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SELECTED FACTORS INVOLVED IN WAR TERMINATION

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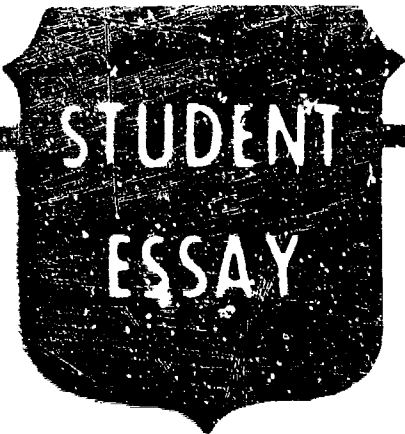
STUDENT ESSAY

20 October 1975

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WAR TERMINATION

BY

COLONEL WALLACE E. BOSTICK

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

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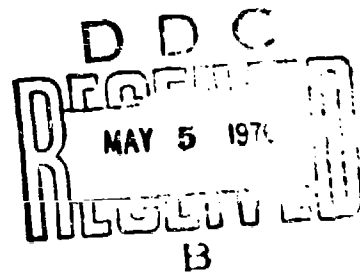
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Because wars are calculated political acts on the part of nations or polities, their termination also involves political acts on the part of the participants. There are many factors which lead to the termination of war. Nations need to develop a clear set of goals as they pertain to the war and must be able to communicate these goals to the enemy. There are a variety of constituencies which a national leader must satisfy and from

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Colonel Wallace E. Bostick

Military Intelligence

US Army War College

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

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AUTHOR: Wallace E. Bostick, COL, MI
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of goals as they pertain to the war and must be able to communicate
these goals to the enemy. There are a variety of constituencies
which a national leader must satisfy and from whom he must have
support to successfully conduct a war. Included in these are:
military advisors, the general public, the news media, elected
officials, an d government employees. Each of these parties can
influence a leader to seek peace.

SELECTED FACTORS INVOLVED IN

WAR TERMINATION

INTRODUCTION

Wars have plagued man throughout recorded history and continue to do so today. War is open armed conflict between nations or between factions within a country and is carried out between sovereign entities in which, at least, two opposing polities are involved. As Kecskemeti noted:

> War is characterized, in the first place, by
> the exchange of violent, destructive blows be-
> tween armed units possibly combined with viol-
> ence against non-fighting populations. Organized
> collective violence, as such, however, does
> not suffice to define war as a distinct mode
> of group interaction. An essential trait of
> war is that the fighting forces participating
> in the act on behalf of a more inclusive group,
> a collectively forming a political unit. War
> is violent interaction, not just between fight-
> ing forces but between political societies
> using such forces as their organs.[1]

War is the ultimate political act to compel the opposition to do ones bidding. It begins by action of, at least, one of the parties involved, and is used to bring about a political decision by means of force. Clausewitz emphasized the point that war was a political instrumentality:

> We know, certainly, that War is only called
> forth through the political intercourse of
> Governments and Nations, but in general it is
> supposed that such intercourse is broken by
> War, and that a totally different state of

> things ensues, subject to no laws but its own.
> We maintain, on the contrary, that War is noth-
> ing but a continuation of political intercourse,
> with a mixture of other means. We say mixed
> with other means in order thereby to maintain
> at the same time that this political inter-
> course does not cease by the War itself, is
> not changed into something quite different,
> but that, in its essence, it continues to
> exist, whatever may be the form of the means
> which it used, and that the chief lines on
> which they are attached, are only general
> features of policy which runs all through War
> until Peace takes place.[2]

Wars do not just happen, they are calculated deliberate political acts promulgated by sovereign entities to accomplish a given purpose.

