Purely Military Advice: Military Translation of Strategic Policy in Wars of Limited Aims

A Monograph

by

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Case studies from the 2007 Iraq Surge and the 2009 Afghanistan Surge examine deliberations between the president and the military. Friction occurred as generals negotiated, or failed to negotiate, ways and means that would enable the development of campaign plans capable of achieving the policy maker's desired end state. The conclusion affirms Clausewitz's notion that providing "purely military advice" to politicians is not preferable, and that operational level military officers are responsible for understanding the political aims of the war.

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Abstract

Purely Military Advice: Military Translation of Strategic Policy in Wars of Limited Aims, by Major Matthew G. Mattingly, US Army, 41 pages.

This monograph is meant to inform operational level military officers as they interpret political policy and develop campaign plans. Evidence demonstrates that operational artists translate presidential policy and negotiate elements of operational art from emergent political strategy. The criteria identify the commander with both the authority to advise policy makers, and the responsibility to arrange the forces capable of achieving a policy objective, as the operational artist.

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I would like to thank my beautiful, pregnant wife for feigning interest in Clausewitz all these months. I promise not to name the baby Carl.

Acronyms

ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council

Section 1: Introduction

> The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war...the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be.
>
> - Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

> As if I do not know that, in a military point of view, Moscow is of no value. But Moscow is not a military position, it is a political position.
>
> -Napoleon Bonaparte, Moscow, 1812

In the earliest days of organized combat, sovereign kings and emperors took up arms and rode into battle. Whether they understood their dual purpose or not, they simultaneously directed tactical actions while refining strategic objectives. Napoleon may have been the last to do so when he invaded Russia in 1812. During the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck and Moltke rode side by side on the battlefield. Bismarck controlled strategy; Moltke orchestrated combat. The division of labor was beginning to emerge, but the politician remained a presence on the battlefield. The telegraph allowed politicians to remove themselves from immediate danger as the railroad extended the battlefield. President Abraham Lincoln, fully embracing new technology, kept a firm grip on his generals while remaining in Washington.[1]

Communications technology advanced during the twentieth century, but, whether correct or not, the public impression was that there was little political influence on generals during the World Wars. These near total wars had simple, enduring objectives: defend the homeland and destroy the foe. One hundred years prior, Carl von Clausewitz explained that wars with an absolute political aim produced an appearance of apolitical combat. After the Second World War,

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[1] Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest for France in 1870-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 278-280. Even with both men on the battlefield, the political and military elements occasionally clashed. Bismark's political strategy, following the failure to find peace after the capture of the French Emperor at Sedan, required a rapid, violent destruction of Paris, while Moltke preferred to siege the city and preserve his combat power. David H. Bates, *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office: Recollections of the United States Military Telegraph Corps during the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), 42. The manager of the War Department telegraph office recalled of Lincoln, "He almost lived in the telegraph office when a battle was in progress."

the United States engaged in a series of wars of limited aims in support of the political settlement engineered by the United States and Western Allies. These wars often had the appearance of overt political posturing and failed to produce decisive victories. Considering American dissatisfaction with the outcome of wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, it is appropriate to examine the civil-military relationship in the development of campaigns. With the politician now far removed from the battlefield, what is his influence on the design of military operations?[2]

The intent of this research is to describe how policy translates into military force in wars of limited aims. There are numerous, well documented instances of American political direction of military action. President Lincoln was in constant contact with his generals. President Harry Truman publicly fired General Douglas MacArthur. President Lyndon Johnson once bragged that the Air Force couldn't, "bomb an outhouse without my approval."[3] The Goldwater-Nichols Act outlines which political leaders may involve themselves but does little to define the scope of their contributions. Samuel Huntington's "objective civilian control" is perhaps the dominant theoretical model for designing relationships between politicians and generals in developing military operations, though Huntington acknowledges its impracticability.[4]

Operational artists translate presidential policy and negotiate elements of operational art from emergent political strategy. Clausewitz's philosophy, that wars are not autonomous military actions, but an instrument of policy, would logically apply to the actors that design and execute these campaigns. In short, generals may influence policy, and politicians always influence

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[2] "The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war...the more military and less political will war appear to be." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87; G. Stephen Lauer, "American Discontent: Unhappy Military Outcomes of the Post-Second World War Era," *Strategy Bridge Journal*, May 2017.

[3] Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking, 1983), 415.

[4] David H. Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 446; Kori Schake, "Presidents Get the Military Leaders They Deserve," *Foreign Policy* (May 11, 2015). "The separation of powers is a perpetual invitation, if not an irresistible force, drawing military leaders into political conflicts. Consequently, it has been a major hindrance to the development of military professionalism and civilian control in the United States." Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1957), 177.

military operations. This research will specifically focus on how operational artists negotiate with policy makers to nest strategy and operations.[5]

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 provides the legal basis for the current command structure and strategic military framework for the Department of Defense. The act clarified the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in advising the President. The chain of command was established; orders come from the President to the Combatant Commanders, who then have authority to organize and direct forces within a theater. Finally, the act provided the Secretary of Defense with, "sole and ultimate power within the Department of Defense on any matter on which the Secretary chooses to act." Case studies drawn after implementation of Goldwater-Nichols provide greater value to understanding how American military operations are and will be developed. From the end of the Second World War, the United States has been involved in near continuous armed conflict. Most of these engagements involve irregular warfare or a small number of troops supporting a host nation force. They are typically authorized solely by Presidential directive. Since 1986, only three operations have involved a prior congressional mandate: The Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom (primarily conducted in Afghanistan), and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The latter two were lengthy wars that surpassed the limits of the original contingency plans and required an evolution of strategy and operations. These two conflicts provide an opportunity to examine the development of strategy and operations in the context of the role of the military operational artist.[6]

A comparison of the 2007 Iraq surge and 2009 Afghanistan surge policies provide evidence to demonstrate the hypothesis. Each case involves a presidential desire for new policy.

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[5] Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

[6] US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986,* 99th Cong., 2d sess., 1986; US Congress, House of Representatives, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986: Conference Report* [to accompany H.R. 3622], 99th Cong., 2d sess., Report 99-824, p. 101; US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *US Periods of Wars and Dates of Recent Conflict,* By Barbra Salazar Torreon, RS21405 (February 27, 2015).

In each case, a general with all the authorities and responsibilities of an operational artist will fail to translate the policy goals of the president and be replaced by a general capable of developing political strategy into a military operation. This provides an opportunity to view the hypothesis not only through a comparison between case studies, but also by comparing actors within each case study. The cases also provide a look at two presidents from different political parties, with different philosophies on the role of American military power. Observation of similar actions between contrasting key figures lessens the significance of individual personality and supports a more unified theory of American civil-military engagement. Identification of common traits provides value for understanding the intersection between politics and military operations in future conflicts.[7]

The criteria for evaluating the hypothesis lies in identifying who the operational artist is, and then observing the negotiation of elements of operational art that will form the campaign. The operational artist is the commander of the forces intended to secure a national policy objective. He or she has the responsibility to advise policy leaders on appropriate military ways to achieve strategic ends. He has the authority to both negotiate for appropriate means, as well as the arrangement of the means in the conduct of his assigned tasks. The interaction between this commander and policy makers – typically the President and the National Security Council – will demonstrate the hypothesis of operational art as a translation and negotiation of strategy.[8]

Primary sources for these case studies include memoirs and speeches of President George W. Bush. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates wrote a detailed work on his experience during both case studies; Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has a memoir as well. Secretaries of State Condoleezza

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[7] George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010); The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2010). The Bush Doctrine was preemptive and offensive in nature. While President Obama did not have a defined doctrine, his strategies relied less on offensive military means and more on engagement through diplomacy.

[8] G. Stephen Lauer, "Blue Whales and Tiger Sharks," Real Clear Defense (February 20, 2018). Dr. Lauer provides analysis of the negotiation between policy makers and operational artists in a recent article. These criteria derive largely from that work.

Rice and Hillary Clinton both published first person accounts of their role in war planning. Several key generals have released works. Generals George Casey and Stanley McChrystal wrote full manuscripts. General David Petraeus lacks an autobiography, although he wrote several articles and sat for interviews during the periods examined, and Colonel Peter Mansoor wrote a firsthand account of his time on General Petraeus' staff. Admiral Mike Mullen held frequent press conferences and sat for interviews following his retirement. President Barack Obama has not released a work that covers this time period, but he did give public speeches, and he sat for extensive interviews with Bob Woodward. Several books by reputable observers will provide secondary source input to further clarify events. Books by Thomas Ricks and Bob Woodward include interviews with key actors and synthesize multiple points of view to provide a holistic narrative of events.[9]

Theory attempts to explain why actors interact in certain ways and suggests how to optimize their relationships. Theory may explain social norms, but it exists in a nonbinding, extralegal realm. Military officers, due to the prescriptive nature of their station, are more likely to be bound by the institutionalization of a theory. Politicians are only bound by law, and may choose to apply a variety of philosophies to their craft.

