DEFINING VICTORY: THREE CASE STUDIES OF STRATEGIC
GUIDANCE AND DECISION MAKING

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ABSTRACT

DEFINING VICTORY: THREE CASE STUDIES OF STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND DECISION MAKING, by Major James W. Vizzard, USA, 99 pages.

The Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991 was widely hailed as a triumph of modern warfare. Those who remembered the trauma and inconclusiveness of Vietnam applauded its clear goals, lack of civilian interference, and decisive end. Yet, twelve years later, the U.S. invaded Iraq and embarked upon the high-risk, open-ended commitment that the first Bush administration had sought to avoid.

This thesis examines U.S. civil-military relations and decision making regarding Iraq at three points between 1990 and 1998. Were those decisions consistent with legal, treaty, and moral obligations? Did the civilian policy makers provide military leaders with adequate guidance to make decisions and did the military provide the civilians with adequate options to formulate guidance? Finally, did the decision makers adequately revisit their decisions in order to adapt to changing situations?

The U.S. political system constrained civilian decision makers within the law, but the desire for unambiguous and unchanging guidance caused civilian leaders to leave guidance unchanged in the face of changing political circumstances. Both military and civilian leaders generally discounted the unpredictable impact of military actions themselves on the strategic goals and therefore failed to adapt to changing situations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Tonight, as our troops come home, let us recognize that the hard work of freedom still calls us forward. We've learned the hard lessons of history. The victory over Iraq was not waged as "a war to end all wars." Even the new world order cannot guarantee an era of perpetual peace. But enduring peace must be our mission. Our success in the Gulf will shape not only the new world order we seek but our mission here at home. (US President 1991a)
>
> President George H.W. Bush

> The problem comes with open-ended deployments and unclear military missions. In these cases we will ask, "What is our goal, can it be met, and when do we leave?" (US President 1999)
>
> Governor George W. Bush

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the national security apparatus of the United States engaged in a fierce debate over the proper role of the military. Fifty years of cold war and nuclear standoff against a peer competitor coupled with the painful experience of limited war in Vietnam had conditioned many in the military establishment and elsewhere to think only in terms of fighting and winning the nation's wars. This school of thought found expression in the so-called Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, requiring a clear national interest, overwhelming force, and firm congressional support for any use of US military force (Powell 1992/1993). In reality, the distinction between "peaceful" and "military" instruments is quite problematic. Children who have suffered through a regime of economic sanctions might see it as a distinction without a difference. In practice, national interests generally had to be short-term and quantifiable to convince the adherents of this philosophy.

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The other school might best be described as the Albright School, characterized by the interventionism of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This camp believed that there is no point in having a capable military if you are unwilling to use it. They believe that the US can couple military force with diplomacy to achieve long-term, unquantifiable goals such as the furtherance of democracy and human rights (Albright and Lehrer 2001). Ironically, many would argue that this school, so closely associated in the popular mind with political liberals and the Clinton administration, began its ascendancy with President George H.W. Bush and his "new world order." In fact, the Clinton Administration was often quite reluctant to commit American military force, even when political pressure forced it to do so. Recent events have shown that conventional divisions between "right" and "left" do not describe foreign policy schools very well. Liberals may oppose the political "realism" of Powell's position but resist the same military adventures on pacifist or anti-imperialist grounds while so-called conservatives may pay lip service to the Weinberger-Powell doctrine but ignore it in practice. In recent years, humanitarian adventurism has been followed by neo-conservative adventurism. That bipartisan fondness for the employment of force makes it all the more likely that the US will continue to use its military in ambiguous circumstances and all the more important for military strategists to clearly understand the links between political ends and military operations.

<div align="center">The Strategic Framework</div>

What is "victory?" It seems like a simple word, but it rests on the assumption that nations clearly understand what their strategic goals and objectives are, and that they are able to rationally apply power of various types to achieve those goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, this is far more difficult to achieve than it first appears. The definition is particularly difficult for the United States because its role in the world and its perception of power have changed dramatically over its relatively brief existence.

Strategy in the American Republic

> While troublesome in all kinds of political environments, coherent strategy and civil-military relations seem particularly difficult in America, where multiple centers of authority are constantly competing for power. Numerous Americans with responsibility for national defense have long believed that their governmental institutions are uniquely ill suited for this task. (1999, 9)
>
> Michael D. Pearlman

The American democracy was formed in a paradoxical combination of armed revolution and a spirit of anti-militarism. The Declaration of Independence lists twenty-nine grievances against the English king and the people of Great Britain, of which ten deal with the regulation of the military and the conduct of war. It is not surprising then, that Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution enumerates the powers of the Congress in ways that virtually mimic the Declaration. Although the Constitution empowers the Congress to "provide for the common Defence," "To raise and support Armies," "To declare War," and "To provide and maintain a Navy," it is more remarkable for the powers it limits. It enumerates to Congress the power "To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of land and naval Forces," even though Article II, Section 2 designates the president the "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy" as well as the militias when federalized. Indeed, that sentence is the only one touching directly upon the president's military duties. Article I also restricts the raising of armies to two years (US Constitution, art. 1, sec. 8). Alexander Hamilton points out in "Federalist No. XXIV" that

"the whole power of raising armies was lodged in the LEGISLATURE" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1937, 159).

The anti-militarist attitudes of the thirteen states were so ingrained that they led to one of the stranger arguments for union in the entire *Federalist Papers*. In "Federalist No. VIII," Alexander Hamilton argues that wars between the nascent states would be far more terrible than wars in Europe because the states would not maintain regular military establishments. Hamilton predicts a dystopian future in which the large states overrun the small states with militia forces and warns that "PLUNDER and devastation ever march in the train of irregulars" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1937, 50). Such a state of affairs would lead the states "to institutions which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. . . . The institutions chiefly alluded to are STANDING ARMIES and the correspondent appendages of military establishments" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1937, 50). At no point in this paper does Hamilton explain why standing armies are evil. Rather, he highlights the term and assumes that the reader will agree. The abhorrence of standing armies was so strong that it constituted a shared value and the avoidance of such an institution an end in itself.

It is then strange that the Constitution does not simply prohibit the maintenance of a standing army. Hamilton alludes to this in "Federalist No. XXIV." Arguing that militias would not tolerate extended duty under federal control to man the posts of the western frontier, Hamilton admits that the fledgling republic has some need of the dreaded standing army, "a small one, indeed, but not the less real for being small" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1937, 162). This tiny admission, buried at the tail end of the essay,

illustrates the quandary in which the republic would shortly find itself--one in which political theory clashed with the cold hard reality of the world.

Far from being opposed to the use of the military for purposes other than defense against invasion, the advocates of the Constitution, and presumably the public, were quite happy to use military force for commercial gain. They objected to standing armies not because of scruples about their foreign use but because of fears of their domestic misuse and their proportionately smaller utility in furthering the commercial interests of the nation. In "Federalist XI," Madison illuminates the preference for navies, and the relationship of military power to commerce. The ostensible purpose of this essay is to argue the merits of union for commerce, but the discussion turns to the formation and maintenance of a capable standing navy without any of the trepidation engendered by standing armies. Madison writes, "There can be no doubt that the continuance of the Union under an efficient government would put it in our power, at a period not very distant, to create a navy which, if it could not vie with those of the great maritime powers, would at least be of respectable weight if thrown into the scale of either of two contending parties . . . a situation so favorable would enable us to bargain with great advantage for commercial privileges" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1937, 73-74).

One critical lesson from the *Federalist Papers* is the extent to which isolation shaped the strategic thinking of the founders. Many of their successors took this as an endorsement of isolation and sought to maintain it long after the state of the world and the nation had made it impossible. Others note the tendency only to point out that the strategic vision of the founders is of limited utility for subsequent generations. It is not so

much a useful guide as an indicator of the cultural biases that may need to be overcome in formulating more responsive strategies for a more integrated world.

The ambivalence about the use of military force and the tension between theory, necessity, and self-interest did not abate with the decades. Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1835:

> Democracy appears to me better adapted for the conduct of society in times of peace, or for a sudden effort of remarkable vigor, than for the prolonged endurance of the great storms that beset the political existence of nations. The reason is very evident; enthusiasm prompts men to expose themselves to dangers and privations; but without reflection they will not support them long. There is more calculation even in the impulses of bravery than is generally supposed; and although the first efforts are made by passion alone, perseverance is maintained only by a distinct view of what one is fighting for. (de Tocqueville 1994, 228-229)

That ambivalence continued with the rise of American power in the 1940s. If anything, it increased. Although the propaganda of World War Two has largely obscured the sentiments of the times, contemporary polling paints a picture far different from the postwar perception of unity and enthusiasm.

In mid-1941, a poll found that two thirds of respondents felt that defeating the Axis was more important than peace, but only one third wanted to enter the war as a combatant. Soldiers throughout the war fought out of necessity or in order to end the war, not out of any ideological commitment to the war's aims (Pearlman 1999, 222-223). These attitudes were not improved by Franklin Roosevelt's desultory decision making style. Roosevelt had become a popular president by muddling through and taking the paths of greatest reward. While he is remembered today as a champion of the United Nations and democracy, his wartime policies focused primarily on maintaining the wartime coalitions, both domestic and foreign.

The disappointment of Korea followed by the debacle of Vietnam served to reinforce American ambivalence about the uses of military force. Korea began with a high degree of idealism, but its inconclusive end did not sit well with Americans. Vietnam was not so much an example of strategy at work as it was of warfighting without strategy. As H. R. McMaster argues in *Dereliction of Duty*, the Johnson administration's primary strategic goal was the reelection of Lyndon Johnson followed by the passage of his domestic political agenda. At the outset, Johnson foreclosed the possibility of unilateral withdrawal, the only rational strategy for achieving his political aims. Richard Nixon's Vietnam policy was more successful only because he aimed for the easiest possible outcome--withdrawal. Only the conditions of the withdrawal and the domestic political effects of those conditions constrained his actions. The most important strategic concept to grow out of the Vietnam War was not any strategy of the war itself but the reaction to defeat.

<div align="center">Cold War Strategy</div>

The strategists who formulated American policy in the 1990s came of age in the Cold War. Some of them followed the conventions of Cold War strategy while others rebelled against those conventions, but all were shaped by them. A brief survey of Cold War strategic thought is, therefore, a useful departure point.

Carl von Clausewitz and "policy by other means"

Carl von Clausewitz's strategic views enjoyed a remarkable renaissance in the US during the decades after World War Two. In *On War*, he famously defined war as policy by other means (Clausewitz 1976, 605). and strategy as, "the use of the engagement for the object of the war" (Clausewitz 1976, 177). In a passage that has become very popular

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with strategic critics in recent years, Clausewitz wrote, "no one starts a war--or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so--without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it" (Clausewitz 1976, 579). That statement assumes levels of objectivity and clarity that rarely occur in our political and strategic environment.

Clausewitz's insistence on clear linkages between policy and military operations is a function of both his rhetorical style and his historical moment. The frequent misinterpretation and misrepresentation of his most oft-quoted dictum demonstrates the extent to which a reader's cultural background may render impotent the clearest and most important explanations of theory. Clausewitz's equation of policy and war paradoxically establishes them as distinct entities. His statement is so often quoted and viewed as important specifically because it is shocking--equating two things that are generally viewed as separate and distinct, even mutually exclusive. Clausewitz uses "the phrase 'with the addition of other means' because [he] also want[s] to make it clear that war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different" (Clausewitz 1976, 605). A nation should use armed conflict and diplomacy in conjunction to achieve its ends without any major change in its general organization or operation.

This brings us to the crucial failure of those who focus on Clausewitz's famous dictum without carefully reading his explanation of it. That failure is particularly evident in democratically inclined theorists who subscribe to what Eliot Cohen has dubbed the "normal" school of civil-military relations (Cohen 2002, 4-8). According to the "normal" school, political leaders strive to achieve political goals through the "peaceful"

instruments of national power, diplomacy, information, and economics. If those instruments should fail, the nation declares war on its enemies and subordinates the three peaceful instruments to the military instrument. Civilian leaders focus their efforts on marshaling the diplomacy, economy, and media of their nations in support of the military effort. At some point, the military achieves a victory sufficient to induce the other side to meet the original political goals, and the generals return primacy to the politicians who negotiate an acceptable settlement. Adherents of the "normal" school expect subordination of the peaceful instruments to the military in time of war but are often leery of fully subordinating the military instrument in time of peace. This is not to say that they challenge theoretical civilian control of the military, but rather that they tend to challenge specific uses of the military for non-combat roles on the grounds that such "distractions" weaken "readiness."[1] Clausewitz's most important contribution to strategic theory was to debunk that clear dichotomy, but later readers who started from the "normal" point of view have shown a surprising ability to squeeze his theory into their preconceived notions.

To be fair, Clausewitz was also a prisoner of his background. His belief that military action should and could be integrated fully with the exercise of policy stemmed in part from his environment--an autocratic Prussian state--and from his antecedents--Frederick the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte. Clausewitz states that Napoleon took warfare to a "state of absolute perfection" (Clausewitz 1976, 580), and Napoleon may have been the most autocratic ruler in modern European history. Napoleon could pursue politics through war because his political aim was quite simple--his own uncontested control over the majority of the European continent. However, even for Napoleon the

autocrat, public emotion and domestic constituencies played major roles. Frederick also fought a series of short wars for limited gains, but his ability to fully integrate war and policy was facilitated by his absolute rule of a small, homogeneous nation.

<u>The Nuclear Strategists</u>

The decision makers of the 1990s came of age in an era--in some cases lived their whole lives in an era--dominated by nuclear weapons and the standoff between the United States and the USSR From the 1950s to the late 1980s, nuclear weapons formed the center of the strategic universe, and other types of strategy, to the extent that they existed independently at all, revolved around nuclear strategy. Furthermore, until the actual collapse of the Soviet Union, most strategists as well as most lay people viewed the situation as permanent--changeable only by an actual nuclear exchange between the superpowers. This focus on nuclear weapons had a number of peculiar effects on strategic thinking, and those effects lingered after the situation changed dramatically.

Henry Kissinger argued for the primacy of nuclear strategy when he wrote in 1965, "Above all, the nature of strategy has changed fundamentally when the decision to go to war hazards the lives of tens of millions instead of thousands, when what is risked is no longer the loss of a province but the survival of society itself" (Kissinger 1971, 5). This preoccupation with nuclear strategy, the superpower struggle of the Cold War, and the wars of revolution that accompanied it suffuses Kissinger's work and the work of his contemporaries. Though he does not cite Clausewitz, Kissinger does not stray far from his vision of strategy. He defines national security policy as, "the policy area where power impinges on national objectives" (Kissinger 1971, 7).

