

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: THE POWELL DOCTRINE

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Military History

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ABSTRACT

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: THE POWELL DOCTRINE, by MAJ James E. Armstrong III, 147 pages.

This paper will describe the significant events and experiences that shaped the Powell Doctrine and affected the manner in which General Colin Powell applied those principles during his tenure as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) from October 1989 until September 1993. The Weinberger Doctrine and Powell's experience in Vietnam are frequently cited as catalysts for the Powell Doctrine. Although Vietnam served as an important driving force for Powell, the formulation and application of Powell's doctrine was greater than the so-called Vietnam Syndrome. Powell's understanding of military thinkers, his experience with various styles of Presidential leadership, and the responsibility of a new role as the first full tenure Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with Goldwater-Nichols authority influenced Powell's translation of theory and experience into policy manifested by his application of the Powell Doctrine. Study of the aspects that contributed to the formulation of Powell's doctrine coupled with an examination of Powell's application of his doctrine during his tenure as CJCS demonstrates the change that occurred in translation of an idea into action that characterizes the difference between theory, doctrine, and practice.

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ACRONYMS

CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
MNF	Multi-National Force
NSC	National Security Council
UNOSOM	United Nations Operations in Somalia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The world has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. The security environment offers a unique combination of challenges. As Secretary Gates said, “Unfortunately, the dangers and challenges of old have been joined by new forces of instability and conflict.”¹ The clear distinction between friend and enemy, state actors and non-state actors has blurred. The emerging security environment has created a lack of clarity and turned the difficult into the complex. Although the environment has changed, the leadership of the United States has always been required to carefully consider if, when, and how to use military force to influence the security environment. The decision to use military force as an element of national power has always been important, difficult, and debated. The threat, the public, the media, and the civilian-military relationship are all elements that contribute to the decision to conduct military intervention.² Throughout time, military and political figures advocated certain principles, or doctrine, to facilitate successful military intervention and avoid repeating previous failures.³ The Powell

¹Robert M. Gates, Landon Lecture Series (Speech, Kansas State, Manhattan, Kansas, 26 November 2007), <http://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/landonlect/gatetext1107.html> (accessed 23 October 2010).

²Richard N. Haas, *Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 9-13. The debate with regard to intervention is an old argument. Many viewpoints about intervention, articulated by those from the United States, originate from Christian just war theory. Richard Haas offered a brief historical review of intervention in his book, *Intervention*.

³*Ibid.*, 14-18. Some of the more recent military and political figures to offer their opinions on military intervention are: former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, former Senator Gary Hart (D-Colorado), former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and

Doctrine was one of the most pervasive set of principles in the contemporary era to shape current views of military intervention in the United States.

The Context of the Problem

Future presidential administrations, and those who serve them, will continue to introduce different doctrines for military intervention. Their principles will certainly be compared to Powell's doctrine.⁴ Every doctrine has some link to theory and history. An important part of building a relevant and comprehensive foreign policy is to develop principles, use the knowledge gained from the past, and compare these ideas to previous methods with a historical understanding. Before any further comparisons are made to the Powell Doctrine, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of its creation, application, and the relationship between its creation and application. This study describes how the significant events and experiences, beyond Vietnam, that shaped the

Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and each of the Presidents the aforementioned served.

⁴Admiral Mike Mullen, current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke about his views for the proper use of modern military forces on 3 March 2010. News outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Foreign Policy* published stories shortly after Mullen's speech that compared his ideas to the Powell Doctrine. Mike Mullen, Landon Lecture Series (Speech, Kansas State, Manhattan, Kansas, 3 March 2010), <http://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/landonlect/mullentext310.html> (accessed 23 October 2010); Robert Haddick, "This Week at War: The Long Death of the Powell Doctrine, Foreign Policy" *Foreign Policy* (2010), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/03/05/this_week_at_war_the_powell_doctrine_is_dead (accessed 23 October 2010); Thom Shanker, "Joint Chiefs Chairman Readjusts Principles on Use of Force" *The New York Times*, 3 March 2010 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/04/us/04mullen.html> (accessed 23 October 2010); Greg Jaffe, "Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen outlines a more restrained art of war," *The Washington Post*, 5 March 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/04/AR2010030405039.html> (accessed 23 October 2010).

Powell Doctrine affected the manner in which General Colin Powell applied those principles during his tenure as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) from October 1989 until September 1993.⁵

The background in this study provides an examination of the Powell Doctrine's predecessor, the Weinberger Doctrine, and a definition of the Powell Doctrine in order to establish a common understanding for the study of its creation and application.

Subsequently, the author offers a study of various perspectives of Powell and his doctrine. The study reveals three major factors that contributed to the Powell Doctrine's creation and influenced its application during his chairmanship. This chapter concludes with a synopsis of intervention strategies from President Harry Truman to President Ronald Reagan in order to provide the reader the historical context in which Powell developed.

Following the introduction, the author uses a chapter to analyze each of the three major factors which contributed to Powell's creation of his doctrine. Within each chapter the author examines the components in Powell's experience that underpin each of these major factors and investigates its influence on Powell and his doctrine. In the conclusions of each chapter, the author analyzes the influence that each major factor had on Powell's application of his doctrine from October 1989 through September 1993. This analysis demonstrates how the factors that contributed to the Powell Doctrine beyond Vietnam and exposes their effect on Powell as illustrated by his application of his doctrine.

⁵The author will refer to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff duty position as chairman or CJCS throughout this paper.

Finally, the concluding chapter describes the change that occurred between the theories Powell believed in and the doctrine Powell put into practice. This study reveals the extraordinary convergence of global events that occurred as Powell emerged at the strategic level of leadership and rose to serve at the highest ranks of the United States military. The author uses this study to provide a deeper understanding of this important element of U.S. foreign policy within its historical context. This paper closes with suggestions for the next step of analysis and study.

The Weinberger and Powell Doctrines Defined

As the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Powell traveled with Secretary Caspar Weinberger to hear him give a speech at the National Press Club on 28 November 1984. According to Weinberger, “In that speech, I proposed six ‘tests’ governing my definition of a situation requiring us to commit our forces to combat.”⁶ These tests are known as the Weinberger Doctrine.⁷ Weinberger outlined these six criteria again in the Spring 1986 edition of *Foreign Affairs*:

1. The United States should not commit forces to combat unless our vital interests are at stake. Our interests include vital interests of our allies.
2. Should the United States decide it is necessary to commit its forces to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers and with sufficient support to win. If we are unwilling to commit the forces and resources necessary to achieve our objectives, or if the objective is not important enough so that we must achieve it, we must not commit our forces.

⁶Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace* (New York: Warner Books Inc., 1990), 402.

⁷Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: The Random House Ballantine Publishing Group, 1995), 303.

3. If we decide to commit forces to combat, we must have clearly defined political objectives. Unless we know precisely what we intend to achieve by fighting, and how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives, we cannot formulate or determine the size of forces properly, and therefore we should not commit our forces at all.

4. The relationship between our objectives and the size, composition and disposition of our forces must be continually reassessed and adjusted as necessary. In the course of a conflict, conditions and objectives inevitably change. When they do, so must our combat requirements.

5. Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, the U.S. government should have some reasonable assurance of the support of the American people and their elected representatives in the Congress . . .

6. The commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort—only after diplomatic, political, economic and other efforts have been made to protect our vital interests. [number format added by the author]⁸

Weinberger devised these tests after the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut in 1983.⁹ The Beirut barracks bombing made a deep impact on Weinberger and Powell who later wrote, “We must not . . . send military forces into a crisis with an unclear mission . . . such as we did when we sent the U.S. Marines into Lebanon.”¹⁰

⁸The reader can refer to Appendix B for reference to the Weinberger Doctrine throughout this paper. The Weinberger Doctrine has also been examined by many military professionals. There are various scholarly works examining the Weinberger Doctrine in detail, posing the question of its relevance, and contrasting it with the more interventionist views of Tony Lake and George Shultz. These include seven papers by the *Strategic Studies Institute* compiled into one work entitled “The Recourse to War: An Appraisal of the Weinberger Doctrine.” Caspar W. Weinberger, “U.S. Defense Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* 64, no. 4 (Spring 1986): 686-687.

⁹Caspar W. Weinberger, *In The Arena* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2001), 76-77. Having served as a Marine in World War II, Weinberger had a special connection to those killed in Beirut. Weinberger described his service as a Marine and what it meant to him as Secretary of Defense in chapter four of his book, *In The Arena*. A more detailed description of Lebanon and its affect on Weinberger and Powell occurs in chapter 3 of this paper.

¹⁰Colin L. Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” *Foreign Affairs* 71 (Winter 1992/1993): 39.

In his memoirs Powell recalled that Weinberger's doctrine became his practical guide.¹¹ The Weinberger and Powell Doctrine are often referred to in the same breath and separated with only a hyphen in writing.¹² In a speech to the Command and General Staff College twenty-four years after Weinberger articulated his tests, Powell acknowledged the Weinberger Doctrine, but emphasized, "If you really want to know where the Powell Doctrine came from, go to Leavenworth and ask them to give you a class on the principles of war. And the Powell Doctrine is essentially two principles of war: the principles of the objective and mass, simple as that."¹³ Despite these comments, the similarities between the Weinberger and Powell Doctrine are undeniable.

Journalist Jeffrey Smith first used the term Powell Doctrine to describe Powell's method of conducting his duties as the principal military advisor for the President.¹⁴ Powell first articulated the elements of the Powell Doctrine in the winter 1992 edition of *Foreign Affairs*. In this article, Powell outlined his view of the future security environment, the U.S. military's role in that future, and the six questions to assess the circumstances for armed intervention that are known as the Powell Doctrine:

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Some of these works include "U.S. Interventions Abroad: A Renaissance of the Powell Doctrine" by Alexander Wolf, "Back to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine" by Jeffrey Record in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, as well as many post graduate works by military professionals such as Earl Abonadi who wrote "Weinberger-Powell and Transformation" in 2006 while at the Naval Post Graduate School.

¹³Powell's reference to his doctrine as principles of war carries its own implications and is addressed later in this paper. Colin Powell, Inaugural address at Colin Powell Lecture Series (Speech, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 28 April 2008).

¹⁴Ibid.

1. Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood?
2. Have all other nonviolent policy means failed?
3. Will military force achieve the objective?
4. At what cost?
5. Have the gains and risks been analyzed?
6. How might the situation that we seek to alter, once it is altered by force, develop further and what might be the consequences? [number format added by the author]¹⁵

The author will use these questions as the definition of the Powell Doctrine for three reasons. First, the analysis that follows in this paper will demonstrate that Powell used these questions as a doctrine.¹⁶ In his 1992 *Foreign Affairs* article Powell did argue, “There is, however, no fixed set of rules for the use of military force. To set one up is dangerous.”¹⁷ However, he then wrote, in the same article, about the application of these questions and the corresponding failure or success based on specific answers.¹⁸

Second, this study is limited to the conclusion of Powell’s tenure as CJCS in September 1993. The list in his 1992 *Foreign Affairs* article is his most detailed explanation on the use of force articulated within the scope of this study. Although this

¹⁵The reader can refer to Appendix A for reference to the Powell Doctrine throughout this paper. Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 38.

¹⁶Joint Publications. *Doctrine*, Joint Electronic Library, 2010, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/doctrine.htm> (accessed 4 April 2010). Doctrine: Fundamental principles that guide the employment of US military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.

¹⁷Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 37-38.

¹⁸Chapter 2 will address this idea in greater detail.

paper will include some sources from outside the September 1993 timeframe to provide insight, the author uses this 1992 article as the unrevised definition of the Powell Doctrine.

Third, these six questions are the elements Powell thought should be considered before using military force and later versions often absorb Powell's answers to these questions. Decisive or overwhelming force and vital national interests are the most prominent examples. In his book, *My American Journey*, Powell seems to caveat number three, "Use all the force necessary, and do not apologize for going in big if that is what it takes. Decisive force ends wars quickly and in the long run saves lives."¹⁹ The idea of a clearly defined exit strategy and incorporation of Weinberger's vital national interest are commonly considered a part of the Powell Doctrine. This is a result of Powell's first question being answered to satisfaction. In the epilogue of *My American Journey*, Powell wrote, "But when the fighting starts, as it did in Somalia, and American lives are at risk, our people rightly demand to know what vital interest that sacrifice serves."²⁰

Perspectives on Powell

Powell's autobiography, *My American Journey*, is the cornerstone of any research on the shaping of Powell. Powell wrote *My American Journey* following his tour of duty as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell's book spans his lifetime and pays particular attention to his time in Washington. Common themes throughout the book are Powell's organization and structure applied to problems he faced, lessons he learned

¹⁹Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 434.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 605.

throughout his career, with an emphasis on Vietnam, and how he applied those lessons to future challenges.

There were many biographies written about Powell during and after his tenure as chairman. Howard Means wrote *Colin Powell: Soldier/Statesman, Statesman/Soldier* in 1992 prior to Powell's retirement. Means' book provides an interesting perspective because he did not have the benefit of using Powell's *My American Journey*, published in 1995, as a source. Means used interviews and works written about the various events in Powell's life thereby providing a different context.

Sacred Honor written by David Roth was published in 1993, shortly after Powell's retirement. Roth's work, like Means, was completed before Powell's *My American Journey*. However, unlike Means, Roth served in the military and worked on Powell's staff during his tenure as CJCS. Roth's access provides a different perspective on the events that shaped Powell and his decisions.

After Powell's reemergence in the public eye as Secretary of State, two more significant biographies were published. *Soldier*, by Karen DeYoung, is a detailed look at Powell's life and career that parallels Powell's *My American Journey* and extends the coverage to Powell's tenure as Secretary of State. DeYoung added some important thoughts on Powell's influences while in the Reagan administration.²¹ However, DeYoung linked decisions Powell made during his service as CJCS with his experience in Vietnam and witness to Lebanon exclusively. DeYoung made two important points about the Powell Doctrine. First, in reference to Desert Storm DeYoung wrote:

²¹Karen DeYoung, *Soldier* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 138, 154, 157. DeYoung highlights the effect Lebanon had on Powell and Powell's role in addressing issues as a part of Reagan's National Security Council after the Iran-Contra Affair.

It was a payoff for the previous two decades, from Vietnam through the painful rebuilding of the Army, and a validation of what journalists were now calling the “Powell Doctrine”—no military commitment without decisive force, a clear objective, and popular support. The label smacked of Weinberger’s similar checklist, and Powell himself avoided using it. But it was his strategy, and it had worked.²²

Second, DeYoung surmised that Powell’s “strategy” was not a grand design about the role of the United States after the Cold War, “He [Powell] held strong convictions about the use of military power in specific circumstances but had given little thought to the appropriate diplomatic role of the United States in the post-Cold War world.”²³

The most recent book published about Powell’s life and service was *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* by Christopher O’Sullivan. As the title suggests, O’Sullivan focused more on Powell’s influence on the question of military intervention over the past twenty years than other works. O’Sullivan chronicled pieces of Powell’s life, but not nearly in the detail as DeYoung or Powell himself. O’Sullivan and DeYoung agree on Powell’s, perhaps intentional, lack of grand foreign policy design beyond the question of military intervention, “Never does he [Powell] venture beyond his critique [of the military and civilian leadership in Vietnam] to examine the broader implications of America’s Cold War containment policy in Vietnam.”²⁴ O’Sullivan links the Powell Doctrine with the Vietnam Syndrome and suggested, “Despite the end of the Cold War and the demise of the USSR, the quest for

²²Ibid., 210.

²³Ibid., 250.

²⁴Ibid., 16.

empire remained on the table. Perhaps this should have reinforced the necessity of applying the criteria of the Powell Doctrine.”²⁵ O’Sullivan’s characterization of the Powell Doctrine as restrictive and a product of the Vietnam Syndrome is a popular description. This literature leads the reader to conclude that Powell’s experience in Vietnam and his tutelage under Weinberger created his affinity for the Weinberger Doctrine that Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm later validated.

More than Vietnam

There is no debate that Powell’s experience in Vietnam influenced him. In his memoirs, Powell wrote this emotional assessment:

Our senior officers knew the war was going badly. Yet they bowed to groupthink pressure . . . As a corporate entity, the military failed to talk straight to its political superiors or to itself. Many of my generation . . . vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in halfhearted warfare for half-baked reasons that the American people could not understand or support.²⁶

Although Vietnam served as an important driving force for Powell, the formulation and application of Powell’s doctrine was greater than the so-called Vietnam Syndrome.²⁷

Many authors do not address the myriad factors and national security events that shaped Powell’s rationale behind his doctrine and how those experiences affected Powell’s

²⁵Christopher D. O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 2-3.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 149.

²⁷Vietnam Syndrome refers to reluctance on the part of some U.S. policymakers and military leaders to approve of U.S. military intervention for fear of creating another Vietnam. O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 2-3. Interestingly, Ronald Reagan brought the term “Vietnam Syndrome” to public use in a campaign speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in 1980. Ronald Reagan, “Peace: Restoring the margin of safety” (Speech, Chicago, Illinois, 18 August 1980), <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/8.18.80.html> (accessed 21 September 2010).

application of his principles. Frequently, critics describe the Powell Doctrine as a Cold War era viewpoint not applicable to the complexity of the 21st century security environment defined by small wars, security cooperation with foreign nations, and humanitarian assistance.²⁸

Analysis and synthesis of the military force issue produces doctrines that are tested by conflict and evaluated by history. Despite the relative success of the doctrine applied, analysis and synthesis of the results continue to refine the product or process. In his article about shifting foreign policy paradigms, Michael Roskin wrote, “Which paradigm, the old or the new, is the truth? The answer is neither. The new paradigm is at best merely a closer approximation to reality.”²⁹ Powell’s doctrine, a result of his analysis and synthesis of the successful application of military force, is one of the most debated and publicized doctrines of military intervention in recent history.

This study examines three major factors that contributed to the formulation of Powell’s doctrine and influenced its application. Powell’s understanding of military thinkers, his experience with various styles of Presidential leadership, and the responsibility of a new role as the first full tenure CJCS after the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 influenced Powell’s translation of theory and experience into policy manifested by his application of the Powell Doctrine.

²⁸David Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 2001), 40. For example, General Merrill McPeak’s, Chief of Staff of the Air Force in the early 1990s, thought Powell’s ideas about the use of military force were too limiting and handcuffed civilian leadership.

²⁹Michael Roskin, “Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting Generational Paradigms and Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (1974): 565.

Intervention Models: Truman to Reagan

Analyzing foreign policy and the use of military force from 1776 until the present is not within the scope of this paper. However, it is necessary to lay a foundation for the evolution of different models applied during the years that shaped Powell's life experiences. A broad overview of the doctrines that guided the United States' propensity to engage in policies across the spectrum from military intervention to non-intervention post World War II provides an appreciation for the historical context of Powell, his life events, and his application of the Powell Doctrine.

Truman

The attack at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 was a traumatic experience that shifted the United States toward a more interventionist approach in foreign policy. Non-intervention and isolationist views sank with the battleships. As President Harry S. Truman presided over the end of World War II, the Soviet threat and lessons from Pearl Harbor were not far from the nation's memory. These events paved the way for the Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment.³⁰ Truman described his vision to Congress in 1947 saying, "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."³¹ Truman linked these outside pressures to the United States' national interests. Truman stated that "totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the

³⁰Doris A. Graber, "The Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines In Light of the Doctrine of Non-Intervention," *Political Science Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (1958): 321-331.

³¹*Ibid.*

security of the United States.”³² With these remarks, Truman declared the right to intervene and took the United States into Korea to contain communism.

Eisenhower

As Dwight D. Eisenhower became President of the United States, support declined for the continued commitment of America’s blood and treasure in Korea.³³ Although Eisenhower experienced Pearl Harbor, he was a career soldier and witnessed the sacrifices that occurred as a result of both world wars. He observed the isolationism that occurred between World War I and World War II, termed by Michael Roskin as the Versailles Paradigm.³⁴ Eisenhower’s diverse experiences bridged multiple major traumatic events and shaped his formulation of a new foreign policy that attempted to strike a balance on the spectrum of intervention and non-intervention.³⁵

Eisenhower described his “New Look” and “policy of boldness” to the people of the United States at the State of the Union Address on 7 January 1954. Eisenhower explained his vision as the “massive capability to strike back.”³⁶ Eisenhower, through massive retaliation strategy, attempted to find a way for the United States “to protect its global interests without risking additional, costly, direct military interventions on the

³²Ibid.

³³Samuel F. Wells, “The Origins of Massive Retaliation,” *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 1 (1981): 31.

³⁴Roskin, “Pearl Harbor to Vietnam,” 577.

³⁵Ibid., 573.

³⁶Wells, “The Origins of Massive Retaliation,” 33

periphery.”³⁷ Eisenhower threatened the “center,” China and Russia, rather than the edges.³⁸ Although this sounds as though it leaned toward non-intervention, Eisenhower also declared a specific interest in the Middle East known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.³⁹ More limited in scope than Truman’s containment, the Eisenhower Doctrine required “overt armed aggression” by communist nations to trigger the use of U.S. military force.⁴⁰ The Eisenhower Doctrine also added “the need for formal consent by the nation which was to be helped to resist communism.”⁴¹

In his memoirs Eisenhower posed five logical guidelines he applied to his foreign policy:

The United States would never start a major war; U.S. forces should be designed “primarily” to deter a war, although they might be compelled to fight; national security has economic as well as military components; U.S. forces must be kept modern; and the United States must maintain an alliance system to spread the defense burden around the free world.⁴²

Like Eisenhower, Powell’s career spanned multiple traumatic events in the history of United States foreign policy.

³⁷Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2005), 57-58.

³⁸Wells, “The Origins of Massive Retaliation,” 36.

³⁹George Lenczowski, “The Arc of Crisis: Its Central Sector,” *Foreign Affairs* 57, no. 4 (Spring 1979), 796-797.

⁴⁰Graber, “The Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines,” 366.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²Wells, “The Origins of Massive Retaliation,” 39.