Carl von Clausewitz, a 19th century Prussian army officer, attempted to explain war as a theory of phenomenon. Clausewitz dismissed the notion that politics ends when war begins. He

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[9] George W. Bush, *Decision Points*; Robert Gates, *Duty* (New York: Random House, 2014); Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin, 2011); Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of my Years in Washington* (New York: Crown, 2011); Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014); George W. Casey, *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom July 2004 – February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012); Stanley A. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task: A Memoir* (New York: Portfolio, 2014); Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 2013); Harvard Business Review Staff, "Admiral Mike Mullen," *Harvard Business Review* (June 2012); Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011); Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, From George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Pantheon, 2012); Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006 – 2008* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008); Ricks; *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq,* 2006-2008 (New York: Penguin, 2009).

stated that war continues the dialogue between the political actors of two states who entered their combatants into war. "[W]ar is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means." Battles and campaigns communicate a message and create conditions for negotiation of favorable terms. Thus, political influence must logically extend to actions within the war. Clausewitz posited that politics influences "the planning of war, of the campaign, and even of the battle."[10]

Clausewitz identified a contrast between wars that sought final military victory, and wars of limited aims. The political requirement for the absolute subjugation of an opponent translated into a military objective of final victory in the complete overthrow of an opponent's ability to resist. "As policy becomes more ambitious and vigorous, so will war, and this may reach the point where war obtains its absolute form." This type of war is political – Clausewitz having argued that all war is political – but it gives the impression of greater military emphasis. "The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war," Clausewitz stated, referring to the political object of the war, "the more military and less political will war appear to be." Wars of limited aims, however, gave the impression of greater political involvement. Political influence appeared especially overt when the sovereign determined the resources required. Clausewitz argued that, "The degree of force that must be used against the enemy depends on the scale of political demands." An all-out commitment of forces to achieve lesser objectives was counterproductive. "[A]ll proportion between action and political demands would be lost: means would cease to be commensurate with ends, and in most cases a policy of maximum exertion would fail because of the domestic problems it would raise." The smaller military footprint and lower tolerance for combat removed the martial character from the battlefield. "The less intense the motives, the less will the military element's natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives."[11]

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[10] Clausewitz, *On War*, 87, 606.

[11] Clausewitz, *On War*, 606, 585, 87.

Following Clausewitz, Prussian General Helmuth von Moltke was a dominant military leader whose operations were instrumental in shaping Germany into a European power. Moltke is the father of the modern general staff, and his innovations are taught in current US Army officer education. Moltke agreed with Clausewitz that war "is the continuation of policy with other means," although he referred to the intersection of the two "unfortunate." Moltke believed in a hard separation between politics and combat and that, once war was declared, the political objective became secondary to military operations. "Military considerations are decisive for the course of war." He stated firmly that, "In no instance must the military commander allow himself to be swayed in his operations by policy considerations only." In American philosophy, General MacArthur's 1951 speech to Congress offered a similar opinion on civilian authority over military ways and means. His claim of military supremacy was questionable, as President Truman had recently fired him for insubordination.[12]

At the founding of the United States, the farmer, the soldier, and the politician were often the same man wearing different hats. This stands in contrast with the current 115th Congress, which has an all-time low number of veterans in office. Social scientists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann noted the phenomenon of societies' desires to divide labor and develop "role-specific knowledge" that builds upon itself and creates a field "inaccessible to outsiders." Samuel Huntington observed this theory in action and argued that, despite its intentions, the Constitution was no longer an effective means of civilian control over the military. He accepted Clausewitz in principle on the concept of political war, noting that the Constitution "mixes political and military functions, interjecting politics into military affairs and military affairs into politics." But he

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[12] Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings,* ed. and trans. Daniel J. Hughes, trans. Harry Bell (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 36. Moltke was quoting Clausewitz, *On War*, 69. MacArthur acknowledged the political process that builds to war, but argued against limited aims determined by elected officials. "But once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory, not prolonged indecision. In war there can be no substitute for victory." Douglas MacArthur, "General MacArthur's Address to Congress" (April 19, 1951), 7.

claimed the growing professionalism of the military – warfighting as a unique field of study and vocation – made civilian oversight increasingly difficult. The shift began around World War I, when the lethality of weapons combined with a scale created by industrialized nation states to create a battlefield too complex for the common citizen to manage. To match the needs of a democratic society that demanded military subjugation with the reality of a complex battlefield that required specialized knowledge, Huntington proposed absolute professionalism of the armed forces and objective civilian control of their ranks. "Objective control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state." A hazard arises in the application of this theory: without sufficient knowledge of the other's domain, one expert risks providing unhealthy levels of deference to the other, or acting inappropriately in an unfamiliar domain.[13]

Military doctrine describes how uniformed service members compliment elected officials and provides tested techniques for successful execution of duties. United States joint military doctrine defines three levels of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. The strategic level begins with the President and encompasses his approach to determining objectives (ends) and coordinating (ways) elements of national power (means) in the nation's best interest. Under advisement from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President provides intent and approves plans from the Geographic Combatant Commanders to fulfil that strategy. Combatant Commanders may be responsible for achieving multiple national strategic objectives using multiple instruments of national power (more than just military means for military ends). Once assets are assigned to a theater, the Combatant Commander has the authority to establish command relationships, assign tasks, and arrange tactical actions toward the accomplishment of those strategic objectives. By

[13] Abigail Geiger, "The Changing Face of Congress in Five Charts," Pew Research Center, February 2, 2017; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 77-87; Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 32, 163; Samuel Huntington, "Civilian Control and the Constitution," *American Political Science Review* 50, no. 03 (1956): 676-699. Fewer than twenty percent of the 115th Congress have served in the military. The percentage was near eighty in the 1970s.

both negotiating and interpreting policy, as well as designing campaign plans, the combatant commander straddles the strategic and operational levels of war.[14]

In US joint military doctrine, the operational level of war links strategy to tactics. Put another way, this is the level that ensures battles progress consequently toward the accomplishment of strategic ends, rather than a series of disparate violent engagements with no unifying objective. The *Joint Operations* manual indicates that the combatant commander occupies the nexus between strategy and operations, and that the Joint Forces Commander and component commanders work firmly in the operational level.[15]

Since the strategic level of warfare belongs to the joint force, Army service doctrine begins to prescribe action at the operational level. "Operational art" is the term used for developing an operation out of strategy. The Army *Operations* manual describes operational art as "the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."[16]

While the term "operational artist" is not found in doctrine, the criteria in this monograph describing an operational artist is derived from doctrine. The case studies will demonstrate that the role exists. Actors who embrace the role of an operational artist – an officer willing to advise and negotiate at the strategic level in order to receive the tools necessary to succeed at the tactical level – will succeed. Actors who fail to unify the strategic and tactical responsibilities of an operational artist will struggle at all levels of warfare.

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[14] US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), xii, II-9; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), I-7, I-13.

[15] US Joint Staff, *JP 3-0, Joint Operations 2017*, I-13.

[16] US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-1.

Section 2: The Iraq Surge

> In the end, I only presented the President the course of action we selected – accelerated transition – and I believe that I should have offered him a wider range of options to meet his policy needs.
>
> – General George W. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*

> Lincoln discovered Generals Grant and Sherman. Roosevelt had Eisenhower and Bradley. I found David Petraeus and Ray Odierno.
>
> – President George W. Bush, *Decision Points*

Background

A coalition of nations, led by the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 with the intent to destroy the country's weapons of mass destruction program, remove Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party from power, and establish a regime that would support both regional stability and western effort to combat terrorism. The operational planning process featured courses of action with widely varied tempo, some plans calling for a total buildup of forces prior to execution and some committing forces to combat as they arrived in theater. The phasing construct also varied on the sequencing of the air and ground campaigns. Operational reach and culmination became a point of controversy in the aftermath of the war. The original campaign plan called for 500,000 troops. When the operation launched on March 20, 2003, US forces numbered fewer than 250,000.[17]

On April 9, twenty days into major ground combat operations, the US Army occupied Baghdad. The public removal of Saddam Hussein's statue from Fridos Square was broadcast live around the world and served as the symbolic indicator of the defeat of the Iraqi Army and removal of Hussein from power. President Bush declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003. The United States dissolved the Ba'ath Party and the Iraqi Army. The US Army was officially an occupying force until the establishment of a provisional Iraqi government on

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[17] Catherine Dale, Congressional Research Service, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress*, RL34387 (February 17, 2009), 27-30.

