusion section reviews the purpose of this study, the research questions, and the thesis. In addition, this section reviews the principle findings, implication for practice, and suggests future research.

Separately, the topics of policy, strategy, operational approach, and the political arguments for war maintain a rich body of research. Strategy certainly is a subject thoroughly explored by scholars as far back as 2,500 years ago with Sun Tzu. Similarly, a comprehensive study on policy exists for all American presidential administrations. Categorizing arguments for war is a less explored topic compared to strategy and policy; yet, publications about “selling war” or “justifying war” endure a prominent place in scholarship. Research exploring relationships between all these topics, however, remain largely unexplored. Even the most famous relationship between strategy and policy remains an immature research area. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand, through historical case studies, how these topics are interrelated. It sought to answer the question, what is the nature of the relationship between these topics?

The argument for war, communicated by the political elite, is an important and often overlooked criterion when understanding the relationship between policy, strategy, and the operational approach. This study validated this thesis through the investigation of three case studies, Iraq (1991), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001). All three case studies demonstrated

¹⁰² Hew Strachan, “A Clausewitz for Every Season,” *The American Interest* 2, no. 6 (July 2007): 29-35.

how policy, strategy, and the operational approach interacted in nonlinear ways and how the political rhetoric further affected this relationship.

In summary, this study presented three main findings. One, the American values argument is the predominant argument for war by the political elite. This largely corresponds to the foreign policy that relates to the region in which the conflict occurred. Moreover, American values rhetoric is often found in the strategy's ends. Second, when an administration inherits an ongoing war, the administration provides a renewed argument to continue the conflict or to eliminate it. This affects policy, which in turn affects war. The war no longer is a continuation of policy but instead a continuation of multiple policy changes, a subtle yet significant point. As demonstrated in the historical examples, this has a profound impact on the war's strategy and operational approach and assumes the character of the argument. Finally, as the Iraq example indicated, an argument for war can provide the foundation for a new policy when an older policy is no longer relevant.

This study potentially has significant implication for practice, particularly for policy makers, strategists, or operational artists. The draft Joint Doctrine Note 1-17, *Strategy*, suggests the strategist, after an analysis of the strategic situation, must answer seven questions to determine how and when to employ force. The first and most fundamental question the authors of the Joint Doctrine Note identified was "what is the political aim?"¹⁰³ Determining the political aim is difficult for several reasons and any guidance received is usually unclear and imprecise.¹⁰⁴ To help answer this basic question outlined by the Joint Doctrine Note, understanding the relationship and interactions between the argument for war, policy, strategy, and the operational approach is a logical starting point. This study demonstrated that the argument for war plays a

¹⁰³ US Joint Staff, JDN 1-17, *Strategy*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Matt Gaetke, "Certainty is Illusion: The Myth of Strategic Guidance" (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies), 2015.

meaningful role in policy formulation as well as the employment of the operational approach. Consequently, policy makers, strategists, or operational artists should look beyond traditional means of guidance in formulating policy or strategy and carefully take into account past and present political rhetoric. Furthermore, by understanding the classification of the rhetoric, policy makers, strategists, or operational artists gain valuable awareness and a more holistic understanding of the political elite's motivation, level of commitment, and endstate.

The limitations and delimitations of this study leave room for further research. Expanding this research beyond three case studies and broadening the types of case studies would add breadth to the research and further validate its findings. Moreover, future research might expand the scope of the historical evidence beyond an American scope to include Western or Eastern examples. This might reveal new argument classifications not used by American politicians and potentially determine the argument for war influences strategy and policy across all nations.

For planners, strategic thinkers, and operational artists, understanding strategic objectives is essential. Furthermore, the ability to determine an operational approach in support of strategic goals enables the accomplishment of national policy. However, without careful consideration of the argument for war within the already vacillating relationship of policy, strategy, and operations, a critical piece of the puzzle is missing.

Appendix A. Arguments for War

Realist Arguments

Security: Military action is necessary because American territories or citizens have been or are in immediate danger of being attacked.

Deterrence: Military action is necessary to resolve a current conflict by directly discouraging through demonstrations of power and will current or potential foes from attacking the United States.

Reputation: Military action is necessary to resolve a current conflict by demonstrating that the United States possesses in its innate character the power and will to confront and defeat foes.

Domino Theory: Military action in defense of a friend or ally is necessary because the loss of one state will alter the balance of power and, by the addition of territory and resources to the control of opponents, lead to further losses.

Credibility: Military action in defense of a friend or ally is necessary to encourage allies and discourage foes through instances of promise keeping involving demonstrations of power and will.

Forward Defense: The defense of American territories, borders, citizens and interests cannot be achieved without venturing further into the world to confront and defeat threats using military force.

Diplomacy is Futile: Military action is necessary because further use of peaceful diplomatic means for settling a dispute which threatens American security will not work, as often demonstrated by the failure of prior efforts, or the nature of the opponent.

Existing Hostilities: Military action is necessary because an opponent has already attacked the United States.

Aggression: Military force is necessary to stop aggressors, that is, revisionist actors who use military force to attain their ends in the absence of opposition.

Inadequacy of International Law and Norms: The United States cannot depend on international law to settle disputes.

Nationalist Arguments

Sovereignty: Military force is necessary to protect national sovereignty.

Majority: Americans approve of the military action.

Trade: Military action is necessary to protect American trade and commerce.

Patriotism: Everyone must support officials in their decision to use military force to resolve a conflict.

Partisanship: Opposition to martial policies must cease because it is motivated by the desire to score political points.

Domestic Benefits: The war will bring the United States tangible goods like territory or natural resources.

Constitutional: Policymakers have followed all relevant Constitutional procedures and rules.

American Values Arguments

Democracy: Military action is needed to defend and promote democracy in the world.

Freedom: Military action is needed to defend and promote freedom in the world.

Humanitarian/Human Rights: Military action is needed to defend human rights.

Peace: Military action is needed to eliminate aggressors and bring about peace

Self Determination: Military action is necessary to defend the right of all nations to determine their own affairs.

International Order: Military action is needed for purposes of creating or supporting a world order.

Source: David Lorenzo, A Necessary Recourse to Arms: Justifying the Use of Military Force and the American Debate over War and Peace, 2017 (unpublished).

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