Because wars are conscious political acts their termination must also involve deliberate action by the participants involved. Even where one side has suffered complete irrevocable defeat details of termination must still be worked out. According to Wright out of 311 hostilities from 1480-1970 137 were ended by formal peace treaties. Of these, during this 400 year period 96 peace treaties settled 13 major wars, and 110 wars ended in a single peace treaty. Within this time period 174 ended without peace treaties, of these, 60 were suppressed domestic or colonial insurgencies; over 50 ended inconclusively by discontinuance of hostilities. Four were concluded by Great Power intervention, and the League of Nations ended two.[3] The trauma through which the United States has passed in the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, and the present hiatus in the Israeli-Arab conflict demonstrate the need for polities to formulate a policy for terminating

armed conflict. Nations need to be conscious of the conditions under which it is no longer feasable or profitable to continue to fight, and what factors are needed to terminate the war. The problem of how to extricate a nation from a war involves an intricate process which can take years to accomplish. The Peace of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years War, took thirteen peace treaties streching over eight years between the first and last treaty signing with the fighting going on throughout the political maneuvering during those years. The Korean Armistice negotiations lasted two years before a cease fire was finally arranged: the Vietnam War went on for over 30 years, the last eleven years involving the United States, before negotiations to bring the fighting to an end were finalized.

The steps leading to termination can be long, painful, and frustrating demanding ceasless and unremitting effort before they are successful, and many factors will need to be considered when embarking on the path to termination.

WAR GOALS

Once a war begins each side wants to bring it to a successful conclusion. But what is a successful conclusion? Before becoming involved in a war a nation should have some very clear ideas to just what it wishes to accomplish. Powerful nations must determine their vital interests and include in their national goals and in their contingency planning what their posture is going to be under a myriad of conditions. Foreign policy planning must include what the responses are going to be in given situations.

Within foreig policy planning and implementation, the conditions
and possible responses to war must be postulated. Both domestic and
foreign policies must be coordinated in the planning for possible
war. Such planning must take into consideration the purpose for
which the war is waged. Is it in defenses of the nation against
attack? If so, what are the goals? Are they to repel the enemy,
restore pre-war status, seek revenge, destroy the enemy and prevent
him from waging war in the future? Is the war to gain territory?
Is it to seek hegemony over other states? Is it to build an empire?
Is it to create a new social and economic order? These questions
merely open the areas which must be analyzed in setting war aims.
The analysis must also include the postulation of the potential
enemy's war aims as well in order to develop possible courses of
action to counter the enemy's actions.

War aims must be expressed in as explicit terms as possible.
They must be sign posts which guide a nation to the point where
termination of the war can be considered. The costs of war must
be calculated in terms of human, moral, material, monetary, diplo-
matic, and international relations costs. When these are determined
a decision to continue the war or to terminate it can be made.
If the costs are determined to be too great, then the war must be
brought to an end.

Once a war starts the emphasis, must necessarily, be placed
on the military aspects of the war. As it continues and the
involvement becomes deeper, the emotional aspects cry out for

victory, and winning the war becomes an end in itself. But wars are not fought as military exercises, they are fought for political considerations. For that reason it is necessary to have realistic explicit war aims so that termination of the war can be accomplished at the earliest moment consonent with national goals. Not to do so can lead to disastrous consequences. In September of 1941, the Japanese Staff in discussing their coming war with the United States, the Japanese Navy Chief of Staff recognized that a decisive naval victory would not bring the proposed war to a conclusion. The Japanese failed to contemplate the circumstances, short of total victory, under which termination of the war could take place resulted in a fundemental miscalculation which ultimately led to their defeat.

Even though nations may make the most detailed contingency plans, they cannot anticipate the realities of future situations totally. Strategic plans may be changed to fit conditions as they are at a given moment. However, it is possible to allow fortuitous tactical situations to overshadow strategic considerations. Emanating from the experiences leading to World War II and recognizing another tyrany in the form of international Communism was attempting to establish itself on a world-wide basis, the United States took upon itself the mantle of the defender of the free world. Containment of Communism became the keystone of United States foreign policy which meant stopping overt aggression by Communist North Korea. After an initial severe mauling by the North Koreans the United States and South Korea, acting under

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United Nations' auspices made a stunning recovery pushing the North

Koreans back beyond the original demarcation line of the 38th

Parallel. At this juncture a new set of war aims beyond the original

ones stated by President Truman on June 29, 1950:

> ...that operations above the 38th Parallel
> should be designed only to destroy military
> supplies, for I wanted it clearly understood
> that our operations in Korea were designed
> to restore peace there and to restore the
> border.

began to be contemplated. The United States succumbed to the fort-

unate battlefield circumstances and hastily changed its war aims.