June 28, 2004. Though Iraqi sovereignty was restored, a United Nations resolution granted Multi-National Forces – Iraq authority to "take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq."[18]

The strategy for post-major combat struggled to produce the intended ends. Following the defeat of the Iraqi military, the coalition plan for the stability phase consisted of four lines of operation. A legitimate, democratic government would enfranchise for all Iraqi citizens. Security forces would maintain rule-of-law and defend peaceful citizens from internal and external threats. Essential civil services would serve basic needs. Economic activity would return and restore Iraq as a prosperous nation. This approach called for the United States to execute a whole-of-government effort, equally weighting all four lines of operation. The theory was that "the lines of operation, pursued simultaneously, would be mutually reinforcing." Yet the security line rapidly deteriorated, and none of the other lines seemed able to advance. The 2004 loss of control in Fallujah and subsequent return to major combat operations, the February 2006 Golden Mosque bombing and resulting sectarian violence, and the increasing number of American casualties from roadside bombs all pointed to a failed security operation. President Bush began to question if his initial strategy was still viable.[19]

Emerging Political Strategy

If, as Clausewitz says, "war is an instrument of policy," then logically the conditions for victory and defeat are determined and measured by the policy maker. This exclusive ability to assess progress and the perception of success and failure as a characteristic of the political nature

[18] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait," S/RES/1546 (June 8, 2004), 4.

[19] Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom,* 57; Kyle Crichton, Gina Lamb, and Rogene Fisher Jacquette, "Timeline of Major Events in the Iraq War," *New York Times* (December 15, 2011).

of the phenomenon of war may not always be apparent to a military officer. This was the case in 2006 for President Bush and his military commander in Iraq, General Casey.[20]

In July of 2006, General Casey had been in command of all coalition forces in Iraq for two years. He made significant progress in establishing new Iraqi security forces and began a process of reducing both the visibility and numbers of US forces. Touting his belief in T.E. Lawrence's advice on fighting in Arab nations, he was convinced Iraqi problems demanded Iraqi solutions. He recognized the increase in both sectarian violence and attacks against coalition troops but claimed that the American presence only encouraged extremist attacks and government ineptitude. Reducing the American presence, he argued, would force Iraqi politicians and security forces to develop sustainable solutions. General Casey believed that the United States could not win with significant numbers of troops in the country. He described the strategy as, "Leave to win."[21]

President Bush saw the situation differently. Sectarian violence in Iraq didn't arise because there were too many soldiers in Iraq, but that the current troop levels were insufficient to restore the peace. President Bush visited General Casey in July of 2006 and expressed his growing concern with the situation. He told his General, "We have to win." General Casey replied, "But to win, we have to draw down." The two men were talking past each other. General Casey expressed that he needed to do a better job communicating how his operations supported strategy. "You do," confirmed the President. President Bush began to question his own strategy, as well as the operational artist translating his policy into action.[22]

Less than two weeks after their Baghdad meeting, General Casey briefed a plan to "off-ramp" US forces beginning that fall. President Bush encouraged the General to slow down. "We may not need to go that fast." By July, General Casey was beginning to come to the same

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[20] Clausewitz, *On War,* 604.

[21] Casey, *Strategic Reflections,* 51, 143; Woodward, *The War Within,* 236.

[22] Bush, *Decision Points,* 363, 367; Woodward, *The War Within,* 4.

conclusion that President Bush arrived at three weeks earlier: the United States was not ready to withdraw. In response to a series of bombings in and around Baghdad, General Casey suddenly extended the deployment of a Stryker Brigade. The off-ramp plan was indefinitely on hold. Yet despite the inability to maintain his course, General Casey did not develop a new plan.[23]

Operation Together Forward was intended to bring security to Baghdad through a "clear, hold, build" methodology. The idea was to isolate neighborhoods and, with the Iraqi Army in the lead, clear the area of insurgent fighters. Once an area was secure, the Iraqi Army would maintain their presence, which would allow economic activity and civil services to resume. The first iteration began in July of 2006. The Iraqi Army underdelivered on its force commitments by two brigades. Neighborhoods enjoyed brief periods of peace following the clear phase, but the Iraqi Army was ill-equipped to hold all of Baghdad simultaneously. Violence quickly returned. A second iteration, Operation Together Forward II, was launched in August. Again, the plan failed to bring sustained peace. By October, the Pentagon acknowledged that, "Operation Together Forward...has not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence."[24]

In Washington, President Bush and administration officials began to lose confidence in General Casey. There was a sense that the General did not see conditions on the ground as they actually were. He briefed the White House that 33,000 buildings were cleared by Iraqi forces during Together Forward. The Administration focused on the mere seventy detainees that were captured. General Casey disliked the President's focus on insurgents captured or killed. He felt it harkened back to President Johnson's handling of the Army in Vietnam. As President Bush saw the situation, a terrain focused strategy was of little value. Clearing buildings without capturing or killing the enemy only meant that the threat was moving ahead of coalition forces. The rapid

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[23] Casey, *Strategic Reflections,* 113; Woodward, *The War Within,* 60, 65.

[24] Casey, *Strategic Reflections,* 110; Ricks, *The Gamble,* 50, 55.

return of violence in Baghdad seemed to support the President's assessment. President Bush also saw a logical contradiction in General Casey's planning. Securing Baghdad was a manpower intensive task, but the General continued to insist on reducing troop numbers.[25]

During a press briefing on October 25, the President offered prepared remarks that acknowledged the difficulties in Iraq but offered an optimistic outlook. The enemy had "changed their tactics" precisely because of American success. In response, US forces were "adjusting our tactics" to maintain initiative. The picture painted was one of small changes and consistent progress. President Bush later explained that he "made a conscious decision to show resolve, not doubt, in public." Privately, however, the President wanted to do more than adjust tactics. He sought a new strategy.[26]

A series of parallel efforts in Washington began to explore the progress of the existing strategy. In March of 2006, Congress formed the Iraq Study Group to develop policy recommendations. In September 2006, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, created the Council of Colonels to explore the current military strategy. In the White House, the President directed the National Security Council to conduct a formal review following the 2006 Congressional election.[27]

The Iraq Study Group was formed of prominent retired statesmen from both parties. The Commission provided the White House with routine updates on their findings and recommendations and released their final report in early December 2006. The President said from the outset that he would strongly consider the group's recommendations, and indeed much of the report's recommendations were reflected in actions eventually taken by the Administration. Of

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[25] Woodward, *The War Within,* 105; Casey, *Strategic Reflections.* 167; Bush, *Decision Points,* 366.

[26] George W. Bush, "Press Briefing by The President," *The White House*, October 25, 2006; Bush, *Decision Points,* 367.

[27] James A. Baker III, Lee H. Hamilton, and Iraq Study Group, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006); Mansoor, *Surge,* 41-45; Woodward, *The War Within,* 205.

note, while the Commission called for a drawdown of US forces along the lines of General Casey's plan, there was mention of a "short term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad." While the report did little in the way of developing the surge or convincing the President to pursue that course, it appears as though the initial idea for a troop surge came from former Senator Chuck Robb, a panel member. One panel member, Robert Gates, would eventually leave the group and become the Secretary of Defense.[28]

The Council of Colonels formed by the Joint Chiefs reviewed the military aspects of the initial strategy. The group's report was classified and had no authority. It only served to advise the Joint Chiefs, who in turn advised the President. President Bush traveled to the Pentagon to meet with the Joint Chiefs on December 13, 2006, where several members of the Council presented the report. The three options were given oversimplified titles. "Go big" required a troop increase to counterattack the insurgency, though the recommendation did not resemble the eventual surge. "Go long" was a lengthy advise and assist mission. "Go home," was a troop withdrawal. While there's no indication that any of the Council's recommendations were reflected in the eventual strategy change, the Colonel's blunt assessment of the war did impact White House and Department of Defense thinking. "We are losing," the report stated.[29] General Petraeus eventually selected two members of the Council who supported troop reinforcements, Colonel H. R. McMaster and Colonel Peter Mansoor, to serve on his staff during the surge.[30]

In the White House, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley began an unofficial strategy review in July 2006. There was fear of an overt review so close to the United States midterm elections, so rather than hold formal meetings, key leaders began asking difficult questions and trying to gain a better understanding of the situation

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[28] Woodward, *The War Within,* 314; Baker and Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, 50; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame,* 273-274, 278.

[29] Mansoor, *Surge,* 41-45.