While idealizing strategy as the pursuit of national goals, Kissinger concurrently emphasizes the confounding factors of domestic politics and bureaucracy, again echoing Clausewitz. Where Clausewitz emphasizes the importance of a commander's personal genius, Kissinger argues that bureaucratic imperatives cloud the ability of the decision maker to think and act creatively, regardless of the specific political system in which he functions.

In concert with other Cold War strategic theorists, Kissinger emphasizes the critical role of uncertainty in decision making. In his view, complexity of issues, enormity of consequences, and cultural preference for technical solutions all conspire to create ponderous bureaucracies of experts who are primarily inclined to stall and wait for developments. Their encyclopedic grasp of the issues gives them power over policy makers with broad responsibilities and short tenures while simultaneously making them aware of the difficulty of making the "right" choice. This in turn leads them to seek ever greater levels of information before making conclusive policy decisions, and "certainty is purchased at the cost of creativity" (Kissinger 1969, 18). As the experts gain power, they also create empires, and the staff that "starts out as an aid to decision makers often turns into a practically autonomous organization whose internal problems structure and sometimes compound the issues which it was originally designed to solve" (Kissinger 1969, 20). Though he does not cite it directly, the tension between the US Departments of State and Defense since 1947 exemplifies this trend. The predictable response has been for presidents to create shadow cabinets within the White House that ostensibly "coordinate" the efforts of cabinet departments but frequently perform the duties once performed by cabinet officers.

Bernard Brodie focused exclusively on the implications of nuclear war in his work, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, which reflected both the preoccupation with nuclear strategy and the renaissance of Clausewitz. Brody begins with an examination of Clausewitz and Giulio Douhet, and then moves through a rehash of World War Two bombing to set the stage for his nuclear theory.

Of particular importance for the conduct of operations against Iraq, Brody notes from the results of World War Two bombing that people under extreme physical stress tend to turn *toward* authority rather than away from it. Moreover, they are most likely to turn toward traditional sources of authority rather than a declared enemy and invader, or in the case of humanitarian interventions, a culturally alien force, no matter how fine its intentions. Strategic bombing largely failed to induce rebellion in the Axis countries because the destruction of infrastructure, though it lowered morale considerably, also required citizens to spend their available energy on mere survival (Brody 1959, 135)

Although Cold War strategists focused on nuclear war, they could not ignore the non-nuclear wars that occurred regularly throughout the period. Instead they developed theories of "limited" war that placed smaller conflicts in the context of the superpower standoff and the possibility of nuclear war.

In 1957, Robert Osgood defined "limited war" as "one in which the belligerents restrict the purposes for which they fight to concrete well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement" (Osgood 1957, 1-2). Osgood and his contemporaries suffer from a major logical flaw in their approaches to "limited war," viewing it from the point of view of the superpower. Although there are occasional

references to the different sides seeing the war differently, Osgood does not really explore the implications of that asymmetrical view. Osgood sees the critical limitation in "limited war" as ends rather than means. He points out that the nation that refuses to fight limited wars will be left with three options in the face of aggression: no resistance, ineffective resistance, and/or collapse of deterrent credibility.

Osgood rests his theory of limitation on Clausewitz's dictum that war should be the continuation of policy by other means. He extends that to mean that nations should only be willing to commit limited means to limited ends. However, the war that is limited for a superpower is anything but limited to the small nation that is invaded or to the terrorist group that is pursued relentlessly across the globe. Osgood's emphasis on limiting aims in order to limit means leads to the possibility of a superpower engaging in conflict in which the superpower is unwilling to escalate its means, but the opponent is unwilling to limit his. The enormous latent power of the United States is irrelevant if the US is unwilling to bring it to bear on a particular problem. Counter-intuitively, this divergence of commitment lends an enormous advantage to the weaker nation or adversary.

Osgood and his contemporaries also assumed that the US could practice such a strategy, ignoring or discounting de Tocqueville's observation that democracies are militarily best suited "for a sudden effort of remarkable vigor" (de Tocqueville 1994, 228).

<p style="text-align:center;">How loud a voice? How big a stick?</p>

The conflict in the 1990s between the Powellist and Albrightist approaches to the exercise of US power reflected the clash between traditional, pre-Civil War, American

strategic conventions and the more aggressive strategies adopted as American power grew. In his farewell address, Washington simultaneously enjoined his successors to act in a spirit of morality and justice and to avoid foreign engagements. He and his contemporaries viewed the constant squabbling and rapaciousness of European states to be their chief failing, and therefore perceived neutrality as moral. Even as the US was drawn ever more deeply into the affairs of the world, the legacy of Washington's views lingered. The nuclear age, following hard upon Pearl Harbor, brought forth an entirely new perception of threats. No longer could the US wait to absorb an attack in order to be sure of the need for war. Indeed, in the nuclear age it would be immoral for America's leaders to take such a position.

This was the legacy of strategic thought with which the US entered the post-Cold War world. Without the counterweight of an opposing superpower, the US struggled to define its role in the new world and to reconcile that role with its self-image developed over more than two centuries. In the first decade after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States actually employed military forces in varied circumstances, providing abundant data for students of strategy to determine the effects of each school of thought. Each side claimed that its philosophy best served the overall interests of the United States, but these claims were often based on faith or prejudice grounded in past personal experience rather than hard data or systematic thought about the situation at hand.

Colin Powell, like most of his peers in the military, was irrevocably shaped by his and the nation's experience in Vietnam, and he sought to avoid another "quagmire." The Weinberger-Powell doctrine began as a speech to the National Press Club in November, 1984. Weinberger was embroiled in a conflict with the Secretary of State, George Shultz,

over the use of military forces. Shultz's attitude, summarized by Weinberger's military aide and Shultz's eventual successor Colin Powell, was: "What was the point of maintaining a military force if you did not whack somebody occasionally to demonstrate your power?" (Powell 1995, 303). Weinberger and Powell felt that military power was a blunt instrument to be employed (as opposed to threatened) only when certain key conditions were met.

In the National Press Club speech, Weinberger enumerated those "<u>six</u> major tests":

> (1) <u>First</u>, the United states should not commit forces to <u>combat</u> overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should <u>declare</u> beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.

> (2) <u>Second</u>, if we decide it <u>is</u> necessary to put <u>combat</u> troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all. Of course if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.

> (3) <u>Third</u>, if we <u>do</u> decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, "no one starts a war--or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so--without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it."

> War may be different today than in Clausewitz's time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job--and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.

> (4) <u>Fourth</u>, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed--their size, composition and disposition--must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the

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course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: "is this conflict in our national interest?" "Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?" If the answers are "yes", [*sic*] then we <u>must</u> win. If the answers are "no," then we should not be in combat.

(5) <u>Fifth</u>, before the US commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.

(6) <u>Finally</u>, the commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort (1994, 7-8).

The Weinberger-Powell Doctrine clearly arose from the wounds and lessons of Vietnam, as reinforced by more recent experiences. In 1984, the US had recently completed two military interventions: the Marine peacekeeping "presence" in Lebanon and the non-combatant evacuation turned invasion in Grenada. To Powell and Weinberger, these operations seemed to illustrate the two poles of military commitment. The reference to "peacekeeping" in rule three, the need to constantly reassess enumerated in rule four, and the phrase "asking our troops not to win, but just to be there" in rule five (the attribution to Vietnam notwithstanding) all reflect the recent failures in Lebanon. Following the bombing of the Marine barracks, the commander of the Marine force, Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, testified that his "presence" mission had required him to make tradeoffs between security and visibility even though car bombings, snipers, and mortar attacks in the weeks preceding the destruction of his barracks had made it clear that he was in a hostile environment (US House Committee on Armed Services 1983, 259). On the other hand, the Joint Staff wrote of the Grenada operation: "Guidance and policy were concise and clear as were the orders given by the NCA, the JCS, the CINC,

and the JTF commander to the forces involved" (*J3/OPD Joint Overview* 1985). For the policy makers of the Reagan administration, disdainful of the Carter administration's ineffectiveness, recent history seemed to fully support their view of military force.

Notably, Weinberger's successors shortened and simplified his doctrine significantly, removing or overlooking key elements in the process. Powell's enumeration of the doctrine in his autobiography is only seven lines long (Powell 1995, 303). Following the debacle in Somalia, many critics of the Clinton administration invoked the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, and the term "mission creep" became a new obscenity in our military lexicon. However, Weinberger's fourth rule recognizes the need for flexibility in objectives as well as methods. Other adherents of the doctrine invoked it to oppose US involvement in the Balkans and peacekeeping missions in general, but Weinberger's language, and particularly his underlined points of emphasis, make clear that he viewed these rules as applying only to "combat" missions and that he saw these as distinct from "peacekeeping" missions, as he clearly points out in his third rule. Unfortunately, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine as enumerated envisions a clear distinction between military missions, but Weinberger's own rule number four anticipates the difficulty in maintaining that bright line of separation.

Madeleine Albright's worldview and her positions on the use of military force for political aims were shaped by a very different set of events: her childhood in Europe before World War Two and her belief that early intervention for "soft" goals could prevent the rise of much larger problems. In 1994, she tellingly echoed her predecessor George Schultz when she responded to Colin Powell's reluctance to intervene in the

Balkans by asking "what's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?" (Powell 1995, 576).

Powell and Albright are both the children of immigrants, but one fled persecution while the other came to the US in search of economic opportunity. The former sees the United States as the nation that defeated the two great despotic regimes of the twentieth century, Nazi Germany and the USSR The latter saw the US damaged by Vietnam and strives to avoid unnecessary dangers. They were capable of looking at the same conflict-- the Bosnian civil war--and seeing two very different conflicts. Albright saw a continuation of the epic struggle with totalitarianism; Powell saw a peripheral conflict of no particular interest to the US.

Ambassador Richard Holbrooke is representative of the adherents of the Albright philosophy. Holbrooke began his career as a Foreign Service Officer in Vietnam in 1963. In 1995, he served as the chief US negotiator of the Dayton Peace Accords that brought about US intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Holbrooke's history and attitudes illuminate some of the differences and similarities between the Weinberger-Powell adherents and the Albrightists. Holbrooke, like Powell, was shaped by Vietnam, and often his rhetoric does not sound different. In a 1999 interview, Holbrooke said in regards to the policy of graduated pressure in Vietnam, "It simply doesn't matter whether you were a hawk, or a dove. The calibrated bombing was wrong. You're either going to not bomb at all, draw a limit on your involvement, and then defend your strategic interests in another way, globally negotiate some kind of deal; or, alternatively, you're going to bomb at a very high level" (Holbrooke 1999). Judged against the text of Weinberger's speech, it is difficult to distinguish between the two

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schools; the difference comes in the application. As Holbrooke said, "One must not be imprisoned by Vietnam. Let's learn from it, but not be dominated by it" (Holbrook 1999).

In application, Powell and Holbrooke are virtual opposites. Holbrooke views their shared principles as enabling while Powell sees them as restricting. In 1995, Powell wrote of Bosnia: "No American President could defend to the American people the heavy sacrifice of lives it would cost to resolve this baffling conflict. Nor could a President likely sustain the long-term involvement necessary to keep the protagonists from going at each other's throats all over again at the first opportunity." Powell deemed the bombing that preceded his writing a failure, implied that the US had no vital interest there, and predicted doom for any policy of intervention (Powell 1995, 577-578). Holbrooke saw the situation differently. He credits the bombing campaign of 1995 (after the completion of Powell's book) with the lifting of the siege of Sarajevo and with generating the political will for the Dayton Peace Accords (Holbrooke 1999).

On the other hand, the Powellist critics of the intervention in Somalia in 1992-93 proved to be correct. The US did not have the political will to accept casualties, nor was the military presence overwhelming enough to prevent them. When the US force lost eighteen soldiers in October 1993, the Clinton administration began pulling out just as the Reagan administration had in Lebanon a decade before. The debate between the Powellists and the Albrightists may, then, not represent a distinction between a "correct" worldview and an "incorrect" one so much as the impossibility of guiding foreign policy by a set of simple rules. It may also be that the application of those rules--the designation of vital interests, the definition of "clear guidance," the distinctions between the inevitable changes in wartime situations and "mission creep"--varies wildly depending

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upon the lens through which the policy maker observes the situation. Watching a chaotic situation, sifting through the barrage of information from sources both governmental and commercial, weighing the domestic and international political factors, it is exceedingly difficult for the policy maker to apply the principles of strategic decision making rationally.

However, the passage of time should allow a more reasoned assessment of the success or failure of military interventions. This thesis will examine the strategic decision making process regarding US-Iraqi relations from the beginning of the Gulf War in 1990 through Operation Desert Fox in 1998, focusing on three key decisions: if and how to fight the first combat phase of the Gulf War, when and how to terminate that phase, including the US response to the anti-Baathist uprisings that followed the Iraqi ejection from Kuwait, and Operation Desert Fox in 1998. The general measure of effectiveness rests on Carl von Clausewitz's definition of strategy: "the use of engagements for the object of the war," (Clausewitz 1976, 177) substituting "operations" for "engagements."

Does it really matter?

These questions are not merely academic, and the subordinate questions that must be answered are critically important to military strategists. Since no peer competitor is likely to emerge in the next ten years, and since terrorists can do great harm but are not likely to topple the US republic,[2] it follows that military operations will result from the preferences of policy makers rather than the clear need to defend the nation from conquest or destruction. Policy makers' visions of the possible are shaped in large part by perceptions of success or failure in past operations. No American president would embark on a war if he expected it to "be like Vietnam," but there is now a revisionist

historical school that argues the Vietnam conflict was both necessary and successful. If those historians are right, then the results of that simile have unnecessarily constrained policy makers for thirty years. Even if they are wrong, the very existence of that fear provides a powerful tool for those who oppose the use of military force for limited aims.

These issues are critically important to the military strategists who help shape perceptions of the possible as well as perceptions of the results of operations. Military leaders have a long-noted tendency to seek "scientific" certainty through principles and maxims. Clausewitz pointed out not only the tendency, but also the feebleness of such thinking (Clausewitz 1976, 133-147). Could military advisers to civilian policy makers be limiting the utility of the military because of misperceptions about the efficacy of previous operations?

Furthermore, military leaders must design their operations to achieve political ends. Particularly in limited wars or interventions, there is no other rational purpose. However, theories regarding the proper employment of military force may cloud these judgments. Powellists might object to an intervention with no clearly defined goal or one that used minimal force even though the intervention achieved the political objectives for which it was designed.