According to Brodie:

> The time accorded them for deciding on this
> radical change in policy was exedingly short,
> not more than two or three weeks, and it had
> to be made during a period of enormous euphoria
> at the dramatic reversal in our military fort-
> unes....now suddenly the enemy army had been
> virtually destroyed with its remnants offer-
> ing no significant resistance to our northward
> push.

The new aims to invade North Korea, which when adopted, led to

the intervention of the Communist Chinese with exceedingly serious

consequences for the United Nations' forces.

Before entering a war a nation should have a very clear

understanding of its vital interests and actions it will undertake

to defend those interests. During war these vital interests must

be continually reviewed in realation to the existing circumstances

relating to the conduct of the war and adjustments made, but care

must be exercised to be sure that the strategic posture of the

nation is not jeopordized.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BELLIGERENTS

During peacetime nations are continually communicating with one another, formally and informally, in a number of ways. They do so by diplomatic exchanges, cultural exchanges, business contacts, government announcements, personal contacts by officials and private persons. There are literally inumerable contacts that are carried on on a world wide basis by nations of the modern world. When conflict occurs communications do not cease between belligerents. Formal direct contact usually ceases, but the belligerent parties still are able to communicate with each other through intermediaries, other governments, international forums, information broadcasts and announcements, and statements of responsible government authorities.

The difficulty is not so much that there is no information to receive or hear, but "true communication." Do the governments involved really understand what is being said, and do they believe the other side's statements? Can they separate propaganda from meaningful communication? The credibility of stated positions rests on the foundation, do the statements being made reflect the actions of the nation involved? How credible is a nation's call for peace, when at every turn it escalates the war? Credibility, then, must be founded on an analysis of the opponents actions compared to his statements. Deeds must reflect words. It is essential that both sides be able to let the other side know exactly

where it stands, what it means, and what it will do. Misunderstanding or misinforming the opponent can prolong a war unecessarily.

The lack of credibility may impair the possibility of terminating hostilities. During the "Phony War" phase at the beginning of World War II Hitler's credibility, after having over-run Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, each with successive promises of no more aggression or territorial demands, had run out. Thus, when he offered peace to England, his offer was rejected. His past had caught up with him, and he no longer was believed. On the other hand, the Allies call for Unconditional Surrender coupled with an intensifying successful war effort and reinforced by Morgenthau's Plan to agrarianize Germany, was fully credible to Hitler and helped to prolong the war unecessarily by reinforcing his will to fight.[7]

> ...the war was prolonged almost entirely by Hitler's relentless determination. It might have been ended more quickly if the Western Allies had been less relentless in their demand for "Unconditional Surrender".[8]

Albert Speer, the Nazi Minister for War Production agreed that the call for "Unconditional Surrender" steeled Hitler to continue the war.

> In January 1943 they [the Allies] had jointly issued a demand for Germany's surrender. Hitler was probably the only German leader who Entertained no illusions about the seriousness of this statement...during the situation conferences, he more and more often declared: "Don't fool yourself. There is no turning back. We can only move forward. We have burned our bridges." In speaking this way Hitler was cutting off his government from negotiations.[9]

Fuller throughout his book iterates his belief that the call for unconditional surrender prolonged the war, thus, in discussing the possibility of a negotiated termination of the war he said:

> That Hitler would have agreed to them is un-
> likely, because the Sixth Clause of the Atlan-
> tic Charter demanded "The final destruction of
> Nazi tyrany." But in the depths of their hearts
> the German people would eagerly have done so is
> highly probable, and, had they, the strength of
> their trust in them would have given to the
> powerful military faction which all along had
> opposed Hitler's policy, enormous support. So
> great that the revolt of the Generals in July,
> 1944 would all but certainly have occurred a
> year earlier and have been successful, as it
> nearly was and without Allied support when it
> was actually staged.[10]

and,"Therefore, unconditional surrender crippled opposition to Hitler within Germany and like a blood transfusion gave two years further life to the war."[11]