[30] Ibid., 41-45; Ricks, *The Gamble*, 101-102; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame,* 284.

in Iraq. Mr. Hadley sent General Casey fifty questions requesting very specific details on the war's progress. Following the November elections, President Bush launched a formal policy review. As the President held command authority over the war, his review would become the most impactful. The National Security Council (NSC) review presented the President with three options. The first was a minor adjustment to the transition timeline, but essentially maintaining the current strategy. The second was to remove US forces from Baghdad, allow sectarian violence to run its course, and return to work with the victors. The third was to "double down;" increase troop levels in the cities and focus on population security to create breathing room for the Iraqi political system. That recommendation eventually became the surge.[31]

General Casey was aware of all three reviews. He hosted members of the Iraq Study Group in Baghdad and sat for interviews. He held a video conference with the Council of Colonels and read their report prior to its release. When he began receiving questions from Mr. Hadley, he rightly assessed that some of the content was driven by the President. During the formal NSC review, he was asked to assess the impact of various policy changes. Yet there is no indication that General Casey ever identified that the President was seeking a new solution, or that the campaign plan in Iraq needed to change.[32]

General Casey lost credibility in the eyes of the President. Both iterations of Together Forward failed, yet the plan to secure Baghdad did not change. General Casey demonstrated a cognitive dissonance by continuing to argue for troop reductions while simultaneously extending deployments He later admitted that he did not have "a deliberate process to revisit the decision as the situation visibly changed." While General Casey was attempting to "demonstrate that the country [Iraq] was not 'aflame,'" the President was fully convinced that the United States was not

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[31] Woodward, *The War Within,* 73-78; Bush, *Decision Points,* 372.

[32] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame,* 274; Casey, *Strategic Reflections, 137*; Woodward, *The War Within,* 73.

winning the war. President Bush asked, "What can we do that's fundamentally different?" General Casey insisted on staying the course.[33]

Though General Casey's position gave him all the authority of an operational artist, he declined to take on the responsibility of negotiation. It's possible that he was unaware of the earnestness with which the President sought new policy options, although given the number of high-level strategy reviews he participated in, that seems unlikely. More plausible is that he and the President differed on the General's responsibility. President Bush wanted a variety of options, General Casey only advocated one course; a path that the President rejected. When the two met in Baghdad in June, the President expressed his doubts about the existing plan. General Casey's response was, "I need to do a better job of explaining it to you." General Casey realized the White House had significant concerns during the interview with Mr. Hadley, but explained that he made no adjustments because, "I did not receive any new direction as a result of the discussion." In September and November, when members of the Iraq Study Group proposed options to General Casey, he expressed strong disapproval of any course other than the one he was on. When, in December, the White House insisted on a new plan that would employ more forces, General Casey offered that "one brigade – at most two – would be needed." After the new strategy was all but announced, General Casey remained deaf to the President's concerns. "We have an opportunity now to accelerate the transition of security to the Iraqis," he briefed. Arguably his most overt disregard for the duties of an operational artist was his failure to adapt once the decision to surge was made. When it became clear in December that additional troops would be ordered to Iraq, General Casey did no planning for their employment. "We had ideas, but no

[33] Casey, *Strategic Reflections,* 116, 140; Woodward, *The War Within,* 283.

operational plans, for the additional three brigades." President Bush moved on and sought a new operational artist.[34]

Translating Policy

One of the artful responsibilities of an operational artist is translating policy into tactics without published orders. In a war with undefined combatants and battle lines, President Bush desired the ability to claim a clear-cut victory. General Casey provided precise, terrain-based assessments that most of Iraq, outside of Baghdad, was secure. President Bush had a political understanding that there could be no victory without stabilizing Baghdad, the heart of the country. His evaluation of the war constantly revolved around the word "win." "Win" was his order to Casey in Bagdad during the June meeting. "Win" was his selection criteria for a new strategy. When the Joint Chiefs expressed concern that a surge would over burden the force, Bush rejoined that the troops could endure more so long as they were winning. President Bush sought an operational artist who could develop a plan equal to his rhetoric.[35]

Sending additional troops to Iraq was a strategic decision. It meant tapping into reserve forces, rendering the Army unable to respond if another threat to national security emerged. However, the number of troops necessary and their use came down to an operational artist's interpretation of the President's desire for change. General Petraeus emerged as a candidate to replace General Casey. He understood the need to negotiate ways and means to support the President's emerging policy. Secretary of Defense Gates, who replaced Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in December 2006, consulted with General Petraeus prior to touring Iraq. General Petraeus encouraged Secretary Gates to examine the focus of current operations. Transitioning control to Iraqi leadership was going poorly. What would be the impact of changing the priority

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[34] Bush, *Decision Points,* 367; Casey, *Strategic Reflections,* 77, 144; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame,* 274, 302; Woodward, *The War Within,* 293. The number of additional brigades would eventually be five, not three. This was unclear at the time General Casey was developing "ideas."

[35] Bush, *Decision Points,* 366; Woodward, *The War Within,* 4, 191; Gates, *Duty,* 39-40.

to securing Baghdad, even if that meant a US lead effort? General Petraeus was beginning to plant ideas for new strategic ways in Iraq. When the White House questioned the General on how many troops were needed for a new approach, the answer matched the intensity of the President's rhetoric. "Everything you can get your hands on." General Raymond Odierno, the commander of the US division in Baghdad, advised General Petraeus that the situation required eight brigades. That number wasn't feasible, leading to fears of a return to conscription. When the time came for more finite planning, General Petraeus requested the maximum amount available at current Army strength: five brigades. In the spirit of Clausewitz's maxim on soldiers advising politicians – that "no major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors," – General Petraeus developed a military plan that appealed to and acknowledged the President's policy interests. With the President confident he had found his operational artist, the timeline to replace General Casey was accelerated. Using the gambling analogy from his NSC strategy review, the President likened the surge to "doubling down" on a bet. General Petraeus upped the ante. "Mr. President, I think it's more like all in."[36]

The President announced the surge on January 10, 2007. There was a sharp contrast from his assessment in October. In his fall remarks, he spoke of enemy and friendly forces engaged in a process of evolving tactics. Now the scale was grander. "Their strategy worked," the President declared. "We need to change our strategy." The President stated openly what he had believed in the summer of 2006, that prior operations failed because there were not enough troops to hold neighborhoods once they were cleared. The new strategy would match means to ways. Going forward, the priority would be security, particularly in Baghdad. Though unspoken in the speech, the shift in priorities from standing up Iraqi forces and transitioning authority, to first securing the population represents General Petraeus' negotiation with Secretary Gates in December. The

[36] Gates, *Duty,* 40, 45; Ricks, *The Gamble,* 113, 116; Mansoor, *Surge,* 47, 54; Woodward, *The War Within*, 249, 289; Clausewitz, *On War,* 607; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 308; Bush, *Decision Points,* 380.

President also announced a troop increase of five brigades, the number that General Petraeus requested. General Petraeus offered President Bush a new plan that met national policy goals, now the President was providing his General with the resources he needed. The strategy developed into an operation.[37]

General Casey's failure to recognize the deteriorating security situation in Baghdad was unfortunate but recoverable. His terminal failure was his inability to understand that the President was seeking new policy and his unwillingness to engage in the process. General Odierno attempted to fill the void until General Petraeus received positional authority necessary of an operational artist. General Petraeus provided politically aware military advice that translated and shaped the President's policy. Three years later, a remarkably similar scenario would play out in Afghanistan. President Obama's attempt to craft a new strategy would meet resistance from a general averse to the role of politics in military operations, and find success from a general who developed an understanding of the role of an operational artist.

Section 3: The Afghanistan Surge

> [General McChrystal] needed to ensure that the military strategy he presented in his assessment focused explicitly on implementing the broader strategy the president had announced in March.
>
> – Secretary Robert Gates, *Decision Points*

> I should have better understood that the president's review process...was not just evaluating my strategy and force request to accomplish counterinsurgency mission, but was reevaluating the mission itself.
>
> – General Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*

> [W]hen the McChrystal assessment comes in...what became clear to me was, we've got to get everybody in a room and make sure that everybody is singing from the same hymnal.
>
> – President Barack Obama, *Obama's Wars*

[37] George W. Bush, "President's Address to the Nation" (January 10 2007).

Background

On September 11, 2001, nineteen men armed with razor blades hijacked three planes, destroyed the World Trade Center, attacked the Pentagon, and attempted to strike the US Capitol. Nearly 3,000 Americans were killed. The terrorists represented al Qaeda, an organization headed by Osama bin Laden, that trained in and operated out of Afghanistan with the blessing of the Taliban government. The Taliban refused to surrender bin Laden or cooperate with the United States in any way concerning al Qaeda. Led by special operations forces and air power, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies removed the Taliban from power and destroyed al Qaeda bases. Tactical success on the battlefield resulted in the collapse of the government and disruption of al Qaeda operations; however, significant key leaders avoided capture. By December, leaders from both organizations had fled to safe havens in Pakistan. In March of 2002, Operation Anaconda marked the end of major combat operations.[38]

On the political front, the United Nations held the Bonn process to establish a new Afghan Government. Participants from major Afghan political factions, minus the Taliban, met in Germany and developed the procedures through which a democratic Afghan government could be formed. The Afghan Transitional Authority elected Hamid Karzai as its president in 2002 and established a constitution in early 2004. Afghanistan held a national election later that year, and Karzai was popularly elected president.[39]

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[38] George W. Bush, "Presidential Address to the Nation," October 7, 2001; US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*, By Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, R40156 (December 3, 2009), 5; Stephen Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle: US Army War College Press, 2002), 12.