Kennedy

President Kennedy's strategy of flexible response replaced Eisenhower's massive retaliation.⁴³ Surely influenced by the events preceding and including World War II, Kennedy published a book at the age twenty-three entitled *Why England Slept*. In his book Kennedy gave six rules for democracies that would later guide his presidential foreign policy:

1. Peace-loving democracy is weak in the face of expansionist totalitarianism.
2. The democratic leader's role is to teach the population that isolated events form an overall pattern of aggression against them.
3. Defense preparedness must be kept up, even if this means increasing defense expenditures.
4. Reliance on a single-weapon defense system is dangerous; a country must have several good defense systems for flexibility.
5. Civil defense measures must be instituted in advance to protect the population in case of war.
6. The nation must be willing actually to go to war in the final crunch; bluffing will not suffice.⁴⁴

Kennedy articulated his interventionist outlook in his 1962 televised address. In this address, Kennedy equated the continued Cuban Missile Crisis buildup to World War II, "The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war."⁴⁵ For Kennedy and his national security team, success during the Cuban Missile Crisis seemed to validate flexible response, soon to

⁴³Deborah D. Avant, "The Institutional Sources of Military Doctrine: Hegemons in Peripheral Wars," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1993): 417.

⁴⁴Roskin, "Pearl Harbor to Vietnam," 571-572.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 573.

become gradual response, as a policy and lead the United States into Vietnam.⁴⁶

President Johnson illustrated his commitment to continuing Kennedy's policy in 1966:

Perhaps it reflects poorly on our world that men must fight limited wars to keep from fighting larger wars; but that is the condition of the world. . . . We are following this policy in Vietnam because we know that the restrained use of power has for 21 years prevented the wholesale destruction the world faced in 1914 and again in 1939.⁴⁷

There is no doubt the experience in Vietnam had a traumatic effect on the United States, foreign policy, and the question of military intervention. As assessed in 1974, "The immediate impact of Vietnam on United States foreign policy is already apparent. . . .

The longer-term effects may be far deeper."⁴⁸ Even the leaders that favored intervention kept a wary eye on comparisons to Vietnam.

Nixon

President Richard Nixon inherited Vietnam just as Eisenhower inherited Korea, "The Nixon Doctrine could trace its lineage to Eisenhower's New Look."⁴⁹ First known as the Guam Doctrine, Nixon presented his principles to journalists in the summer of 1969 while traveling in Asia.⁵⁰ Five months later, these principles became the Nixon Doctrine as the president outlined in his address:

⁴⁶H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, And The Lies That Led To Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 28-30.

⁴⁷Roskin, "Pearl Harbor to Vietnam," 570.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 587.

⁴⁹Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War*, 57.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

Second, America shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, the United States will furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But it will look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.⁵¹

These three points were part of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy to end Vietnam and avoid any other wars in Asia, establish relations with China, and start an “awards and punishments” approach to enable negotiations with the Soviet Union.⁵² Nixon and Kissinger believed this strategy would lead to détente between the world’s superpowers and “hoped the rhetoric of commitment . . . could continue, because the reality of détente would allow the commitments to remain unimplemented.”⁵³

Abrams

The Abrams Doctrine was another important doctrine developed during the Nixon Administration. In August 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird introduced Total Force Policy in a memorandum that directed the services to economize through a reliance on the Guard and Reserve Components.⁵⁴ Laird wanted the active component, reserve

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., 58-62.

⁵³Robert S. Litwak, *Detente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuite of Stability, 1969-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 126.

⁵⁴Chris Downey, “The Total Force Policy and Effective Force” (Strategic Research Project, United States Army War College, Carlisle: United States Army War College, 2004), 9.

component and national guard treated as one force. In October 1972, General Abrams took his post as Chief of Staff of the Army as plans were already in progress to reduce the active army to 825,000 soldiers and thirteen divisions.⁵⁵ Laird's initial goal was to downsize the active component to 785,000 soldiers and thirteen divisions.⁵⁶ In March 1974, before a congressional hearing, Abrams announced the need for sixteen divisions to meet the Soviet threat.⁵⁷ Laird's successor, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, agreed on the increase in divisions from thirteen to sixteen as long as it did not require additional resources or manpower.⁵⁸ The last time the Army had sixteen divisions prior to 1974 was a decade earlier when the Army had an end-strength of 969,000 soldiers to resource those sixteen divisions.⁵⁹ In order to achieve an increase in divisions without an increase in end-strength, Abrams adjusted the "tooth to tail" ratio.⁶⁰ Abrams wanted more combat elements, the "tooth," in the active component and more combat support and combat service support elements, the "tail," in the reserve component. This change in force structure later became known as the Abrams Doctrine. The "tooth to tail" shift allowed for smaller number of active component soldiers to provide the maximum

⁵⁵James Jay Carafano, "The Army Reserves and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future," *Heritage Lectures* no. 869 (April 2005): 3.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Time* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 362-363.

⁵⁸Carafano, "The Army Reserves and the Abrams Doctrine," 3.

⁵⁹Creighton W. Abrams Jr., "The Sixteen Division Force: Anatomy of a Decision" (Master's Thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 1975), iii.

⁶⁰Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335.

amount of combat elements. The shift created a reliance on the reserve component for combat support and combat service support thereby forcing mobilization of the reserve component to support the active component in times of war. There was speculation that reliance and mobilization of the reserve component would connect the American people to the decision to fight wars, act as a check on presidential power to start war, or act as a restriction on the nation's ability to sustain an unpopular war.⁶¹ However, Abrams never called this force structure decision the Abrams Doctrine. His son wrote a thesis entitled, "The Sixteen Division Force" and never mentioned the word doctrine, a check on presidential powers, or sustaining support for a war as a part of his father's decision.

Carter

President Jimmy Carter offered a promise to involve the American people in foreign policy.⁶² Carter's approach to foreign policy was complex.⁶³ Carter frequently marginalized the Soviet threat and talked more about the principles, values, and morality of foreign policy than vital national security interests of the country.⁶⁴ Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, drafted a forty-three page memorandum that listed strategic objectives.⁶⁵ Brzezinski also listed ten goals that included North-South relations to increase third world stability, human rights, Sino-American normalization,

⁶¹Ibid., 364.

⁶²Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War*, 88-89.

⁶³Phil Williams, "The Limits of American Power: From Nixon to Reagan," *International Affairs* 63, no. 4 (1987): 577.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War*, 95.

and US-Soviet talks.⁶⁶ Although multiple lists and objectives existed in memorandums from Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, these lists were not woven into a grand design.⁶⁷ In fact, Leslie H. Gelb, Director of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs from 1977 to 1979, stated, "Indeed the Carter approach rests on a belief that not only is the world far too complex to be reduced to a doctrine, but that there is something inherently wrong with having a doctrine at all."⁶⁸ Brzezinski and Vance's disagreements about military intervention could have perpetuated the lack of a grand design.⁶⁹ One of Brzezinski's aides and future Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, represented his views, "I think that's one of the legacies of Vietnam-we are afraid to use power."⁷⁰ 1979 changed everything for the Carter Administration.

The oil shortage, the Sandinista victory, fall of the Shah, hostage crisis, and Soviets in Afghanistan reinvigorated the East-West focus.⁷¹ Carter announced the Carter Doctrine in response to the "shocks of 1979"-the U.S. would take necessary action to secure the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia.⁷² Carter's new found focus was too little too late. President Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz, referred to the 1970s as "a

⁶⁶Ibid., 96-97.

⁶⁷Ibid., 98.

⁶⁸Ibid., 99.

⁶⁹Ibid., 94-96.

⁷⁰Ibid., 111.

⁷¹Williams, "The Limits of American Power: From Nixon to Reagan," 577-579.

⁷²Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War*, 112.

decade when negotiations often seemed to be a substitute for strength . . . dominated by the psychology of Vietnam.”⁷³

Reagan

Although Reagan shared the goal of avoiding another Vietnam, that goal was all he shared in common with Carter’s foreign policy. Reagan viewed the world as anything but complex. The world was good against evil.⁷⁴ The Soviet Union capitalized on the Vietnam Syndrome.⁷⁵ The Reagan Administration steered the country toward realism and away from “collaborative arrangements with the adversary.”⁷⁶ The beginning of the end for the Cold War and indicators of wars to come occurred during the Reagan administration.

The military intervention issue revealed divisions within the Reagan Administration just as it had in Carter’s. Reagan’s Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, and Secretary of State, George Shultz, engaged in disagreements on many issues to include the use of force in Lebanon.⁷⁷ Their debate escalated after Weinberger gave his speech at the National Press Club in 1984 where he espoused the Weinberger Doctrine for the first time. Shultz gave a speech of his own just one month before

⁷³Ibid., 147.

⁷⁴Williams, “The Limits of American Power,” 580.

⁷⁵Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War*, 137.

⁷⁶Ibid., 579.

⁷⁷Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, 284, 291.

Weinberger where he discussed his views about military intervention.⁷⁸ Powell established relationships and worked through various matters of intervention and national security with both Weinberger and Shultz.

Ironically, the “peace dividend” at the end of the Cold War brought more instability and intervention. Without a check on U.S. power “the paradox remained that as the Soviet Union faded, the United States often pursued a foreign policy inclined to inflate potential threats.”⁷⁹ Author Michael Roskin argued that there was a cyclic nature to the United States’ foreign policy. This cycle revolves around generation gaps defined by traumatic foreign policy experiences.⁸⁰ These traumatic experiences have often been a test of the previous generation’s foreign policy model with some type of result—the negative results sticking in memories more so than any positive findings.⁸¹ These negative results most often confirm the opposite of the current generation’s model. A non-interventionist attitude shifts to more interventionist, or vice-versa.⁸² This was the world in which Powell formulated and formalized his views on the successful application of military force. Powell entered service at the age of twenty-one when Eisenhower was President.⁸³ Over the next thirty years Powell experienced the ebb and flow of the

⁷⁸George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power, and the Victory of the American Ideal* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 648-649.

⁷⁹O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 92.

⁸⁰Roskin, “Pearl Harbor to Vietnam,” 563-564.

⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁸²*Ibid.*

⁸³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 317.

aforementioned paradigm shifts at every level of war. Powell drew on each of these experiences to inform his decisions that had a lasting and profound effect on our military and foreign policy.

CHAPTER 2

POWELL'S COGNITIVE PROCESS

Every leader has a process by which they gather data, process that data into information, apply analyses to acquire knowledge, and then use their judgment to support their decisions.⁸⁴ Powell's process and experience provided a unique combination that contributed to the decisions he made during his tenure as CJCS. To understand where the Powell Doctrine contributed to Powell's decisions it is important to examine its cognitive foundation and how this foundation influenced Powell's application of the doctrine. The research and analysis offered in this chapter demonstrates that Powell blended his study and understanding of military thinkers with a unique balance of structure and intuition. Additionally, this chapter will show that his doctrine was founded on pragmatism mixed with his understanding of Carl von Clausewitz, which lead to Powell's linear application of a useable doctrine in a prescriptive attempt to control the outcomes of war.

The comparison of two great military thinkers, Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine de Jomini, can provide a framework to show the complexity that coexisted in Powell's philosophy. The purpose of structuring the study of Powell's Doctrine and decision process in the context of Clausewitz and Jomini is not to ignite an exhaustive debate or comparison, but to illustrate how the direct and indirect influences of these military thinkers created a dialectic tension that Powell never reconciled. Most theorists seem to focus on the differences of Clausewitz and Jomini, yet Powell seemed to synthesize them as they both influenced and resided in his vernacular of war. Although Powell professed

⁸⁴Department of the Army, Field Manual 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2010), 1-4.

to be a follower of Clausewitz, he is often classified as a reductionist closer to Jomini. Powell, like the rest of the American Army, concurred with much of Clausewitz's theory. However, Powell's understanding of Clausewitz's "preliminary concept of war" exchanged description for prescription, which caused Powell's doctrine to look Clausewitzian on the surface, but inherently limited the results of its application.⁸⁵

Powell and Clausewitz

Clausewitz was widely introduced to a receptive generation of Army officers in 1976 in a version of *On War* edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. The timing was right for Clausewitz's ideas on political-military relationships, friction, and the passion of the people to be embraced by a generation of officers with Vietnam experience. Powell's service in Vietnam seemed congruent with Clausewitz's theories about the nature of war. Powell's admiration for Clausewitz was clear, "That wise Prussian Karl von Clausewitz was an awakening for me."⁸⁶ Powell was explicit in his view that Clausewitz was directly linked to the foundation of Weinberger's doctrine. When recalling Weinberger's articulation of his doctrine for the first time Powell wrote, "Clausewitz would have applauded."⁸⁷

Powell thought Clausewitz would have applauded Weinberger's connection between political and military objectives.⁸⁸ Clausewitz's most famous quotation can be

⁸⁵Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

⁸⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 207.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 303.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

seen in Powell's question, "Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood?"⁸⁹ Powell believed in Clausewitz's idea "that *war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means* [emphasis in original]."⁹⁰ Throughout his chairmanship, Powell demonstrated his support for the idea that politics and war are not separable. In testimony to the House Armed Services Committee Powell said, "Military planning must flow from clear political direction."⁹¹ In testimony to the Senate in April of 1993 Powell stated, "You should use military force for political purposes, not military purpose."⁹² During his confirmation as CJCS in 1989, Powell answered a question from Senator Sam Nunn, (D-Georgia), directly relating to the Weinberger Doctrine that forecast his perspective on the military-political relationship, "There is no hesitancy to use the Armed Forces as a political instrument when the mission is clear and when it is something that has been carefully thought out and considered."⁹³ While describing Powell's aversion to intervention in Bosnia, David Halberstam posited that the balance in the military-political war equation tipped toward the political realm as a result of evolving technology and the information environment and would more easily erode

⁸⁹Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," 38.

⁹⁰Clausewitz, *On War*, 69.

⁹¹General Colin Powell, speaking on Crisis in the Persian Gulf: Sanctions Diplomacy, and War, on 14 December 1990 to the House Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 539.

⁹²General Colin Powell, speaking on Department of Defense Appropriations, FY94, Part I, on 21 April 1993, to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., 92.

⁹³General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 20 September 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 652.

America's will to intervene and replicate Vietnam.⁹⁴ While the Clausewitz connection explained above would indicate that Powell always believed the equation tipped in favor of the political realm, Powell diverged from Clausewitz in the deeper foundations of where the political-military link fit in the overarching theory. It was not the political-military war equation that influenced Powell, but Powell's view that there was a balance or control he could impart through his doctrine that ran in contrast to Clausewitz. Ironically, Clausewitz's ideas that war was not controllable appealed to Powell.

Certainly Powell must have agreed with Clausewitz's idea of friction created by the infinite number of imponderables that complicate the act of real war versus war on paper.⁹⁵ Powell and his generation had just returned from Vietnam, where they witnessed firsthand the dangers and fog of war coupled with other "psychological forces" and "chance."⁹⁶ Clausewitz's statement, "If one has never personally experienced war, one cannot understand in what the difficulties constantly mentioned really consist," confirmed much of what Powell and his fellow Vietnam veterans experienced.⁹⁷ More than his Vietnam experience, Powell also saw friction wreak havoc in the botched attempt to rescue hostages in Iran as a part of Operation Desert One.⁹⁸ Friction, chance,

⁹⁴Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace*, 35.

⁹⁵Clausewitz, *On War*, 119-121.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 86.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁸Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 248-249. Powell presented his thoughts on the Desert One mission in his memoirs, "Yet, I had had enough experience in helicopter operations in Vietnam, Korea, and the 101st Airborne to be surprised at the way this operation had been conceived and conducted." Powell thought more helicopters should have been launched to make sure the minimum number needed for mission

and imponderables are the reason Clausewitz postulated that war cannot be deduced to a set of absolute, mathematical factors.⁹⁹ Powell's most frequently overlooked caveat to his doctrine was in accord with Clausewitz on this point, "There is, however, no fixed set of rules for the use of military force. To set one up is dangerous."¹⁰⁰ This caveat seems to have failed to deflect criticism he knew was coming, just as Jomini failed to deflect criticism of his principles that would vary with specific application.¹⁰¹ The caveat failed because it did not address the reason why war cannot be deduced to rules or mathematical formulas. This was where Powell, seemingly unaware, parted company with Clausewitz. The division between Clausewitz and Powell concerned Clausewitz's nonlinear description, as opposed to Powell's linear prescriptive control.

The relationship between Clausewitz's concept of the paradoxical trinity and war is where Powell's thinking began its departure. Clausewitz used the paradoxical trinity to describe war:

As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity—composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.¹⁰²

success and recalled, "I would have rated Desert One's chances of success at a hundred to one, foolhardy odds for a military operation."

⁹⁹Ibid., 86.

¹⁰⁰Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," 37-38.

¹⁰¹John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 154.

¹⁰²Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

Directly following this detailed description, Clausewitz offered the realms of action for the trinity, “The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government.”¹⁰³ Clausewitz’s trinity has often been reduced to these three aspects: the people, the commander and his army, and the government. Clausewitz wrote, “Our task . . . is to develop a theory that maintains a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets.”¹⁰⁴ With this description, the reader may visualize this object in an equidistant, static position among the magnets. If the magnets exert the same force then the object remains controlled. The reader may conclude that Clausewitz’s theory illuminates ways to prevent magnet imbalance and retain control over the object in suspension. However, this reasoning does not nest with Clausewitz’s friction, imponderables, and that “war is never an isolated act.”¹⁰⁵ Some alternate scholarly views of Clausewitz help the reader to appreciate Clausewitz’s magnet analogy and understand his theory’s application.

An article by Alan Beyerchen entitled “Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War” presents a helpful mental picture of Clausewitz’s magnet analogy:

But when a pendulum is released over three equidistant and equally powerful magnets, it moves irresolutely to and fro as it darts among the competing points of attraction, sometimes kicking out high to acquire added momentum that allows it to keep gyrating in a startlingly long and intricate pattern. Eventually, the energy dissipates under the influence of friction in the suspension mountings and the air, bringing the pendulum's movement asymptotically to rest. The probability is

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 78.

vanishingly small that an attempt to repeat the process would produce exactly the same pattern.¹⁰⁶

The object in suspension is still an element of Byerchen's description, but only after the "irreproducible" pattern.¹⁰⁷ Beyerchen also offers an alternate translation of Clausewitz's magnet analogy statement:

"Die Aufgabe ist also, dass sich die Theorie zwischen diesen drei Tendenzen wie zwischen drei Anziehungspunkten schwebend erhalte." Literally: "The task is therefore that the theory would maintain itself floating among these three tendencies as among three points of attraction." The connotations of *schweben* involve lighter-than-air, sensitive motion; a balloon or a ballerina "*schwebt*." The image is no more static than that of wrestlers. The nature of war should not be conceived as a stationary point among the members of the trinity, but as a complex trajectory traced among them.¹⁰⁸

Clausewitz's theory of the nature of war was the starting point of a nonlinear description of the object's path for the study of war.¹⁰⁹

Clausewitz's intent, as John Sumida wrote in an article for *Army History Magazine* in 2009, was to reform the Prussian officer education system to enable those with little experience to replicate decision making through historical reenactment.¹¹⁰ According to Sumida, Clausewitz acknowledged historical reenactments would be incomplete due to innumerable factors not in historical records, but Clausewitz believed

¹⁰⁶Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992-1993): 70.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 61-66. Beyerchen defines nonlinear systems as: "those that disobey proportionality or additivity. They may exhibit erratic behavior through disproportionately large or disproportionately small outputs, or they may involve "synergistic" interactions in which the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts."

¹¹⁰John Sumida, "The Clausewitz Problem," *Army History* (Fall 2009): 18.

that weakness could be surmounted by “surmise about factors that are supposed to have been important. The basis of this surmise is a body of theory about those forces that affect decision making in war.”¹¹¹ Beyerchen’s and Sumida’s examination of Clausewitz combine to demonstrate myriad factors that influence the path of the object between the magnets. Clausewitz’s theory helped to describe the factors that influence the object’s path in order to add necessary detail and context of the historical reenactment whose outcome could change radically with a minor adjustment of the factors considered.

Powell adjusted the Weinberger Doctrine in such a way that suggested Powell attempted to be congruent with Clausewitz. Powell did not simply copy Weinberger’s Doctrine verbatim. Powell structured his points as questions, not statements, tests, or criteria. Weinberger specifically referred to his statements as “tests” in his speech to the National Press Club in 1984 and recalled them as “criteria” in his book *In the Arena*.¹¹² During Powell’s confirmation hearing testimony in 1989, Powell articulated his view on the possible application of the Weinberger Doctrine, “Secretary Weinberger’s very famous speech and his guidelines are useful guidelines, but I have never seen them to be a series of steps each one of which must be met before the Joint Chiefs of Staff will recommend the use of military force.”¹¹³

Powell integrated this view into his 1993 *Foreign Affairs Article* entitled “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead” where he explained that his points were questions useful to

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Weinberger, *In the Arena*, 308.

¹¹³General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 20 September 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 652.

evaluate the circumstances of the intervention being pondered and not hard and fast rules or tests.¹¹⁴ The question structure was important because it helped Powell gather information, spur thought amongst civilian leaders, and start debate.

The use of questions as an analytic framework gave Powell's doctrine flexibility in application and was an example of the dichotomy that Powell seemed to be able to harmonize. Powell took Weinberger's more reductionist framework as well as his personal experience with principles of war over time and significantly changed the application of the doctrine by making each point a question. In Book II of *On War*, Clausewitz wrote a section entitled "Theory Should Be Study, Not Doctrine." In this section Clausewitz defined theory as an analytical investigation that can become a "guide to anyone who wants to learn about war from books; it will light his way, ease his progress, train his judgment, and help him avoid pitfalls." Clausewitz also wrote, "It [theory] is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not to accompany him to the battlefield."¹¹⁵ Powell's questions conveyed important points or principles in a structure that encouraged study in a theory approach. The flexibility of the question format is evident in the 1996 National Security Strategy. Despite the obvious differences between the Clinton national security team and Powell, the 1996 National Security Strategy written by Clinton's team after Powell's departure is the only National Security Strategy since 1988 that specifically

¹¹⁴Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," 37-38.

¹¹⁵Clausewitz, *On War*, 141.

addressed “Deciding When and How to Employ U.S. Forces.”¹¹⁶ The strategy defined “vital” versus “important” national interests and espoused the Powell Doctrine with additions:

But in every case, we will consider several critical questions before committing military force: Have we considered nonmilitary means that offer a reasonable chance of success? Is there a clearly defined, achievable mission? What is the environment of risk we are entering? What is needed to achieve our goals? What are the potential costs—both human and financial—of the engagement? Do we have a reasonable likelihood of support from the American people and their elected representatives? Do we have timelines and milestones that will reveal the extent of success or failure, and in either case, do we have an exit strategy?¹¹⁷

Powell’s change to a question format would not be enough to overcome the separation evident between Clausewitz’s work and Powell’s view of his doctrine.