Although there had been unmistakable warnings given to the United States in the Korean War, failure to heed the warnings given by the Russians and the Chinese led to intervention of the Chinese into the conflict. There had been an initial warning by Jacob Malik, the Soviet Representative to the United Nations, on August 22, 1950 when he said, "that continuation of the United Nations actions would lead to a broadening of the conflict."[12] In September, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai announced, "The Chinese people will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate their neighbor being savagely invaded by the imperialists."[13] If these warnings were not clear enough Chou transmitted, through the Indian Ambassador to China, to the

United States an unequivocal statement that the Chinese would
intervene if the United States troops crossed the 38th Parallel
but would not do so if only the South Koreans crossed the line.[14]

Intelligence reports for that period showed that the Chinese
had concentrated troops on the border and, in fact, had moved nine
divisions into North Korea. In spite of Chou's direct warning and
the evidence of troop movements, the United States did not receive
the "communication" that the Chinese would, indeed, enter the con-
flict. This inability to "get the message" would cost the United
States dearly in the months to come.

Ten months later, after severe fighting, both sides were
able to communicate to each other the desire to negotiate an
armistice. Once again, it was Ambassador Malik who suggested in a
radio broadcast that a cease fire and armistice might be arranged
on condition both sides withdraw forces from the 38th Parallel.
This was followed by a note from the Deputy Foreign Minister of
the Soviet Union to the United States Ambassador that an armistice
limited to military matters could be negotiated by the senior
military field commanders. The United States Secretary of State,
appearing before the House Military Affairs Committee four days
later, stated the United States military objectives would be met
if the Communist forces withdrew north of the 38th Parallel.
Under instructions from President Truman, General Ridgeway directed
a message to the Commander-in-Chief of Communist Forces proposing
a meeting between himself and the Communist Commander. The

Communists responded by radio broadcast agreeing to meet. After an exchange of more messages, a meeting was arranged. After each side had understood the others messages expressing a willingness to meet, the first steps along a long and painful road to ending the war were taken.[15]

FACTORS IN WAR TERMINATION

Wars are political intrumentalities meant to carry out the will of one polity over another. At some point a decision must be made to terminate hostilities. We have already alluded to the fact that nations must define vital interests, set war aims, and we have seen that war aims can change as a war progresses. When a nation is victorious in carrying out a war, that is, it is capable of enforcing its will on its opponent as the Allies were able to do in World War I and World War II, one waits until the enemy capitulates. But what are some of the factors which lead a nation to ask for termination in a war? At what point are they perceived? Both the Korean and Vietnamese Wars give us clues, at least, in the experience of the United States in what leads to termination. The lessons from these wars indicated that the American public would not tolerate a long drawn out war which could not clearly be shown to support our vital interests or to reflect our fundemental moral beliefs.

The political leaders of a nation draw conclusions and make decisions on the basis of information given them and as reflected

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by their own personal background, beliefs, philosophy, and perceptions of the world around them. The perceptions of reality of the national leader is influenced from many quarters.

Military Advisors

Military advisors provide a picture of the military situation. The military by their training are imbued with the objective to win. Throughout their careers they are taught tactics and strategy relating to the battlefield to gain supremacy in war. In the United States it is manifest policy that the military is always subordinate to the civil leadership. This doctrine of civilian control tends to make the military view war from an apolitical position obscuring the fact that war is political. In doing so wars are seen from the technical viewpoint outside of the political context. The military commander identifies the objective of winning on the battlefield as the objective and can lose sight of the conditions and objectives on the broader political front.

General McArthur, during the Korean War, was so convinced that the defeat of the Communist Army was vital to the defense of the United States that he departed from the political position of President Truman. He called for more and more troops and made injudicious statements regarding the political position being taken by the president. In his conviction he failed to adhere to the President's instructions to avoid commenting on the political aspects of the war and was finally removed from his command.