[39] Serge Schmemann, "UN Expected to Endorse Accord Reached in Bonn," *New York Times* (December 6, 2001); Library of Congress, *War in Afghanistan,* 5. The United Nations arranged to have members of the major Afghan ethic groups meet in Bonn, Germany. The representatives agreed to form a governing council and set the framework for the creation of a constitution and national elections. They also agreed to allow multinational security force in Afghanistan. The United Nations subsequently affirmed this decision and provided the legal basis for ISAF operations.

While the Afghan government struggled to establish itself, the Taliban regrouped in Pakistan. Karzai's ineffective governance resulted in a weak economy. High unemployment and a light security presence from NATO forces created fertile ground for Taliban resurgence. Counter-government forces began a nationwide offensive in the summer of 2005. Gaining ground each fighting season, the Taliban established shadow governments in all Afghan provinces by 2009.[40]

President Bush ordered the NSC to conduct a strategic review in late 2008. Headed by Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, the review concluded that the United States was not winning in Afghanistan and would not win under current conditions. Poor Afghan governance, criminal networks centered around the opium trade, and insurgent safe havens in Pakistan were identified as impediments to victory. The Bush Administration kept the review from public eye due to the impending turnover of the United States presidency.[41]

Coupled with the strategic review was a request from General David McKiernan, commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), for 20,000 more troops. President Bush favored the proposal but given that the order awaited his successor, he deferred the decision. When Barack Obama assumed office on January 20, 2009, the NSC strategic review and the troop requests were waiting for him. It was clear that this president was in position to make a strategic change.[42]

Emerging Political Strategy

During his presidential campaign, then Senator Obama argued that the Iraq war was consuming resources that could be better used in Afghanistan and pledged to increase troop strength should he be elected. The Secretary of Defense submitted a proposed troop increase to

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[40] Joseph J. Collins, *Understanding War in Afghanistan* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 2011), 72-80.

[41] Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "US Study Is Said to Warn of Crisis in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (October 8, 2008); Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, 40-44.

[42] Gates, *Duty*, 223; Mazzetti and Schmitt, "US Study Is Said to Warn of Crisis in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (October 8, 2008).

President Obama on January 23. Negotiations took place between the White House and the Pentagon as to how large the increase should be, the later favoring greater forces. The Pentagon position was weakened when the NSC identified errors in the troops-to-task numbers submitted by the Joint Chiefs. The military lowered their initial request for 30,000 troops to 13,000 and then raised to 17,000. On February 16, President Obama approved a troop increase of 17,000.[43]

Though the Bush NSC strategic review was on his desk, on February 2 President Obama commissioned his own NSC to conduct a new review. With a sixty-day timeline for completion, this meant the President had committed new resources to an old mission. The additional manpower and equipment represented a small shift in strategic means, but the discussion of altering the ways or the ends had yet to take place. Vice President Joe Biden voiced his dissent during the troop increase debate. "We have not thought through our strategic goals. We've got to put together the decisions that [President Obama] has to make." The concern was acknowledged by all parties but overshadowed by the extra force presence needed to safeguard the August 2009 Afghan presidential election. As valid as that concern may have been, in the civil-military intercessions necessary to nest operations with strategy, the military had negotiated out of turn. The role of an operational artist requires negotiating means in conjunction with policy development, but here the military had asked for means without any policy discussion. Having already arrayed forces, the White House set about changing the mission.[44]

The NSC review, led by Mr. Bruce Riedel, identified Pakistan as the issue of greatest concern. Mr. Riedel argued that Afghanistan and Pakistan could not be thought of separately; that all solutions must be regional. Extensive diplomatic engagement with the Pakistani government was required to coordinate efforts against al Qaeda. These efforts required support in the form of

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[43] Barack Obama, "My Plan for Iraq," *New York Times*, (July 14, 2008); Gates, *Duty,* 337-340; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 95; Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on Afghanistan" (February 17, 2009).

[44] Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 81, 89; Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Greg Jaffe, "McChrystal's Plan for Afghanistan War Remains Largely Intact," *Washington Post* (December 7, 2009).

economic and military aid. Additionally, the security apparatus in Afghan border provinces needed improvement. Beyond that, the review seemed to mirror General Lute's NSC review from the year prior. Senior leaders were already aware of the identified issues. The central Afghan government was corrupt, and local governments could not provide essential services. Afghan security forces did not demonstrate a commitment equal to their foes. The resources the United States government applied were insufficient to resolve either of those problems. Secretary Gates critique on the report was that it "contained no new ideas."[45]

Sources vary on the exact number of strategy options presented to the President. This likely results from the similar nature of the proposals. All packages contained identical elements, but in varying amounts. Each required counterterrorism action, support for civil governance, development of local security forces, and counterinsurgency tactics to secure the population. On one extreme was Vice President Biden, who felt that stabilizing Afghanistan was unachievable. The United States, he argued, was best served by maintaining a small special operations presence to conduct strikes against al Qaeda, but otherwise the Afghans should be left to their own devices. On the other end of the spectrum was Secretary of State Clinton, who sought a robust counterinsurgency force to create space for Afghan government reforms, and maintain the human rights gains that had been made. Remarkable in the available accounts is the lack of a unique contribution from the Department of Defense. Secretary Gates opposed Vice President Biden's option, but didn't offer an alternative. If Admiral Mullen, or Generals Petraeus and McKiernan provided an option or opinion to Secretary Gates, there is no mention in the public record. Secretary Gates' assessment of the process was that, "Far too much attention was paid to *what* should be done and far too little to *how* to get it done." Where the Generals had requested a purely military decision in February, the White House made its policy decision in March.

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[45] Bruce Riedel, "Obama's War: Prospects for the Conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan," *The Afghanistan Papers*, no. 7 (September 2010); Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "US Study Is Said to Warn of Crisis in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (October 8, 2008); Gates, *Duty*, 341.

Operational art – translation of policy and negotiation of means by a commander with the authority to employ forces – had been put on hold. The negotiation to render an emergent strategy into military aim and means would come later.[46]

The President approved an approach that blended Vice President Biden and Secretary Clinton's preferences. He announced his strategy in a televised speech on March 27, 2009. The new strategy had three main planks. The first was an emphasis on denying safe havens in Pakistan. The means were heavily diplomatic and economic. The funding for these efforts hadn't yet been approved by Congress. The second plank fell to the military: develop Afghan security forces and transition responsibility. This was a shift in focus from fighting al Qaeda and insurgents. The President announced the deployment of 17,000 additional troops, the same ones he authorized and announced in February, to partner with Afghans on the battlefield. He also added an additional 4,000 troops dedicated to accelerating the pace of training local soldiers. The final plank relied on civil servants to deploy and develop Afghan governing capacity. These personnel were to come largely from the State Department and US Agency for International Development.[47]

Months prior to the new Commander in Chief or the Afghanistan strategy shift, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen developed a growing discomfort with General McKiernan. They felt the General was unresponsive to the changing environment. There were mounting concerns with civilian casualties on the Afghan battlefield. The Taliban intentionally injured significant numbers of noncombatants, while NATO forces assumed risk to avoid civilian casualties and

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[46] Gates, *Duty*, 342; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 102; Clinton, *Hard Choices,* 138, 141, 151; Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Greg Jaffe, "McChrystal's Plan for Afghanistan War Remains Largely Intact," *Washington Post* (December 7, 2009). Secretary Gates recorded four options. Bob Woodward reported three options. Secretary Clinton broadly framed the discussion as a debate between counterinsurgency or counterterrorism. Vice President Biden argued against attempting to construct a robust state because Afghanistan had "little history of a strong central government, few natural resources and almost no infrastructure."