Finally, it is of paramount importance that the US military subordinate itself to appropriate civilian authority at all times. In a democracy, it can be very difficult to pinpoint what "the" political goals are even without considering unspoken or ulterior motives. Congress and the president may differ. Published strategic policies are often intentionally vague so that the Departments of State and Defense may have very different views of American interests or the acceptable levels of risk to achieve them. Assessing

the efficacy of these military operations against political goals requires first determining what those goals were. That, in turn, requires a methodology that assesses for appropriateness and utility the guidance passed from political decision makers to military leaders.

Research Question

Did the senior civilian leaders provide adequate and appropriate strategic guidance to the military, and did the military provide sound advice to civilian policy makers regarding the efficacy, design, and termination of military operations in Southwest Asia between 1990 and 1998? Secondary and tertiary questions that must be answered include the following: What were the political objectives? Did the military operations aid or hinder their achievement? Were these objectives met or did military operations set the conditions for meeting them? Did the interagency national security process as currently practiced provide adequate guidance to military planners? Key tertiary questions include: How do you define "the" political ends in a democracy? How did military input shape the strategic objectives? How did military input shape the decisions to initiate these operations and to terminate or withdraw from them? If achievement of the political goals did not drive conflict termination, what did? Is there a trend or was each case unique?

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1. See President George W. Bush's campaign speech at The Citadel, 23 September 1999.

2. In discussing terrorism this point is often lost. President Bush's 2002 NSS states, "Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank" (U.S. President 2002). While the "chaos and suffering" of terrorist acts are "great," it is difficult to conceive a terrorist threat so great that it could overcome the "position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" (Bush 2002) that the U.S. enjoys. No major power has ever fallen to an *external* terrorist threat.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

The volume of material covering the first phase of the Gulf War, from August 1990 to March 1991, is nearly overwhelming. In the wake of Desert Storm, strategists, journalists, and historians wanted to describe the revolutionary turnaround in America's armed forces. Bob Woodward published *The Commanders* while the oil fires were still burning in Kuwait. Already in progress when the war began, Woodward's book benefits from the access of a celebrity journalist but suffers from a lack of perspective due to quick publication. Harry Summers's *On Strategy II* likewise focuses on the apparent success of the war in order to claim validation of his earlier book, *On Strategy*. Though flawed, these very early works demonstrate the attitude of the nation in 1991, and they contain quotations from key decision makers that would have been suppressed or distorted later when the long-term implications of some actions became clear.

The official histories and autobiographies date from 1992. General Schwarzkopf retired immediately following the war and was, therefore, able to publish his memoir that year. General Powell stayed on until 1994 and published his memoir in 1995. The official histories, like the instant histories, reflect the euphoria of the immediate aftermath. The autobiographies provide insight into the participants' views after the fact, sometimes unintentionally. For instance, Colin Powell's book completely ignores the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings that followed the war. The Gulf War biographies are also particularly interesting because of the apparent decisiveness of the war. The participants avoided stepping on too many political toes, but they were surprisingly willing to make

categorical statements about the state of the Gulf and the future--statements that many of them would probably like to retract today. George Bush left his own memoir until 1998 allowing him better perspective on events.

Around 1995, more carefully researched histories of the war began to appear. The best of these is Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor's *The General's War*. By 1995 some of the bloom had come off the rose and many key players were no longer in positions that required them to be sensitive to each other's feelings. Gordon and Trainor enjoyed unprecedented access to primary documents and key decision makers.

<u>Operation Desert Fox</u>

Information on Operation Desert Fox is much more limited. President Clinton and many of his key advisers have yet to publish their memoirs, and nobody has chosen to write a comprehensive study of the operation. The coincidence of Desert Fox with the impeachment crisis further impedes research. A military operation that might otherwise have constituted a major milestone in the Clinton presidency becomes a mere distraction in the hindsight of politicians.

There are several valuable items available, however. Sean M. Condron published a thorough study of the legality of the operation in the September, 1999 edition of the *Military Law Review*. Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, has recently published her memoir, which sheds some light on the views within the administration of Saddam Hussein. President Clinton's Oval Office address on the first night of the operation provides a concise enumeration of the public objectives, and Anthony Cordesman has published an exhaustive list of events in the confrontation with Iraq during that period.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Strategic decision making and guidance are not easily measurable either quantitatively or qualitatively, yet this case study must assess whether the strategic decision making process in the United States Government for these three interventions was appropriate and functional. As measurement tools, I will seek answers to the following three questions:

1. Did the strategic guidance meet all statutory, regulatory, and treaty requirements, and did it comply with fundamental American values regarding the use of the military?

2. Did the guidance provide sufficient clarity and detail for military planners to shape operations toward the political goals?

3. Was the process sufficiently recursive to cope with a changing situation and with the changes in goals necessitated by the conduct of the military operation?

If the goal of strategic guidance is to further national aims, then subverting the nation's core values cannot be a desirable result. Question two does not imply that political leaders should micromanage military operations or be unmistakably explicit about what they hoped to achieve. Some ambiguity may be desirable in that it provides room for compromise in conflict termination. If one views war as just another policy negotiation, then it is certainly unwise to show one's entire hand. The key word is "sufficient." Could military planners effectively translate the political goals into military operations? Question three addresses the unpleasant reality that the situation changes. Adherents of Cohen's "normal" school of civil-military relations largely ignore the

influence that subsequent events can have on strategy. If Abraham Lincoln had announced in April of 1861 that the war to restore the Union would probably cost three quarters of a million dead, or that he intended to abolish slavery, it is unlikely that he would have mustered much support. In fact, it is unlikely that he even dreamed of the potential cost in lives and treasure, and he clearly did not seek to abolish slavery immediately. The war itself overtook him on the first count, and it was only reasonable to adjust the goals to match the costs or stop paying the costs.

Question three addresses the unfortunate political reality that policy reversals are painful, and those who face reelection may be loathe to acknowledge them. Staying the course has an odd political appeal in the otherwise pragmatic United States. However, in an open society where even military plans will become public sooner rather than later, military planners must be able to recognize the difference between policy tweaks and major policy shifts. Such major shifts should only be signaled by the appropriate civilian authorities, and so it is incumbent upon them to clearly acknowledge such shifts.

This thesis will seek the answers to these questions in regards to three strategic decision points in Southwest Asia: The beginning, goal, and means of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; the termination of Desert Storm including the subsequent Kurdish and Shiite rebellions; and the Operation Desert Fox attacks on Iraq in 1998. These examples offer a range of conflicts in which the US is likely to engage. The strategic decision making process stretched across two presidential administrations of different parties and different outlooks, and each occurred in the context of the one before. Although not one of the three key questions, it is also reasonable to ask what lessons decision makers learned in one case and applied in the next.

Ultimately, the answers to these questions must be subjective, just as the decisions they assess must be. However, they should allow us to judge whether the process by which strategic policy was made and transmitted to military decision makers had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the outcome of the US interventions.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS

<u>Introduction</u>

At 2019 hours on 17 May 1987, Iraq, a country that many viewed as a near-ally,

attacked the USS *Stark* in the Persian Gulf, causing massive destruction and starting a

raging inferno below decks, even though its warhead failed to detonate (Levinson and

Edwards 1997). In a little over three years, the US would embark on a war with the Iraqi

state that would last for over twelve years followed by an occupation that continues as of

this writing.

The *Stark* incident differed from precursors to earlier wars, such as the 1916

sinking of the *Lusitania* or the 1937 *Panay* incident. In previous cases, the US was

generally unfriendly toward the other nation and either truly neutral or leaning toward her

opponents. In the case of the Persian Gulf "tanker war," the US was anything but neutral,

and it certainly did not favor Iran.

Following the 1979 embassy seizure and the ensuing hostage crisis, the US had

understandably focused on Iran as its primary enemy in the Gulf region. When Iraqi

forces used chemical weapons against Iran in 1983, the US publicly condemned the

action but privately sent the once and future defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, to

Baghdad to reassure the dictator that "a recent move to condemn Iraq's use of chemical

weapons was strictly in principle and that America's priority was to prevent an Iranian

victory in the Iran-Iraq war and to improve bilateral ties." The US Defense Intelligence

Agency also detailed more than sixty officers to share intelligence and bomb-damage

assessments with the Iraqi military (Marquis 2003). President Reagan's 26 November

1983 decision directive ordered immediate consultations with the euphemistically described "Gulf Arab states" as well as US allies to plan responses to, "attacks on or interference with non-belligerent shipping." The directive authorized the US military, "to deter and, if that fails, to defeat any hostile efforts to close the Strait [of Hormuz] to international shipping" (US President 1983). Iraq touched off the most dangerous phase of the "tanker war" shortly after the US overtures, but all US efforts continued to focus on defeating Iran.

Iraqi aircraft in the Gulf were designated as "friendly" by the American AWACS radar planes that tracked them. That designation may have accurately represented the grand strategic view from Washington, but it did not represent the naval situation in the Gulf region. Iraq had initiated the tanker war and Iraq had continued to attack vessels in the Gulf, including vessels of Arab states that were generally viewed as friendlier to Iraq than to Iran. Iraq apologized for the attack on the *Stark*, and relations were quickly patched up, despite Iraq's notable failure to cooperate with the ensuing investigation. In hindsight, Saddam Hussein's willingness to risk the wrath of his Arab neighbors, Iraq's long history of coveting Kuwait, and the attack on the *Stark* all should have raised red flags about the future of US-Iraqi relations long before 2 August 1990, but US policy makers continued to view Iraq through lenses clouded by US-Iranian hostility.

"This Will Not Stand"--The US Confronts Iraq

In the US Army's official history of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, General Robert H. Scales wrote of the victory, "Only 100 ground combat hours were necessary for the Army to reestablish itself convincingly as a successful land combat force. During that brief period, mechanized forces moved more combat power faster and

farther than any similar force in history" (Scales 1993, 5). Harry Summers used the decisive victory to elaborate, again, his triumphalist vision of America in the New World Order. Echoing the "normal" interpretation of Clausewitz, he wrote, "The national objectives of the United States remained constant throughout the war. . . . As the doctrinal manuals prescribed, Central Command's military campaign plans at the operational level of war were designed specifically to meet those strategic objectives. And that's what they did" (Summers 1992, 175-176). In the immediate aftermath, the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War seemed to be an absolute triumph, the most decisive victory since the Israeli drubbing of the Arab states in 1967. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, US commander in chief in the theater, agreed to the cessation of ground combat after 100 hours with the observation that it "beat" the Israeli Six-day war by a day; his staff chose not to mention the three-week air war that preceded it (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 405). In the week following the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush opined that with the decisive victory in Kuwait, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all" (US President 1991b).

That view seemed entirely justified in March 1991, but twelve years later the view looks very different. Between March 1991 and October 2002, the United States spent approximately $12 billion on military operations to contain Iraq while the British spent nearly $1 billion (Prados 2002, 10). US and British forces maintained a continuous military presence and a near-continuous land presence in the Gulf region to contain Iraq and enforce UN sanctions. Many of the same people who lobbied to limit the aims of the 1991 Gulf War and applauded its "decisive" outcome became the most strident advocates of invading Iraq and deposing Saddam Hussein in 2003. Certainly, it is unfair to judge

the decisions of 1990 and 1991 entirely by the view of 2003, but we should not fail to ask what changed in the intervening years. Was the Gulf War victory truly "decisive?" Did the "normal" model of civil-military relations actually function, and if so, did it serve the interests of the United States? If not, what could have been done to better serve those interests--to achieve the political ends for which the war was fought?

Legality

Despite a cavalier attitude toward the Constitution's requirements for waging war and toward the UN's role in limiting conflict, the Bush administration did a remarkably good job of obeying the law of the land and the UN Charter in regards to the decision to go to war. Additionally, the administration generally adhered to its own policies as stated in the National Security Strategy. It was only at the level of civil-military relations as dictated by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (hereafter Goldwater-Nichols) that they failed.

The Constitution's enumeration of Congress's power to declare war has been problematic since the earliest days of the republic, due primarily to the flexibility of the term "war." Even the strictest constructionist would be unlikely to argue that the president cannot use *any* military force without congressional approval. On the other hand, few would argue that Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War were not wars-- terms like "police action," "conflict," and "intervention" notwithstanding. The question then becomes, when does a "conflict" become a war and require a congressional declaration?

George H. W. Bush claims to believe that the threshold rested somewhere above sending a half million troops to Southwest Asia to conduct decisive offensive operations

into a prepared defense to eject the fourth largest military in the world from the country

that it has occupied. In his memoirs, he writes, "I was confident I did not need a

resolution. The United States had used military force about two hundred times in its

history and there had been only five declarations of war" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999,

441). While that sounds confident and mirrors the position of every president since

Richard Nixon on the War Powers Resolution, the more telling sentence follows it. Bush

continues, "But for the country's sake, and to show Saddam we were speaking as one

voice, I wanted Congress on record, and before the deadline passed" (Bush and

Scowcroft 1999, 441).

In fact, while Bush had maintained since August that he did not legally need

congressional approval, he had felt all along that he needed it politically. On 11

September, Bush addressed a joint session of Congress. He wrote later that he "wanted to

find a way to get Congress on board with an unmistakable show of that support for what

we were doing, and what we might have to do" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 370-371). On

13 September he wrote in his diary, "We do not want to unleash a War Powers debate,

nor do most of the senators, so we're going to keep working the problem . . . My gut

wonder is, how long will they be with us?" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 371). He was so

concerned with congressional support that he tasked his White House counsel, C. Boyden

Gray, to research Lyndon Johnson's handling of Congress in the months prior to the

Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

Bush's dealings with Congress may not have matched the ideal of Franklin

Roosevelt's request for a war declaration on 8 December 1941, but neither did the

circumstances of the Gulf War match the clear threat of Pearl Harbor. Bush clearly feared

the Congress and its ability to change positions. With 535 members, Congress is never as consistent as even the most irresolute president, and Bush was anything but irresolute over Kuwait. He predicted often that congressional support would evaporate at the first sign of adversity, and he did not want to ask for a resolution if it would tie his hands. Even when he finally accepted the utility of a congressional resolution at the end of November, he felt, "If we could not limit the agenda of a special session and get a consensus in both houses, there was no point in asking for a vote yet" (Bush and Scowcroft, 423).