Military appraisal of battlefield requirements tend to escalate in the attempt to gain a military decision. In Vietnam the United States military judgement escalated force requirements from 21,000 men to 510,000 men in three years. In 1968 an additional 206,000 men, an increase of 40 per cent, were requested in order to support a military solution. The military commanders were doing their jobs as military men, but by then, other factors were intervening calling for a halt to the war, as a matter of fact, this request became the catalyst for reappraisal and de-escalation of the war.[16] As a war continues war aims may be redefined. As Randle puts it:

> The war aims of states often change during war. Hence by the time peace negotiations are about to begin, a belligerents war aims may not be the same as those at the outbreak of the war.[17]

The military recommendations reflect the professional judgement of those making them. They are the result of analytical systems, technical and professional military analysis. They are presented by men doing their job as competently as they can, however, it is up to the civil leadership to place them into political contexts and to integrate these recommendations into the overall war aims and decisions to continue or to terminate the war. Whether the military recommendations are valid, whether they will accomplish the political objectives are part of the determination in the process of decision making.

Public Support

The public may in the beginning support entry into war
but as the war continues it may withdraw that support. As casual-
ties mount and sacrifices increase, and as an increasing tempo of
the war does not seem to bring victory, public sentiment toward
supporting the war will decrease. The frustration of continuing
the war after excessive losses of men and material will bring demands
to end the war. The values, judgements, moral precepts, and views at
the beginning of the war may change from support, to questioning, and
finally to rejection of the war effort. In 1917, the Russian people
had become totally war weary. Huge casualties, shortages of mater-
ials, and food on the home front as well as at the front lines,
made them desperate for an end to the war. The people were willing
to give their support to any party which would get them out of the
war. Conditions became so bad that the government was overthrown
and a new government which promised to end the war was installed.

Protests, at first questioning, may turn into militant anti-
war demonstrations. An active anti-war movement may develop oppos-
ing the war. During the Vietnam War, as the United States commit-
ment grew larger and larger, anti-war protests also grew. Thousands
of men fled the country to avoid military service. Anti-war marches
were held in many cities including a march on the Pentagon in
Washington, D. C. . There were inumerable demonstrations on college

campuses with one ending in the tragic death of four students. The anti-war protests came to a climax in 1969 with the formation of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee which developed nation-wide protests culminating in a march on the nation's capitol in November, 1969.[18]

News Media

The news media play an important role in presenting information, facts, figures, and most important, opinions which influence the public. The news media in a free society not only report information released by the government, but develop their own sources of information which is interpreted to the public. They may editorialize, distort, slant, and criticize the conduct of the war. The media can show discrepancies between the government's reporting of the war and their own reporting. They can raise questions of credibility of government information. They can print stories advocating positions for or against the war. "The press inevitably functions as a critic of governmental policy and operations unless it is censored."[19]

The daily coverage which modern communication media has at its disposal can literally bring the war into the living room. Vivid battle scenes showing "live" action where soldiers are shot and killed, wounded and bleeding in full color on the television screen in the living room have an enormous impact on public feeling and opinion. The media mold opinion by presenting a particular point of view. By featuring articles and editorials they are able to reinforce positions of support or opposition. The media were

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in overwhelming opposition to the continuation of the Vietnam War
and said so over and over again. Editorials critical of the Pres-
ident's (both Johnson and Nixon) conduct of the war appeared,
marshalling opinion against the war.

The press playing a key role in molding attitudes and opin-
ions can bring enormous pressure to seek peace. It not only makes
opinion but reinforces it by allowing selected voices to be heard
expressing common points of view. It is a powerful factor in rally-
ing the public to a particular stance and cannot be neglected by
the leaders of a nation.

Elected Officials

In a democracy another major constituency affecting the
leadership in the conduct of a war is the elected official. These
officials constitute not only the representatives of the people
but they also become the leaders of the people. They confirm the
pattern of national direction. They help to give direction to
government policies by legislative support. Before support is
given they gather information, seek alternatives, and debate the
merits of government policies. In the American system of govern-
ment it is essential that the president have the majority support
of the legislative branch if he is to successfully govern. Because
of their stature elective officials are in a position to mold opin-
ion. It is an integral part of their profession to discuss issues
and to attempt to sway people to their views. Indeed, a politician
who is unsuccessful in molding favorable opinion does not remain in

office. Elected officials at all levels but especially at the national level have an opportunity to reach mass audiences.