Powell used two analogies to explain his doctrine. Both of Powell’s explanations illustrate a divide with Clausewitz. First, Powell’s 1992 article in *Foreign Affairs* he equated the use of his questions to evaluate circumstances of military intervention to that of determining successful evacuation routes in case of a fire. Powell cautioned not to use these questions as rules just as you would not use the elevator or the same evacuation route every time there is a fire.¹¹⁸ Like Clausewitz’s object that bounces between the magnets, each fire has unique circumstances and it may be impossible to recreate the combustibles that started the fire. However, Powell used his fire analogy to illustrate different evacuation plans, courses of action, or *prescriptions* needed to avoid bad decisions, whereas Clausewitz’s magnet analogy is used to aid in the study of factors that

¹¹⁶White House, *National Security Strategy: A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), 18.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 38.

influenced an object's path to illustrate why the command decisions were made for better or for worse.¹¹⁹

The second problematic analogy Powell used is found in his recollection of what he learned from studying Clausewitz while at the National War College. Powell identified what he thought were the three legs of the Clausewitz stool, "Without all three legs engaged, the military, the government, and the people, the enterprise cannot stand."¹²⁰ Powell's stool analogy takes the idea of an equidistant, static object to the extreme and rigidly connects the elements of the trinity, compartmentalizes them, and describes the parts needed for balance to control the equilibrium of the stool. Clausewitz stressed the *interactions* among the trinity to describe what was needed for a balanced theory. Powell thought his doctrine was founded on Clausewitzian principles, but further examination reveals the political-military link may be all Powell's doctrine and Clausewitz had in common. The lack of connection to Clausewitz offers evidence to confirm Powell's similarities with Jomini.

Powell and Jomini

Jomini and Clausewitz were arguably not mutually exclusive, but Jomini clearly leaned toward the reductionist side of the spectrum relative to Clausewitz.¹²¹ Although Jomini is not as clearly or directly associated with Powell, there are definite links between Jomini's theories and Powell's doctrine and thought process.

¹¹⁹Sumida, "The Clausewitz Problem," 21.

¹²⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 208.

¹²¹John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 172.

As John Shy pointed out in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, the Jominian basics included the idea that “strategy is controlled by invariable scientific principles,” and, “these principles prescribe offensive action to mass forces against weaker enemy forces at some decisive point if strategy is to lead to victory.”¹²² The U.S. Army duplicated Jomini’s principles of war, among his many other proposals, and codified them in field manuals. According to Jomini, if the principles of war were ignored the commander risked defeat, but if the principles were followed the commander almost always found victory.¹²³ Powell accepted and integrated Jomini’s principles of war, albeit through Army doctrine, and used structured principles in his thought process to guide action that influenced the formulation and application of the Powell Doctrine.

In a 2008 speech to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Powell said, “And if you really want to know where the ‘Powell Doctrine’ came from, go to Leavenworth and ask them to give you a class on the principles of war. And the ‘Powell Doctrine’ is essentially two principles of war: the principles of the objective and mass, simple as that.”¹²⁴ Although Powell did not attribute these principles to Jomini in his speech or mention Jomini as an influence in his biography, this quotation makes a clear connection between Jomini’s principles of war and the Powell Doctrine. Powell also

¹²²Ibid., 146.

¹²³Ibid., 154.

¹²⁴Colin Powell, Inaugural address at Colin Powell Lecture Series (Speech, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 28 April 2008).

espoused the use of decisive force to achieve decisive results - a reflection of Jomini's aforementioned basics.¹²⁵

Powell, like Jomini, also favored the use of structured principles that guide action. As a result of their prescriptive approach, both Powell and Jomini were categorized by critics as reductionist. Powell was well known for the structure he brought to solve problems as well as his guiding principles in many different aspects of life.¹²⁶ Among his many formulas were Powell's Rules for Picking People that highlighted, among other qualities, intelligence, judgment, anticipation, loyalty, and drive.¹²⁷ Much like Jomini, who identified principles that consistently worked over time illustrated by historical example, Powell identified qualities he saw during his career that offered the best chance for success. Powell also had many motivational sayings under the glass of his desk which became the basis for Colin Powell's Rules published in *Parade* magazine three days after

¹²⁵Powell reiterated his idea of decisive force in his 2008 speech to the Command and General Staff College. Colin Powell, Inaugural address at Colin Powell Lecture Series (Speech, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 28 April 2008). Powell used the phrase "decisive results" with regard to US military intervention in his testimony to the Senate in 1993, "And if you are going to do that, if you are going to put American lives at risk and American prestige at stake, you should try to achieve decisive results." General Colin Powell, speaking on Department of Defense Appropriations, FY94, Part I, on 21 April 1993, to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., 92.

¹²⁶In his memoirs, Powell recalled Frank Carlucci explaining the attributes that were required of Powell to help the National Security Council after the Iran Contra Affair, "I'm looking for someone who knows how to make things work. I need what you did for Cap [Caspar Weinberger] and me, someone who can impose order and procedure on the NSC." Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 329. Bob Woodward offered a similar description of Powell while describing Cheney's search for a new CJCS in 1989. Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1991), 79.

¹²⁷Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 355.

his appointment as CJCS.¹²⁸ The thirteen rules that made the *Parade* magazine list were just some of Powell's glass top collection. These were not the only rules Powell created. Powell had rules for holding meetings and individual rules he picked up along the way such as, "Out of that experience emerged one of my rules: you don't know what you can get away with until you try."¹²⁹ Powell's application of structure to decision making contributed to his categorization as a reductionist and was transferred to a "checklist" view of the Powell Doctrine despite Powell's continued insistence to be selective and flexible in the approach to use of force. When examining Powell's application of his doctrine, it is important to recognize Powell's Jominian acceptance of principles as a guide for action, but it is equally important to understand the influence Clausewitz had on the doctrine's foundation.

Powell embodied an interesting dichotomy between Clausewitz's descriptive approach and Jomini's prescriptive use of principles. One of the most important doctrinal manuals for the U.S. Army of Powell's time, Field Manual 100-5 (1986), enumerated the application of Jomini's principles of war, but also acknowledged Clausewitz's friction.¹³⁰ Clausewitz may have been proud to read the following excerpt from FM 100-5:

Friction—the accumulation of chance errors, unexpected difficulties, and the confusion of battle—will impede both sides. To overcome it, leaders . . . must be

¹²⁸Ibid., 409. The reader can find Colin Powell's Rules in Appendix C.

¹²⁹Ibid., 167, 343, 445-446. The reader can find Powell's rules for holding meetings in Appendix D.

¹³⁰Williamson Murray, "Clausewitz Out, Computer In" (The National Interest: Clausewitz Homepage 1997), <http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Clause&Computers.htm> (accessed 20 May 2010).

prepared to risk commitment without complete information, recognizing that waiting for such information will invariably forfeit the opportunity to act.¹³¹

Powell had an interesting method to address this friction. Powell's timely decision making formula, P = 40 to 70, seemed formulaic, yet coincided with Clausewitz's idea of military genius.¹³² In Powell's formula, P stood for the probability of success. The numbers, 40 to 70, represent the percentage of information Powell needed to make a timely decision. Powell wrote, "I go with *my gut feeling* [emphasis added] when I have acquired information somewhere in the range of 40 to 70 percent."¹³³ Although Powell's equation contributed to the reductionist view, this was Powell's method, endorsed by Army doctrine, of overcoming friction. This method echoed Clausewitz's idea of "genius" in command capability.¹³⁴ Powell held structure and efficiency in high regard, but at decision time Powell "went with his gut" exercising his military genius. Powell recalled that he developed this decision making philosophy by the time he finished his

¹³¹Ibid. The 1986 Field Manual 100-5 is classified For Official Use Only. Therefore, the author uses the quote from Murray's writing.

¹³²Clausewitz dedicated an entire chapter to military genius and wrote, "But we cannot restrict our discussion to *genius* proper, as a superlative degree of talent, for this concept lacks measurable limits. What we must do is to survey all those gifts of mind and temperament that in combination bear on military activity. These, taken together, constitute *the essence of military genius*." Clausewitz, *On War*, 100.

¹³³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 393.

¹³⁴Sumida, "The Clausewitz Problem," 18. Clausewitz wrote at the end of his chapter, "On Military Genius," "The man responsible for evaluating the whole must bring to his task the quality of intuition that perceives the truth at every point. Otherwise a chaos of opinions and considerations would arise, and fatally entangle judgment." Clausewitz, *On War*, 112.

tour as National Security Advisor and described his philosophy as instinct informed by intellect.¹³⁵

Despite Powell's affinity for Clausewitz and his employment of military genius, his doctrine was markedly different from the ideas found in *On War*. In straying closer to Jomini than Clausewitz, Powell formulated a doctrine that seemed to attempt to control war. This idea of control, rooted in Powell's understanding of Clausewitz's trinity, is the deeper reason for why critics claimed Powell only "did the big wars."¹³⁶ Small wars, although counter intuitive, are often less controllable. Powell often listed the military's involvement in smaller interventions to counteract the big war only idea. However, the smaller interventions Powell listed were chosen based on Powell's perceived ability to control the outcomes through application of his doctrine. The application of Powell's doctrine shows evidence that Powell thought he had a sufficiently flexible approach grounded in Clausewitz. Powell's decisions illustrated Powell's reflection of Clausewitz ideas on the periphery, but Powell's prescriptions inherently limited the results of the

¹³⁵Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 393.

¹³⁶The following citations provide sources that offer criticism of the Powell Doctrine as a reason for, or contributing factor to, the view that the military only supported big wars. Antulio J. Echevarria II, "An American Way of War or Way of Battle?" (The Strategic Studies Institute, January 2004), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=662> (accessed 2 September 2010), 2; O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 2-3; Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace*, 34-35, 40, 390-391; Jeffrey Record, "The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency," The Cato Institute, 1 September 2006, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6640 (accessed 2 September 2010), 13; Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary* (New York: Mirimax Books, 2003), 180-183; Peter Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2003), 170; Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: Random House Inc., 1998), 216-218.

decisions regarding US military intervention he faced as CJCS. Powell did not have to wait long to put his ideas in practice.

Powell in Practice

On 3 October 1989, shortly after Powell's confirmation as CJCS, word came through General Max Thurman, Commander-in-Chief Southern Command (CINCSOUTH), that a coup in Panama was planned by Panamanian Defense Forces officer Major Moises Giroldi Vega. Powell made his first call to the Secretary of Defense and remembered, "This was a key call, the first time I would be carrying out the JCS Chairman's responsibility to provide military advice to the Secretary of Defense."¹³⁷ Although the basis for the Powell Doctrine had been in the back of Powell's mind since Weinberger's speech five years earlier, the question of intervention on behalf of Giroldi did not cross the threshold for Powell. He had gathered enough information to make a decision using his informed instinct. Powell also had experience with Panama and Manuel Noriega during his years in the Reagan administration that provided a context for the information he was being fed during this coup attempt. The important point in this seemingly minor incident was that Powell did not force this problem into any list of criteria or tests and took a selective application of the Powell Doctrine. Not every question was inputted in the Powell Doctrine "machine" for decision. Powell illustrated his ability to use Clausewitzian "genius." There were certainly more direct links in the application of Powell's decision making method to examine.

¹³⁷Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 417.

An example that clearly illustrated Powell's decision making method and its impact during his tenure as CJCS was Powell's work on what he called the Strategic Overview. In November of 1989, Powell started drafting his vision to move the military from its fixed position in cold war thinking and wrote at the top of a notepad, "Strategic Overview–1994."¹³⁸ According to Powell, this document outlined the future security environment over the next five years, as he saw it, as well as his force structure projections to meet future threats. Powell continued to shape his vision throughout his tenure into a fairly concrete plan called the Base Force concept. Powell's Base Force concept divided the armed forces into four force packages: Strategic, Atlantic, Pacific, and Contingency. Packaging the force in this manner included cuts across the services.¹³⁹ Powell described his thought process as "analysis by instinct" and recalled that his "thoughts were guided simply by what I had observed at world summits, by my experience at the NSC [National Security Council], by what I like to think of as informed intuition."¹⁴⁰ Although not a decision for application of force and therefore not a candidate for the Powell Doctrine, this example illustrates Powell's affinity for structure only went so far. Powell's conclusions from his Strategic Overview were important in shaping the US armed forces and joint doctrine.

¹³⁸Ibid., 436.

¹³⁹General Colin Powell, speaking on Future of US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era, on 24 March 1992, to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., 361. Powell proposed a twenty-five percent cut affecting each of the services.

¹⁴⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 436.

A coup in the Philippines was yet another seemingly small question of intervention during Powell's first few months as chairman that illustrated the flexibility in Powell's application of his doctrine as influenced by Clausewitz and Powell's instinct. According to Powell, upon return from a trip to Brussels he was informed that Philippine President Corazon Aquino was in the presidential palace in Manila while it was being bombed as a part of a coup attempt led by General Edgardo Abenina. The U.S. ambassador in Manila, Nicholas Platt, confirmed President Aquino's request for U.S. military intervention. President Aquino asked the U.S. to bomb the rebel held airfield that served as the base for attacks. Powell began asking questions and gathering information to better understand and visualize the situation. As Powell contemplated the second and third order effects of air strikes, surgical or not, he devised a plan to conduct a demonstration of force using F-4 Phantom jets to "scare hell out of them."¹⁴¹ Powell stressed the importance of being able to talk to Fidel Ramos, the Philippine defense minister, to get an accurate picture from someone on the ground.

After finally getting in touch with Ramos, Powell learned his instincts were correct: there were better ways to accomplish the objective of disrupting the coup attempt than to start bombing. Powell's recommendation definitely had political components to it. The second and third order effects Powell considered were not solely military, "We have interests in the Philippines that go beyond Mrs. Aquino."¹⁴² Brent Scowcroft, the

¹⁴¹Ibid., 441-444.

¹⁴²Woodward, *The Commanders*, 124. In his book, *The Commanders*, Bob Woodward suggested Powell considered, "Suppose the coup succeeds? We don't want to get off on the wrong foot with its leaders even before they take power." In his memoirs, Powell recalled warning the State Department and Vice President, "I can guarantee you

National Security Advisor, recalled that Powell's course of action, "was precisely what was required to snuff out the uprising, and we accomplished our goal."¹⁴³

The failure of the coup attempt just hours later confirmed the application of key points of Powell's principles as Powell recalled, "The night the coup ended, I left the Pentagon feeling good. I had applied Clausewitz's teachings, or Weinberger's Maxim No. 3, and my own rule for forming military advice."¹⁴⁴ Here it is important to note that Powell equates Clausewitz's teachings only to Weinberger's test to have clearly defined political and military objectives in this incident. Powell's statement also shows his prescriptive approach—Clausewitz or Weinberger's No. 3 as a rule for action.

Powell's recommendations and decisions regarding the Philippine coup attempt did show that he was not averse to limited objectives or to sending signals through the use of military force if the situation. In *The Commanders*, Bob Woodward wrote, "The Chairman [Powell] did not normally like to use his forces as a signal."¹⁴⁵ In the Philippines, Powell sent signals. A little over a year later, Powell wanted to send the 82nd Airborne Division to send a signal to Saddam of U.S. commitment to the defense of Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁶ By using the word "normally," Woodward may have explained that Powell did not mind sending signals in situations he felt he could control.

that the Filipinos are going to blast us at their funerals, no matter which side we hurt." Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 442.

¹⁴³George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 161.

¹⁴⁴Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 444.

¹⁴⁵Woodward, *The Commanders*, 195.

¹⁴⁶Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 323-324.

The Philippines was not the only case in which Powell was comfortable with limited objectives and seemed to depart from the restrictive categorization frequently applied to his doctrine. The U.S. Armed Forces contribution to the war on drugs was a question of intervention where Powell displayed his willingness to support limited, surgical strikes. In his confirmation testimony, Powell was asked:

If, in cooperation with an in conjunction with foreign units operating in another country, it was deemed necessary or appropriate to retaliate [to acts of drug-related terrorism] do you think it would be appropriate to use U.S. special forces, anti-narcotics units or whatever in actual direct action against drug lord armies and drug operations?¹⁴⁷

Powell responded, “If it was beyond the capability of the forces of the country concerned and if they asked for our assistance and if the President so directed, I would have no reservations on that kind of retaliatory strike.”¹⁴⁸ Powell added to the list of wars fought for limited objectives in his editorial in the *New York Times* published in October of 1992 where he wrote:

In December 1989, a dictator was removed from power in Panama. In that same month, when a coup threatened to topple democracy in the Philippines, a limited use of force helped prevent it. In January 1991, a daring night raid rescued our embassy in Somalia. That same month, we rescued stranded foreigners and protected our embassy in Liberia. We waged a major war in the Persian Gulf to liberate Kuwait. Moreover, we have used our forces for humanitarian relief operations in Iraq, Somalia, Bangladesh, Russia and Bosnia. American C-130 aircraft are part of the relief effort in Sarajevo.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 20 September 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 628.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹Colin Powell, “Why Generals Get Nervous” *New York Times*, “Opinion,” 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/08/opinion/why-generals-get-nervous.html?scp=1&sq=Colin+Powell+Editorial&st=nyt> (accessed 13 May 2010).

Powell's support for the use of U.S. armed forces for limited objectives can be traced to his study of Clausewitz. Powell wrote, "All wars are limited. As Carl von Clausewitz was careful to point out, there has never been a state of absolute war."¹⁵⁰ Powell went on to summarize Clausewitz and explain that wars are limited by the territory on which they are fought, the resources used to fight, or by the objectives. Powell also categorized Desert Storm as a "limited objective war."¹⁵¹ Powell's logic concluded and his doctrine reflected that factors can be manipulated to control war.

It is important not to get stalled on the finer details of comparing and contrasting Clausewitz and Jomini. The dichotomy with respect to Powell and his doctrine provides a good framework to examine the formulation and application of Powell's doctrine. Powell's use of a fire and the stool as analogies for Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity shows that Powell intended to have Clausewitz's ideas more integrated in his own doctrine than it actually was. Powell's understanding of Clausewitz influenced the application of Powell's doctrine as an effort to prevent imbalance in the trinity as an effort to prescribe a way to control outcomes. With this foundation, Powell's doctrine inherently filtered out those situations which had a high probability of chaos and contributed to the "big wars only" view of the military at the time.

¹⁵⁰Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," 37.

¹⁵¹Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

POWELL AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

In his farewell address to the nation on 11 January 1989, President Ronald Reagan said, “We meant to change a nation, and instead we changed a world.”¹⁵² Reagan’s critics and supporters alike agreed that the world experienced vast changes during his presidency. This time period was an important strategic level experience for Powell that influenced the rest of his career. As a part of the Reagan administration, Powell served as the military assistant to Reagan’s Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, followed by duty as the Deputy National Security Advisor under Frank Carlucci, and, finally, service as Reagan’s National Security Advisor.¹⁵³ Powell and the world began to experience the vague, uncertain transition to a post-Cold War world.¹⁵⁴ The catalysts for change were a

¹⁵²Quoted in Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1991), 792.

¹⁵³These were the positions Powell held in the Reagan Administration. During the Reagan presidency, Powell also served as Assistant Division Commander, 4th Infantry Division from June 1981 to August 1982, Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Combined Arms Combat Development Activity from August 1982 to June 1983, and Commanding General, V Corps, United States Army Europe from June 1986 to December 1986. See Appendix E for Powell’s complete timeline.

¹⁵⁴In Powell’s mind the Cold War ended during his tenure in the Reagan administration. In May 1989 Powell suggested in a speech that the Soviet “bear looks benign.” Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 356, 357, 362. In a document produced by the Joint History Office in 1993, Powell’s actual speech given at Carlisle Barracks in May 1989 is cited. The author is assuming the Joint History Office had access to this actual speech. Lorna S. Jafee, “The Development of the Base Force 1989-1992,” Joint History Office, 1992, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/history/baseforc.pdf> (accessed 14 October 2010). Howard Means credits Powell with contemplating a New World Order before most military or political thinkers in his book published in 1992. Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 279.

global mix of people and events. These agents of change shaped Powell, contributed to the foundation of his strategic worldview, and solidified his presumptions about military intervention that he applied in practice as CJCS.

Initially, this chapter provides a brief review of Reagan's foreign policy to frame the appropriate strategic context in which Powell operated. After this brief review, an analysis of U.S. involvement in Lebanon and Reagan's leadership style demonstrates how Powell's experience during the Reagan administration influenced the formulation of Powell's doctrine. Although Powell's experience in Vietnam was, admittedly, the driving force for his doctrine, the analysis suggests that Powell's service in the Reagan administration provided the framework, opportunity, and substance that helped codify his Vietnam-inspired feelings and thoughts.¹⁵⁵

Powell's connection to the Reagan administration and its influence on him is not a novel subject. Numerous authors have written about Powell's service in the Reagan administration and the honing of his political skill while he watched the events of Lebanon and Iran-Contra unfold before a president often criticized for being disengaged.¹⁵⁶ However, this study carries the analysis of Powell's service in the Reagan administration through in detail to examine its impact on Powell's application of his doctrine during his tenure as CJCS for Presidents George H. W. Bush and William J. Clinton respectively. Powell's experience highlighted his need for a set of guiding

¹⁵⁵Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 144-149. In his memoirs, Powell gave a five page synopsis of his feelings on Vietnam and his thoughts on the war after he had time and broader experiences to add to his ability to reflect on his service.

¹⁵⁶The authors referred to in this paragraph include Karen DeYoung, David Roth, Howard Means, and Christopher O'Sullivan. Each of these writers published a book about General Powell's life and career.

principles to help him bring clarity to the diverse Presidents he served, yet they also provided a false sense of security as the United States faced new challenges in the post-Cold War environment.