The Congress managed to simultaneously fulfill the president's worst fears and the Constitution's best intentions. In September the president proposed a large shipment of arms to Saudi Arabia and debt relief for Egypt, a key ally in the conflict. A number of congressmen balked, and the administration split the arms deal into two parts to give the appearance of less aid. The arms deal eventually went through on 29 October because Congress simply failed to act against it, and Egyptian debt relief passed in the first week of November (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 373). When Congress adjourned on 28 October, it appointed a bi-partisan committee to consult with the White House during the recess. At the first meeting, the Speaker of the House, Tom Foley, presented the president with a letter stating that any offensive action would require the consent of Congress. That was precisely what Bush wanted to avoid, since it was not clear that such consent would be forthcoming (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 389-390).

When faced with a roll call vote, however, Congress generally supported the president. On 1 October, the House of Representatives confirmed Bush's sense after his 11 September speech by overwhelmingly passing a non-binding resolution supporting

administration efforts to that point (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 379). The resolution encouraged the president to find a diplomatic decision, but the administration itself was still pursuing that strategy. In fact, both General Powell and General Schwarzkopf had strongly indicated that defense of Saudi Arabia would be the only American goal.

A more severe test came on 8 November, the day after the congressional mid-term elections, when the Pentagon announced the deployment of a second army corps to Saudi Arabia. This clearly put offensive ground combat on the table, and without prior consultation, members of Congress reacted angrily. Again, the administration perceived its legal obligations very differently from its political obligations. Brent Scowcroft wrote of that particular political storm that, "We never seriously contemplated invoking the War Powers Resolution" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 398). Perhaps not, but Bush acknowledged in his diary that they handled the congressional liaison very badly and directed that future decisions be broached with key members first (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 397).

The real test came in mid-January with the UN deadline looming. Despite months of claiming that the law did not require congressional approval, George Bush had come to the conclusion that politics did. On 12 January 1990, each house considered three resolutions. The first reaffirmed the right of Congress to declare war and demanded prior approval of offensive action. The second was a Sense of Congress resolution supporting economic sanctions and requiring congressional preapproval for offensive action. The third backed use of force to enforce UN Resolution 678. Despite heated debate, the first two were defeated in both houses, and the third passed 250-183 in the House of Representatives and 52-47 in the Senate (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 444-446).

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Ultimately, the administration obtained congressional approval to wage war in southwest Asia. Although the resolution does not call itself a declaration of war, neither does the Constitution require it to do so. Critics of the administration would point out that it was always political expediency rather than virtue that sent the president to Congress, and Scowcroft admits as much when he writes, "We were faced with weighing the President's inherent power to use force against the political benefits of explicit support from Congress" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 416). Those political benefits are precisely the checks and balances envisioned by the founders. The tension inherent in the Constitution forced the president to seek congressional approval just as it forced Lyndon Johnson before him. Both presidents asserted their right to use force short of war without congressional approval, and both defined war rather narrowly. In fact neither of them defined war at all except to claim that his war was not one. However, they both fulfilled the intent of the Constitution in the end. The example of Vietnam indicates that congressional approval is no guarantee of a wise or just war, but the wars with Mexico and Spain indicate that it is not an improperly formed declaration that makes an unjust war. Article 1, section 8 does not guarantee good wars; it only guarantees that presidents cannot wage them very long without popular support.

The Bush administration's dealings with the UN largely paralleled its dealings with Congress. Although many Americans might disdain the UN and deny the need for UN support of US military action, the Gulf War was fought on the authority of the UN Charter as well as specific UN Security Council resolutions. The Bush administration may have been cynical about its use of the UN, but the realities of domestic and

international politics forced it to comply with the intent of the UN charter even as they privately disdained it.

Between 2 August and 29 November 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed eleven resolutions regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Brent Scowcroft wrote that "the UN provided an added cloak of political cover. Never did we think that without its blessing we could not or would not intervene" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 416). The UN may have only provided cover, but it was cover that the administration desperately wanted for domestic political reasons.

The aftermath of the Gulf War has largely obscured the political tensions that preceded it--not only over the war decision, but also over the budget, taxes, and the mid-term congressional election. In November, Senator Sam Nunn held hearings on the Persian Gulf crisis, and a number of national security authorities testified. Although Henry Kissinger supported prompt military action, former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral William Crowe and General David Jones, testified that sanctions should be allowed to work (Woodward 1992, 318). Crowe testified the day before the UN Security Council vote on Resolution 678 to authorize force to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. With Democrats controlling both houses of Congress and most of them opposed to military action, the president desperately wanted that political cover. In addition to Admiral Crowe and General Jones, General Schwarzkopf had publicly stated that he did not expect to fight for Kuwait. General Powell had fought the White House at every attempt to escalate the conflict. Secretary of State James Baker had publicly announced that the war was about "jobs, jobs, jobs" and caused a fire storm of criticism about going to war for financial gain (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 399). Announcing the escalation on the day

after the election without prior congressional consultation had stiffened opposition to the very strategy that the White House now wanted to pursue.

The UN resolution that Scowcroft disdains as "political cover" changed the political dynamics. Other nations and some in the US had balked at fighting a war to return a hereditary monarch to his throne. Political realists, including Colin Powell, had questioned how an Iraqi puppet in Kuwait threatened American interests. Resolution 678, combined with all of its predecessors, weakened those arguments substantially. The major nations of the world had voted to declare an attack into Kuwait defensive under Article 51 of the UN Charter. That, in turn, placed congressional opponents in the position of advocating against enforcing the UN Charter--a position most of them did not want on their records.

The US system worked because the political realities of the government established by the Constitution overcame one president's belief that an article of that Constitution did not apply to this case. Eight years later he could still claim that the law did not require him to obtain congressional permission, but politics did, and that meant that the more restrictive interpretation of the Constitution had triumphed. Likewise, the UN might simply have provided "political cover," but it could do so only because it possessed legitimacy in the eyes of the world and of a substantial number of Americans-- legitimacy that the administration did not command on its own. We can never know for sure what would have happened if the administration had lost the vote in either the Congress or the Security Council, but the pains to which they went to win those votes indicate that they would have been loath to act unilaterally.

Clarity

Once the decisions had been made to use military force and long before the administration had obtained authorization from the UN and the Congress, the US military had to plan how to fight the war.

The Bush administration national security strategy (NSS), written in March 1990 as the Soviet Union collapsed, was simultaneously a prescient assessment of the emerging environment and a reactionary vestige of the Cold War. The Bush NSS acknowledged the changes occurring at the time in the Soviet Union and designated the spread of democracy in the third world as a vital US interest, but it primarily focused on international stability, the balance of power, and the predictability that Cold War strategists had craved. "As the world's most powerful democracy, we are inescapably the leader, the connecting link in a global alliance of democracies. The pivotal responsibility for ensuring the stability of the international balance remains ours, even as its requirements change in a new era" (US President 1990a, 7).

Several elements of the NSS bore directly on the situation that would develop only a few months later. It states explicitly that the US will deter and, if necessary, repel aggression that could threaten US security and "end conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its interests and allies" (US President 1990a, 8).

In 1990, the Pentagon was more focused on resizing the US military than on what that military might actually need to do. As Iraqi troops rolled over Kuwait on 2 August 1990, President Bush was en route to Aspen, Colorado for the fortieth anniversary of the Aspen Institute--a Cold War think tank. He had chosen the event to announce the broad outlines of the post-Cold War national military strategy.

The president began his speech by invoking the memory of Korea--a clear sign of the direction his thinking was taking on both the nature of the Iraqi threat and the proper response to it, but the reference to Korea had broader implications for the overall strategy. Bush and his entire national security team were products of the Cold War and the containment doctrine, of which Korea had been an early test. Although Bush acknowledged that "the defense strategy and military structure needed to ensure peace can and must be different" (US President 1990c). In the post-Cold War world, it was difficult for him or any of his advisers to step outside the framework of their lives.

In his autobiography, Colin Powell emphasizes that the Base Force had to break out of the Cold War mold, but then he claims that he based it entirely on his intuition without any formal input from the national security bureaucracy (Powell 1995, 436-437). That intuition was formed by his three decades of Cold War service, and it inevitably reflected his experience. Some have argued that the Base Force, later called the Two Major Theater War concept, was not a strategy at all but a justification for preserving force structure. Powell largely admits as much when he writes of it, "It will not last forty years, as did the strategy of containment, but it is appropriate for the present post-Cold War transition period" (Powell 1995, 580).

The wording of the announcement itself bears out the sense that national security leaders were searching for a compass in the post-Soviet world and seeking to avoid the loss of too much military capacity in the search for a peace dividend. President Bush began by stating that, "What we need are not merely reductions but restructuring" then proceeded to focus on the continuing threat from Russia and the resultant need to continue the B-2 bomber, the Trident submarine, and two land-based ICBM projects (US

President 1990c). Like the NSS that it supported, the new NMS faced a new world situation with old methods and structures.

Despite later claims of revolutionary changes, the war that began on 2 August 1990 followed the national military strategy announced on the same day. The military that fought Desert Storm was the military designed to defeat the Soviet Union on the plains of Germany, and it had not yet even suffered the reduction in numbers that would follow over the next decade. We will never know whether that force was equal to the task for which it was designed, and many subsequent critics have charged that it was poorly designed for the new world order, but it was more than equal to the task of defeating the Iraqi military in Kuwait.

Ends

Unfortunately, as a guide to *how* to fight one of those major theater wars, neither the NSS nor the NMS was very useful. The Base Force was announced on the same day as the invasion, so the MTW it envisioned was generic. The US had focused on the threat from Iran for the preceding eleven years and had translated that into tolerance for Iraq. All agreed that the immediate imperative was the defense of Saudi Arabia, but agreement ended there. Fortunately, that task alone would require a long buildup and give the administration and the Pentagon time to work out what to do next.

This piece of the national security process did not run smoothly. Before leaving for Aspen on 2 August, President Bush spoke with reporters and listed the diplomatic and economic steps he had taken in response to the Iraqi invasion. Of course the first question, from United Press reporter Helen Thomas, was whether the US would intervene militarily. Bush at first said he would not discuss it, then finished by saying, "I'm not

contemplating such action ['sending troops'], and I again would not discuss it if I were"
(US President 1990b). Bush writes in his memoir that he was not yet certain of the
options, and that he did not want to tip his hand in public (Bush and Scowcroft 1999,
315). Asked if he were contemplating severing diplomatic relations with Iraq he would
only say that he would be "discussing this matter with our top advisers here in just a
minute" (US President 1990b).

Buried in the cautious answers, however, was a key element of Bush's reasoning
to which several of his advisers failed to pay heed in the coming months. A reporter
asked him if he believed the Iraqi action was limited to Kuwait, and he responded, "what
I want to do is have it limited back to Iraq and have this invasion be reversed and have
them get out of Kuwait" (US President 1990b). Bush confirmed in his own memoirs that
even at that early moment he knew "for sure that the aggression had to be stopped, and
Kuwait's sovereignty restored" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 315). Despite the clear
caution over means, President Bush's vision of the ends never receded and may even
have advanced from that initial statement. The gap between ends and means in that public
statement illustrates one problem for the subordinate trying to parse a political leader's
words for guidance. One sentence might be sincere while the next might be a throwaway
for political cover or even intentionally misleading.

Within a few hours the decision to employ military force had been made. The
question then shifted to defining the strategic endstate. While the president was in Aspen,
the senior officials of the Defense Department met in the secretary's office to discuss
their options. At that meeting, Secretary Cheney, Undersecretary for Policy Paul
Wolfowitz, General Powell, and others discussed three distinct strategic ends: the defense

of Saudi Arabia, the retaking of Kuwait, and the removal of Saddam Hussein. General Powell clearly favored the first option. At one point he argued, "The next few days Iraq will withdraw, but Saddam Hussein will put his puppet in. Everyone in the Arab world will be happy. I don't see the senior leadership taking us into armed conflict for the events of the last twenty-four hours. The American people do not want their young dying for $1.50 gallon oil" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 33). The position indicates that Powell had not listened very carefully to the president's public statement. That statement had itself been contradictory--advocating the reversal of the invasion while denying the use of US forces--but Powell chose to reconcile the contradiction between the president's stated ends and means by limiting the strategic goal.

The strongest option--invasion of Iraq and deposing Saddam Hussein, came from Secretary Cheney. Powell acknowledged that the US Central Command had a contingency plan for deploying 100,000 troops to Saudi Arabia but kept returning to the need for public support while Cheney insisted that the administration would have to lead rather than follow public opinion. The meeting came to a close with Cheney shouting at Powell to produce some options and no consensus on the strategic goal, although the option of toppling Saddam apparently died there. For the next three months, the question remained: hold the line or return to the *status quo ante bellum*? (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 32-34)

The issue could have been resolved at the National Security Council (NSC) meeting on 3 August, but the president and his national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, made a critical mistake in the interests of maintaining open dialogue and achieving consensus. After the early morning NSC meeting of the day before, Scowcroft had been

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"appalled" at those who suggested accepting the invasion as a *fait accompli*. Scowcroft expressed his uneasiness to the president and proposed opening the next NSC meeting with a strong statement about the importance of rolling back the Iraqi invasion. Bush agreed and proposed that he should open, but Scowcroft argued that such a statement from the president would "stifle discussion" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 317-318). Bush's silence on the matter allowed those who disagreed to attribute the position to Scowcroft alone.

This debate over political ends was critical to the ensuing discussion regarding means. The ground combat force necessary to defend Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi invasion was only about half the size of the force required to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait. Iraqi forces moving in the open desert would be easy targets for US airpower, but only ground troops could go in and dig them out of their prepared defenses. In fact, Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf underestimated the effects of airpower and therefore overestimated the need for ground troops if the strategic goal was retaking Kuwait. What is not clear is how much that erroneous estimation was influenced by the reluctance among senior military leaders regarding retaking Kuwait.

The problems at this stage arose largely from the reluctance of both sides to jump out in front. The Bush administration could only decide what to do if it had some concept of the cost--requiring an estimate of possibilities and resources from the military--but Powell wanted the administration to define the goals first before he would assess the possibilities and costs. When he finally did so, Powell consistently inflated the military cost in order to preclude a policy that he saw as unwise in the light of his own "doctrine."