Representatives to the national government because of their position have access to information not available to the public. They are, therefore, in a better position than the public to keep abreast of events in a war, what its results are, and to make judgements regarding the need or desirability to continue. By analyzing the situation from their. proximity to the seat-of-government they may come to the realization that the war must end. This may require a complete about-face from support to opposition. Senator William Fulbright who was the floor manager in the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution which for all practical purposes gave President Johnson, in 1964, authority to carry on the Vietnam War, became one of the severest critics and opponents to the Vietnam War. He was not alone in the Congress to come to the realization that the war must be ended: other Senators and Representatives raised their voices in opposition. Because of their stature and position they were able to influence government officials and to mold public opinion against the war, thus adding another dimention of dissent.

Government Employees

Still another constituency a leader must face is that composed of those who serve in his government: the ministers, secretaries, senior bureaucrats, and all that vast group of people who literally run the government. It is these people, especially, the senior officials whom the leader must turn to for information,

advise, and expertise in the many areas which impinge on the war effort. He must rely on them not only for information and advice but also to carry out his policies. If an official in these high positions is unable or unwilling to support the leader he can be removed from office, but in an unpopular war opposition may finally encompass the majority of advisors. When this happens it is possible to influence a leader to change his policies. The Vietnam War provides an excellent example of senior advisors and cabinet officers bringing about a major change in war policy. Townsend Hoopes in his book relates the events leading to the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam. Essentially, there was a review of the military and domestic climate which led to a new look and a change of opinion in the majority of key presidential advisors. The changed view was to oppose further escalation of the war and to reduce the level of hostilities. The shift in opinion was finally able to impress the President with the severity of the criticism of the war by the public and to the devisiveness of the war domestically that not only reduced the level of hostilities but also led him to withdraw himself from candidacy for another term in office.[20]

Probably one of the biggest problems a leader has is to get information needed to make judgements. Not because the information is unavailable but because he is surrounded by his immediate circle of advisors who not only bring information but also screen, sift, and select the information he sees in an effort to save him time and to bring him only that which truly deserves his attention. Clear unequivocal presentations from all constituencies must be

made available to the leader if realistic appraisals and decisions are to be made. In discussing President Johnson's perplexity in the change of his advisors' views Hoopes said:
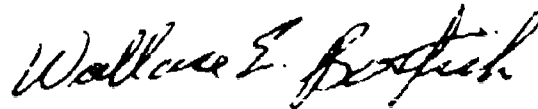
> In retrospect, it was my impression that the President's sense of incongruity reflected the extent to which he had become the victim of (1) Rostow's "selective briefings"——the time-honored technique of underlining within a mass of material, those particular elements that one wishes to draw to the special attention of a busy chief—— and (2) the climate of cozy, implicit agreement on fundementals which had so long characterized discussions within the inner circle on Vietpam where never was heard a disparaging word.[21]

CONCLUSIONS

A nation at war initiates moves leading to war termination when it is no longer advantageous to continue hostilities. The juncture at which this takes place has no definitive boundaries which say, "Now is the time to negotiate." There are many factors which lead to a determination that it is no longer in the nation's interest to continue a war. It may be that the objectives for which the war was fought have been attained, and there is no further reason to fight. Conditions may exist in which continued fighting will only result in worsening ones position. It is possible that the objectives for fighting may have changed during the war and it is no longer feasable to fight. It is possible that the damage and destruction brought by the war have reduced the means of fighting, war weariness from plrolonged and costly war may bring about a shift in public opinion from support to opposition. The domestic

climate may have become so turbulent as to endanger national stability. Hardship, privation, and the lowering of the standard of living may contribute to calling for an end to the war. The loss of support of key government officials, as well as opposition from elected officials augmneted by a critical press may create sufficient pressure to seek an ending to the war.

The political leadership must weigh all factors which determine national survival and then decide whether the time to end the war has arrived.

WALLACE E. BOSTICK
COL MIL INT USAR

FOOTNOTES

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