[47] Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," March 27, 2009.

were responsible for relatively few incidents. Nevertheless, the insurgency was winning the information war and there was political pressure to respond. While General McKiernan acknowledged the political need to address civilian casualties, Secretary Gates felt that the response was not fast or decisive enough. Secretary Gates also implemented changes to the command structure designed to allow General McKiernan to focus more on diplomatic relationships with President Karzai and NATO allies. General McKiernan resisted the change in favor of remaining with the tactical fight.[48]

Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen recommended that President Obama replace General McKiernan with General McChrystal. On May 11, Secretary Gates announced the transition, but struggled to explain the move other than to say that the implementation of a new strategy required, "fresh thinking, fresh eyes on the problem." Secretary Gates would later write that General McKiernan, "made no egregious mistake and was deeply respected." A Washington Post article published months after the firing painted the picture of a general who lacked political acumen. General McKiernan admitted as much, saying he should have "done a better job of feeding the beast in Washington." He continued, however, to reject Clausewitz's notion of the political responsibilities of a general. "An operational commander needs to spend the vast majority of his energy and time and efforts focused inside the theater of operations and not on trips to Washington." General McChrystal, the piece noted, seemed "able to nimbly run the troops on the ground as well as the traps in Washington."[49]

The act illustrated the unique rolls of the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in forming coherent political-military strategy. The former is tasked with

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[48] Gates, *Duty*, 218.

[49] Robert Gates and Mike Mullen, "Press Conference with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen on Leadership Changes in Afghanistan from the Pentagon," US Department of Defense, Press Office (May 11, 2009); Gates, *Duty*, 345; Chandrasekaran, "Pentagon Worries Led to Change of Command," *Washington Post* (August 16, 2009). "No major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors." Clausewitz, *On War*, 607.

translating politics for the military, the latter is responsible for explaining military options to the political element. Together, these roles affirm Clausewitz's notion that no general should provide "purely military advice," and that a good policy maker ought to have a "grasp of military affairs."[50] However, without command and control of forces in Afghanistan, neither man was able to serve as an operational artist. That role could only be filled by the ISAF commander. General McKiernan's reluctance to participate in two-way, civil-military negation resulted in his termination.[51]

As a special forces officer, General McChrystal was more familiar with counterinsurgency and training foreign soldiers than his predecessor. However, the new strategy that required his "fresh thinking" had been developed without his involvement. The President was effectively asking General McChrystal to develop an operation without input on the ways or means. General McChrystal played no role in the policy negotiation. Adding to the difficulty of this task, President Obama preferred to communicate with his general indirectly.

Translating Policy

Before exploring the interaction between President Obama, the policy maker, and General McChrystal, the operational artist, it's important to note that the two did not often communicate directly. General McChrystal received guidance from the President through Secretary Gates, or Jim Jones, the National Security Advisor, and occasionally Admiral Mullen and General Petraeus. What becomes apparent is that, by using intermediaries to communicate, much was lost in translation. The responsibility for this arrangement lay with President Obama. General McChrystal, embracing his role as an operational artist, sought to gain direct

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[50] Clausewitz, *On War*, 607-608.

[51] Harvard Business Review Staff, "Admiral Mike Mullen," *Harvard Business Review* (June 2012). Admiral Mullen did not seem overly comfortable with this role. "[M]y advice was independent. I approached this from an apolitical or neutral point of view and gave the best advice." However, his preference for politically minded Generals (Petraeus and McChrystal) indicated that he inherently understood the necessity of blending political and military advice.

understanding of the President's intent whenever possible. In General McChrystal's memoirs, he frequently discusses his "interpretation" of what the President wanted, and directed his staff to gain, "understanding of the mission as outlined by President Obama in speeches."[52]

Prior to arriving in Afghanistan on June 13, 2009, Secretary Gates tasked General McChrystal to conduct a strategy review and include any recommendations for troop increases. When Secretary Gates mentioned the review in the White House, the President was livid. He insisted that no more troop increases were politically tenable and would not be considered. Yet General McChrystal's task was not reformed or rescinded; it was some time before he was even aware that the President disapproved. In late June, the National Security Advisor, accompanied by a congressional delegation of Senators Lindsey Graham, Joseph Lieberman, and John McCain, toured Afghanistan. Mr. Jones told the General that no additional troop increases would be considered in 2009, and no assessment was necessary until the new strategy and troops were fully in place. This meant that General McChrystal's assessment, due in August, would arrive four to six months before the White House was interested in receiving it. General McChrystal noted, "I was working on what I thought was different guidance from Secretary Gates." General McChrystal, newly installed in command, thought he had room to negotiate. The White House disagreed.[53]

General McChrystal still required an internal report to help him develop the campaign plan necessary to execute the President's strategy. The ISAF staff completed the review and campaign plan in August, a mere four months after the President had announced a new strategy. Neither Generals McKiernan nor McChrystal had roles in the development of that strategy, and the current Commander's view was that it wasn't militarily feasible. "To accomplish the mission we'd been given within the time frame we thought we had, we'd need additional US and NATO

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[52] McChrystal, *My Share of the Task,* 292, 349.

[53] Gates, *Duty*, 348-349; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 133; McChrystal, *My Share of the Task,* 306.

forces." The alternative course to requesting greater means, was to change the ways or ends. "The only other option, as I saw it, was to alter the mission and objectives." General McChrystal submitted the full report to Secretary Gates on August 31.[54]

The assessment painted a bleak picture. "The overall situation is deteriorating," and the enemy was forming a "resilient and growing insurgency." Through General McChrystal acknowledged Secretary Gates' instruction to keep all recommendations within the March strategy, the report indicated the necessity for a more substantial shift. "The key take away from this assessment is the urgent need for a significant change to our strategy and the way that we think and operate." As a retort to Mr. Jones message that no review or revision was desired until early 2010, General McChrystal added, "Failure to gain the initiative in the near-term (next 12 months) ... risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible."[55]

Secretary Gates informally delivered the assessment to President Obama on September 2. Though General McChrystal's recommendation on a way forward was not included in the President's portfolio, Secretary Gates took the opportunity to request an additional 5,000 troops over the 68,000 cap the President set in March. The President rejected the request outright and scolded Secretary Gates for not accounting for all troop needs earlier in the year. It was apparent that General McChrystal's request for a substantial increase would not be welcome.[56]

Secretary Gates anticipated that the White House would meet the assessment with calls to remain on the current course, or drawdown and shift effort to a counterterrorism focused strategy, the latter a favorite of Vice President Biden. To preempt push back from political leaders, Secretary Gates created a portfolio around General McChrystal's report. On September 10, the President received the full assessment, along with a white paper from General McChrystal on the

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[54] McChrystal, *My Share of the Task,* 333; Gates, *Duty*, 361.

[55] Stanley McChrystal to Robert Gates, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," *Washington Post* (September 21, 2009).

[56] Gates, *Duty*, 356; Clinton, *Hard Choices,* 133.

symbiotic relationship between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. The paper explained that one could not be successful without the other. Also included were memorandums from Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, and General Petraeus, endorsing General McChrystal's recommendations. Secretary Gates' fundamental message was that the strategy was not changing, but that General McChrystal did not have the proper tools to execute the necessary operations. General McChrystal, he argued, required "proper resourcing to carry out his plan." In an August meeting, Secretary Gates mentioned to the President that the March strategy had been developed completely absent of an operational approach. "[T]he troop increase approved in February had preceded the president's decisions on strategy in March." General McKiernan did not negotiate for an operation concurrent with strategy development, and General McChrystal was brought on board after the fact. Secretary Gates believed that General McChrystal's request for troops was a continuation of the March strategy negotiation.[57]

Secretary Gates correctly assessed the political appetite for change was limited, but General McChrystal's report was convincing enough to persuade the President that the environment in Afghanistan warranted further discussion of options. As the President would later explain, the report "clarified a gap...about what our central mission was." The General's approach was not accepted outright. At the September 13 national security meeting, the President questioned the value of counterinsurgency given the rampant corruption within the Afghan government and the prevailing influence that Pakistan held over the Taliban. The relationship between al Qaeda and the Taliban was central to the mission. A debate was sparked over whether defeat of the latter was necessary for the destruction of the former. As anticipated, Vice President Biden called for a counterterrorism focused strategy. General McChrystal had only intended to justify more resources, but it appeared that all options were under review. "We're going to begin

[57] Gates, *Duty,* 348-349, 356, 364-367. Multiple times in August and September 2009, Secretary Gates tied the military negotiation for troops back to the March strategy review.

with interests," the President said, "and then figure out what it is we want to accomplish, how we're going to do it, and eventually get to resources. We don't want to talk about troops initially."[58]

Concurrent with the classified strategy debate were a series of public comments, outlined in the following paragraphs, interpreted as the military's public negotiation for resources. It's unclear whether the media campaign was intentionally orchestrated, or if this occurred incidentally at a natural point of frustration in response to President Obama's initial strategy review process. The sources of leaked reports remain anonymous and there's no record of collaboration. Nevertheless, over a 30-day period, several prominent military officers made their discontent with the Afghanistan strategy publicly known.