Powell was not a rogue Army officer out of touch with his colleagues. Rather, he reflected a broad trend among the officers who had rebuilt the Army after Vietnam as well as many in the other services. When Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz visited Saudi Arabia in October, Lt. Gen. Gary Luck told him that Kuwait was not worth the lives of American servicemen (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 149). Bob Woodward reported in *The Commanders* that, "[Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff Admiral] Crowe was a skeptic about all uses of force, not just in Panama. He knew presidents sometimes had ambitious, extravagant ideas about the goals they could achieve with military power. War, to Crowe's mind, was a nasty, unpredictable affair, not something to be treated as just another foreign-policy tool" (Woodward 1991, 54). The Weinberger-Powell doctrine was very popular among the Army's senior leadership who felt like scapegoats for the failures of Vietnam.

The general military caution and adherence to the Weinberger-Powell doctrine made it all the more important for the president to clearly articulate his political ends. Colin Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, and their entire generation of officers had bought into the idea that their civilian masters had the responsibility to delineate clear, achievable goals for any military action and then leave them completely free to achieve those goals. Curiously, they did not seem to feel that they were restricted from weighing in on politics where it impinged on military concerns.

After the war, General Powell and other senior military leaders attempted to downplay their reluctance. At the 3 August NSC meeting, Powell asked "if it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait" (Powell 1995, 464). In his memoirs, he describes this as a "Clausewitzian" question designed to elicit clear strategic guidance from the civilian

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leaders. Others took it as part of Powell's general reluctance to go to war, but notably, no answer was forthcoming even though Scowcroft and Bush had already discussed the issue and--according to them--reached a consensus that it was worth going to war.

Later in the day, Cheney chastised Powell for even asking the question, but a great deal of later drama over means and methods might have been avoided had the president answered the question or at least noted that a firm answer was required. At a followup briefing at Camp David a few days later, Schwarzkopf listed the troops and time he thought necessary to eject the Iraqis--several hundred thousand troops and eight to ten months. According to Schwarzkopf's account, Powell had forbidden him to even discuss the matter at the 3 August NSC briefing (Schwarzkopf 1992, 297).

The critical shift in guidance occurred on 5 August as the president returned from Camp David. Stepping off the helicopter, he stopped to talk to reporters and took a tough stance, ending with, "This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait" (US President 1990d). Powell recalls that the president's comment made him sit up in his chair and wonder if the guidance had changed from what he calls a "tail-end option" to a "front-end option" (Powell 1995, 466). In fact, the option had always been on the table--Powell just did not like it. Additionally, the president stated explicitly that a puppet regime--Powell's anticipated solution--was unacceptable. The news conference and Powell's recollection of it seem to indicate that the president established a clear end state in a very public forum, but subsequent public statements demonstrate just how muddy such guidance really is.

On 8 August the president addressed the nation to explain the deployment of forces to Saudi Arabia, and then he held a news conference. In light of the key strategic

question of the moment, the message of both the address and the news conference that followed were consistently contradictory. Bush firmly stated the strategic goal of evicting the Iraqis from Kuwait and the determination of the United States to "do its part" to ensure that end, but when it came to discussion of troops he emphasized only their role in defending Saudi Arabia from further Iraqi aggression.

Bush was in the middle of a delicate balancing act--trying to put together a coalition, deter further Iraqi aggression, and maintain public and international support for whatever course of action he eventually chose. In a perfect world there would be a private message to subordinates and a public message, and the two would not be so far off that the public message loses credibility. Unfortunately, Powell's recollection of the effect a few off-the-cuff words had on him indicates that the subordinates themselves are not sure when they are receiving guidance and when they are just listening to political chatter. In hindsight, the president's spontaneous words on the White House lawn stand out as the true expression of his inclinations while the cautious and contradictory message of his public address is largely forgotten. It merits only half a page in his own memoir and he does not even mention the strong emphasis on defense over offense.

At the time the difference was unclear. General Schwarzkopf had briefed the president on 4 August regarding the necessary forces for evicting the Iraqis. The president had already moved strongly in the direction of that goal, but nearly three more months went by before he made the decision to apply the force that his general briefed him in the first seventy-two hours would be required to achieve his desired end-state. In the meantime, he hoped that the other instruments of power would be sufficient to eject the Iraqis from Kuwait, but as former Army Chief of Staff, Gordon Sullivan, said, "Hope

is not a method," and it does not initiate the necessary preparations for moving hundreds of thousands of soldiers between continents.

<u>Ways and Means</u>

As the president indicated ever more strongly that he was willing to use military force to achieve the political end--the removal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of the Kuwaiti government--the debate moved to the ways and means of achieving that end. Throughout the crisis, the United States and its allies continued to use diplomatic, informational, and economic levers to try to change Saddam Hussein's mind, but as time wore on, their commitment to a peaceful solution waned. By January of 1991, the president was both personally frustrated and committed to removing Saddam Hussein as a future threat. In his diary, he complained that Saddam Hussein was "jerking us around" and wrote that he was "inclined to slam the door and leave it closed" on further negotiations with Iraq (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 437).

If the strategic goal was the removal of Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, and the administration had resolved to use force to achieve that goal if necessary, then the next step was to develop a military plan for achieving it. General Schwarzkopf had briefed the president on 4 August that an offensive into Kuwait would require several hundred thousand troops. That estimate was merely his professional guess, but it turned out to reflect or be reflected by the actual Desert Storm campaign plan quite accurately.

Despite the president's startling declaration that the Iraqi aggression would not stand, Powell continued to resist the decision, which served to inhibit planning for a campaign to achieve it. On 24 August:

Powell told Schwarzkopf that no more than 150,000 troops would be sent to the Gulf, Schwarzkopf recalled. Echoing the comments he had made to Cheney on the day of the invasion, the JCS chairman said he was concerned the American public would not support keeping a larger force in the inhospitable Saudi desert. Schwarzkopf's own estimate required 216,000 troops, and the CENTCOM commander was determined to deploy every last one of them. As it turned out, the American defensive deployment totaled about 265,000 troops, only to double again when the United States began preparing to launch its offensive. (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 65-66)

Powell went on to say that he did not expect the president to authorize a war. Schwarzkopf later told Gordon and Trainor that he found Powell's assessment comforting because he was "consumed" with the defensive preparations and "found the idea of an offensive almost too terrible too [*sic*] contemplate" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 66).

Because of the overwhelming task of establishing an adequate defense and Powell's reluctance to move forward on offensive planning, General Schwarzkopf had not yet briefed a ground plan in Washington at the beginning of October. While the president was clearly leaning toward an offensive action, he could not make the final decision without a clear idea of the costs. On 6 October, Powell called Schwarzkopf and told him that he was under great pressure from the "hawks in the White House" and he wanted Schwarzkopf to send someone to brief the ground plan to the president (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 128). Schwarzkopf's planning cell had developed a plan for a frontal assault into the Iraqi defenses in Kuwait because they felt they could not do anything more complex with only one corps. Schwarzkopf saw this plan as the best he could do with what he had, and he had not yet prepared a wish list for what he would want if he actually had to attack Kuwait. Nevertheless, he sent his team to Washington to brief the president.

Powell was probably not reluctant to show Schwarzkopf's preliminary ground plan to the president because it bolstered his case against going to war. Neither he nor anyone else in Washington bought into the Air Force planners' assertion, already floating around the Pentagon, that airpower alone could win the war. Despite the president's clear statement of intention on the 24th, Powell may still have hoped that the unimaginative ground plan would discourage--perhaps even horrify--the political leadership. On 9 October Powell told Britain's air chief marshal Sir Patrick Hine that a war "would be politically damaging to Western interests in the Middle East," that even a successful war might not achieve a positive political solution, and that it might cost many friendly casualties (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 130).

Predictably, the CENTCOM briefing on 11 October did not go well. Powell explained the frontal attack by arguing that the Army could not logistically sustain a western envelopment and that the force in the Gulf was not adequate (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 138). Scowcroft was once again "appalled" and President Bush later wrote that "the briefing made me realize we had a long way to go before the military was 'gung ho' and felt we had the means to accomplish our mission expeditiously, without impossible loss of life" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 381).

Later, Schwarzkopf was angry because he felt he had been misrepresented to the president (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 140). Powell and Schwarzkopf were emphasizing the same issue for diametrically opposed reasons. Powell assumed--wrongly--that the civilians would be daunted by both the clumsy frontal assault and the force proposed for a more daring maneuver plan. Although a consummate military politician, he failed to accurately read his commander in chief's resolve on the issue. Referring to the

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subsequent offensive plan for two corps, Robert Gates told Gordon and Trainor, "The White House had been accustomed over the years to the military coming in with very large force requirements for contingency plans. This was clearly partly out of caution, but there was also the perception that at times it was to dissuade the president from action. What was striking about this episode was that the military put their gigantic requirements on the table--moving the VII Corps from Europe, six carrier battle groups, activating more reserves--and Bush did not blanch" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 154). However, while Bush did not blanch from the decision, he did delay announcing it until after the mid-term congressional elections on 7 November.

Submitting the initial ground plan this way served both generals poorly. Bush and Cheney were unwilling to accept the limitations and eventually deployed the larger force that Powell opposed. At the same time, Powell's presentation allowed them to believe that Schwarzkopf was actually advocating a frontal assault--a position that caused them to question Schwarzkopf's competence and judgment and subsequently to exercise more control from Washington--precisely the approach that Army leaders wanted to avoid.

The briefing set loose a chain of events that probably moved the planning forward and caused the generals to fully support the offensive option. Overseen by Paul Wolfowitz, a team in the Pentagon developed a plan dubbed the "Western Excursion" that would have sent forces into western Iraq to either provide a bargaining chip for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait or to be a springboard for an attack into Baghdad to induce "regime collapse" (Gordon and Trainor, 144-145). On 25 October, Cheney made clear on television that more troops would be going to the Gulf, then briefed the Western Excursion at the White House without telling Powell first. Powell told

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Schwarzkopf that he would not be able to leave Washington any more because "things get out of control" and asked Schwarzkopf for an assessment of the plan so he could "get this thing back in the box" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 151). They agreed that they did not want "bargaining chips" but decisive victory.

The planning for the air war developed along similar lines, with General Powell attempting to limit the options for civilian leaders so that they would limit the ends. In this case, however, Powell's bias against air power based on his own experience in Vietnam, may have led him to undermine his own goal of avoiding a ground war.

The Air Force wargaming cell Checkmate under Col. John Warden had begun developing an air campaign plan as soon as the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. After receiving Warden's briefing, General Schwarzkopf sent Warden to brief Powell, who liked the plan but told Warden that he could not recommend an airpower-only campaign to the president. Powell also criticized the plan for not attacking Iraqi military formations in Kuwait. Shortly after the invasion, he had told the J-3, Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly, that Iraq's army needed to be destroyed if we went to war so that there would be no need for the US to maintain a long-term presence to defend Saudi Arabia (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 82-84). Continuing his role as *de* facto joint chief of staff, Powell directed Warden to move his operation to the JCS and to create a condensed version that he, Powell, could brief to senior officials (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 82-85).

Although he had adopted Warden's ambitious air plan, Powell continued to downplay the capabilities of airpower. In Senate testimony on 3 December, Powell publicly stated that airpower alone would be unlikely to win the war (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 178). Ironically, this undermined his own preferred outcome. Instead of bluffing

Saddam Hussein into withdrawing from Kuwait, Powell was reinforcing the Iraqi belief that they could weather an air campaign, thereby eliminating one possible positive outcome. Powell had initially believed that the international community would allow Saddam to keep Kuwait under some sort of puppet regime. He seems never to have envisioned any outcome other than his first assessment or an allied ground assault to destroy Iraqi forces. Once the president's resolve not to let Iraq have Kuwait became clear, Powell seems to have focused his energy on blocking that decision rather than on finding another alternative such as an airpower bluff. His conviction that airpower alone could not work (and he may have been correct) led him to foreclose the option even though it might have avoided the ground war that he dreaded.

Given the president's fairly clear guidance, why could the Secretary of Defense not simply order the chairman and the theater commander in chief to develop a better plan? Illustrating Kissinger's theory of autarkic bureaucracies, Powell, and to a lesser extent Schwarzkopf, used their considerable prestige and their lock on military expertise to block political decisions by portraying the costs as too high. In reality, guidance did not flow from the civilian leadership to the generals and get translated from political ends to military means in the process. Instead, it was a constant poker game in which each player had an agenda and used his cards and his chips to maneuver the other players into his desired course of action.

On 30 October, President Bush held another meeting with his close advisers, the "gang of eight," at which Powell briefed CENTCOM's two-corps plan including the need for nearly a half million troops. The president approved the plan and directed preparation for the offensive option (Powell 1995, 488-489). The following day, the president

convened the full NSC to put the rubber stamp on the decision (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 153). Once the decision was formalized, the not-so-secret balking by the military came to an end. Woodward reports that by November, "Powell had given up pushing the containment strategy. He had his orders. He wasn't giving the slightest thought to containment now" (Woodward 1991, 7).

Unlike the positive outcome of the congressional and UN maneuvering, the flawed civil-military process had more serious consequences. The logistical challenges of sending 265,000 troops and their equipment half way around the world bought the president and the Pentagon leadership approximately three months to discuss their courses of action. The president's strategic goal was achieved with minimal loss of allied lives. However, the push-back from the military combined with the reluctance in Congress distracted the president from examining the emerging situation. Although he began leaning toward an offensive response in August, Bush had to spend three months going back and forth with the military leadership before he could officially make the decision. During those three months, his own view of the situation changed, but he was still trying to push through his decision of August. Colin Powell and others defined the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait as an aggressive response, and thereby defined any more aggressive response as extreme. When the time came to end the war, the shackles of that conception would cause several questionable decisions that have reverberated for over a decade.

<center>Flexibility and Reexamination</center>

Just as the messy strategic process inhibited the military planners, the methodical military planning process limited the flexibility of the strategic goals. After three months

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of defending Saudi Arabia, the CENTCOM planning staff had only developed a plan to defend Saudi Arabia. The theater commander in chief had publicly stated his opposition to any offensive to liberate Kuwait, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs had resisted such a campaign at every turn. The president had made the decision to use force in defense of Saudi Arabia within twenty-four hours of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It took four more months to formally decide to use force to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait. That decision was announced on 8 November, and the administration shifted its energies to moving the Congress and the UN to support the decision it had already made. That effort consumed another two and a half months, ending on 12 January with the congressional joint resolution. It then took approximately six weeks to actually fight the war to a conclusion that could only be defined as wildly successful by the terms of the stated strategic goal. Why then did the president, on 1 March, make the extraordinary statement that he was dissatisfied with the outcome?