Reagan's Foreign Policy

Reagan's longtime Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, explained Reagan's commitment to building military strength as a means to bring the Soviets closer to meaningful negotiations with the end result of a "roll back" of communism.¹⁵⁷ In a speech at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco in February of 1985, Secretary of State George Shultz spoke about the Reagan administration's approach to the Soviet Union. In the speech, Shultz said America would side with anti-communist elements around the world. Although the support for those elements against communism may vary, it must always be understood whose side the United States was on. Throughout the speech, Shultz referred to ongoing insurgencies in places such as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Cambodia.¹⁵⁸ For Reagan, the ambiguity that clouded the Carter administration's policies was not present. There was evil, communists, and there was good, anyone but the communists. Although not always conducted in the most efficient and prudent manner, Reagan's presidency lived up to his foreign policy rhetoric.

Lebanon, the Beirut Barracks Bombing, and the Powell Doctrine

U.S. military intervention in Lebanon began in 1958 on President Eisenhower's watch. A four month military deployment seemed to stabilize the government and guided

¹⁵⁷Weinberger, *In The Arena*, 277-278.

¹⁵⁸Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 525-526.

it through an election before redeployment. Conditions in Lebanon consistently degraded over the next twenty years.¹⁵⁹ Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger described Lebanon as a “powder keg” that could explode in another Arab-Israeli conflict and endanger American interests throughout the region.¹⁶⁰

Lebanon in the early 1980s was a confluence of four major factions: the Maronite Christian dominated Lebanese Government, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Israeli Army, and the Syrian Armed Forces. Fighting between the factions began to influence U.S. policy directly in April 1981.¹⁶¹ As a result of this continued fighting and the Israeli’s preparation for a major attack to destroy the PLO, the United States agreed to send a Multinational Force (MNF), with France and Italy, to supervise the departure of the PLO from Beirut.¹⁶² The MNF deployed in July of 1982 and by mid-September of that same year the MNF had moved out of Lebanon and Weinberger, although initially opposed to the idea, believed the mission had been a “complete success” in removing a cause of instability and easing conditions for Beirut residents.¹⁶³

The same day that the MNF pulled out of Lebanon, a Syrian-supported assassin killed Bashir Gemayel, the President-elect of Lebanon.¹⁶⁴ Israel moved its forces back

¹⁵⁹Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars*, 47.

¹⁶⁰Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 138.

¹⁶¹Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars*, 47.

¹⁶²The MNF consisted of three countries: United States, Italy, and France. Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 143-144.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, 144-145.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 150.

into Beirut and fighting resumed.¹⁶⁵ On 29 September 1982, the MNF returned.

Weinberger opposed this MNF involvement as well. Initially, the MNF was given a mission to “establish a presence” and later the mission was clarified as “the interposition of the multinational force between the withdrawing armies of Israel and Syria, until the Lebanese armed forces were sufficiently trained and equipped to take over that role.”¹⁶⁶

Colonel Timothy Geraghty, Commander of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit, assumed command of U.S. land forces in Lebanon on 30 May 1983.¹⁶⁷ According to Geraghty, “The Marines’ principal function, in both the patrols and the checkpoints, was to provide both a visible presence in support of the LAF [Lebanese Armed Forces] and stability for the government of Lebanon.”¹⁶⁸ The next five months were filled with military and diplomatic complexities at every level. By August, Geraghty noted that the environment had changed for the worse.¹⁶⁹ A month later, Israeli Defense Forces conducted an uncoordinated withdrawal from strategic positions that triggered fighting

¹⁶⁵In his memoir, *Turmoil and Triumph*, Secretary of State George Shultz said Moshe Arens, the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, offered security of Israel’s northern border and stabilization of the situation following Bashir Gemayel’s assassination as reasons for the Israeli Defense Forces re-entering Beirut. However, Shultz described the situation as being “dragged down by preemptive Israeli military behavior and political deception.” Shultz wrote that Ariel Sharon falsely reported a hostile attack on the U.S. embassy in Beirut and offered Israel provided security. Shultz rejected the offer. In response, Sharon sent a message informing Shultz that Israel secured key points in Beirut to prevent civil war. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 101-104.

¹⁶⁶Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 152.

¹⁶⁷Timothy J. Geraghty, *Peacekeepers at War* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2009), 29.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 53.

between all factions surrounding the MNF to fill the vacuum.¹⁷⁰ Fighting was especially fierce in the Shouf Mountains which overlooked the Marine positions at Beirut International Airport. Simultaneously, increased attacks on Marine positions tested their resolve, response, and, most importantly, their neutrality.¹⁷¹

As a result of intense clashes in the Suq-el-Garb area of the Shouf Mountains, Special Envoy, and National Security Advisor to President Reagan at the time, Robert “Bud” McFarlane sent a cable to Washington which recommended adjustments to the rules of engagement to include Navy offshore gunfire support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).¹⁷² Although initially opposed to the idea of providing U.S. Navy offshore gunfire support to the LAF for fear of sacrificing the appearance of neutrality, on the morning of 19 September 1983, Geraghty ordered U.S. Navy offshore gunfire support to the 8th Brigade of the LAF to prevent their defeat in the Suq-el-Garb. Geraghty recalled that there were no easy answers in such a complex situation, “It was a dilemma wherein we were obliged to provide support to prevent the LAF’s defeat, but in doing so we terminated our peacekeeping mission while opening ourselves to unknown retribution.”¹⁷³ Little more than a month later, 23 October 1983, a truck carrying more

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 50-52, 59.

¹⁷¹In a weekly situation report Geraghty sent to Commander, Sixth Fleet, he wrote, “The worsening military and political situation in Lebanon this week has pulled the MAU [Marine Amphibious Unit] deeper and deeper into more frequent and direct military action. Our increasing number of casualties has removed any semblance of neutrality and has put us into direct retaliation against those who have fired on us.” Ibid., 60-63.

¹⁷²Ibid., 64-65.

¹⁷³Ibid., 71-72.

than 12,000 pounds of explosives detonated at the barracks in Beirut killing two hundred and forty-one Marines and fifty-eight French soldiers.¹⁷⁴

While the Marines were in the midst of this fight, at Weinberger's request, Powell left his assignment as Deputy Commanding General for Combined Arms Combat Development Activity at Ft. Leavenworth to serve as Weinberger's Military Assistant in June 1983.¹⁷⁵ Powell was the bearer of bad news to Weinberger as the casualties from the barracks bombing were reported.¹⁷⁶ Having served as a Marine in World War II, Weinberger had a special connection to those killed in Beirut.¹⁷⁷ Powell knew the bombing incident had greatly affected Weinberger, but, Powell recalled, "I did not realize how deeply until a singular draft document came out of his office."¹⁷⁸ This document was the Weinberger Doctrine. However, a study of the various lessons learned from Lebanon demonstrates that the criteria in the Weinberger Doctrine (Appendix B) and the questions in the Powell Doctrine (Appendix A), even if addressed, may not have prevented the same result in Lebanon.

¹⁷⁴Haas, *Intervention*, 24.

¹⁷⁵Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 280.

¹⁷⁶Powell accompanied Weinberger on a trip to visit the Marines on the *USS Guam* and *USS Trenton* after they had been pulled out of Lebanon the second time. Weinberger recalled, "On both ships, I told our Marines, sailors and soldiers, of my pride in their performance as they had carried out their hopeless task—and of my deep sorrow at our losses. It was a very difficult moment." Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 170-171.

¹⁷⁷Weinberger described his service as a Marine and what it meant to him as Secretary of Defense in chapter 4 of his book, *In The Arena*. Weinberger, *In The Arena*, 76-77.

¹⁷⁸Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 302. Weinberger served as a Marine in World War II.

Given the direct link to the Weinberger and Powell Doctrine outlined above, it is important to understand the lessons learned and issues from Lebanon and contrast these lessons by applying the questions in Powell's doctrine. Powell took note of the lessons learned in Lebanon. In his book *My American Journey*, Powell highlighted the unclear purpose given to the Marines as a part of the MNF. Powell also pointed out that the MNF's use of U.S. Navy offshore gunfire against Shiites effectively chose sides in an operation where neutrality was essential. Applying Powell's six questions in his doctrine does not clearly solve both Powell's lessons learned and certainly does not alleviate the myriad of issues that made the problem complex.

Powell's first, second, third, and sixth questions seem most relevant to Powell's lessons learned in Lebanon.¹⁷⁹ Powell's first question about clearly defined and understood political objectives would address the issue of clear purpose. However, if the Marines were given the task of protecting the Beirut International Airport, a clear mission, diplomatic restrictions would not disappear and Geraghty may well have been making the same tough decision to support the 8th Brigade of the LAF with U.S. Navy offshore gunfire. Powell's second question, have all other means failed, is too subjective even when examined in hindsight, as the analysis of sanctions in Desert Storm shows later in this chapter. Powell's third question asks if military force can achieve the objective. Weinberger provided additional views of the actual objective of the MNF in his book *Fighting For Peace*. Weinberger's chief complaint was not that the mission was

¹⁷⁹Question 1: Is the political objective important and defined? Question 2: Have all other policy means failed? Question 3: Will military force achieve the objective? Question 6: How might the situation that we seek to alter develop further and what might be the consequences? The reader can reference all six questions in Appendix A.

unclear, but that the mission was unobtainable. President Reagan redefined the “presence” mission as a mission to act as a buffer between the withdrawing Israeli, Syrian, and Lebanese forces. The reality was, according to Weinberger, that none of the forces mentioned were withdrawing. A mission to supervise withdrawal or act as a buffer for withdrawal does not make sense if there are no withdrawing forces. There is a missing step and, according to Weinberger, the mission was unobtainable.¹⁸⁰ However, as the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces in September 1983 showed, there was not an easy mission to be had in Lebanon. More importantly, there was little in Lebanon that was a strictly military effort. Even the most tactical actions had strategic, political effects. A correct answer to Powell’s sixth question, how might the situation change and what are the consequences, may address the issue of neutrality and the changing political circumstances only if one understands the situation well enough to offer a correct answer.¹⁸¹ However, if the national level leadership reframed the problem incorrectly they would not have been any closer to a solution.

The challenges in Lebanon were complex. Powell’s doctrine, if applied, may not have had any effect on the outcome. Weinberger described serious chain of command problems, “There was a coordinating committee in Beirut . . . but there was no overall command of the force, and the coordination was best described as loose.”¹⁸² During the

¹⁸⁰Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 152.

¹⁸¹Peter W. Rodman, *Presidential Command* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009) 170-171.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 153. The full quote is: “There was a coordinating committee in Beirut that tried its best to deal both with military liaison and with some political issues, but there was no overall command of the force, and the coordination was best described as loose.”

fighting for the Shouf Mountain region, Commodore Morgan “Rick” France, overall commander of U.S. forces in Lebanon, drafted a message titled “Chain of Command” that described the issues at hand. The first line read, “Originator and CTF-62 are being caught in the middle of chain of command problem.”¹⁸³

Colonel James Mead, commander of the Marine Amphibious Unit Geraghty’s unit replaced, wanted to secure high ground near his position, but was denied permission by higher headquarters because the United States did not want to be seen as supporting the Israeli troops using the road below the high ground.¹⁸⁴ The Long Commission, chaired by Admiral Robert Long, conducted an inquiry into the barracks bombing incident and found, among other issues, operational chain of command negligence with respect to force protection.¹⁸⁵ This was a tough, but not uncommon or unavoidable circumstance in charged political situations the Powell Doctrine left unaddressed.

The ability to provide training and support to the LAF, yet retain a perception of neutrality among the other actors was a fine, but important line. Although multiethnic, support to the LAF was an effort to stabilize the Maronite Christian dominated Lebanese Government. With or without U.S. Navy offshore gunfire, the all important neutrality in peacekeeping may not have lasted long. In his book about his experience in Somalia, Robert Oakley reflected on the important, but difficult principle of peacekeeping forces maintaining neutrality. Oakley summarized the fighting between the Christians and

¹⁸³Geraghty, *Peacekeepers At War*, 67.

¹⁸⁴Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars*, 52.

¹⁸⁵Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 164.

Muslims in Beirut as a major lesson from Lebanon, “Don’t take sides, and proceed carefully—the traditional axiom of UN peacekeeping.”¹⁸⁶

Although the intervention metric Weinberger provided and Powell adapted was developed as a result of Lebanon with Vietnam as a background, a study of the situation reveals that the circumstances in Lebanon were not going to be solved by a handful of criteria or questions. Later in the chapter the author will demonstrate that by the time a similar situation was presented in Somalia, Powell’s initial success as CJCS in intervention extended a sense of security in his doctrine to borderline complacency.

Powell, Reagan, and the Iran-Contra Affair

Powell continued his service as Military Assistant to Secretary Weinberger until December 1986. After a brief time as Commanding General of V Corps, Powell found himself back in Washington DC as the Deputy National Security Advisor followed by the president’s National Security Advisor. Throughout five of the Reagan’s eight years in office, Powell was able to experience leadership at the highest levels of the U.S. Government.

Opinions of Reagan’s leadership yields mixed results along a common theme. In 1990 Reagan’s Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, wrote that the “myths” about Reagan’s disengagement and lack of awareness “differ grossly from the facts” as he knew them.¹⁸⁷ Chief Counsel for the Senate in the Iran-Contra Affair, chief counsel for

¹⁸⁶John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1995), 156. Although Oakley says “UN peacekeeping,” the MNF in Lebanon was not under UN control.

¹⁸⁷Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 11.

the Senate's investigation into Iran-Contra, Arthur Liman, read pieces of Reagan's diaries that led him to believe Reagan was not as detached as many may have thought.¹⁸⁸ However, evidence of Reagan as a man that neglected detail and was, at times, disconnected cannot be ignored. In 1993 Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz, described Reagan's serious weakness, "A tendency to rely on his staff and friends to the point of accepting uncritically—even wishfully—advice that was sometimes amateurish and even irresponsible."¹⁸⁹ Shultz also lamented Reagan's unwillingness to master the details.¹⁹⁰ Journalist Lou Cannon dedicated a chapter in one of his five books about Reagan to what he called "The Delegated Presidency" where Cannon described Reagan's "delegative style" plagued by intellectual laziness and riddled with "knowledge gaps."¹⁹¹ Powell's recollection of his experience with Reagan reinforces the more critical view of Reagan. Although some of these examples are bias critics, it can be fairly accepted that Reagan was at least guilty of delegating too much authority in certain areas.

In his book *My American Journey*, Powell described Reagan's style as passive—an optimistic description based on Powell's story of his first briefing with Reagan as Deputy National Security Advisor. At this briefing Powell recalled that Reagan asked few questions and gave no guidance. Despite being presented with a recommendation, Powell

¹⁸⁸Haynes Johnson, *Sleepwalking Through History: America in the Reagan Years* (New York: HarperCollins Inc., 2003), 351-352. Although Haynes' work is decidedly critical of Reagan, Haynes' acknowledgment of Liman's perspective provides useful context.

¹⁸⁹Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 263.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 1135.

¹⁹¹Lou Cannon, *Reagan* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982), 371-373.

observed, “The President would merely acknowledge that he had heard him [Frank Carlucci, National Security Advisor], without saying yes, no, or maybe.”¹⁹² In fact, Powell found out about his nomination as national security advisor to replace Carlucci on a note passed in a meeting, “The President himself never spoke to me about the job, never laid out expectations, never provided any guidance; in fact, he had not personally offered me the position or congratulated me on getting it.”¹⁹³ “Scary” was Powell’s more frank description of Reagan’s lack of guidance and decision.¹⁹⁴ Whether Reagan’s lack of guidance was a result of intelligence, competence, or delegation is an answer that will not be found in this paper. However, the debate itself illustrates Reagan’s presidential leadership style and its affect on Powell. Powell’s concerns were highlighted to the American public during the Iran-Contra Affair.

In November 1986, just as Powell was leaving Weinberger as his Military Assistant to take command of V Corps, Al-Shiraa, a Lebanese news agency, reported the United States was secretly selling arms to Iran.¹⁹⁵ These reports began an investigation that revealed a secret program driven by members in the Reagan White House and National Security Council (NSC). As the action officer, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North

¹⁹²Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 334.

¹⁹³Ibid., 349. Although Powell wrote this in 1995, David Roth offers similar verbiage in his 1993 work, *Sacred Honor*. According to Roth’s research, Powell wrote in 1989, “When Frank Carlucci and I took over, we found no law which spelled out the duties of the position. There was no job description, there was no directive, and there was no specific guidance from the President.” David Roth, *Sacred Honor: Colin Powell* (New York: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 137.

¹⁹⁴Interview with Lou Cannon as quoted in DeYoung, *Soldier*, 156.

¹⁹⁵Joel Brinkley and Stephen Engelberg, ed., *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair* (New York: Random House, 1988), 7.

coordinated for the profits from secret Iranian arms sales to support the Contras' fight against the communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua.¹⁹⁶ This occurred even though Congress had mandated that U.S. support to Contra military operations stop. Reagan's deep entrenchment in the good against evil, democracy against communism, fight led him to ask his National Security Advisor, Bud McFarlane, to find a way to keep the Contras viable.¹⁹⁷ Iran-Contra's relevance with respect to this paper lies in its illustration of Reagan's presidential leadership style and its influence on Powell as the principal military advisor to future presidents.

Former Senator John Tower (R-Texas) led the commission established in November 1986 to examine the NSC's involvement in the Iran-Contra Affair.¹⁹⁸ The Tower Commission report concluded, "President Reagan was largely out of touch with the operations undertaken by his NSC staff."¹⁹⁹ The report asserted, "The President should have insured that the N.S.C. system did not fail him. He did not force his policy to undergo the most critical review of which the N.S.C. participants and the process were capable."²⁰⁰ Powell's summary of the Tower Commission's results a decade later were, "It [Tower Commission] depicted President Reagan as confused and uninformed and

¹⁹⁶Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 166.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹⁸Brinkley and Engelberg, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, xxiv.

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰⁰These are excerpts from the Tower Commission Report. Tower Commission Report, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/PS157/assignment%20files%20public/TOWER%20EXCERPTS.htm> (accessed 8 July 2010).

found that his hands-off management style was the reason he did not know what was going on in his own presidency.”²⁰¹ Although an important factor, Reagan’s “hands-off” style was not the sole contributor to this problem. A different view worth examining asserts that Reagan’s leadership style contributed to the support-at-any-cost attitude toward the Contras, but the Iran issue was a different case altogether.

Peter Rodman, a member of the Reagan administration’s State Department and then on his NSC in 1986, made a clear distinction in his book *Presidential Command* between the Iran issue and the Contra dimension of the affair. Rodman stated that the diversion of money to the Contras was unknown to Reagan for many of the reasons cited by the Tower Commission. However, Rodman also highlighted that deals with Iran were, “most emphatically a presidential decision.” Furthermore, Rodman suggested that Reagan believed in a communication breakthrough with Iranian moderates for reasons beyond rescuing hostages in Beirut.²⁰² This idea is confirmed in Powell’s recollection, “Reagan would launch into a twenty-minute monologue on why the deal had not been arms-for-hostages; and how did we know there were no Iranian moderates?”²⁰³ Powell concluded that his challenge as National Security Advisor, a position he may not have eventually held without the Iran-Contra Affair “was to help the President rule with his head as well as his heart.”²⁰⁴ Reagan’s “hands-off” approach and prospect of being led

²⁰¹Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 335.

²⁰²Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 166-168. Reference to hostages refers to those US citizens kidnapped throughout the Middle East in the late 1970s to early 1980s. Secretary of Defense Weinberger felt most of them were kidnapped by Iranian agents.

²⁰³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 337.

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 347.

astray by overly empowered subordinates caused the “mess” Powell was called to clean up. In his memoirs, Powell recalled Frank Carlucci explaining the attributes that were required of Powell to help the NSC after the Iran-Contra Affair, “I’m looking for someone who knows how to make things work. I need what you did for Cap [Caspar Weinberger] and me, someone who can impose order and procedure on the NSC.”²⁰⁵

Frank Carlucci, the new National Security Advisor in November 1987 as a result of Weinberger’s resignation, asked Powell to bring organization and structure to the NSC.²⁰⁶ Carlucci put Powell in charge of reviewing all covert operations conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency. In order to conduct this review, Powell used four tests in the form of questions that were remarkably similar to some of his later questions in the Powell Doctrine (see table 1):

²⁰⁵Ibid., 329. Bob Woodward offered a similar description of Powell while describing Cheney’s search for a new CJCS in 1989. Woodward, *The Commanders*, 79.

²⁰⁶Powell worked for Calucci in the Nixon Administration at the Office of Management and Budget. Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 329.

Table 1. Questions for Review compared to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine	
Questions for CIA Review	Powell Doctrine
Is it legal?	
Do we know what it is supposed to achieve?	Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood?
Is it achieving its objective?	Will military force achieve the objective?
What would the American people say about it if they found out?	Weinberger Doctrine: Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, the U.S. government should have some reasonable assurance of the support of the American people and their elected representatives in the Congress.

Source: Created by author using information from Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: The Random House Ballantine Publishing Group, 1995), 329; Colin L. Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” *Council on Foreign Relations* 71 (Winter 1992/1993): 38; Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace* (New York: Warner Books Inc., 1990), 442.

In addition to these four criteria, Powell and Carlucci created the Policy Review Group.²⁰⁷ The Policy Review Group acted as a coordinating body that reviewed, in detail, issues of the day and provided clear and concise recommendations for the seniors to present to the President.²⁰⁸ Along with the Policy Review Group itself, Powell brought an efficiency and structure to the conduct of the meetings that demanded conclusions and decisions.²⁰⁹ Finally, Powell used the Tower Commission’s report as his manual for fixing the NSC. As a part of this manual, Powell stressed that the NSC existed to provide advice to Presidents.²¹⁰ Powell’s views were shaped by what he came to see, in the

²⁰⁷Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 337.

²⁰⁸DeYoung, *Soldier*, 157.

²⁰⁹Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 343-344.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*, 335.

aftermath of Iran-Contra, as a flawed process or system for the President and the military getting and giving advice.

As a result of his experiences in the Reagan administration, Powell began duty as principal military advisor to President Bush with a successful mental model that reinforced the structure and tenants of Weinberger's Doctrine to screen courses of action, link policies to objectives, and bring clarity to ambiguity.²¹¹ Perhaps most important, Powell's time with Reagan demonstrated the negative consequences that would occur with a disengaged president or a staff not capable or willing to apply some type of efficient structure to link a coherent policy to clear objectives. In theory, Powell's doctrine demanded answers from the president that would force the Commander-in-Chief to be engaged and ensure policy was congruent with methods. In application, the results varied as much as the presidents Powell served.