On September 4, the *Washington Post* published an interview with General Petraeus, wherein the General openly stated that victory in Afghanistan was dependent on increasing troop levels. He also dismissed the idea of a counterterrorism-based strategy and extolled the value of a large counterinsurgency campaign. The combatant commander publicly called for a troop increase and countered the Vice President's known position on the war.[59]

Senators Graham, Lieberman, and McCain, the same Senators who met with General McChrystal in Afghanistan, released a September 14 op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* calling for implementation of General McChrystal's plan. It's unlikely that any military leader requested an editorial from three US Senators, but within the context of their meeting with General McChrystal and growing flag officer commentary, the piece added fuel to the fire.[60]

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[58] Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 183, 169; Peter Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (December 5, 2009).

[59] Michael Gerson, "US Has Reasons to Hope for Afghanistan," *Washington Post* (September 4, 2009).

[60] Lindsey Graham, Joseph I. Lieberman, and John McCain, "Only Decisive Force Can Prevail in Afghanistan," *Wall Street Journal* (September 14, 2009).

Admiral Mullen's confirmation hearing for a second term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs occurred on September 15. When speaking to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Admiral stated that he supported a more robust counterinsurgency campaign and that a troop increase was likely necessary. The President's most senior military advisor gave public support to one of the many options that the President was privately considering.[61]

On September 21, the *Washington Post* published an article that significantly damaged White House, Pentagon relations. General McChrystal's assessment had been leaked to Bob Woodward. There were redactions of information potentially harmful to soldiers in Afghanistan, but the overlying theme remained. The message of General McChrystal's report stood in contrast with the Obama administration's recent claims that the war was in hand.[62]

Three days later, *60 Minutes* aired an interview with General McChrystal. During the interview, General McChrystal explained that the situation in Afghanistan was worse than expected and stated that he rarely spoke to President Obama. *CBS* recorded the interview in July, but the timing of its release added to the White House's perception of a military campaign to limit the President's options.[63]

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[61] US Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, "Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," 111th Cong., 1st sess. (September 15, 2009), 1234; Decades earlier, Samuel Huntington noted the peculiar distress that constitutional separation of power presents to military officers. "If the military chief accepts and defends the President's policies, he is subordinating his own professional judgment, denying to Congress the advice to which it may constitutionally claim to be entitled, and becoming the political spokesman of an Administration policy. If the military chief expresses his professional opinions to Congress, he is publicly criticizing his Commander in Chief and furnishing ammunition to the latter's political enemies." Huntington, *Civilian Control and the Constitution,* 697. Huntinton seems to identify, but not acknowledge, Clausewitz's maxim that a "purely military point of view," is likely impossible. Clausewitz, *On War,* 606.

[62] Bob Woodward, "McChrystal, More Forces or 'Mission Failure,'" *Washington Post* (September 21, 2009). At a press conference, Secretary Gates had stated, "I don't believe that the war is slipping through the administration's fingers." He added, "we think that we now have the resources and the right approach to begin making some headway." Robert Gates and Mike Mullen, "DoD News Briefing with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen from the Pentagon" (September 3, 2009).

[63] David Martin, "McChrystal's Frank Talk on Afghanistan," *60 Minutes*, CBS (September 24, 2009).

The final note came during an October 1 speech General McChrystal gave to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. During a question and answer session, General McChrystal rejected the idea of a counterterrorism focused strategy, claiming it would result in "Chaos-istan." Again, the White House viewed the remark as an attempt to limit the President's options, and an open rebuke of Vice President Biden's policy preferences.[64]

President Obama used direct and indirect methods to message his displeasure to his flag officers, and the strategy review continued. At the end of September 2009, the President received General McChrystal's options for an operational approach. The options reminded Secretary Clinton of the Goldilocks story, one too hot, one too cold, and one just right. There was a request for 10,000 troops with a limited mission to train more Afghan security forces. There was a request for 85,000 troops to carry out a vigorous counterinsurgency. In the middle, there was a proposal for 40,000 additional troops to conduct counterinsurgency in critical population centers, "ink blots." President Obama, however, was not prepared to discuss resourcing. Unlike the spring review, the President now understood that the mission had to be decided ahead of the means. Questions over the significance of defeating insurgent forces outside of al Qaeda remained, as did concern that there was no military solution in Afghanistan so long as the central government was corrupt and Pakistan was supporting insurgents.[65]

Over the next two months, the President held roughly a dozen meetings with members of his national security team. A coalition of Secretaries Gates and Clinton, along with Admiral

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[64] John F. Burns, "McChrystal Rejects Scaling Down Afghan Military Aims," *New York Times* (October 1, 2009); Michael Hastings, "The Runaway General: The Profile That Brought Down McChrystal," *Rolling Stone* (June 22, 2010).

[65] Clinton, *Hard Choices,* 133; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 192; Stavridis, *The Accidental Admiral*, 42; Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (December 5, 2009); Riedel, "Obama's War: Prospects for the Conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (September 2010); Stanley McChrystal to Robert Gates, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," *Washington Post* (September 21, 2009). Both Riedel and McChrystal identified similar issues in their assessments. Admiral Stravridis, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces, was kept abreast of negotiations. His view of the selection was, "As any experienced military briefer can tell you, when subordinates give you a range of three options, they expect you to go for the middle one." Stavridis, *The Accidental Admiral,* 42.

Mullen and Generals Petraeus and McChrystal hardened around the 40,000 troop, ink blot approach. Vice President Biden continued to advocate a counterterrorism strategy, but without significant backing from senior military officers, he was unable to produce a viable operational approach to support his ideas. The lack of options frustrated President Obama.[66]

On November 11, following a tour of Arlington National Cemetery, the President sharpened his guidance. The mission, with regards to the Taliban, would be to disrupt. The President provided his own definition of disrupt: "to degrade capacity to such an extent that security could be manageable by the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces]." The President expressed displeasure with the methodology of bracketing one legitimate option with two extreme proposals. Admiral Mullen's response confirmed the lack of creativity; "I didn't see any other path."[67]

Two weeks later, the national security team reconvened. Secretary Gates developed a list of six objectives that, while providing some population security, required the military to disrupt the Taliban only as much as necessary to develop Afghan forces and transfer responsibility. The President's decision to disrupt rather than defeat the Taliban and limit the scope of counterinsurgency, also enabled Secretary Gates to recommend a troop proposal that was less than General McChrystal had offered. General James Cartwright, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was sitting in for Admiral Mullen. He provided new thinking on manning. "It's not the number of troops, it is how quickly we can get our troops in." He argued that a sudden influx would shock the operational environment. He also favored a set timeline to create leverage with Afghan and Pakistani allies, causing them to understand that they would eventually bear the

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[66] Clinton, *Hard Choices,* 129; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 185-310; Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (December 5, 2009). President Obama told the national security team, "We don't have two options yet. We have 40,000 and nothing." Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 251.

[67] Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," *New York Times* (December 5, 2009); Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 278-279.

security and governance burden. Speaking from the perspective of the United States, he characterized the message as, "I'm not an occupier – that there is a date certain that I'm going to start to change the character of my relationship here." President Obama appreciated the depth this added to the plan. A rapid surge of troops and a set withdrawal timeline would dual hat military resources, allowing troops to accomplish military objectives while also influencing strategic, non-military aims. The President began to accept this as a fully developed strategy.[68]

In the final week of November, President Obama met with political advisors to assess if the plan would receive funding from Congress and crafted an announcement speech. On December 1, 2009, the President addressed the nation from West Point. The speech stood in contrast to the one he gave in March. In both speeches, the President distinguished between al Qaeda and the Taliban, but in March he defined the mission as "defeat" of both. In December, "defeat" was reserved for al Qaeda alone. Instead, the military would reverse the Taliban's momentum to "deny it the ability to overthrow the government [of Afghanistan]." The purpose of a 30,000-troop increase was to create the condition for "transition," a word used six times in December. To emphasize that the transition was inevitable, the President announced that a drawdown would begin in July 2011. He did not mince words when assigning a purpose to the drawdown. "The absence of a time frame for transition would deny us any sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government." The President had limited the mission, demonstrated resolve by increasing the resources available, and created leverage by setting an end date.[69]

The yearlong Afghanistan strategy development process was a result of unfortunate timing and misunderstood roles. The military required an immediate decision from a new

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[68] Gates, *Duty,* 380-382; Woodward, *Obama's Wars,* 290-299; McChrystal, *My Share of the Task,* 356-357. Both quotes appear in *Obama's Wars*, 295.

[69] Barack Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," December 1, 2009; Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," March 27, 2009; Barack Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," December 1, 2009. President Obama used the word "transition" only once in his March speech.

President to respond to an evolving threat. A purely military proposal was made to the President without identifying that policy change was imminent. The President, in turn, developed a policy without input from a willfully absent General McKiernan. The damage had been done when General McKiernan was relieved, and General McChrystal was slow to identify that he was not only negotiating for means, but also advising on ways and ends. Discussions were slow, with both political and military factions struggling to identify their appropriate roles in the every-changing context of the Afghanistan military strategy and the holistic nature and negotiation inherent in civil-military affairs. The December 2009 the strategy represented a fully integrated strategy that President Obama thought he had developed early in the year.