Bush's own words give a clue to the problem. When asked why he seemed "somber," Bush explained that it did not seem finished to him. He praised the troops for their "finished" job but then stated, "I still have a little bit of an unfinished agenda." The questions at that news conference also reveal part of the problem. One reporter notes that the president had "talked a great deal throughout these many months and weeks about, at the appropriate time, what you want to see happen in a postwar Middle East" and then transitions to his actual question with, "Provided Saddam Hussein is toppled, ousted, and/or leaves" (US President 1991a).

Throughout the war, Bush had been increasingly angered by the Iraqi treatment of occupied Kuwait and had directed increasingly hostile language at Saddam Hussein

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personally. The president's anger was sincere, but he was turning the war into a vendetta against Saddam. Scowcroft or his deputy, Robert Gates, began traveling with the president to hold down his rhetoric (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 389). His increasing anger at Saddam and his realization that Iraq remained a military threat might have led him to rethink his strategic goal, but three things stood in the way.

First, the coalition and the domestic political consensus had resulted from Herculean efforts. Bush was rightly cautious about blowing on his house of cards. Second, the ponderous military planning process had given him no indication that he could change goals. It had taken three months of defense to come up with a defensive plan, another month to start an offensive plan, and six more weeks to get it ready for execution, with the military resisting forward motion at every point. The switch from defense to offense had required an increase of over 300,000 troops from the original CENTCOM plan. Even as coalition troops attacked into Kuwait, most military commanders expected a tough ground fight. Bush had little encouragement to believe that altering the strategic goal was even a viable option.

Finally, the assumptions implicit in the reporters' questions on 1 March led him to avoid any tough rethinking of his objective. He and others assumed that Saddam Hussein would fall as a result of the military defeat in Kuwait, without shedding additional allied blood and without endangering the coalition. Reporters were already asking the president about reconstruction aid for post-Saddam Iraq, a question that was premature by twelve years.

Conclusion

Constrained by domestic and international politics, the Bush administration did an admirable job of staying within the US Constitution and the UN charter. However, the need for consensus sometimes limited the clarity of the president's strategic guidance to the military. As will be apparent in the attempt to terminate the conflict, that need for consensus can have devastating effects on the ability to reexamine strategic goals in light of changing circumstance.

"Ending" the War

The termination of Operation Desert Storm was much briefer than the lead-up to it, and it was characterized by a combined sense of triumph and anti-climax. The failure of the Bush administration to reexamine its own emerging objectives combined with the military culture exemplified by the Weinberger-Powell doctrine to set the stage for precisely the sloppy, incomplete finale that all of the policy makers hoped to avoid.

Legality

Legally, the president, in consultation with the coalition partners, could simply choose to end the war as soon as he felt that UNSCR 660 had been fulfilled or was on its way to being fulfilled. That resolution required Iraq to "withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990" (United Nations Security Council 1990a). UNSCR 678 authorized member states to enforce 660 and the congressional joint resolution likewise authorized the president to use US forces for that purpose (US Congress 1991).

By that standard, the war could have ended as early as the evening of 25 February when the Iraqis signaled a general retreat. Some might even argue that the

coalition was required to do so--that the UN resolution on which their authority rested authorized no further action--but that interpretation is probably unreasonably narrow and legalistic. If we presume that the United States was fighting the war to protect and further its own interests within the scope of the UN authorization, then the president needed to determine the point at which termination would best enhance those interests. Legally, the president's decision was unassailable.

The president's decision also reflected a concern not only for coalition casualties, but also for Iraqi casualties. That concern was partly politically motivated, but it is nevertheless admirable that the administration sought to minimize the carnage among Iraqi soldiers who were, after all, conscripts. The president's demonization of Saddam Hussein over the preceding months had constructed a view of Iraq in which Saddam and a few henchmen oppressed and coerced millions of otherwise innocent Iraqis. In general, the president's decision was both legally and morally acceptable.

<center>Clarity</center>

The more serious question about the termination of Operation Desert Storm regards its wisdom. Did civilian policy makers provide adequate guidance to military commanders, and did the commanders accurately explain the military capabilities and options to their civilian masters?

As noted above, the military had achieved the explicit strategic goal--the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait--as early as the evening of 25 February. At that point, the Iraqi armed forces in Kuwait were already defeated and retreating to Iraq. The United Nations had never stated as its goal the destruction of the Iraqi military, nor had Congress specifically addressed the issue in its authorizing resolution. However, the military had

always taken a broader view of the strategic objective than simply the eviction of the Iraqis.

The NSS sought stability in the region, and Iraq's invasions of two of its neighbors had clearly demonstrated that it was a destabilizing influence. Neither the Bush administration policy makers nor the senior military leadership were naïve; both recognized the need to weaken Iraq so that it could not seriously threaten its neighbors in the future. Brent Scowcroft recalled after the war that the administration had intended to destroy much of Iraq's economy and infrastructure without specifically intending to topple Saddam Hussein (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 197).

The problem had as much to do with President Bush's internal conflicts as with any flaw in the system. On the one hand, Bush was a prudent realist. He notes in his memoir that "neither the United States nor the countries of the region wished to see the breakup of the Iraqi state" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 489). On the other hand, he envisioned a brave new world of peace and international order enforced by the western alliance under US leadership. Dictators like Saddam Hussein had no place in the new world order, and Bush was genuinely distressed by the rape of Kuwait and the abuse of the Shia and Kurds in Iraq. His 1 March press conference sounded to the Iraqi opposition like a call to revolt, and he makes it clear in his memoir that he would have been happy to see Saddam toppled, although he does not address how that might have affected stability in the region.

Gordon and Trainor speculate that Bush and his advisers hoped that Saddam would be toppled and replaced by a less vile, more malleable military officer. They cite Schwarzkopf's political advisor, Gordon Brown, in claiming that CENTCOM insisted on

the rapid repatriation of prisoners so that they could spread the word of Saddam's defeat within Iraq (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 449-450). There is no other direct evidence to support their contention, but General Powell's willingness to accept an Iraqi puppet government in Kuwait at the outset of the crisis indicates that at least some policy makers were amenable to less than ideal rulers in the region as long as they were not openly aggressive. Brent Scowcroft writes that the US goal was to "reduce the Iraqi military as much as possible. . . . The trick here was to damage his offensive capability without weakening Iraq to the point that a vacuum was created, and destroying the balance between Iraq and Iran, further destabilizing the region for years" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 383-384). Bush faced the same choices the US had faced with the Shah of Iran, Ferdinand Marcos, Manuel Noriega, and dozens of others in the past, but unlike his predecessors, Bush could not excuse support or tolerance for dictators with the needs of the Cold War. That and his own apparently sincere dislike of such governments created a great deal of ambivalence in his strategic guidance and public statements.

Unfortunately, this area required particularly clear guidance to overcome the stark divide between senior officials at the Pentagon. On the military side, Powell wanted no war, and if there had to be a war he wanted it short and clear-cut. Once the stated goal was achieved, US forces should disengage and return home as fast as possible. That attitude, reflected by other military commanders, would have serious consequences at the truce negotiations. Senior civilian officials, however, had been thinking in terms of "regime collapse" as early as October (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 145).

President Bush also desired a clear end, but he saw it rather differently from Powell. In his diary for 25 February, Bush wrote, "It seems to me that we may get to a

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place where we have to choose between solidarity at the UN and ending this thing definitively. I am for the latter because our credibility is at stake. We don't want to have another draw, another Vietnam, a sloppy ending. . . . We are not going to permit a sloppy ending where this guy emerges saving face. We may take some hits for having our forces in Iraq to stop this; but far worse than that would be if we lost credibility in some silly compromise. I'm not going to do it" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 482-483). Where Powell saw limited and achievable goals guaranteeing a clean end, Bush apparently recognized that only flexibility could do so.

As he had in the initial NSC consultations, however, Bush failed to express his private feelings in front of his advisers. Less than forty-eight hours later, the president asked if it was time to end the war, and followed their advice that it was. In his own account, he does not indicate that he expressed his own misgivings. Certainly a great deal had changed in those two days, but Bush's diary entry for the following day, 28 February, indicates that he saw the situation much as he had three nights before and that he recognized that he had fallen into precisely the trap that he had identified. He wrote of the truce, "It hasn't been a clean end--there is no battleship *Missouri* surrender" and of Saddam Hussein, "He's got to go" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 485-487). He had seen the situation clearly, but something--his desire for consensus, his background in *real politik*, his fear of the uncertain--led him to weaken the resolve he had expressed three days earlier. In the end, he did let Saddam save face; he did not break the coalition to achieve a clean end.

Bush's internal conflict is apparent in his 1999 defense of his decision. He writes that "trying to eliminate Saddam, extending the ground war into an occupation of Iraq,

would have violated our guideline about not changing objectives in midstream, engaging in 'mission creep,' and would have incurred incalculable human and political costs. Apprehending him was probably impossible. We had been unable to find Noriega in Panama, which we knew intimately. We would have been forced to occupy Baghdad and, in effect, rule Iraq. . . . Under those circumstances, there was no viable 'exit strategy' we could see, violating another of our principles" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 489). The tragedy is that Bush's attempts to adhere conscientiously to "principles" and "guidelines" placed him in an impossible position. His guidelines were mutually exclusive because one required a decisive end to the campaign and another prohibited significant change to the goals. If the original goals would not achieve a decisive end, then one principle or the other would have to be broken. His "guidelines" assumed perfect planning and understanding.

It is unclear where these "principles" originated. Imprecise commentators have often paraphrased the Weinberger-Powell doctrine as rejecting mission creep and requiring a clear exit strategy. More careful readers will note that neither Weinberger's original version nor Powell's restatement requires any such thing. Indeed, both versions acknowledge that objectives will change during the course of a military commitment and instruct policy makers to recognize those changes and adapt the level of force to accommodate them. They also require clear objectives with full public and congressional support. A clear objective is not, however, an exit strategy. As noted earlier, the conduct of the war, as well as outside events, can and usually will alter the war's objectives. Bush's interpretation of the "principles" of civil-military relations essentially stands Clausewitz on his head: instead of political goals driving military action, the need for

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clear military guidance and the desire to disengage freeze the political goals at the beginning of the conflict.

This muddled thinking detached the strategic end from the military ways and means. The official goal of the operation did not require the death of a single Iraqi soldier so long as they withdrew from Kuwait. The US military, however, perceived a more difficult goal: "In briefing the American commanders in October, Schwarzkopf had left no ambiguity about the Army's mission. The Republican Guard were not to be routed, they were not to be made 'combat ineffective.' They were to be destroyed" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 429). The US military determined early on that the US goals and interests required the destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guard and the weakening of the Iraqi government and military, but not too much. President Bush along with some others in his administration felt a need to remove Saddam Hussein from power, but he was unwilling to commit US forces to that goal in the face of opposition from the military and the coalition.

Working from that ambiguous guidance, the military proceeded to commit a series of errors that made a successful campaign less likely. First, military planners allowed interservice battles to dictate operational plans. CENTCOM's planning cell did not include any Marine planners until November. At that point, the Marines were furious to learn that they and the British troops would be breaching the Iraqi defenses and then guarding lines of communication. They believed the Army planners had given them the most dangerous job and then hogged all of the glory for their own service. On 6 November, the Marine commander, Lt. Gen. Walter Boomer, objected and indicated that the Marines intended to attack to take Kuwait City. Incredibly, Schwarzkopf agreed and

let the Marines develop their own separate plan (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 159-162).

Later, that decision would have a major and perverse impact on the coalition's ability to

destroy the Iraqi military.

The Air Force and CENTCOM also had difficulty synchronizing their objectives.

Warden's *Instant Thunder* plan had focused on Iraqi centers of gravity *in Iraq*, but

Powell and Schwarzkopf had decided that the coalition needed to destroy Iraq's offensive

military capability--essentially the Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Despite orders to include

Republican Guard forces in the target lists, Air Force planners relegated them to a lower

priority (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 89).

The muddled guidance came home to roost on the last night of the ground war as

military leaders passed inaccurate information to civilian leaders eager for success. All

had agreed in theory that Iraqi forces in Kuwait should be destroyed if possible, but the

complex plan, based on numerous competing agendas, had never changed sufficiently to

achieve that goal. The Marines achieved unexpected success in the first day, pushing the

Iraqi forces to retreat north before the VII corps had even begun its attack in the west.

Consequently, the US main effort struck the tail of the Iraqi forces rather than encircling

and annihilating them.

On the afternoon of 27 February, Powell told President Bush that he had spoken

to Schwarzkopf, and that they had agreed the war aims would be achieved within twenty-

four hours and that there were three thousand destroyed tanks. The Bush team was

perceiving political pressure to end the war after press reports about the "highway of

death." Bush felt misgivings, but he agreed with Powell, based on the information he had

received, to end the war at 100 hours (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 415-416).

Flexibility and Reexamination

Unfortunately, the information was wrong. 1 March surveillance photos showed that one quarter of Iraq's tanks in the theater and half of its armored personnel carriers, 842 and 1,412 respectively, had escaped. At least 365 of the escaped tanks were Republican Guard T-72s, out of 786 with which they began the war. The Hammurabi division escaped largely intact (70% or more) because the Tawakalna and Medina divisions took the brunt of the fight. In addition to armor, the Iraqis had also salvaged crucial command and control capabilities. Only one of the senior officers captured during the war came from the Republican Guard (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 429).

In addition to the condition of Iraqi forces, conditions within Iraq would shortly present the opportunity to rethink the decision to end the war. Emboldened by the military's defeat and American rhetoric, Iraqi Shiites and Kurds began revolting against Baathist rule. Decisions made by the American commanders in the field, facilitated and guided from Washington, would play a major role in the outcome of those revolts.

The Escape of Iraqi Forces

The best Iraqi troops escaped because the Air Force and Marines were more successful than expected while the Army moved through the western desert too slowly to cut off the retreat. Early Marine success and the pounding of strategic targets inside Iraq had induced a rapid retreat. The relegation of Republican Guard armor to later phases meant that the air component was unready to shift enough resources onto the Republican Guard to destroy them before they reached sanctuary. Obscuration from oil fires and some technical mistakes by forces on the ground also contributed to the failure.

Additionally, the plans had envisioned destroying the Iraqi forces, so nobody had thought through the mechanics of a retreat. At the pentagon, planners had just completed a memo that outlined the strategy for reducing Iraqi military forces, but it was already too late to execute it (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 425). At 0255 on 28 February Schwarzkopf called Powell to tell him that Iraqi armored forces were streaming north over pontoon bridges and causeways and that there were no coalition forces in range to cut them off. The president's offer of a ceasefire had included a provision that Iraqi soldiers abandon their vehicles, but it was then too late to get the word out and Schwarzkopf did not want to be placed in the catch-22 of bombing retreating forces or allowing them to violate the terms. Powell had the provision removed, and the Iraqis were allowed to drive their armor out (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 426). The decision is extraordinary since it abandons an element of the cease-fire agreement designed to achieve one of the war's strategic goals. Also, Powell had no legal authority to make such a decision, though previous civilian deference gave him every reason to believe that his decision would be honored.