Powell, President George H. W. Bush, and Military Intervention

Powell described Bush as different than Reagan, not better.²¹² Bush was an expert in foreign affairs; his credentials included vice president for eight years, U.S. representative to the United Nations, chief of the U.S. diplomatic mission in China, and director of Central Intelligence Agency.²¹³ Bush took engagement on foreign affairs to a new level and wanted all the details. Some State Department officials referred to him as "the mad dialer" as they tried to keep abreast of his involvement on the international

²¹¹All reference to President Bush or Bush refers to the 41st President of the United States, George H. W. Bush.

²¹²Woodward, *The Commanders*, 205.

²¹³Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 180.

scene.²¹⁴ There were challenges remained despite Bush's personal involvement and foreign policy expertise.

In his first meeting with the Bush team after the attempted coup in Panama, Powell was surprised that important discussions occurred with little to no preparation.²¹⁵ Powell also mentioned that Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor to President Bush, had discontinued the Policy Review Group only to recreate it as the Deputies Committee through discovery learning.²¹⁶ In his book, *The Commanders*, Bob Woodward described Powell as being "disenchanted with the NSC procedures and meetings."²¹⁷ Woodward also wrote that Powell felt options were not fully explored and clear decisions were rarely brought forward.²¹⁸ Powell's application of his doctrine would make up for any shortcomings he perceived of the National Security Advisor. In his description of the first NSC meeting after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 Powell wrote, "Still the discussion did not come to grips with the issues. I am uncomfortable with meetings that do not arrive at conclusions, and as I saw this one about to end, I tried to get clearer guidance. 'Mr. President,' I asked, 'should we think about laying down a line in the sand concerning Saudi Arabia?'"²¹⁹

²¹⁴Ibid., 181.

²¹⁵Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 418.

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Woodward, *The Commanders*, 286.

²¹⁸Ibid., 286.

²¹⁹Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 463.

Powell also described a discussion he had with General Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief (CINC) Central Command, during preparation for Operation Desert Storm as Schwarzkopf told Powell, “I need to know where the hell this operation is heading.”²²⁰ Powell understood Schwarzkopf’s frustration and described his role in helping bring clarity to Schwarzkopf’s mission, “The answers would eventually emerge, but I needed to set the stage for the President to provide them.”²²¹ Setting the stage, as Powell described it, is the piece that was missing from the Reagan administration’s NSC and is exactly what Powell’s Policy Review Group meetings and structure at the NSC provided. Just as Powell, with Carlucci, used criteria to judge Central Intelligence Agency missions as a part of fixing the NSC after Iran-Contra, Powell used his doctrine in a similar manner to set the conditions for the decisions Bush would be required to make as Commander-in-Chief. Powell was not disappointed. Bush provided answers to Powell’s questions that were, more often than not, favorable. Powell and Bush did disagree on the margins. Perhaps the most publicly debated disagreement concerned the answer to Powell Doctrine question number two: have all other nonviolent policy means failed?²²²

On 24 September 1990, Powell told Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney that he was concerned President Bush felt rushed to make a decision to use force to expel Saddam Hussein’s army from Kuwait. Powell cited the domestic agenda “standstill” caused by developments in the Gulf and Bush’s challenge to maintain the international

²²⁰Ibid., 469.

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 38.

coalition as the primary pressures on Bush to make a military intervention decision. Powell told Cheney he wanted to give Bush a complete picture of how “long-term sanctions and strangulation would work.”²²³ Cheney took Powell to meet with Bush the same day. Once in the oval office Powell explained the timings on the offensive and sanctions options. After this impromptu meeting, Bush thanked Powell for his analysis, but remarked, “I really don’t think we have time for sanctions to work.” Powell refuted Bob Woodward’s version of these events as recorded in *The Commanders* that depicted him as trying to guide Bush toward sanctions.²²⁴ Powell maintained that he simply made sure Bush was aware of his options. The moment Powell and Bush decided sanctions would not work is debatable. In testimony on 14 December 1990 Powell indicated time was running out for sanctions.²²⁵ Powell was certainly not advocating sanctions forever. As Powell recalled his testimony on 3 December 1990 he wrote, “Nunn [Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee] reasoned that sanctions should be given as much time to work as they required, which seemed to me like entering a tunnel with no end.”²²⁶ Powell seemed to think Bush’s “this will not

²²³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 466.

²²⁴*Ibid.*

²²⁵General Colin Powell, speaking on Crisis in the Persian Gulf: Sanctions, Diplomacy, and War, on 14 December 1990, to the House Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 542-543, 584, 593.

²²⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 491-493. In his memoirs Powell updated his view on sanctions, “I still believe that sanctions are a useful weapon in the armory of nations. . . . But sanctions work best against leaders who have the interests of their country and people at heart, because sanctions hurt the people and the country more than the leaders.” *Ibid.*

stand” remark on 5 August 1990 signaled a change in his commitment to sanctions.²²⁷

Bush wrote in his book, *A World Transformed*, that he had not made a decision on use of force at that point. However, it is clear Bush made the decision that all other nonviolent policy means had failed before Powell came to the same conclusion. Powell believed it was Bush’s decision to make.²²⁸ Despite, their differences Bush and Powell succeeded in Desert Storm which confirmed their previous success in Panama. Bush’s willingness to meet the intent of the other five questions in the Powell Doctrine made his “quicker” decision to use force more palatable for Powell and allowed for the successful prosecution of Operation Desert Storm.

In March of 1991, just a month after the end of Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein launched a campaign to punish the Kurdish population in northern Iraq. The Kurds claimed a “homeland” that spanned corners of six separate countries. Since Saddam was weakened by Operation Desert Storm, and with some encouragement from the United States, the Kurdish population in northern Iraq staged a rebellion and captured the northern city of Kirkuk. Saddam recaptured Kirkuk, destroyed Kurdish villages in northern Iraq, and forced the Kurds into the mountainous border along Turkey during the winter months.²²⁹ Turkey had its own problems with Kurdish uprisings and forced the refugees back into Iraq, the harsh winter, and Saddam’s troops. Media pressure, support requests from Turkey, and a United Nations Resolution drove the decision for a U.S. led

²²⁷Ibid., 467.

²²⁸Ibid., 542.

²²⁹Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars*, 152-155.

relief and peacekeeping effort in northern Iraq.²³⁰ With General Jack Galvin, Powell carved out security zones around Kurdish cities in Iraq identified for resettlement. Troops from eleven nations protected these security zones. Nearly three months after Saddam's assaults began U.S. troops helped settle Kurds in new homes. The mission was deemed a success and mission accomplishment announced on 8 June 1991.²³¹ A successful relief and peacekeeping operation could not have come at a worse time. Operation Provide Comfort's success during Powell's watch as CJCS is important because it contributed to the impression that the Powell Doctrine would ensure success regardless of the complexity or type of operation. Just as a Powell Doctrine may not have stopped the disastrous results in Lebanon, Powell's doctrine would not stop the coming disaster in Somalia.

The images of destitute, freezing Kurds was replaced a year later by starving Somalis. On 24 April 1992, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 751 was approved. This resolution established United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) and authorized humanitarian relief for Somalia.²³² Supplies and food could not keep up with Somali needs. The little amount of support that had arrived did not make its way to those most in need. In July of the same year, the United Nations Security Council passed UNSCR 767 requesting an emergency airlift of supplies to southern

²³⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 531.

²³¹Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars*, 157.

²³²Richard W. Stewart, *The United States Army in Somalia: 1992-1994* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History), 6-8.

Somalia. In response, President Bush launched Operation Provide Relief.²³³ This operation focused on the U.S. military's ability to provide logistics to help with relief efforts without introducing substantial military ground forces.²³⁴ As a result of the security situation, food and supplies were still not getting to the population most in need. The initial method was to establish noncontiguous security points where food and supplies could be airdropped. However, the UN peacekeepers continued delay among other factors, made the prevention of looting impossible. Understandably, the U.S. military was not willing to support an operation with such limited effectiveness and viability.²³⁵

After mounting public pressure, Bush met with Powell and other senior advisors on 25 November 1992, to discuss the options.²³⁶ After some discussion, Bush chose the most robust option presented that introduced US ground troops to lead a major international humanitarian intervention—Operation Restore Hope.²³⁷

Operation Restore Hope was conducted by United Task Force. Consistent with his doctrine, Powell explained United Task Force's clearly defined, limited objective of providing security in order to allow humanitarian relief until handover of operations to

²³³Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 24.

²³⁴Stewart, *The United States Army in Somalia*, 8.

²³⁵Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 41.

²³⁶Some of the articles in the *New York Times* in the months leading up to the meeting were titled "The Hell Called Somalia," "Who Cares About Somalia?," "Help Needed for Forsaken Somalia" and "Save Somalia From Itself."

²³⁷*Ibid.*, 43.

UNOSOM II force while retaining the right to use force when necessary.²³⁸ US Marine Corps, US Navy special operations elements, and soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division joined other nations in a diverse team of nearly 38,000 soldiers.²³⁹ The United Task Force phase was largely a success.²⁴⁰ However, when the time came to transition to UNOSOM II old challenges in a new area with a new security team emerged. Eventually, humanitarian relief turned into peacekeeping which drifted into peacemaking via a manhunt for a warlord named Mohamed Farah Aideed, all under the watchful eye of Powell and his doctrine. Events culminated just days after Powell's retirement from the Army in a raid to find Aideed that cost the lives of eighteen U.S. soldiers.

Among the issues that influenced mission accomplishment in Somalia, the transition to UNOSOM II exposed a convoluted command structure, a shift on the spectrum of conflict, political complexities, and the loss of the perception of neutrality. The French and Italian units began checking with their national command authorities more frequently and refused to participate in certain operations.²⁴¹ Neutrality of UNOSOM II was questionable from the start. The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was seen as the key leader by certain factions in Somalia. Ghali was the former Foreign Minister of Egypt, a country that once supported the brutal dictator General Mohamed Siad Barre, whom the warlords in Somalia had just fought to expel during a bloody civil war. The transition along the spectrum of conflict and unobtainable

²³⁸Ibid., 46-47.

²³⁹Stewart, *The United States Army in Somalia*, 10.

²⁴⁰Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 161.

²⁴¹Ibid., 119.

objectives were marked by UNSCR 814 and UNSCR 837. According to Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, UNSCR 814 was “an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country.”²⁴² UNSCR 837 authorized all necessary measures to be taken against those responsible, meaning Aideed, for attacks on UNOSOM II forces.²⁴³

The problems in Somalia were eerily similar to those in Lebanon. Both missions involved a multinational effort. Both missions showed shifts in the local political landscape that caused transitions from peacekeeping to peacemaking that were not recognized or properly accounted for by U.S. leadership. Both exhibited political complexities without clear or easy solutions. Powell thought the proper application of his doctrine, founded on the Weinberger response to Lebanon and Vietnam, would prevent the type of incidents that occurred at the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. The successful execution of Operation Just Cause in 1989 and Desert Storm in 1991 created confidence in the efficacy of the Powell Doctrine as a comprehensive intervention doctrine. However, Operation Just Cause and Desert Storm were on very different points of the spectrum of conflict.²⁴⁴ With the execution of Operation Provide Comfort, that confidence was mistakenly extended beyond conventional operations to humanitarian relief and peacekeeping. The shortcomings that were highlighted by Operation Restore

²⁴²As quoted in Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 111.

²⁴³*Ibid.*, 118.

²⁴⁴The spectrum of conflict refers to a scale the military uses to characterize a conflict from stable peace to general war or peace operations to major combat operations. See Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, chapter 2 for a complete discussion. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0: *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 2-1.

Hope in Somalia demonstrated challenges still not addressed after a decade and new multinational political issues on the rise.

Powell, President William Clinton, and Bosnia

Successful actions in Panama and Iraq during the Bush administration, ironically, were a major contributing factor that led to a period of more, rather than less military intervention. As the Bush administration came to a close, there seemed to be a can-do attitude among the military and a political willingness to utilize that attitude. In the two years between Desert Shield and the end of President Bush's term, the military participated in more than nine major operations, all of which were limited applications of force.²⁴⁵ This tempo of operations is in stark contrast to that of the national security team in the follow-on Clinton administration.

In her memoirs, President Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, characterized the options Powell presented for intervention in Bosnia, "Time and again he led us up the hill of possibility and dropped us off on the other side with the practical equivalent of 'No can do'. After hearing this for the umpteenth time, I asked in exasperation, 'What are you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?'"²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵The list includes: Operation Seal Angel—disaster relief in response to a cyclone in Bangladesh. Operation Fiery Vigil—non-combatant evacuation after a volcano erupted in the Philippines. Operation Eastern Exit—non-combatant evacuation of personnel in Somalia. Operation Sharp Edge—non combat evacuation of personnel in Liberia. Operation GTMO—humanitarian assistance to Haitian refugees. Operation Provide Hope—humanitarian assistance to citizens in the former Soviet Union. Operation Provide Comfort I & II—humanitarian assistance and security for Kurds in northern Iraq. Operation Southern Watch—controlling airspace over southern Iraq. Operation Restore Hope—humanitarian assistance to Somalia. UNPROFOR—United Nations Protection Forces in Bosnia.

²⁴⁶Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 230.

In response, Powell told Albright that the military had frequently been involved in a myriad of operations along the spectrum of conflict, but always with a clear objective.²⁴⁷ Former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Merrill “Tony” McPeak, reinforced Albright’s assessment when he said, “He [Powell] did not frame the issue [intervention in Bosnia] in a way that made it possible for the president to do what he wanted.”²⁴⁸ There were also accusations that Powell was intentionally inflating troop estimates for a Bosnian intervention.²⁴⁹

Powell had criticisms of his own for the Clinton team that, when examined, resemble some of those important weaknesses Powell experienced in the Reagan administration. Powell described meetings as “wandering deliberations” and “marathon debates.”²⁵⁰ Powell described his first national security team meeting as lacking structure, not driven by the national security advisor, and almost missing a seat for Clinton, once he decided to attend.²⁵¹ Peter Rodman wrote of Clinton’s NSC, “Under Clinton the system seemed to rely more on the interaction of his subordinates, with presidential involvement more sporadic.”²⁵² Clinton’s advisor during the first few months, David Gergen, wrote, “Clinton early on reversed the tables: domestic affairs probably consumed 75% of his

²⁴⁷Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 576-577.

²⁴⁸Michael Steinberger, “Misoverestimated,” *The American Prospect*, 2004, <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=8853> (accessed 9 July 2010).

²⁴⁹*Ibid.*

²⁵⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 577.

²⁵¹*Ibid.*, 575.

²⁵²Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 208.

time, foreign affairs less than a quarter.”²⁵³ The result was another disengaged commander-in-chief. The reasons behind the results may have been different, Clinton’s focus on the economy vice Reagan’s “delegative” style, but Powell’s apprehension was clear. Even after Clinton’s role as commander-in-chief became more active Powell wrote, “He was still, however, surrounded by young civilians without a shred of military experience or understanding.”²⁵⁴ Perhaps Powell realized he could not extend the same latitude he had given the Bush team after Desert Storm to a Clinton team that exhibited some of those same qualities that led Reagan to negative consequences. Perhaps the disagreements on the margins of the Powell Doctrine that were conceded to Bush, such as when sanctions would no longer work, would be too risky to concede. Perhaps, this hostile environment required a more strict application of Powell’s doctrine While there is no doubt Powell lacked confidence in the Clinton team, there is not clear evidence to indicate that Powell employed a different application of his doctrine to prevent intervention in Bosnia.²⁵⁵

Powell was rather complimentary of Clinton in his memoir, “I always felt more comfortable when the President [Clinton] was present at these discussions. Bill Clinton had the background to put history, politics, and policy into perspective.”²⁵⁶ Clinton was

²⁵³Quoted in Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 203.

²⁵⁴Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 581.

²⁵⁵The author specifies Bosnia here because it was the major question of intervention during Powell’s tenure with Clinton. The Somalia decision was made during the Bush term. Although issues with Somalia occurred on Clinton’s watch certainly exacerbated the tension between Powell and the Clinton national security team, the question of intervention in Somalia was not an interaction between Clinton and Powell.

²⁵⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 577.

as complimentary of Powell in his memoir where he described Powell as a man of “conviction and class”²⁵⁷ More important than these compliments was the record both men held on their positions for intervention in Bosnia. Powell said, “My own views on Bosnia had not shifted from the previous administration. In response to constant calls by the new team to ‘do something’ to punish the Bosnian Serbs from the air for shelling Sarajevo, I laid out the same military options that I had to President Bush.”²⁵⁸ In testimony, Powell demonstrated his skepticism of what bombing could accomplish—a common theme he applied consistently in the Bush administration. In the same testimony he compared Bosnia to Vietnam.²⁵⁹ The most telling evidence came from Clinton’s memoir where he explained reasons for not intervening, none of which were Powell:

For example, I was reluctant to go along with Senator Dole in unilaterally lifting the arms embargo, for fear of weakening the United Nations. I also didn’t want to divide the NATO alliance by unilaterally bombing Serb military positions, especially since there were European, but no American, soldiers on the ground with the UN mission. And I didn’t want to send American troops there, putting them in harm’s way under UN mandate I thought was bound to fail.²⁶⁰

Perhaps if Powell had a longer tenure with the Clinton administration there would be more case studies to act as data points for analysis to reveal a bias in Powell’s application of his doctrine. There was certainly a tension between Powell and the Clinton team and a surge in interventions during the Bush presidency. The difference between Bush and

²⁵⁷Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 522.

²⁵⁸Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 576.

²⁵⁹Powell consistently compared every intervention to Vietnam. General Colin Powell, speaking on Department of Defense Appropriations, FY94, Part I, on 21 April 1993, to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., 92, 95, 96.

²⁶⁰Clinton, *My Life*, 513.

Clinton may have been that as Powell led the leadership up Madeleine Albright's "hill of possibility" the Bush administration underwrote Powell's resource requests to make sure he jumped off the other side; whereas Clinton was not prepared to force execution.

Conclusion

Powell's experience in Vietnam acted as a driving force for his doctrine that was later codified by his experience in the Reagan administration. Based on his experience with Reagan, Powell knew his decisions may become de facto policy which made a rationale and organization for framing decisions on the use of military force an imperative. Powell also learned that he must be able to provide clarity from ambiguity to set the conditions for a decision to be made. Powell was a steady success in this realm using the skills and doctrine he honed in the Reagan administration.

The successful military interventions in the early Bush administration built trust between the U.S. military and the American people. These interventions also built a trust between Powell and his doctrine. Ironically, both of these contributed to the conditions for more, not less, military intervention. Unfortunately, this trust was grounded in a false sense of efficacy of Powell's Doctrine for the post-Cold War world that dated back to another important event during the Reagan administration and the mechanism for the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine-Lebanon. Despite Powell's steady and even application of the doctrine with early success across the Bush administration, this false sense of security caused complications in Somalia. Interestingly, the continued applicability of these principles led to security although the context within which these principles were developed was now entirely different.

CHAPTER 4

POWELL EMPOWERED BY THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT

Since the end of World War II, the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 was the most significant law to influence the United States armed forces.²⁶¹ This law required major changes in the defense department and empowered the CJCS with authorities not yet seen in the history of the United States military. General Colin Powell, nominated as the Chairman in 1989, was the first officer to harness the power authorized by the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

This chapter will first examine how the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) system evolved from the end of World War II to Vietnam. It will then explore the actions of the JCS following Vietnam through implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This deeper look provides context to illustrate what Powell may have observed during his important post-Vietnam years when he began to formulate the Powell Doctrine. The Goldwater-Nichols Act ushered in a new era in defense organization. An examination of the Goldwater-Nichols language relevant to the chairman, the JCS, and the Joint Staff provides an important common understanding for study. Following this examination, the chapter considers how Powell's predecessor, Admiral William Crowe, implemented the act and his thoughts about implementing the chairman's new authorities. With this foundation of understanding about the Goldwater-Nichols Act, an analysis of how changes driven by the Goldwater-Nichols Act empowered Powell is important to understand its effect on the application of Powell's doctrine. The analysis demonstrates

²⁶¹ Hereafter, the author will refer to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 as Goldwater-Nichols or the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

that the Goldwater-Nichols Act changed the roles of the chairman. This change created an opportunity, and a need, for a chairman with the ability to provide strategic direction for the armed forces congruent with national policy objectives while also providing his personal military advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President.

The National Security Act of 1947 and Eisenhower's Changes

The National Security Act of 1947 established the foundation for the current U.S. national security structure. Among other important aspects, this law created the NSC system, established the Joint Staff, and specified the JCS as principal advisors to the President and Secretary of Defense.²⁶² It was not until 1949 that Congress passed an amendment to the National Security Act of 1947 to add the chairman's position to the JCS structure.²⁶³ However, the chairman was not a voting member of the JCS and had no command authority.

More reforms occurred in 1952, 1953, and 1958. In 1952, the Mansfield-Douglas Act established the Commandant of the Marine Corps as a JCS member and required the Marine Corps to maintain three divisions and three air wings in peacetime.²⁶⁴ In 1953, newly elected President Dwight Eisenhower ordered additional reforms through his Reorganization Plan No. 6 which clarified the chain of command through the service secretaries and gave the chairman veto power over appointments of officers to the joint

²⁶²Gordon Nathaniel Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 16-20.

²⁶³Hereafter, JCS refers to the service chiefs: Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief Naval Officer, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Commandant of the Marine Corps.

²⁶⁴Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 20.

staff.²⁶⁵ Eisenhower continued to demand further reform. Although change did not meet all his expectations, Congress responded to Eisenhower's requests in 1958 and passed the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958. This law increased the size of the joint staff, gave the chairman the power to vote as a member of the JCS, and refined the operational chain of command. After 1958, the chain of command ran from the President to the Secretary of Defense through the JCS and then to the combatant commanders.²⁶⁶ For the next thirty-six years, the debate over JCS's and the chairman's authorities grew.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1976

As a professor at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and, later, the U.S. Navy War College, Dr. Lawrence Korb wrote a history and analysis of the JCS.²⁶⁷ Korb's work, published in 1976, included insights based on his interviews with three former Chiefs of Naval Operations, three former Army Chiefs of Staff, two former United States Air Force

²⁶⁵Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 21. Reorganization Plan No. 6 established a chain of command that ran from the president to the secretary of defense, to the service secretaries, and then to the chiefs of each service. The operational chain of command was revised soon after in the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958.

²⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 21-22.

²⁶⁷Korb served on active duty for four years as Naval Flight Officer. He taught at the University of Dayton, the Coast Guard Academy, and the Naval War College. Korb authored, co-authored, edited, or contributed to more than twenty books and wrote more than one-hundred articles on national security issues. Korb's previous employment included U.S. Defense Department Assistant Secretary for Manpower, Reserve Affairs & Logistics and Senior Fellow and Director of National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Korb is currently a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and the Center for Defense Information. Center for American Progress, Lawrence Korb Biography, 2010, <http://www.americanprogress.org/aboutus/staff/KorbLawrence.html> (accessed 16 October 2010).

Chiefs of Staff, and three former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.²⁶⁸ Korb's book, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff: The First Twenty-Five Years*, provided views of JCS performance in the first quarter century of its existence during a unique time period—directly following Vietnam. Korb acknowledged that opinions on the JCS's performance varied. Some authors thought that the JCS had a major impact on national decisions and others believed the JCS had “as much impact in the policy process as does a group of cadets studying political science at West Point.”²⁶⁹ Admittedly only one author's view, Korb's work provides detailed analysis of the JCS decision making process and role during the late 1970s. The validity of Korb's conclusions is a subject for a different paper. However, the general foundation around which those conclusions are based foreshadows the issues that reappeared a decade later in defense reform legislation.

The JCS met consistently three days per week in a formal conference room known as “the tank.” Each meeting had a fixed agenda to address issues that the Joint Staff framed using position papers. According to Korb's research, most of the items on the agenda originated from the White House, the Secretary of Defense, or subordinate military commands and not the JCS themselves.²⁷⁰ Korb cited an article in *Commanders Digest* published in 1973 that said the Joint Chiefs acted on less than three percent of the papers processed under the JCS name. This surprisingly low number was largely due to a

²⁶⁸Lawrence J. Korb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff: The First Twenty Five Years* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 191.

²⁶⁹Korb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff*, xi.

²⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 21.

process by which operations deputies and other staff members were authorized to approve and remove items in advance.²⁷¹

The less than three percent statistic seems startling unless the JCS decision making process, referred to as the “flimsy-buff-green-red striped procedure,” is revealed. The name “flimsy-buff-green-red striped procedure” comes from the types of paper reports were printed on as they made their way through the process. Korb described the process as “involved,” but convoluted seems to be a more accurate description. The three week process required a search for concurrence among various service action officers and planners. After almost a month of changing the color of the paper through various service action officers, the JCS might still disagree and submit a split decision. The JCS began to recognize that split decisions were being exploited by civilian leaders, most notably Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.²⁷² This drive to present a unified position yet remain true to each of their services resulted in what is commonly referred to as “least common denominator” solutions. Korb concluded, “The JCS has become so bogged down in the cumbersome process which is so concerned with protecting each chief’s own service interests that it has become addicted to the status quo and has never been a source of innovation in the national security policy-making process.”²⁷³ The chairman, not just the service chiefs, grappled with parochialism. Korb’s realistic assessment suggested that

²⁷¹Ibid., 22.

²⁷²Ibid., 24, 116-121.

²⁷³Ibid., 22-24.

service parochialism was accepted as the unfortunate standard.²⁷⁴ Korb wrote, “Even though the chairman has no service responsibilities, he has had nearly forty years of association with his branch of the armed forces, and few military leaders expect the chairman to shed his service orientation or parochial biases.”²⁷⁵

Despite these harsh assessments, Korb continued to maintain that criticism was commonly rooted in “false expectations” and a misunderstanding of the intentions of the National Security Act of 1947 that created the JCS. Korb argued that, as intended, the JCS represented diverse viewpoints as advisors with no command authority. According to Korb, the JCS only have as much influence as the political leadership is willing to give them. However, Korb did explain the JCS’s professional responsibility to act, within the confines of their roles as advisors, if they opposed the civilian leadership’s proposed defense policies.²⁷⁶

In the last statement of his book Korb predicted, “Doubtless there will be many studies and proposals to modify and perhaps eliminate the JCS, but if past history is any indicator, all of those proposals will have very little if any impact.”²⁷⁷ Hindsight demonstrates that the botched rescue of hostages in Iran, the loss of two hundred and forty-one Marines and fifty-eight French soldiers in Beirut, and the muddled success in

²⁷⁴Ibid., 6. Korb gave two examples to substantiate this assessment, “For example, during the chairmanship of Admiral Moorer, the Navy received the largest share of the defense budget, while the Army fared better in the Johnson administration, when Taylor and Wheeler occupied the top spot.” Ibid.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

²⁷⁶Ibid., 179-181.

²⁷⁷Ibid., 190.

Grenada, in conjunction with a deeper examination of Vietnam, highlighted the negative aspects of the JCS and the defense establishment. In reaction to these events, future legislators and military leaders worked hard to prove Korb's prediction false.

General Jones and The Bumpy Road to Reform: 1980-1982

Less than five years after Korb's prediction, General David C. Jones, United States Air Force, appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee for his second term nomination as CJCS. At this hearing in June 1980, Jones suggested the need to attract better officers for joint assignments, increase the role for joint operations, and strengthen the role of the chairman. Although Jones denied the need for decisive action at the time, two years later he found himself no closer to fixing the problems and at the end of his chairmanship.²⁷⁸ Jones appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 1982 for what he thought may be his last testimony. In this testimony he described the deficiencies of the JCS system with more vigor and urgency than he did two years earlier.²⁷⁹ Jones had served on the JCS for eight years.²⁸⁰ At the time he was presenting the need for defense reorganization, his near decade of service made Jones the longest serving member of the JCS in history. Jones used his experience and credibility to

²⁷⁸General David C. Jones, speaking on Nomination Hearing, on 16 June 1980, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 96th Cong., 2nd sess., 13-14.

²⁷⁹General David C. Jones, speaking on Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for FY83, Part 1, Posture Statement, on 2 February 1982, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 21-22.

²⁸⁰General Jones served four years as Air Force Chief of Staff 1974-1978 followed by four years as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

build the momentum that made the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 possible.

Shortly after his testimony, Jones wrote an article, “Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change” that explained his frustrations with the JCS system:

Most of the problems and some of the approaches I will address have been discovered—then reburied—many times in the past thirty-five years. The difference this time is that proposals for improvement are coming from someone inside the system who for many years has been in the best position to understand the causes and consequences of its short-comings.²⁸¹

Shortly after his retirement, Jones expanded his thoughts to include an assessment of the defense organization in general. In “What’s Wrong with Our Defense Establishment,” Jones summarized defense issues that needed reconciliation:

Strategy is so all-encompassing as to mean all things to all men.
Leaders are inevitably captives of the urgent, and long-range planning is too often neglected.
Authority and responsibility are badly diffused.
Rigorous examination of requirements and alternatives is not made.
Discipline is lacking in the budget process.
Tough decisions are avoided.
Accountability for decisions or performance is woefully inadequate.
Leadership, often inexperienced, is forced to spend too much time on refereeing an intramural scramble for resources.
A serious conflict of interests faces our senior military leaders.
The combat effectiveness of the fighting force—the end product—does not receive enough attention.²⁸²

Along with problems, Jones submitted solutions. Among Jones’ recommended fixes were the idea to charge the chairman, not the corporate JCS, with advising the President and

²⁸¹David C. Jones, “Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no 2 (Spring 1982): 138.

²⁸²David C. Jones, speaking on Structure and Operating Procedures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 16 December 1982, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 21.

Secretary of Defense. Jones also suggested a direct appeal process be available for the service chiefs to the President and Secretary of Defense if a service chief disagreed with the chairman on a joint matter. Jones supported the creation of a deputy chairman and the idea of assigning the Joint Staff to the chairman rather than the JCS as a group.²⁸³

Jones was not alone in his attempt to move reform forward. General Maxwell Taylor described three major issues in testimony to the same Senate Armed Services Committee in 1982.²⁸⁴ First, the JCS failed to provide satisfactory military advice to the President, NSC, and Secretary of Defense. Second, there was not a clear connection between the National Command Authority and the commanders of the combatant commands. Finally, there was not a sufficient military staff to support the Secretary of Defense.²⁸⁵ Army Chief of Staff General Shy Meyer also supported reform. In fact, Meyer published an article in April of 1982 entitled “The JCS—How Much Reform Is Needed?” that suggested changes even more drastic than those offered by Jones.²⁸⁶ The debate over reform continued under General John Vessey, who was less supportive of

²⁸³Ibid., 24.

²⁸⁴General Maxwell Taylor served as Army Chief of Staff 1955 to 1959 and as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1962 to 1964.

²⁸⁵General Maxwell Taylor, speaking on Structure and Operating Procedures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 16 December 1982, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 26.

²⁸⁶Edward C. Meyer, “The JCS—How Much Reform Is Needed?” *Armed Forces Journal*, April 1982, 82-90.

defense reform. Meanwhile, the United States' interventions in Lebanon and Grenada acted as case studies for those that favored reform.²⁸⁷

Lebanon and Grenada Provide Ammunition for Reform Advocates

Although Jones had given much thought to problems in the JCS and Department of Defense as early as 1980, and efforts in Congress began in earnest in 1982, the events in October of 1983 provided confirmation that reorganization was a worthy cause. The bombing in Beirut that killed two hundred and forty-one Marines and fifty-eight French soldiers motivated many in Washington to understand shortcomings, identify lessons learned, and hold leaders accountable. Jim Locher and other members of the Senate Armed Services Committee staff used the Beirut bombing analyses to inform their work on defense reorganization. Locher believed that a confused operational chain of command structure created imbalance between responsibility and authority at the unified command level. Locher also thought this was a lesson the national security apparatus should have learned as a result of Pearl Harbor. In Locher's view, the administrative chain of command, led by the Marine commandant, deserved to share the blame that was heaped on the operational chain of command for not providing proper capabilities and training.²⁸⁸

Just two days after the bombing in Beirut, the US armed forces invaded the small island of Grenada in Operation Urgent Fury. This operation provided numerous examples

²⁸⁷James R. Locher, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 244. Jim Locher cited an interview with Weinberger who recalled a study completed by Vessey in November 1982 that concluded sweeping changes were unnecessary.

²⁸⁸Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 160-163.

of service interoperability challenges. Communications issues between services prevented Navy ships within sight of ground troops from providing responsive or accurate fire support during the fight.²⁸⁹ The decision to divide the island between the Army and the Marines was the result of service compromise to share the credit for capturing the island.²⁹⁰ An Army two star general, then Major General Norman Schwarzkopf, had to fight with a Marine colonel about whether or not to conduct a mission with army troops.²⁹¹ Secretary Weinberger and others attributed challenges in Grenada to a lack of planning time.²⁹² In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Weinberger was asked about problems with communications during the operation to which he replied:

In Grenada, there was adequate interoperability to enable us to do the job that we had to do. It could have been improved, of course, and will be improved, particularly with this and other new equipment. But given the circumstances and given the mission, I think it was satisfactory for the purpose of interoperability of communication equipment in the sense that the units were able to communicate with each other.²⁹³

Nevertheless, Grenada provided ammunition for those senior officials and officers moving forward with defense reorganization.

²⁸⁹Ronald H. Cole, *Operation Urgent Fury: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Grenada* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997), 2-6.

²⁹⁰Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations From FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 288.

²⁹¹*Ibid.*, 289.

²⁹²Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 109-111.

²⁹³Caspar Weinberger, speaking on Reorganization of the Department of Defense, on 14 November 1985, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 124.

During Vessey's tenure as chairman, proponents for reform in the Senate Armed Services Committee were able to identify a unified commander, Admiral William Crowe, who supported defense reorganization. Jim Locher, a staff member working for the Senate Armed Service Committee on reorganization, met with Crowe on 29 October 1984 while Crowe commanded Pacific Command. Locher described Crowe as bold and candid with views that strongly supported the need for reform. In addition to his support of reorganization, Crowe highlighted challenges the unified commanders faced as a result of the current system.²⁹⁴ In February of 1985, Crowe visited Washington to brief the Senate Armed Services Committee on budget issues. General Vessey's term as chairman was coming to an end in the next six months and Crowe's name was near the top of the list as a replacement. During this visit to Washington, Jim Locher arranged a meeting between Crowe and the primary drivers of reorganization on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senators Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona) and Sam Nunn (D-Georgia). Although Goldwater could not make the meeting because of health reasons, Nunn was pleasantly surprised by Crowe's commitment to reorganization and relayed his impression to Goldwater. Locher suggests that Goldwater and Nunn felt Crowe would be the ideal chairman to implement defense reorganization.²⁹⁵ Goldwater and Nunn lobbied for Crowe's selection and, in July of 1984, President Reagan announced his intention to nominate Crowe to replace Vessey as CJCS.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴Locher, *Victory on the Potomac*, 208.

²⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 227.

²⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 314.

Just days after Crowe's assumption of duties as chairman, on 8 October 1985, Locher, with Senators Goldwater and Nunn, traveled to the Pentagon to brief Secretary of Defense Weinberger, Crowe, and almost twenty other Pentagon officials. Weinberger's military assistant, Major General Colin Powell was among these twenty other deputies and various officials. Locher recalled a lackluster reception from Weinberger's group.²⁹⁷ After the brief only one senior official or officer acknowledged Locher–Powell shook Locher's hand and said, "Good briefing."²⁹⁸ In an interview with Locher, Crowe claimed that he tried to convince Weinberger that reorganization was inevitable and the Secretary should try to shape the outcome rather than frustrate the process.²⁹⁹ Despite this resistance, in a letter to Goldwater in December 1985, Weinberger revealed a weakening of his position and supported a few of the significant changes proposed by Goldwater and Nunn. On 28 February 1986, a presidential commission, the Packard Commission, released an interim report that supported defense reform.³⁰⁰ On 2 April, President Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive 219, which ordered the Department of Defense to apply any Packard Commission recommendations that did not require action

²⁹⁷Ibid., 351.

²⁹⁸Ibid., 353.

²⁹⁹William J. Crowe, Jr., *The Line of Fire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 157.

³⁰⁰Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 74. In his memoirs, Admiral Crowe noted one of the reasons he thought Weinberger did not support Goldwater-Nichols, "He [Weinberger] did not, for example, like the idea of increasing the Chairman's authority. A Chairman with more authority would be in a better position to frustrate the Secretary, for whom, after all, he worked." Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, 158.

from Congress.³⁰¹ Three weeks later, Reagan sent a letter to Congress that supported defense reform.³⁰² Although debate continued between the services, a House version of the bill, and a Senate version of the bill, the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act was agreed upon in conference on 12 September 1986. President Reagan signed the act into law on 1 October 1986.³⁰³

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986

Congress listed the following eight statements of intent in the Goldwater-Nichols Act:

- (1) to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority in the Department;
- (2) to improve the military advice provided to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense;
- (3) to place clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands for the accomplishment of missions assigned to those commands;
- (4) to ensure that the authority of the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands is fully commensurate with the responsibility of those commanders for the accomplishment of missions assigned to their commands;
- (5) to increase attention to the formulation of strategy and to contingency planning;
- (6) to provide for more efficient use of defense resources;
- (7) to improve joint officer management policies; and

³⁰¹Ibid.

³⁰²Ibid.

³⁰³Ibid., 76.

(8) otherwise to enhance the effectiveness of military operations and improve the management and administration of the Department of Defense.³⁰⁴

Without reviewing the Goldwater-Nichols Act in its entirety, it is important to highlight some of those key aspects that influenced Powell. The Goldwater-Nichols Act empowered the chairman as the principal military advisor to the President, the NSC, and the Secretary of Defense in order to increase the quality and responsiveness of military advice. The law referred to the chairman's advice as "his own advice."³⁰⁵ This demonstrated a level of personal influence that was absent from the service chief's group recommendations previously provided to the President. The act also allowed the chairman to consult with the other members of the JCS and unified commanders as the chairman "considers appropriate."³⁰⁶ In an effort to continue to provide diverse viewpoints offered by each service chief, the Goldwater-Nichols Act also allowed the service chiefs to "submit to the Chairman advice or an opinion in disagreement with, or advice or an opinion in addition to, the advice presented by the Chairman to the President."³⁰⁷ The law also required the chairman to present these dissenting opinions at the same time he presented his own advice.³⁰⁸

The functions of the chairman were also addressed in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The chairman, as a result of the new law, was required to assist in the development of the

³⁰⁴Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 3.

³⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

³⁰⁶*Ibid.*

³⁰⁷*Ibid.*

³⁰⁸*Ibid.*

strategic direction and planning for the armed forces. Furthermore, the act required the chairman to provide the preparation of contingency plans that nested with national policy guidance.³⁰⁹ The act mandated that the chairman submit a report on the roles and missions of the armed forces once every three years to achieve maximum effectiveness of the armed forces.

As a part of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the combination of joint doctrine, joint professional military education, and joint duty assignment prerequisites emphasized the importance of joint operations. Goldwater-Nichols provided a role for the chairman to influence each of these aspects. The Goldwater-Nichols Act required the chairman to develop doctrine for the conduct of joint operations.³¹⁰ The task of developing joint doctrine was not trivial. Joint doctrine, with the chairman's guidance and approval, "promotes a common perspective from which to plan, train, and conduct military operations. It represents what is taught, believed, and advocated as what is right."³¹¹ With this authority, the chairman was able to shape the fundamental principles that guide the use of military forces.³¹² The new prerequisites for selection to general or flag officer rank in Goldwater-Nichols ensured joint doctrine through joint professional military

³⁰⁹The author uses the word "nested" in the context of military doctrine. According to Field Manual 5-0, *The Operations Process*, "*Nested concepts*[emphasis in original] is a planning technique to achieve unity of purpose whereby each succeeding echelon's concept of operations is aligned by purpose with the higher echelons' concept of operations. Department of the Army, *The Operations Process*, 2-16.

³¹⁰Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 18.

³¹¹Joint Doctrine, Joint Electronic Library, Joint Publications, 2010, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jointpub.htm (accessed 16 October 2010).

³¹²*Ibid.*

education permeated the military's future senior leaders. After Goldwater-Nichols no officer could be selected to general or flag rank unless the officer served in a joint duty assignment.³¹³ In order to strengthen the officers assigned to these joint duty assignments needed for promotion, the law required officers to complete two phases of joint professional military education.³¹⁴ The chairman influenced the content of joint professional military education through more than joint doctrine. In section 663 of Goldwater-Nichols, the chairman was directed to assist and advise the Secretary Defense on the curriculum at all joint professional military education schools.³¹⁵ The chairman was now able to influence the use of the armed forces and future leader development through joint doctrine and joint professional military education.

The chairman would no longer be alone in this process. The Goldwater-Nichols Act created the position of vice chairman. Before 1986, if the chairman was absent, a service chief would sit in his place. A separate position as vice chairman created much needed continuity and gave the vice chairman the authority to execute the chairman's duties in his absence, vacancy, or disability.³¹⁶ Finally, to bolster the chairman in his new position as principal military advisor, the Goldwater-Nichols Act increased the joint staff

³¹³Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 41.

³¹⁴Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, "Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater- Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel," House Armed Services Committee, April 2010, <http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/PMEReport050610/PMEReport050610.pdf> (accessed 16 October 2010), 9.

³¹⁵Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 38.

³¹⁶*Ibid.*, 19.

size and quality and made it answerable to the chairman alone.³¹⁷ In the amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 passed in 1949, Congress authorized an increase from one hundred to two hundred and ten officers on the joint staff.³¹⁸ In 1958, the joint staff authorization rose to four hundred.³¹⁹ Technically, the personnel officially assigned to the joint staff remained at four hundred, but the personnel in the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff rose to over one thousand by 1983.³²⁰ Goldwater-Nichols section 155 authorized the joint staff up to 1,627 personnel.³²¹

The Goldwater-Nichols Act described new relationships for the combatant commanders as well. The Goldwater-Nichols Act stated, “Except as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all forces operating within the geographic area assigned to a unified combatant command shall be assigned to, and under the command of, the commander of that command.”³²² Furthermore, the law specified the chain of command for combatant commands to run from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary to the combatant commander.³²³ Directly after this section, in section 163, the law explained the role of the chairman as related to the combatant commanders:

³¹⁷Ibid., 18-22.

³¹⁸Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 19.

³¹⁹Ibid., 22.

³²⁰Ibid., 42.

³²¹Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 38.

³²²Ibid., 23.

³²³Ibid.

(a) Communications Through Chairman of JCS; Assignment of Duties. Subject to the limitations in section 152(c) of this title, the President may –

(1) direct that communications between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

(2) assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.

(b) Oversight by Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff–

(1) The Secretary of Defense may assign to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsibility for overseeing the activities of the combatant commands. Such assignment by the Secretary to the Chairman does not confer any command authority on the Chairman and does not alter the responsibility of the commanders of the combatant commands prescribed in section 164(b)(2) of this title.

(2) Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the spokesman for the commanders of the combatant commands, especially on the operations requirements of their commands. In performing such function, the Chairman shall–

(A) confer with and obtain information from the commanders of the combatant commands with respect to the requirements of their commands;

(B) evaluate and integrate such information’

(C) advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense with respect to the requirements of the combatant commands, individually and collectively; and

(D) communicate, as appropriate, the requirements of the combatant commands to other elements of the Department of Defense.³²⁴

The Goldwater-Nichols Act significantly increased the power of the chairman. The effects of the Goldwater-Nichols Act at the time of its enactment were not clear, however; the position of CJCS had unmistakably changed.

³²⁴Ibid., 23-24.

Crowe proceeded cautiously with his new authority. Crowe tried to shepherd reorganization with a Secretary of Defense that opposed reform and service chiefs with their own objections. In Crowe's words, he had to "tread carefully."³²⁵ After Goldwater-Nichols became law, Crowe felt he should apply its requirements guardedly for fear of degrading interaction among the services and in the Joint Staff. Crowe felt this strategy would better create the conditions for an "effective and decisive" JCS in the future.³²⁶

The new authorities given to the chairman required a new mix of skills for officers to succeed in this position. There was still an important need to work with the service chiefs, but achieving consensus would no longer be the chairman's focus. The chairman was now *the* principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense. Goldwater-Nichols required the chairman to provide strategic direction and planning nested with national policy guidance. The chairman also had to translate national objectives that involved all the elements of national power into military objectives.³²⁷ In order to accomplish these tasks effectively, the chairman had to understand politics in Washington more so than previous periods in history.