Section 4: Summary and Conclusion

> Unity lies in the concept that war is a political activity, that it is in no sense autonomous.
>
> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

> I found myself in a balancing act between trying to aggressively accomplish the mission I believed I'd been given, and not corrupting a valid policy-review process that quickly came to question whether the mission itself was the correct one.
>
> General Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*

These case studies demonstrate how operational artists translate presidential policy and negotiate elements of operational art from emergent political strategy. In each case, an operational artist was identifiable through his advice and negotiation with political leaders on appropriate military ways to achieve strategic ends. Some failed, some were successful, and some muddled through to the frustration of the Presidents they served. In all cases, it was incumbent on a general to practice operational art concurrent with the negotiation of strategy to nest military operations with policy goals.

Iraq Surge Summary

If, as Clausewitz asserts, "war is a political instrument," then military victory and political perception of military victory may have distinctly different impressions for each. It's entirely possible that President Bush's infamous "mission accomplished" speech in May of 2003 accurately marked military victory. Three years later, President Bush was still seeking political victory in Iraq. In June of 2006, General Casey, the man responsible for translating policy goals into military operations, struggled to interpret his revised political guidance: "We have to win."[70]

General Casey was initially President Bush's operational artist. He met routinely, sometimes privately, with the President and had advisory responsibility. He received direct policy guidance. He had the ability to negotiate with the President regarding ways and means, and the authority to array forces and develop lines of operation. Friction arose when General Casey could not delineate between the military superiority his forces held, and the perception of political defeat produced by sectarian violence. "But it's the capital city [Baghdad] that looks chaotic," President Bush told General Casey. "And when your capital city looks chaotic, it's hard to sustain your position whether at home or abroad." That was a political assessment General Casey failed to understand, and ultimately led to his early removal from command.[71]

General Odierno had enough access to policy guidance to understand that the White House sought a new strategy and operational approach. He controlled tactical forces in Iraq and developed a hypothetical framework around a new operational approach. What he lacked was positional authority to advise and negotiate with the President, though some members of the White House staff consulted with him. President Bush, in a move he felt was reminiscent of President Lincoln, measured his generals until he found one who understood him. "I want to say 'victory.' I want to say 'win.' I want to say 'success,'" President Bush told his speech writers.

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[70] Clausewitz, *On War*, 87; Woodward, *The War Within,* 4.

[71] Woodward, *The War Within,* 284.

General Petraeus heard the Presidents words and translated the call to win into a large, decisive military operation. Using General Odierno's framework, and upon his appointment to command in Iraq, General Petraeus had the authority to negotiate the mission and the resources necessary to develop a military operation capable of achieving national policy objectives.[72]

Afghanistan Surge Summary

The American strategy for Afghanistan developed in fits and starts throughout 2009. A new Commander-in-Chief took over in January. In February, President Obama, following through on a 2008 campaign promise, answered a request for more troops negotiated between General McKiernan and President Bush. This increase applied fresh resources to a strategy President Obama was about to change when he announced his new policy in March 2009. However, with the President having recently modified the military means, a new strategy developed without negotiation of a new military operational approach and an assessment of resource requirements. General McKiernan simply maintained his operation under the mantle of a new mission. This disconnect led to his relief from command.

General McChrystal assumed command in May. His positional authority and responsibility as the ISAF commander made him the clear operational artist. However, President Obama's reticence to communicate directly with General McChrystal created confusion. General McChrystal believed he had leeway to negotiate elements of a new operation; President Obama considered the matter settled. General McChrystal conducted a review of conditions in Afghanistan to help him understand and describe the resources needed to accomplish the mission. The assessment incidentally triggered a full strategic review in Washington.

The President identified that his March strategy lacked a clear and achievable policy. Afghan governance was the central political problem, but the military was the President's most versatile tool. Defeating al Qaeda was still the primary objective, but the Taliban and al Qaeda

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[72] Woodward, *The War Within,* 193.

had formed a symbiotic relationship with each other that was challenging the capacity of NATO forces. The military failed to understand that the President was creating new policy. While the White House attempted to redefine the mission, the military continued to offer resourcing options that fit within an obsolete strategy. From September through November 2009, the effective practice of operational art, connected to an emergent strategy in line with current policy, did not occur. The President asked for new ideas but continued to receive a solitary option he already rejected. General McChrystal maintained positional authority to negotiate, but no one in the coterie of military advisors sufficiently engaged the President regarding ways and means. Vice President Biden, responding to the void, attempted to construct an operation that supported his policy preferences. Vice Chairman General Cartwright supported the Vice President, but without sufficient backing from the Pentagon, the plan failed to gain traction.

As the President increased his knowledge of military operations, he was able to express his intent to disrupt, rather than defeat, the Taliban, allowing the military to enter the emerging policy negotiation with new understanding of the political aim. Addressing the central problem identified by the White House, General Cartwright proposed a pathway that applied military force in a fashion to create the diplomatic leverage sought as a policy objective. The President accepted that approach and made resourcing decisions in line with his objectives. At that point, General McChrystal resumed his role as operational artist and developed a military operation to achieve political objectives. In December, the President announced a strategy that aligned policy and military needs.

Conclusion

Each case study provides an example of a general who did not identify his responsibilities as an operational artist, and participate in the strategic negotiation process. Both Generals McKiernan and Casey perceived victory or defeat through a purely military lens, and each submitted force requests that were only suitable to achieve tactical objectives. Both presidents

replaced their reticent generals with leaders who understood the necessity of negotiating means concurrent with emergent strategic policy.

The Iraq Surge case study provides a clean contrast between a purely military figure, General Casey, and an officer more in tune with political requirements, General Petraeus. Though often criticized for his political nature and willingness to court publicity – as a division commander in Iraq, he had described his role as, "a combination of being the president and the pope," – General Petraeus accurately interpreted the President's political statements into a military operation.[73] "Win" was not a call for military dominance, but the application of decisive action to create the overt appearance of a new Iraq. General Casey could kill insurgents, but General Petraeus could stabilize Baghdad.

In the Afghanistan Surge case study, General McKiernan failed to translate policy and only negotiated means from the perspective of military necessity. His comments after his retirement indicated that his avoidance of the political process was intentional, indicating his lack of understanding of his role as an operational artist. General McChrystal arrived at an unfortunate juncture in the policy debate. He understood that the military operation did not match the policy objectives, but felt uncomfortable negotiating in the political arena, especially given the announcement of new policy just prior to his arrival. General McChrystal had an evolving view of the role of an operational artist. Early in this process, he was advised that his recommendations should have room to negotiate. He responded that he had, "no time for games." He viewed his military input of the policy review as "corrupting." Yet in retrospect, General McChrystal developed an appreciation for the responsibility of a military officer within the political realm.

> My ideal for how a military leader should advise and answer to civilian, democratic authority had been drawn from Samuel Huntington's seminal treatise, *The Soldier and the State*. He argued a military commander should endeavor to operate as independently of political or even policy pressures as possible. And yet I found, as much as I wanted my role to be that described by Huntington, the demands of the job made this difficult. The process of formulating, negotiating,

[73] Scott Wilson, "A Mix of President...and Pope," *Washington Post* (May 16, 2003).

> articulating, and then prosecuting even a largely military campaign involved politics at multiple levels that were impossible to ignore.[74]

The Afghanistan Surge case study provides excellent examples of the folly of military officers avoiding political negotiation. The March 2009 strategy was developed without a concurrent operational approach. By August, President Obama recognized that the resulting military mission was incomplete. In the fall of that year, the military, and especially General McChrystal, again avoided policy negotiation, choosing instead to focus solely on resourcing. But the disruption of Clausewitz's necessary unity between politics and military operations could not be ignored. Military officers improperly, possibly incidentally carried their negotiation of an operational approach into public forums. Politicians, sensing the void, attempted to generate military operations. The disunity demanded a remedy that appeared when General Cartwright understood and described, in military terms, the President's policy needs.

General Petraeus appreciated Clausewitz. In time, General McChrystal came to understand Clausewitz's comment that, "We can now see that the assertion that a major military development, or the plan for one, should be a matter for purely military opinion is unacceptable and can be damaging. Nor indeed is it sensible to summon soldiers, as many governments do when they are planning a war, and ask them for purely military advice."[75] Operational artists must identify emergent political aims, translate presidential policy, and negotiate elements of operational art. Especially in wars of limited aims, this is necessary to support the development of emergent strategy with tactical actions that have the capacity to achieve strategic objectives.

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[74] McChrystal, *My Share of the Task,* 351. All McChrystal quotes in this paragraph are found on page 351.

[75] Clausewitz, *On War,* 607.

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