Even if the Bush administration had changed its mind at the last minute, General Schwarzkopf had already tied their hands. On the evening of 27 February, he took the stage at the Hyatt Regency in Riyadh to brief reporters. Schwarzkopf described the CENTCOM plan and its execution in glowing terms. He said that the coalition could go on to Baghdad but that they had no intention of doing so. He also stated incorrectly that the Iraqis were unable to take any significant armored forces out with them (*New York Times* 1991). If there had been any wavering on the administration's part, those two points effectively ended it. Schwarzkopf had told the American people and the world that

his forces had brilliantly executed a flawless plan to achieve all of the coalition's goals and that the Iraqi military would be left with little or no offensive capacity. Any change in objectives at that point would have required the president to repudiate his wildly popular field commander.

Paul Wolfowitz and others questioned Schwarzkopf's announcement that the allies would not go to Baghdad, noting that it would take the pressure off of Saddam Hussein, but the damage was done. The Iraqis could focus all of their efforts on salvaging their military capacities without any thought to defending themselves from further invasion. They had no incentive to make further concessions since they had already lost all that they were going to lose militarily. Military leaders in Riyadh questioned the decision to quit before the Republican Guard's escape routes were cut off. Schwarzkopf's deputy, General Calvin Waller responded to the announcement with, "you've got to be shitting me." Schwarzkopf explained the decision by saying, "one hundred hours has a nice ring." Waller was not convinced, but Schwarzkopf blamed the decision on "them," the leaders in Washington, even though he had not argued with it (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 422-423).

The Rebellions

In the days after the ceasefire, dissident elements in Iraq rose up against the Saddam regime and changed the conditions in the region. President Bush himself was suffering misgivings about the completeness of the victory and the future of Saddam Hussein's regime and had indicated at least some willingness to change the strategic ends. However, both the military in the theater and his own national security team in

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Washington had effectively eliminated the possibility of decisive military action by the time the rebellion came to light.

One unintended consequence of shutting down the Iraqi infrastructure was the elimination of government jamming of allied radio signals. Suddenly Iraqis could hear both allied propaganda and foreign commercial radio again (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 434). The president's encouragement of revolt in his press conferences and speeches fell on particularly receptive ears in the newly connected Iraq. Gordon and Trainor write: "The Shiites had a history of asserting themselves when they thought there was a weakening of central authority--sometimes with disastrous results to themselves. Throughout the 1970s, antigovernment demonstrations in the Shiite cities along the Euphrates were brutally put down Shiite clerics and their families were executed, and tens of thousands of Shiites were exiled to Iran" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 434).

US bombing of Iraq caused devastation in the Shiite regions. Prices soared, salaries stopped, and public utilities ceased to function. "It seemed as if Iraq had been propelled a hundred years back in time, the leaders of the Shiite rebellion later recalled" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 434). This, of course, was precisely the effect the US had intended according to Brent Scowcroft, but the effect was envisioned for purely operational reasons. Scowcroft described the toppling of the regime as possible "gravy," but nobody seems to have examined what destroying the infrastructure would do to Iraqi society and what effect that would have on US interests after the war.

The devastation and the long list of grievances with Saddam's government created the context in which Iraqi Shiites and Kurds heard President Bush's words. In his press conference on 1 March, he had stated that "the Iraqi people should put [Saddam]

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aside, and that would facilitate the resolution of all these problems" (US President 1991a). Now, on the sixth, he stated, "This I promise you: For all that Saddam has done to his own people, to the Kuwaitis, and to the entire world, Saddam and those around him are accountable" (US President 1991c). By then, the Kurds and Shiites were already in revolt, and Iraqi forces were already putting down that revolt while American troops watched.

The changing situation should have triggered a serious reexamination of the strategic ends, ways, and means, but the administration and military leaders had tied their own hands in ways that made a change in policy very difficult. In order to hold the international coalition together, the Bush administration had clearly limited the public goals to evicting the Iraqis from Kuwait and weakening Iraqi offensive military power. After more than a decade focused on the threat from Iran, political realists like Brent Scowcroft were unwilling to see Iraq disintegrate leaving no counterbalance.

The military was eager to pull its forces out of the Gulf region. A quick withdrawal after a stunning battlefield victory would validate the Weinberger-Powell doctrine and set the precedent for the "proper" use of the military in the future. At the Safwan ceasefire negotiations, General Schwarzkopf had promised the Iraqis that "there will not be one single coalition force member in the recognized borders of Iraq, as soon as, as rapidly as we can get them out" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 447). President Bush, eager to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" supported the military's desire to leave quickly. He could also derive political benefit from it. In his 6 March speech, he noted that the first planeload of soldiers would be homeward bound within hours, thereby reinforcing the image of decisive victory (US President 1991c).

Military options for toppling Saddam were available, but civilian leaders in Washington never saw them. ARCENT's staff began compiling a plan entitled "The Road to Baghdad" so that the civilian negotiators could have options and leverage. The plan would, "increase US/Western influence in SWA/Middle East through long-term military presence in the region" (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 452) and leave Iraq with just enough military capability to defend itself against its neighbors while destroying Saddam's forces once and for all. Army planners believed that the mission could be accomplished by two divisions and an armored cavalry regiment racing to and isolating Baghdad so that special operations forces could enter the city and aid a domestic uprising against the regime. Lieutenant General John Yeosock, the ARCENT commander, was aghast when he saw the plan and ordered his staff to cease working on it (Gordon and Trainor 1995, 452).

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the Bush administration was simply unwilling to face any of its choices with regard to the Saddam Hussein regime. It was not willing to apply force to topple him directly because the military and the president wanted de Tocqueville's "sudden effort of remarkable vigor" to restore the US military's prestige. The State Department, conditioned to fear uncertainty, was not willing to aid the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings and risk an unpredictable outcome. Political realists in the administration feared that Saddam might continue to upset the balance of power in the region, and the president's Saddam-as-Hitler language had made it politically unwise to simply withdraw and allow Iraq to revert to the *status quo*. Ironically, this left only the political outcome that nobody wanted--the continued regime of Saddam Hussein contained by an open-

ended and indecisive US and allied military presence in an inhospitable, distant part of the world.

Operation Desert Fox

On 3 April 1991, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 687, which enumerated the steps Iraq must take to reassure the world of its "peaceful intentions in light of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait" (United Nations Security Council 1991b, 11). Unlike the 1990 resolutions, which focused entirely on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, this resolution sought to limit Iraq's ability to threaten its neighbors in the future. In particular, it required Iraq to dispose of all nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and any programs to produce such weapons, and to allow intrusive UN inspections to ensure compliance. Madeline Albright notes in her memoir that, "At the conclusion of the Gulf War, the UN had been given the job of doing something never before done--disarming a country without militarily occupying it" (Albright 2003, 274). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN charter, the requirements are legal, but the timing of the resolution was unfortunate. The Security Council had decided to change the strategic goals of the war after the ceasefire and after the military capability to accomplish the new goals had evaporated.

The Clinton administration viewed Iraq as a problem dumped in their laps by the failure of the previous administration. Madeline Albright writes, "Of all the headaches inherited by the Clinton administration, Saddam Hussein was the most persistent. We would spend eight full years grappling with issues left unresolved at the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War" (Albright 2003, 272). Over those years, a series of confrontations ensued as Iraq attempted to end the UN inspections without fully complying. These

confrontations reached a peak in the fall of 1998 as Saddam Hussein ejected the

American members of the UN teams, refused access to "presidential sites" and sought to

divide the members of the Security Council. After several episodes of brinksmanship, the

US and Britain finally launched Operation Desert Fox on 16 December.

<div align="center">Legality</div>

As the bombers and missiles attacked Iraq, President Clinton addressed the nation

from the Oval Office. His justification for the attack makes heavy use of UN resolutions,

pointing out Iraq's repeated non-compliance with them and statements by both members

of the Security Council and Arab nations warning Iraq of severe consequences. At one

point, he does invoke the term "clear and present danger," but he applies it to the

"stability of the Persian Gulf and the safety of people everywhere" rather than

specifically to the United States. In short, Clinton frames the justification in terms of the

US acting as the executive agents of the Security Council rather than the direct defense of

the US (Clinton 1999).

In his September, 1999 *Military Law Review* article, Sean Condron examines the

legality of Desert Fox under international law. Condron rejects the use of preemptive

strikes or "anticipatory self-defense" because the threat from Iraq was clearly not

"imminent" (Condron 1999, 150). Curiously, he finds that the US might have been

justified under the "right of reprisal," but that analysis rests on the UN's failure to take

steps beyond condemnation against countries that practiced reprisals--a shaky foundation

(Condron 1999, 151-164). Finally, he determines that the US actions were legal under the

concept of "material breach." Because UNSCR 687 stated that the previous resolutions

regarding the invasion of Kuwait remained in effect, Condron interprets the "all

necessary means" language of UNSCR 678 to remain in effect as well. This finding is also subject to debate on two points. First, only Britain and the US were willing to apply military force in support of 687 at that time. The other members of the Security Council were not. It is difficult to rest on the authority of the Security Council when that body is manifestly unwilling to act. Second, the Security Council had found Iraq in "material breach" previously without taking action (Condron 1999, 171-172). Since Condron interprets other instances of Security Council inaction as precedent-setting endorsements, it is difficult to ignore this one.

President Clinton was also acting in a different domestic legal environment than his predecessor. On 31 October, he had signed into law the *Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*. In May of that year, Congress had passed and the president had signed a law making $5,000,000 available to the Iraqi democratic opposition movement. In August, the Congress and the president had declared Iraq in "material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations" in a law that urged the president "to take appropriate action, in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws of the United States, to bring Iraq into compliance." Now, the *Iraq Liberation Act* officially declared that "it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime" (*Iraq Liberation Act* 1998).

The clear guidance provided by the act did not prevent questions about the purposes of the attack, coming as it did in the midst of the president's impeachment crisis. The *Washington Post* reported that,

At every public briefing yesterday [16 December], administration officials were questioned about the timing of the attack. . . . [Secretary of Defense, William] Cohen and Joint Chiefs Chairman Henry H. Shelton found themselves under inquisition at a meeting last night with House members. Majority Whip Tom DeLay. (R-Tex.) rose from his seat behind a table near the front of the House chamber and asked Cohen about the timing of the strikes. 'Is there any reason why we shouldn't go ahead' with impeachment, DeLay asked, according to several lawmakers (Harris 1998).

Despite the accusations that the administration mounted the attacks to distract the public from its domestic problems, and the status of the attacks within international law, the status within US law is clear. As long as the attacks were aimed at the removal of Saddam Hussein or at inducing compliance with UN resolutions, they were explicitly authorized by the Congress.

Clarity

Unlike Desert Storm, there is no comprehensive open source record of conversations within the US administration regarding Operation Desert Fox. Members of the Clinton administration have only recently begun to publish memoirs, and the four day attack does not stand out, particularly as it took place in the midst of the impeachment crisis. Madeleine Albright barely mentions it, and Hillary Clinton does not mention it at all.

There are however, some clues as to the administration's position. The operative national security strategy was published in October, 1998, in the midst of the crisis. Consequently, it addresses the situation directly rather than stating general principles. It notes, "A number of states still have the capabilities and the desire to threaten our vital interests through coercion or aggression. They continue to threaten the sovereignty of their neighbors and international access to resources. In many cases, these states are also actively improving their offensive capabilities, including efforts to obtain or retain

nuclear, biological or chemical weapons and, in some cases, long-range delivery systems. In Southwest Asia, both Iraq and Iran have the potential to threaten their neighbors and the free flow of oil from the region" (US President 1998, 6). It goes on to say, "Our policy is directed not against the people of Iraq but against the aggressive behavior of the government. Until that behavior changes, our goal is containing the threat Saddam Hussein poses to Iraq's neighbors, the free flow of Gulf oil and broader US interests in the Middle East" (US President 1998, 52).

The NSS also demonstrates some of the general inclinations of the administration that would prove so limiting in applying force to Iraq. The document only mentions the unilateral use of force in defense of "vital interests." In the case of important interests, it states that "we will use our resources to advance these interests insofar as the costs and risks are commensurate with the interests at stake." In the case of "humanitarian interests," it directs the use of diplomacy and the force of example (US President 1998, 5-6). The strategy does designate stability in the Gulf as a vital interest, but the rest of the document indicates an approach to force that will not lead to decisive military action.

Instead of victory, the Clinton NSS seeks engagement and progress. The view of military force is fundamentally different from that envisioned in the Weinberger-Powell doctrine. As Clinton sees it, "Deterrence of aggression and coercion on a daily basis is crucial. Our ability to deter potential adversaries in peacetime rests on several factors, particularly on our demonstrated will and ability to uphold our security commitments when they are challenged. We have earned this reputation through both our declaratory policy, which clearly communicates costs to potential adversaries, and our credible

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warfighting capability" (US President 1998, 12). The limitation of this approach becomes

clear in retrospect when examining the use of military force prior to October:

> The reinforcement of US forces in the Gulf from Fall 1997 to Spring 1998 clearly
> illustrates the importance of military power in achieving US national security
> objectives and stabilizing a potentially volatile situation. The US buildup made it
> clear to Saddam Hussein that he must comply with UN sanctions and cease
> hindering UNSCOM inspections or face dire consequences. It also denied him the
> option of moving to threaten his neighbors, as he had done in past confrontations
> with the international community. Saddam's agreement to open the so-called
> "presidential sites" to UN inspection was a significant step toward ensuring that
> Iraq's WMD have been eradicated. It would not have been achieved without
> American diplomacy backed by force. Our decision [*sic*] maintain a higher
> continuous force level in the Gulf than we had before this most recent confrontation
> with Iraq will help deter Saddam from making further provocations and strengthen
> the resolve of our coalition partners in the Gulf. (US President 1998, 12-13)

Unfortunately, the "higher continuous force level" was an obvious bluff. The

threat of force did not deter Saddam from further provocations. Within two months US

forces would be bombing key sites to resend this same message. By then, the message of

diplomacy and engagement was stronger than the message of limited military force, and

Saddam would not allow the weapons inspectors back into Iraq until faced with a far

more dangerous military threat in 2002.