Powell and the Goldwater-Nichols Act

Although Powell was one of the most junior of fifteen eligible four star general officers, he possessed many of the qualities the first full-tenure chairman after

³²⁵Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, 152-153.

³²⁶*Ibid.*, 160.

³²⁷The elements of national power are: diplomatic, economic, military, and information.

Goldwater-Nichols required.³²⁸ Crowe wrote of Powell, “He is a strong advocate with a sure understanding of the bureaucracy, both civilian and military, and that is the talent that makes him a tremendous asset to the services he represents.”³²⁹ Powell spent his time in Washington serving in high level military and political billets. Less than six months before being named chairman, Powell served as National Security Advisor to President Reagan. Although Powell worked for Weinberger while the secretary frustrated defense reform, Powell did not always agree with his boss and certainly saw the benefits of defense reorganization as he moved into the chairman position. Just before his nomination for the chairmanship, Powell endorsed the Goldwater-Nichols Act during testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, “After two and one-half years, it is my personal assessment that Goldwater-Nichols is beginning to have the positive impact you intended on the way we do business, but fully achieving the objectives of the act will require more time.”³³⁰ In his confirmation hearing for selection as chairman, Senator Sam Nunn asked Powell about the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the JCS. Powell told Senator Nunn, “I will be concentrating on the views of the CINCs and the other Chiefs, making sure that the Joint Staff is responsive to my needs, and assembling the best advice I can

³²⁸Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 408.

³²⁹Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, 45.

³³⁰General Colin Powell, speaking on International Security Environment Strategy, on 18 April 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 513.

from all sources to ensure that I am performing that clear role given to me under the Act as principal military adviser.”³³¹

Like Crowe, Powell thought the Goldwater-Nichols Act was part of the answer to prevent another Vietnam or Lebanon and sharpen the execution of operations like Urgent Fury in Grenada.³³² Unlike Crowe, or perhaps because of him, Powell asserted the newfound power of the chairman more forcefully. The new Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, exercised his option under the Goldwater-Nichols Act to require that orders flow through Powell to the combatant commanders.³³³ This decision supported and encouraged Powell’s aggressive approach.

Powell recalled the decision to invade Panama in his memoirs as the first major test of the chairman’s new role as principal military advisor. Although Powell wrote that he was not going to ignore the advice of the service chiefs, he was quick to point out that he was not constrained to “a messenger role.”³³⁴ The news of the death of Lieutenant Robert Paz and the harassment of Lieutenant Adam Curtis and his wife at the hands of the Panamanian Defense Forces reached Powell on Saturday, 16 December 1989.³³⁵

³³¹General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 20 September 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 617.

³³²Crowe links Vietnam, Lebanon, and Grenada to defense reorganization in his chapter about Goldwater-Nichols. Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, 150. Powell links the three to Goldwater-Nichols legislation in his memoirs as well. Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 411.

³³³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 411.

³³⁴*Ibid.*, 422.

³³⁵*Ibid.*, 421.

Before his meeting the next day at ten o'clock in the morning, Powell called the combatant commander, General Max Thurman, responsible for executing the invasion. Powell also called Transportation Command and Special Operations Command. After a meeting at 10:00 a.m. with the Secretary of Defense, the undersecretary of defense for policy, and assistant secretary for public affairs, Powell talked privately with Secretary Cheney. Powell then gave his advice on military intervention to the Secretary of Defense. Powell said, "Max and I both believe we should intervene to protect American citizens."³³⁶ At this point Powell had not talked to any of the service chiefs. Powell did add the caveat that he would like to hold his final recommendation until he had discussed the issue with the service chiefs.

Before his final meeting with the President that afternoon, Powell met with the service chiefs at his home and the chiefs had voiced unanimous support for the operational plan.³³⁷ In Powell's recollection, the discussion seemed to be more about the appropriateness of the plan more than a recommendation on intervention. According to Powell's description of the afternoon meeting with the President, the last statement of his brief was that the chiefs all agreed with the plan. There is no way to know what Powell may have done had some or all of the chiefs dissented before his afternoon meeting after he had already told the Secretary of Defense they should intervene. However, Powell did make a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense on intervention after conferring with only the relevant combatant commanders. Powell's afternoon meeting with President Bush that same day incorporated discussion about the expansion of the mission beyond

³³⁶Ibid.

³³⁷Ibid., 422-423.

eliminating Manuel Noriega to include the establishment of a new civilian government. This discussion was all done without the consultation or presence of service chiefs.³³⁸

Powell grew more comfortable with the chairman's new authority as his tenure continued. As previously mentioned, Goldwater-Nichols charged the chairman to provide strategic direction and planning nested with national policy objectives. Powell did not waste time in providing direction to accomplish this goal. He put his recent experience as National Security Advisor to work and began shaping his strategic vision for the armed forces. Powell scratched his ideas on a notepad titled "Strategic Overview."³³⁹ According to Powell, this document outlined the future security environment over the next five years, as he saw it. The accuracy of his predictions is irrelevant. Powell's thought process and presentation of the concept was important. As chairman Powell was deciding the strategic direction that bridged between policy and military capability. Powell recalled that he had discussed the ideas in his Strategic Overview with service chiefs, but they had not seen the complete briefing and they had certainly not given the ideas their official support.³⁴⁰ Within a few days, without the service chiefs having seen the complete briefing or having knowledge of the meeting, Powell took his ideas to the President. President Bush posed questions about what this strategic overview meant for his next summit with the Soviet Union, but made no decisions. Powell presented his complete brief to the service chiefs after he had briefed the President. Although Powell wrote that he regretted the decision not to involve the service chiefs in a more meaningful way

³³⁸Ibid., 424.

³³⁹Ibid., 436.

³⁴⁰Ibid., 438.

before going to the President, Powell also understood his unprecedented ability to get ideas codified by *his* joint staff and briefed to the President within days instead of years.³⁴¹ These ideas did not remain merely briefing charts. Powell continued to shape them throughout his tenure into a concrete plan called the Base Force concept.³⁴² In his continued effort to eliminate needless levels of bureaucracy, Powell eliminated the Chairman's Staff Group for staffing joint staff papers and required the joint staff directorates to work with him directly.³⁴³

While Powell continued to develop the Base Force concept and move towards his vision of the future, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The defense of Saudi Arabia, named Operation Desert Shield, and the liberation of Kuwait, named Operation Desert Storm, provided, according to Powell, "the first opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in a major conflict involving substantial contributions by all services under unified command."³⁴⁴ Powell was successful in Panama, started forward

³⁴¹Ibid., 438-439.

³⁴²As discussed in Chapter 1, Powell's Base Force concept divided the armed forces into four force packages: Strategic, Atlantic, Pacific, and Contingency. Packaging the force in this manner included cuts across the services. With the end of the Cold War, downsizing the military was a foregone conclusion. The Base Force Concept was Powell's method to get ahead of the cuts to better shape a responsible downsizing. Powell proposed a twenty-five percent cut affecting each of the services. General Colin Powell, speaking on Future of US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era, on 24 March 1992, to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., 361.

³⁴³Ronald H. Cole et al., *The Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995), 34.

³⁴⁴General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 27 September 1991, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., 348.

progress on his new force concept, and gained confidence in his new authorities as well as his doctrine. The service chiefs were sidelined more so during Operation Desert Shield/Storm than ever before. There are many works written that detail the various meetings prior to and during the operations.³⁴⁵ However, this study focuses on the chairman's role throughout these meetings rather than an argument of which author's recollection is more accurate.

In Powell's memoirs he recalled an important but brief meeting with the President. The service chiefs briefed the President at the Pentagon. After this brief, Bush had a fifteen minute break before giving a speech at the Pentagon. Powell saw this brief moment as an opportunity to provide the President with an understanding of the flow of forces into the theater and the decision point for transition to offensive operations. Although the service chiefs had just finished a briefing, the meeting with Bush on this important subject matter included only Powell, Secretary Cheney, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, and the President's Chief of Staff, John Sununu, in Secretary Cheney's office.³⁴⁶ The opportunity for meetings like this was not as likely without Goldwater-Nichols. To have all the service chiefs present in a larger group would make a fifteen minute window next to worthless. However, Goldwater-Nichols and Powell's ready application of his new authorities ensured that all the authority needed was in that

³⁴⁵These works include, but are not limited to, *The General's War* by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Commanders* by Bob Woodward, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* by Norman Schwarzkopf, *My American Journey* by Colin Powell, and *A World Transformed* by George Bush and Brent Scowcroft.

³⁴⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 469.

room.³⁴⁷ In addition to the authority needed, Powell also possessed skills necessary to advise the President. He developed these skills in various duty assignments in the Reagan administration, to include National Security Advisor to the President. If there is one congruency in the works written about the discussions that led to Desert Storm, it was that Powell, not the service chiefs as a corporate body, was the central figure. For example, there are many different versions of what happened in a meeting on 24 September 1990 where Powell discussed sanctions options with President Bush, but there is agreement that Powell, as the chairman, was a key advisor while the President considered the use of military force.³⁴⁸ There were many other meetings conducted between July 1990 and February 1991 that usually consisted of, at least, the President, the Secretary of Defense, the White House Chief of Staff, the National Security Advisor, and the Chairman. Powell's influence in these meetings, rather than a corporate body in the form of the joint chiefs, naturally created an opportunity for a more personal mark on the chairmanship and armed forces.

The role and application of air power during Desert Storm fueled debate during the planning period and illustrated the new authorities Powell used as chairman. The air power debate is worth examining because it was one of the few contentious issues that occurred between the services and Powell had his own strong beliefs about how to use air

³⁴⁷ Contrast this with President Reagan's discussions to use force in Grenada. The day before the invasion, 24 October 1983, the President met with the entire Joint Chiefs and asked each service chief for his view of the operation. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidents*, 287.

³⁴⁸ Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 480; Woodward, *The Commanders*, 8-9.

power successfully.³⁴⁹ The debate started with General Michael Dugan, the Air Force Chief of Staff, who Secretary Cheney fired for comments Dugan made just ten days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Despite Dugan being fairly correct, in hindsight, about Iraq's military capability and U.S. air power capability, his comments graded on Powell and infuriated Cheney. Powell makes it clear in his memoirs that Dugan was not in the chain of command. Surely this incident sent a signal to the other service chiefs.³⁵⁰

The Air Force Staff, including Colonel John Warden, developed an air plan called "Instant Thunder" to strike at Iraq's command and control, production capability, and air defense networks.³⁵¹ The combatant commander, General Norman Schwarzkopf, and Powell believed there should have been more emphasis on attacking Iraqi army assets in Kuwait to help create conditions to drive Saddam back into Iraq. Although debate would continue about targets and the effectiveness of air power, the CJCS and the combatant commander had the final word. With guidance from the general in charge of the air component in the Gulf, Lieutenant General Charles Horner, Brigadier General Buster Glosson drafted a new plan that kept the same principles as Warden's "Instant Thunder," yet satisfied Powell and Schwarzkopf's direction to focus more on ground forces.³⁵²

³⁴⁹Powell recalled fighting off air power recommendations he disagreed with during the coup in the Philippines, in Panama, the planning for Desert Storm, and again during the debate over Bosnia.

³⁵⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 477.

³⁵¹This plan was first presented to Powell on 11 August 1990. Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 82-85.

³⁵²*Ibid.*, 94-99.

Powell's recollection of the initial brief by Warden also demonstrated an interesting dynamic between the chairman and the combatant commander. Powell wrote, "Schwarzkopf and I asked Warden to expand his strategic plan to include tactical strikes against the Iraqi army deployed in Kuwait."³⁵³ Cheney had specified that orders would flow through Powell to the combatant commander.³⁵⁴ This is significant because Goldwater-Nichols specified that the chairman act as a conduit for communication to the combatant commander or, if specified by the Secretary of Defense, the chairman may oversee the activities of the combatant commander, but the chairman does not have command authority.³⁵⁵ However, Powell's actions prior to and during the operation were arguably close to command. Powell reviewed air power plans and huddled over maps with Schwarzkopf discussing the left hook.³⁵⁶ The result would have been different if the combatant commander was an officer like General Wesley Clark. Clark was not hesitant in moving forward with his own strategy unless otherwise directed. The conclusion from Michael Gordon's and General Bernard Trainor's research on Desert Shield/Storm in their book *The General's War* summarized the dominating role Powell played and suggested the Powell Doctrine was central to this role:

Our effort yielded a simple but important conclusion: the way the war was planned, fought, and brought to a close often had more to do with the culture of the military services, their entrenched concept of warfare, and Powell's abiding

³⁵³Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 473.

³⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 411.

³⁵⁵U.S. Congress, Report 99-824, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 23-24.

³⁵⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 486-487.

philosophy of decisive force than it did with the Iraqis or the tangled politics of the Middle East.³⁵⁷

This conclusion approximates one link between the Powell Doctrine and the results of the Goldwater-Nichol's Act. The new demands on the CJCS created the conditions for a framework, like the Powell Doctrine, to take hold.

Powell put the final touches on his doctrine and philosophy while serving in strategic level duty positions from 1983 to 1989. Powell completed these final assignments that made him an attractive choice to be the first chairman to implement reform just as Nunn and Goldwater made their final push to pass the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The Goldwater-Nichols Act changed the duties and roles of the chairman, thereby changing the type of officer needed to fill the highest military position in the United States armed forces. The increased authority required the chairman to reorient *his* Joint Staff toward *his* vision for the strategic direction of the armed forces that was congruent with national policy objectives. This made the chairmanship more personal than it had been in the past. By no means did Powell alienate the service chiefs by design or otherwise. Nevertheless, the mark on the Joint Staff and the armed forces would be distinctly Powell's. There was, therefore a personal application of Powell's doctrine that was compatible with his duty to provide his personal advice to the Secretary of Defense and President.

Although there is less opportunity for a point by point analysis of Powell's six questions that form his doctrine, the Goldwater-Nichols Act clearly created the opportunity for a principal military advisor that could meld international and domestic

³⁵⁷Gordon and Trainor, *The General's War*, xii.

politics with military strategy. Because Powell based his doctrine on the results from many of the same events Nunn and Goldwater based the Goldwater-Nichols Act, his six questions seemed to meet the demands and opportunities the act presented to the chairman. There is no clear evidence that without the Goldwater-Nichols Act Powell would not have been selected as chairman. There is also no evidence to suggest that without the act Powell would not have formulated or attempted to apply his doctrine. In isolation, the Goldwater-Nichols Act cannot be labeled as the catalyst for Powell or the rise of the Powell Doctrine. However, the new authorities granted to the chairman under the Goldwater-Nichols Act, in confluence with Powell's experiences in the Reagan Administration and his worldview, created the conditions for Powell's rise and an unprecedented opportunity to apply his doctrine. With the conditions set, Powell demonstrated the ability to see and exploit the opportunity to shape a new era.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Vietnam shaped an entire generation of military officers and their attitudes about U.S. military intervention. Colin Powell was among this generation. His experience in Vietnam and the country's reaction to the war deeply influenced Powell. The Vietnam War, and Powell's reflection upon it, provided the driving force Powell used to examine the theory of war.³⁵⁸ However, the complete creation and application of Powell's doctrine was greater than the Vietnam Syndrome.³⁵⁹ Powell's understanding of military thinkers, his experience with various Presidential leadership styles, and the responsibility as the first full tenure CJCS after Goldwater-Nichols influenced his translation of theory to doctrine. These aspects and their effects became manifested in his application of the Powell Doctrine. A remarkable confluence of global events unfolded while Powell sorted and tested the details of his doctrine and proceeded from theory to practice.

³⁵⁸ According to Powell's memoirs, it took more time for him to, "examine the experience [Vietnam] more penetratingly." As Powell gained experience and education he was able to reflect on Vietnam with a deeper understanding. In fact, Powell expanded his experience and education in the six years between his return from Vietnam and introduction to Clausewitz's theory of war at the National War College in 1979. Powell graduated from Georgetown University with a Masters in Business Administration. He was a White House Fellow. He commanded a battalion in Korea and worked for nine months in the Office of the Assistant Deputy Secretary of Defense. In his memoirs, Powell recalled his fondness for Clausewitz's ideas and used Vietnam as an example of failure that would occur if Clausewitz's theory was ignored. Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 144, 207-208.

³⁵⁹ Vietnam Syndrome refers to reluctance on the part of some U.S. policymakers and military leaders to approve of U.S. military intervention for fear of creating another Vietnam. O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 2-3.

A study of the aspects that contributed to the formulation of Powell's doctrine coupled with an examination of Powell's application of his doctrine during his tenure as CJCS demonstrates that change occurred from the time Powell examined the theory upon which his ideas were based to the doctrine's practical application. This change characterizes the difference between theory, doctrine, and practice. The ideas in the Powell Doctrine began with Powell's experience in Vietnam and his view of Clausewitz's theory of war. Powell's next significant step, during his tenure in the Reagan administration, gave him an opportunity to understand where political objectives and military missions should meet at the national command level. His experience in senior level assignments in the military and Reagan administration helped Powell further shape how his ideas would work in practice.³⁶⁰ Finally, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 reinforced the need for a chairman with the ability to provide strategic direction to the armed forces congruent with national security policy and created the conditions for Powell's ideas to carry greater influence.

Powell-In Theory

After two tours of duty in Vietnam, the National War College introduced Powell to Clausewitz's theory of war. Powell's experience in Vietnam matched his later study of Clausewitz at the National War College. Powell experienced and recognized the role of chance and unexpected difficulties, similar to Clausewitz's idea of "friction," that

³⁶⁰From 1981 to 1989 Powell's assignments included: Senior Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Assistant Division Commander 4ID, Deputy Commanding General, Fort Leavenworth, Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, V Corps Commander, Deputy National Security Advisor, and National Security Advisor.

occurred in war.³⁶¹ He also demonstrated an appreciation for the ability to exercise elements of what Clausewitz characterized as “military genius” through his unique intuitive decision making process as a method to overcome friction.³⁶² However, Powell also possessed a pragmatism and affinity for structure that served him well throughout his military career. Powell’s descriptions of Clausewitz’s theory of war revealed these attributes. Powell used various analogies to explain his understanding of Clausewitz that were problematic. Powell’s explanations were meant to show the importance of linking the political objectives to the military mission and highlight the need to consider all actions within the realm of possibility.³⁶³ However, within these explanations Powell introduced prescription and linearity in order to bring Clausewitz’s theory closer to application.³⁶⁴ Clausewitz’s theory was an effort to describe the innumerable, perhaps unrepeatable, interactions that took place in war among the paradoxical trinity in order to

³⁶¹According to Clausewitz, friction was created by the infinite number of imponderables that complicate the act of real war versus war on paper. Clausewitz, *On War*, 119-121.

³⁶²*Ibid.*, 100-112.

³⁶³Powell’s explanations examined in this paper can be found in Chapter 1. Powell used a stool analogy in his memoirs to describe Clausewitz’s paradoxical trinity and used a fire evacuation analogy in his 1992 *Foreign Affairs* article. Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 208; Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 36-38.

³⁶⁴The author uses Alan Beyerchen’s definitions of linearity and nonlinearity. Linearity describes a “system of equations whose variables can be plotted against each other on a straight line.” A linear system is proportional and additive. A nonlinear systems are, “those that disobey proportionality or additivity. They may exhibit erratic behavior through disproportionately large or disproportionately small outputs, or they may involve ‘synergistic’ interactions in which the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts.” Beyerchen, “Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War,” *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992-1993): 62.

add to the study of war.³⁶⁵ Clausewitz intended to answer the question, “Why?” Powell used a discrete portrayal of the elements in the trinity. Powell compartmentalized Clausewitz’s trinity and provided prescriptions to avoid bad decisions. Powell intended to answer the question, “How?” In doing so, Powell created a set of guiding principles in an effort to control the outcome of war through the proper balance of the political-military relationship.

In theory, Powell did agree with Clausewitz’s statement that war is an extension of politics.³⁶⁶ However, Powell’s doctrine developed into guidelines to prescribe action with regard to U.S. intervention, whereas the purpose of Clausewitz’s theory was to describe factors that affected decision making in war.³⁶⁷ Although Powell cites Clausewitz’s work as the theoretical underpinning for what became known as the Powell Doctrine, there was conflict between the purpose of Clausewitz’s theory and Powell’s Doctrine.³⁶⁸ This difference was just one component in the Powell Doctrine’s transition from theory to practice. Clausewitz made a concerted effort to distinguish theory from doctrine and warned readers that theory was to guide self-education, not to prescribe

³⁶⁵Ibid., 67-68.

³⁶⁶The quote from Clausewitz is, “war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 69.

³⁶⁷Sumida, “The Clausewitz Problem,” 18.

³⁶⁸Powell cited, “Clausewitz’s principles of mass and objective.” Although, Clausewitz may not have argued with the importance of mass and objective, the two principles Powell’s application of these principles in a prescriptive manner demonstrates a different approach.

action in battle. Nevertheless, Powell needed a set of tangible principles that would accompany him in service as the CJCS.³⁶⁹

Naturally, Powell turned to principles he learned in the army and to the leadership skills that proved successful in the past. Despite traces of Clausewitz in army field manuals, Jomini's principles of war were more prevalent, especially at the tactical and operational levels of war where Powell had the most experience. Powell used structured principles in his thought process to guide action with great success. Powell, like Jomini, also ascribed to the use of structured principles that guide action. Powell was well known for his ability to provide organization and structure to maximize time, provide clarity, and arrive at decisions. Many successful leaders have a set of principles and axioms that guided them on their path to success. Powell was no exception. Powell applied structure to decision making to his success, but this pragmatism translated to a "checklist" view and application of the Powell Doctrine. Powell's pragmatism overshadowed his insistence to be selective and flexible in the approach to military intervention. Powell's involvement in significant world events and experience in the Reagan administration further refined the guidelines that became his doctrine and reinforced the need for structured application.

The Doctrine Emerges

As Powell rose to the strategic level of war during the Reagan administration a doctrine began to emerge from the abstract theory he pondered early in his career. Powell began his service in the Reagan administration as a brigadier general working for the

³⁶⁹Clausewitz, *On War*, 141.