<div align="center">Flexibility and Reexamination</div>

In seeking the overthrow of the Saddam regime, the US had adopted a long-term

approach without a long-term mind-set or inclination. Both Bush and Clinton had chosen

containment and harassment as their policy toward Iraq ever since President Bush

decided not to pursue the war beyond the liberation of Kuwait. Since that time, President

Clinton, with congressional support, had rhetorically expanded the war into a personal

vendetta against Saddam Hussein, but he had never altered US strategy to match the

evolving strategic goals.

Sometimes, the officials of the administration demonstrated that they understood this, such as National Security Adviser Sandy Berger's statement that "this should not be seen as an overnight enterprise or a quick fix, but as a long-term effort to de-legitimize that regime and bring about change" (Cordesman 1999, 12). State Department spokesman James Rubin responded to an enquiry as to how the administration planned to bring about a post-Saddam regime by saying "we're not promising to bring it about. What we're saying is we're going to intensify our work. Right now, we're focused on providing political support for the opposition and Congress has given us the authority and funding to arm the opposition. We don't want any ill-prepared efforts to lead to a tragic or unnecessary loss of life. So what we're going to try to do is engage more deeply with opposition groups, work with the Congress on some of the ideas that they've had and try to step up our activity with them" (Cordesman 1999, 12).

At other times, they spoke as if they thought resolution was right around the corner. Anthony Cordesman quotes US Defense Secretary William Cohen: "I think everyone understands that this is the last go-round as far as Saddam is concerned. I think he has had more than sufficient warning. I don't believe any additional warning is required" (Cordesman 1999, 12-13). In fact it was the "last go-round" for a while, but not because Saddam was on the brink of collapse. Instead, the US had chosen a tough approach that was not tough enough. Not only was the Clinton administration unwilling to escalate the use of force beyond the initial attack, but it had telegraphed that unwillingness clearly.

For one thing, the US government was clearly still ambivalent about Saddam's future, despite the tough rhetoric. In October, CENTCOM Commander, General Anthony

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Zinni, had publicly stated that "we have to be careful what we are doing. . . . It should not be a case where the end result is just get rid of Saddam. It has to be done in such a way that the sovereignty and integrity of Iraq remains and that what follows Saddam is a decent government. . . . A weakened, fragmented Iraq is more dangerous in the long run than a 'contained' Saddam, as he is now" (Cordesman 1999, 12). US concerns about the disintegration of Iraq made it difficult to seriously pursue any anti-Saddam policy.

The administration further telegraphed the limitations of the attack after it began. President Clinton announced in his address to the nation on the first night that the strikes were timed to avoid the beginning of Ramadan, only a few days away (Clinton 1999, 163). The military had part of an Army maneuver brigade deployed to Kuwait and deployed about 1,500 additional troops during the period of the crisis (Cordesman 1999, 13), but rather than posing a threat, such a small deployment reinforced the message that the air strikes would not be followed with any further offensive military action.

The choice of "surgical" air strikes was completely ineffective as a threat to induce reformed Iraqi behavior. There was no hope that the particular force applied would achieve the desired end state, and unlike the long buildup of 1990, there was no time to reassess ends, ways, or means. By effectively placing a time limitation on the operation at the outset, the administration denied itself the opportunity to assess early results and adjust the use of force accordingly.

The actual end state was the opposite of that intended. The Iraqis continued to bar the inspectors, and the loss of the inspectors proved crippling to any attempt to monitor Iraqi WMD programs. Anthony Cordesman wrote in 1999,

Senior Clinton administration officials say that the strikes will probably leave the

US with little ability to closely monitor Iraq's capability to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and that the attack will almost certainly mean the end of the 7-year-old UN weapons inspection program in Iraq, and will force the US to maintain a large military presence in the Gulf region for at least several more years. While senior US officials state that the air strikes will degrade Iraq's programs to make poison gas and nuclear weapons, they acknowledge that the weapons programs would continue and perhaps accelerate after the attacks end. (Cordesman 1999, 32)

The critical seeds of the 2003 Iraq invasion were present in that statement.

First, the US intelligence capability in Iraq was quite weak. In the wake of the 2003 invasion and the failure to find WMD, Kenneth Pollack wrote, "UNSCOM had a large and highly capable cadre of weapons specialists who focused exclusively on Iraq. Many Western intelligence agencies, faced with other issues that demanded their resources, increasingly relied on UNSCOM's data and assessments and did little to bolster their own (meager) capabilities in Iraq. . . . The end of the inspections eliminated the single best means of vetting what information intelligence agencies could gather independently about Iraq" (Pollack 2004). Second, most people assumed that the Iraqis would continue to pursue their WMD programs, and the withdrawal of the UN inspectors left western decision makers with no means to check their own badly informed intelligence analysts.

Operation Desert Fox brought the Iraqi standoff to a head without applying anything approaching decisive force. Its brevity and the avowed intent to send messages left policy makers with no time to analyze results and address shortfalls. The Clinton Administration committed itself to a finite course of action and left no leeway to adjust its strategy if it failed to achieve the desired ends.

Conclusion

Decisively engaged with his own impeachment, it is not clear that President

Clinton had the political capital to spend on a showdown with Iraq in December 1998,

but in that case it might have been better to drag the crisis out to a more propitious

moment. The 1998 NSS mentions in several places the need for sustained support from

the American people and from Congress, but at that moment, President Clinton could not

count on either. The House of Representatives was overwhelmingly controlled by the

other party, and in particular by individuals who had expressed vitriolic dislike of

President Clinton. Although the House leaders had voted for the *Iraq Liberation Act*, and

although many of them would subsequently strongly support the invasion of Iraq in 2003,

they were unlikely to forego the opportunity to weaken President Clinton.

The attacks were clearly legal, and they appeared to reinforce the policy of

international cooperation that the Clinton administration had adopted from the Bush

administration and subsequently reinforced. President Clinton's justifications centered on

threats to international security and the enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions.

Unfortunately, the attacks were unlikely to achieve their stated strategic goals,

and the president's limitations on military operations left little opportunity for those

operations to evolve. The president's stated reasons for the attacks were inconsistent with

the nature of the attacks, and it is clear that most people realized this at the time.

Madeline Albright writes:

> All of a sudden we had the public's attention. People were worried about
> Saddam's weapons and asking what we were going to do. The problem was, we
> didn't have a fully satisfactory answer. We were threatening to use US airpower
> to attack military targets, but air strikes, no matter how punishing, would not
> guarantee the return of inspectors to Iraq nor permanently destroy Baghdad's

capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction. No serious consideration was given to actually invading Iraq. The senior President Bush had not invaded when given the chance with hundreds of thousands of troops already in the region during the Gulf War. If President Clinton had proposed doing so in 1998, he would have been accused of being reckless and opposed by friends in the Gulf, our allies, most senior officers in our own military, and leading Republicans. (Albright 2003, 276-277)

Barely able to maintain political support for strictly limited operations, it is highly unlikely that President Clinton could have obtained congressional support for any military plan with a chance of actually coercing the Iraqis into compliance. The alternative was to forego enforcement of the UN resolutions, and thereby announce that the US was essentially paralyzed by domestic political problems--an unattractive strategy both internationally and domestically. By opting for limited strikes, Clinton telegraphed to the world--and to the US public--that the US could continue to operate in the midst of impeachment. Operation Desert Fox may, therefore, have contributed to the ongoing containment of Iraq, but it utterly failed to achieve its official goals.

The attacks also marked a turning point in US attempts to keep Saddam "in his box." The US stepped up enforcement of the no-fly zones, hit back at the slightest provocation, changed the sanctions to hurt the regime more and the people less, encouraged opposition groups, and officially adopted regime change as US policy (Albright 2003, 286). However, the Clinton administration did not adopt regime change as a true strategic goal, but as a tool of containment. Albright states that she supports President Bush's goal of removing Saddam Hussein, but the Clinton administration was not willing to commit political capital to that goal. The military program the administration adopted seems to have envisioned for the Saddam regime a "death of a thousand cuts," but there was no military campaign plan worthy of the name. Desert Fox

was simply a show of force. Furthermore, it is not clear how the "death of a thousand cuts" was consistent with the oft-stated US goal of keeping Iraq intact, or how its creators hoped to avoid replacing Saddam with someone worse. Regime change is only meaningful if you have some idea what you want to change it into.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> The thing about the Vietnam War that troubles me as I look back was it was a political war. We had politicians making military decisions, and it is lessons that any president must learn, and that is to the set the goal and the objective and allow the military to come up with the plans to achieve that objective. And those are essential lessons to be learned from the Vietnam War.
>
> President George W. Bush, *Meet the Press*, 8 February 2004

> And, Tim, as you can tell, I've got a foreign policy that is one that believes America has a responsibility in this world to lead, a responsibility to lead in the war against terror, a responsibility to speak clearly about the threats that we all face, a responsibility to promote freedom, to free people from the clutches of barbaric people such as Saddam Hussein who tortured, mutilated there were mass graves that we have found a responsibility to fight AIDS, the pandemic of AIDS, and to feed the hungry. We have a responsibility. To me that is history's call to America. I accept the call and will continue to lead in that direction
>
> President George W. Bush, *Meet the Press*, 8 February 2004

Eliot Cohen has written that the problem with civil-military relations is not too much civilian interference, but often too little. The conception of civil-military interaction that Cohen calls the "normal" school is alive and well in the United States. The conventional wisdom about Vietnam--that Lyndon Johnson selected targets from the White House and tied the military's hands, that the press undermined support for the war when the military was winning in the field--has served to reinforce the conception that presidents and their civilian advisers should set a clear goal and then let the military go achieve it. If Clausewitz was correct in asserting that war is politics by other means, then this position does not allow for adequate flexibility to achieve policy objectives through military action.

In the cases examined here, the political system has worked largely as the founders envisioned. Presidents have not been unwilling to embark on military adventures without congressional support; they have been unable to do so. President Bush recognized this clearly and conducted a skillful political campaign to obtain congressional support for the war he felt was necessary. He may have claimed that he did not need such support, but he proved by his actions that he did. President Clinton, with extremely limited support, contained his military actions well within the War Powers Act. That may have created an irrational strategy with no linkage between ways, means, and ends, but it avoided a constitutional crisis at a time when the nation could not afford one and left the door open for future operations to achieve the desired ends.

The normal school failed, however, in the provision of strategic guidance and the reexamination of guidance because it fails to recognize the realities of politics. President Bush's attempts to "kick the Vietnam Syndrome" and conform to the normal school's ideal caused him to stick with strategic guidance after he had ceased to believe in it. Furthermore, the national security bureaucracy reinforced that trend rather than facilitating presidential flexibility, as when Brent Scowcroft began sending handlers with the president to restrain his rhetoric about Saddam Hussein.

The normal school also makes it difficult to reexamine strategic guidance in light of subsequent events, even though politics is dynamic. Military operations designed to achieve a particular outcome will affect the conditions for future operations and may even affect the desirability of the outcome. In 1991, the apparent success of the military operations had the perverse effect of limiting enthusiasm in Washington for continuing the war. By the final night, Bush's gang of eight was ostensibly still using destruction of

the Republican Guard as their measure of success while simultaneously fretting over the "highway of death" and looking for an excuse to end the war.

The military's adoption of the "normal" school led General Schwarzkopf to focus on disengaging his forces when he met with the Iraqi generals to formulate the ceasefire. The failure of Washington to look beyond the clearly-defined strategic goal left the commander on the ground with no guidance and no incentive to think through the problem himself. Ultimately, the tendency to look at military operations sequentially and the desire to clearly define tasks place blinders on the executors of policy.

If military operations are to achieve political ends, then those most knowledgeable and experienced in politics must have an active and continuing role in designing and guiding those operations. It is unlikely that a general in the midst of a war will be able to keep one eye on the international and domestic political situations and dynamically adjust his operations and tactics to adapt to those situations. Only civilian leaders can provide that input. In order to function in a complex political world, military leaders must overcome their objections to "civilian interference" and actively seek ongoing political guidance. Until the military officially adopts such an approach, civilian politicians will remain fearful of political backlash in the event of failure. No president will want a retired general writing that he lost the war because the president tied his hands. Only by embracing the political nature of war and the dynamic nature of politics can military leaders free civilian leaders to provide adequate guidance.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Further Research</div>

This study only covers a very short, though critical, period. During that same time, the United States and its allies conducted two major and apparently successful

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peacekeeping operations in the Balkans as well as an unsuccessful mission in Somalia and an ambiguous mission in Haiti. Since the change in administrations and the terrorist attacks of 2001, the American approach to strategy has changed dramatically. Were the trends identified in this study present in the Balkan, Somalia, and Haiti operations, and have they continued through the Global War on Terror?

At first glance, it appears that the Balkan peacekeeping mission proceeded fluidly and with minimal rancor after the initial months. The goals were startlingly ambitious, and the United States has maintained a steady commitment and troop presence in the region for nearly ten years. However, a closer inspection raises questions about the forthrightness of the Clinton administration in committing the US to these missions. Public deception as to the goals and cost may be the price for successful intervention. If so, such interventions fail the test established in chapter three for legitimate strategic goals in a democracy.

The debate over postwar planning for Iraq also raises a potential benefit of more dynamic and flexible civilian guidance. Did the desire for clear, definable end states lead the Defense Department to shortchange post conflict planning for Iraq? If so, would ongoing civilian involvement have provided better guidance? The Department of Defense has complained that the press did not report improvements in Iraq between May 2003 and March 2004, and that press coverage therefore created an impression of failure. If post-conflict planning had established clear goals for the military beyond the fall of the Saddam government, would those goals have created measurable milestones and facilitated the articulation of that good news story in a meaningful way?

At the beginning of this chapter are two quotations from President George W. Bush's interview with Tim Russert in February 2004. In the first, he clearly identifies himself as an adherent of Cohen's "normal" school of civil-military relations. In the second, he articulates a broad and ambitious vision of the US role in the world. That vision cannot be achieved without the active participation of the US military. Only the military has the people, the equipment, and the global reach to facilitate those goals. However, the military has no experience with or deep understanding of several of the problems included in the president's list. Only continuous revision of political guidance can facilitate successful military operations to achieve complex, ambiguous, and shifting goals. One aspect of the "Vietnam syndrome" is blind acceptance of the "normal" school of civil-military relations, and only by truly "kicking it" can the US fulfill President Bush's ambitious vision of our global role.

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