Deputy Secretary of Defense. Powell concluded his service under Reagan eight years and two promotions later as the National Security Advisor to the President. From January 1979 until January 1989, Powell witnessed a change in direction for national policy as President Reagan assumed leadership. Powell was in Washington for the height of the Cold War tensions. These significant global events later proved to be a period of major transition in the world. The beginning of the end of the Cold War enabled America's rise as the sole global superpower while Powell served at the upper echelons of the U.S. government. In addition to constant political and military tension with the Soviet Union, Powell was involved at the national strategic level during events such as the Iran Contra Affair, the multinational peacekeeping effort in Lebanon, and U.S. military intervention in Grenada. Powell's experience with Presidential leadership during the course of these events influenced the formulation of his ideas and provided the detail that allowed a tangible doctrine to emerge.

The lessons learned from events in Lebanon and the mixed results of Reagan's leadership style during the Iran-Contra Affair highlighted, for Powell, the importance of providing clarity to reduce ambiguity. Powell saw how influential senior advisors could enhance or detract from the Commander-in-Chief's understanding and provide recommendations at the strategic level that effected his nation's ability to match political objectives with military missions.

As the military assistant to Secretary of Defense Weinberger, Powell watched the decision making process at the national level occur with much debate as the multinational peacekeeping effort in Lebanon unfolded. For Weinberger and Powell, the bombing of the Marine barracks on 23 October 1983 was the single most influential event since the

Vietnam War. The barracks bombing incident in Lebanon served as a catalyst for the Powell Doctrine's progression from theory to practice. After the bombing, Powell saw Weinberger's draft speech in response to Lebanon intended to guide the use of force for the United States. Weinberger's speech, given at the National Press Club, helped Powell further materialize his doctrine and became known as the Weinberger Doctrine. From the relative failure in Lebanon, Powell's major lesson learned was the importance of providing a clear mission for the military.³⁷⁰ An examination of the issues in Lebanon revealed various complexities beyond a clear link between the political objective and the military mission that neither Weinberger nor Powell addressed. Intelligence gaps, operational chain of command issues, and the influence of hostile external state sponsored actors are just a few of the aspects that complicated the MNF effort. A "clear" mission linked to political objectives, would not have relieved troops of the political constraints that impacted tactical situations on the battlefield. Additionally, the use of overwhelming force proved to add to the complexity by destroying the little neutrality the MNF still maintained as a peacekeeping force.³⁷¹ Lebanon reinforced Powell's lessons learned from Vietnam, but this time Powell saw these lessons at the national strategic level. More importantly, through the Weinberger Doctrine, Powell saw a method and structure for codifying his ideas for application.

Powell experienced Lebanon as an observer, but just over three years later Powell became a more active participant in U.S. foreign policy as the deputy national security

³⁷⁰Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 291.

³⁷¹Ironically, Powell pointed out that the MNF's use of U.S. Navy offshore gunfire against Shiites effectively chose sides in an operation where neutrality was essential. *Ibid.*, 290-292.

advisor. Frank Carlucci, the National Security Advisor, and Reagan recruited Powell in the aftermath of the Iran Contra Affair. Powell's assessment of the Iran Contra Affair was that advisors could lead the President astray. President Reagan's delegative leadership style empowered subordinates, but confused limits of responsibility and authority. This leadership style made Reagan especially vulnerable to overactive advisors. Additionally, Powell's contribution to resolving the issues in the NSC solidified his mental model for successful national policy integration and reinforced his affinity for structure. The Iran-Contra Affair also provided job openings that aided Powell's continued upward movement in Washington to include his service as National Security Advisor to the President.

As the Reagan administration came to a close, Powell observed and participated in the practice of U.S. foreign policy. Powell's experience also highlighted the importance of the national leadership's ability to develop a comprehensive approach to U.S. military intervention and foreign policy. Powell's experience as principal advisor to the President, immersed in the challenges of achieving that comprehensive approach, set the conditions for his consideration as CJCS.

Powell's experience and performance throughout his career distinguished him as a candidate for the CJCS position. Defense reform changed the chairman's position. The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 enhanced the chairman's authority. This expanded authority reinforced the advantages of Powell's unique experience and success at the national strategic level. The Goldwater-Nichols Act required the chairman to provide strategic direction for the armed forces congruent with

national policy objectives and present his personal military advice to the Secretary of Defense and President.

At the time the Goldwater-Nichols Act was being implemented, Powell's ideas had evolved over twenty-seven years from a conglomeration of abstract theories to a doctrine of tangible guidelines to be considered before U.S. intervention. Although not a prerequisite for the Powell Doctrine in formulation or application, the Goldwater-Nichols Act provided a multiplicative effect that allowed Powell's guidelines to carry greater influence. The law increased the need for some set of guiding principles the CJCS, as principal military advisor to the President, could use to provide strategic direction and personal military advice. The Goldwater-Nichols Act also increased Powell's ability to apply his doctrine as the principal military advisor to the President. Powell was not bound to a consolidated opinion from the Chiefs of Staff from the various services, was given oversight of combatant commander operations, and charged with developing the roles and missions for the armed forces. As the most significant law to impact the U.S. armed forces since the end of World War II, the Goldwater-Nichols Act served as an enabler and integrator for Powell's experiences, ideas, and leadership attributes.

Powell In Practice

In application, Powell's doctrine revealed the intellectual journey he took from the theorists from which his doctrine was derived to the guidelines he used in practice. An examination of the application of the Powell Doctrine suggests that as Powell's ideas translated from theory to practice the farther they moved away from Clausewitz's theory and more towards firm, prescriptive principles for application. Operations Just Cause, Desert Storm, and Provide Comfort created confidence in Powell and his doctrine as a

check on ill-considered military interventions. Vietnam and Lebanon were the primary examples from the past. As the successes in application of the Powell Doctrine mounted, a false sense of security in the Powell Doctrine's ability to prevent military disasters like Lebanon and Vietnam grew.

Powell's management of the potential coup in the Philippines illustrated his willingness to use limited force as a way to communicate, consider more than military implications, and bring structure to a chaotic situation while drawing on his intuition. Shortly after the failed Philippine coup, Powell made his first step toward realizing the chairman's new Goldwater-Nichols Act authorities as he personally developed a vision for the strategic direction of the Armed Forces in the Strategic Overview soon to become the Base Force Concept.

As work on the Strategic Overview continued, issues in Panama escalated and U.S. intervention came to fruition. The decision to intervene in Panama, the actual invasion, and Powell's recollection of those events demonstrated his willingness to further exercise his new duty as the principal military advisor to the President. The success in Panama confirmed Powell's confidence in his guiding principles. Powell had good reason to be confident, but this confidence had to be understood within the context of the unique situation in Panama. An unpopular dictator, a less than substantial army, and relatively clear justification were all elements in a less complex situation than the United States might see in the future.

Operation Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort, and the popularity that followed Powell afterward, marked a milestone for the Powell Doctrine.³⁷² Powell reinforced his role as the first full tenure Goldwater-Nichols chairman through a commander-like presence in planning, execution, and in media updates that brought the war into America's living rooms. Powell's experience as a part of the national security team for President Reagan and his previous relationship with President Bush assured Powell's presence in key meetings to address the political and military objectives.³⁷³ Powell's involvement was clear from the day President Bush considered intervention until hostilities ceased. Through his involvement, Powell influenced the decisions throughout six months of planning and preparation. With the authority authorized in Goldwater-Nichols and experience in U.S. foreign policy failures and success, Powell understood the consequences of each meeting with the President and his advisors. The President's core group of decision makers that determined if, how, and when to use military force now included the CJCS.

Ironically, the results of Desert Storm and Operation Provide Comfort created the greatest distance between the Powell Doctrine's theoretical foundation and its practical

³⁷²Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars*, 151. Operation Provide Comfort was U.S. military relief to the Kurds in northern Iraq in response to Saddam's attacks to crush the Kurdish uprising.

³⁷³Thomas Preston, *The President and His Inner Circle: Leadership Style and the Advisory Process in Foreign Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 193. Key meetings became known as the gang of eight and included the President, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Vice President, the White House Chief of Staff, the National Security Advisor, Deputy National Security Advisor, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Although some meetings did not involve this entire group, the Secretary of Defense, National Security Advisor, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs attended the majority of the meetings.

application. The debate on the use of force to expel Iraq's army from Kuwait highlighted Powell's desire to make sure that all other non-violent policy means had failed before transition from defense to offense. However, this understandable requirement separated politics from war. Powell may not have intended to do so and wrote that war was politics of a last resort, but in pursuing this aspect so doggedly he reinforced the view that war started when diplomacy stopped.³⁷⁴ Rather than force being used as a political instrument, a belief Powell professed in his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1989, Desert Storm became the precedent for those whom believed in the disaggregation of war and politics.³⁷⁵

After Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort completed the false sense of security Powell had in his doctrine that started with success in Panama. Powell constantly warned that each situation required its own evaluation and answers to the questions that comprised his doctrine. However, by the end of Provide Comfort, it could be said that Powell's Doctrine guided the United States through small and large scale interventions. Powell's recitation of limited interventions was a convincing list. Powell's prominent role, as an important member of Bush's national security team, in successful military interventions from 1989 through 1993 overshadowed his warnings that a universal application of his doctrine or checklist approach to military intervention was not useful. Operation Restore Hope in Somalia brought many of the same challenges and complexities the United States experienced in Lebanon. Even though Powell and Bush's

³⁷⁴Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 148.

³⁷⁵General Colin Powell, speaking on Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 20 September 1989, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 652.

national security team tried to put clear limits on U.S. involvement, the complexity, changing environment in Somalia, and a less-than-interested President Clinton created a difficult situation. Just as the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine may not have prevented the death of two hundred and forty-one Marines and fifty-eight French troops in Lebanon, the Powell Doctrine would not prevent eighteen American soldiers from dying on 3 October 1993 in Somalia.

Conclusion

This study does not attempt to offer an opinion on decisions in history, the Powell Doctrine, or Powell's application of his doctrine. The purpose of examining Powell and his doctrine is not to use the insight gained to predict the future, but to improve the capacity for analysis and synthesis. This paper examined Powell's formulation and application of his doctrine in greater depth in order to provide a deeper understanding of why events transpired the way they did and provide insight by which the reader may see more clearly. As a historical study, it attempts to sharpen the reader's ability to grasp the essential features of complex events and reassemble them in a relevant manner that deepens contextual understanding of an important element of U.S. foreign policy.

The significant events and experiences that shaped the Powell Doctrine certainly influenced the manner in which Powell applied these principles during his tenure as the CJCS. Powell's study and understanding of military thinkers, experience with the Reagan administration, and his challenge as the first full tenure CJCS post-Goldwater-Nichols made a set of guiding principles an imperative and influenced his application of his much debated doctrine. In a broader view, the study of these aspects illuminates the changes that occurred as Powell translated his ideas from abstract theory to tangible principles as

a part of an applicable doctrine. With this translation came advantages and disadvantages that can be debated. Clearly there were more aspects to Powell and the Powell Doctrine than the Vietnam Syndrome. Each of these aspects should be considered and acknowledged before building or detracting from the Powell Doctrine. The examination found in this paper provides a deeper appreciation of a remarkable confluence of events that occurred during a period of transition in history in which Powell was immersed and uniquely capable to influence.

The Next Step

This study adds to the analysis and synthesis process that should be constantly reapplied in examining history. Author Thomas Kuhn was a physicist and an expert on the history of science.³⁷⁶ Kuhn describes the analysis and synthesis process that arrives at an accepted paradigm as it applies to the natural sciences in his book about the structure of scientific revolutions. Kuhn discussed law, theory, application and the paradigms that result.³⁷⁷ In his chapter that addressed how a new paradigm replaces an old view, Kuhn explains that the new paradigm is only a closer estimate of reality always subject to further refinement.³⁷⁸ Kuhn's observation underscores the importance of continued analysis and synthesis. Although Kuhn wrote in regard to the natural sciences, his ideas suggested a new way to examine changes in accepted paradigms. Just as Powell's ideas

³⁷⁶ Author Michael Roskin used Kuhn's ideas in his work, "Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting Generational Paradigms and Foreign Policy." Roskin, "Pearl Harbor to Vietnam," 565.

³⁷⁷ Thomas S Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 10.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

followed the analysis and synthesis process, so should the results of this paper. In addition to the deeper examination of the Powell Doctrine, this study has also identified areas for further research that would aid in the next step of analysis and synthesis.

This paper did not address Powell during his tenure as Secretary of State. A detailed study of this time period may include the change, if any, in Powell's doctrine between his service as CJCS and his duty as Secretary of State. Powell's application of his doctrine in the decidedly political role as Secretary of State in comparison to that of chairman may provide an interesting perspective that would include the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

An additional topic to be researched is the effect Powell's doctrine had on the U.S. military as it began its transition in the post-Cold War environment. Some aspects of this effect are merely hinted at in this paper. However, a detailed study of the military across all elements of the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System before and after Powell's tenure as CJCS would provide an interesting view of change in the U.S. military during this transition period and demonstrate how deeply Powell effected the military. The elements in the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System would include doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities.

Finally, exploration of the Powell Doctrine and its place among history, theory, doctrine, and practice illuminates characteristics of a distinctly American way of war. The majority of scholarly works written about the American way of war since 1973 use Russell Weigley's *The American Way of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and*

Policy as a point of departure.³⁷⁹ Weigley examined the American approach to war from the War of Independence to the Vietnam War. As a result of his study, Weigley posited that the United States, during its infancy, used a strategy of attrition to exhaust its opponents. As America grew stronger, the country turned to a strategy of annihilation aimed at the destruction of the enemy's armed force.³⁸⁰ The end of the Cold War and start of the Global War on Terrorism fueled new assessments of the American way of war.³⁸¹ Many principles in the Powell Doctrine are similar to the elements used to describe the American way of war.³⁸² The similarities suggest some link between the

³⁷⁹In 2002, Brian M. Linn wrote "An American Way of War Revisited." Linn provided four objections to Weigley's work. In response to Linn's critique, Weigley provided an update to his research. *The Journal of Military History* published Weigley brief response in the pages following Linn's article. Brian M. Linn, "An American Way of War Revisited," *The Journal Of Military History* 66, no. 2 (April 2002): 501-530. Russell Weigley, "Response to Brian McAllister Linn," *The Journal Of Military History* 66, no. 2 (April 2002): 531-533.

³⁸⁰Wayne E. Lee, "From Gentility to Atrocity: The Continental Army's Ways of War," in *H300 Roots of Today's Operational Environment: Book of Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, December 2009), 61.

³⁸¹Scholarly works include, but are not limited to: Jeffrey Record, "The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency," The Cato Institute, 1 September 2006, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6640 (accessed 2 September 2010), 4; Max Boot, "The New American Way of War," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July-August 2003): 41-58; Antulio J. Echevarria II, "An American Way of War or Way of Battle?" The Strategic Studies Institute, January 2004, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=662> (accessed 2 September 2010), 1; Colin S. Gray, "The American Way of War: Critique and Implications," in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 27.

³⁸²Authors Max Boot and Jeffrey Record used the phrase quick victory or decisive success to describe the American way of war. Colin Gray wrote that Americans had to approach war decisively to appease their impatience. Gray classified the American way of war as apolitical and astrategic. Jeffrey Record essentially agreed with Gray's assessment that Americans separate war from politics. In an Op-Ed for the *Strategic Studies Institute Newsletter*, Dr. Antulio J. Echevarria argued that America's inability to

Powell Doctrine and an American way of war. Research on this topic may provide a deeper understanding of the true American way of war to separate the symptoms from the causes and strategies from characteristics.

link military achievement with political objectives to create strategic success illustrates an American way of battle rather than war.

APPENDIX A
THE POWELL DOCTRINE

The following list contains the questions Powell articulated in his 1992 *Foreign Affairs* article entitled “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead.”

1. Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood?
2. Have all other nonviolent policy means failed?
3. Will military force achieve the objective?
4. At what cost?
5. Have the gains and risks been analyzed?
6. How might the situation that we seek to alter, once it is altered by force, develop further and what might be the consequences?³⁸³

³⁸³Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 38.

APPENDIX B

THE WEINBERGER DOCTRINE

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger outlined his six tests for the first time in his speech to the National Press Club in 1984. Weinberger included the full text of this speech in his book, *Fighting For Peace*.³⁸⁴ Weinberger included these six tests in his 1986 *Foreign Affairs* article entitled, “U.S. Defense Strategy.”

1. The United States should not commit forces to combat unless our vital interests are at stake. Our interests include vital interests of our allies.
2. Should the United States decide it is necessary to commit its forces to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers and with sufficient support to win. If we are unwilling to commit the forces and resources necessary to achieve our objectives, or if the objective is not important enough so that we must achieve it, we must not commit our force.
3. If we decide to commit forces to combat, we must have clearly defined political objectives. Unless we know precisely what we intend to achieve by fighting, and how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives, we cannot formulate or determine the size of forces properly, and therefore we should not commit our forces at all.
4. The relationship between our objectives and the size, composition and disposition of our forces must be continually reassessed and adjusted as necessary. In the course of a conflict, conditions and objectives inevitably change. When they do, so must our combat requirements.
5. Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, the U.S. government should have some reasonable assurance of the support of the American people and their elected representatives in the Congress...
6. The commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort—only after diplomatic, political, economic and other efforts have been made to protect our vital interests.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 433.

³⁸⁵Weinberger, “U.S. Defense Strategy.” 686-687.

APPENDIX C

COLIN POWELL'S RULES

Parade magazine published an article entitled "Colin Powell's Rules" in the fall of 1989.³⁸⁶ Powell included this list of rules in his memoirs.

1. It ain't as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.
2. Get mad, then get over it.
3. Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position falls, your ego goes with it.
4. It can be done!
5. Be careful what you choose. You may get it.
6. Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision.
7. You can't make someone else's choices. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.
8. Check small things.
9. Share credit.
10. Remain calm. Be kind.
11. Have a vision. Be demanding.
12. Don't take counsel of your fears or naysayers.
13. Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 409.

³⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 613.

APPENDIX D

COLIN POWELL'S RULES FOR MEETINGS

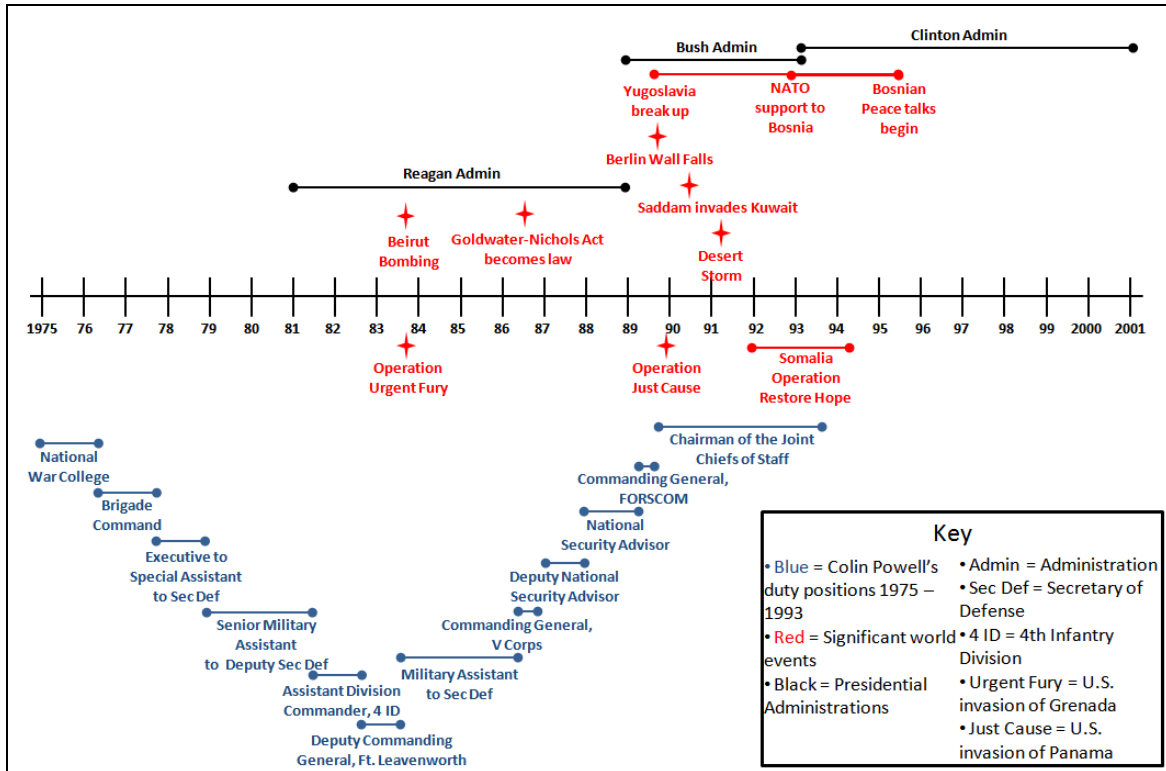
The following excerpt was taken from Powell's memoirs and demonstrates the structure and organization he brought to the National Security Council as the Deputy National Security Advisor in 1987.

Having suffered through endless, pointless, mindless time-wasters for years, I had evolved certain rules for holding meetings. First, everyone got a chance to recommend items for the agenda beforehand, but I controlled the final agenda, which I distributed before the meeting. Once a meeting started, no one was allowed to switch the agenda. The first five minutes, I reviewed why we were meeting and what had to be decided by the end of the session. For the next twenty minutes, participants were allowed to present their positions, uninterrupted. After that, we had a free-for-all to strip away posturing, attack lame reasoning, gang up on outrageous views, and generally have some fun. Fifty minutes into the hour, I resumed control, and for five minutes summarized everyone's views as I understood them. Participants could take issue with my summation for one minute. In the last four to five minutes, I laid out the conclusions and decisions to be presented as the consensus of the participants. Then it was over. Those disapproving of the outcome could go back home and complain to their bosses, who could appeal to Carlucci [the National Security Advisor in 1987].³⁸⁸

³⁸⁸Ibid., 343-344.

APPENDIX E

COLIN POWELL'S DUTY POSITIONS AND WORLD EVENTS



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