

The American Way of War in the Emerging Strategic Environment

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Introduction

An “American Way of War” emerged after the end of the Cold War, in successive combat experiences. We at the CNA Corporation examined the eight main cases of combat from 1989 through 2002 to discern its characteristics. The U.S. has now successfully undertaken a ninth combat case—Operation Iraqi Freedom—in which the characteristics have generally been confirmed, but with some new twists. I will describe them shortly. War-fighting is, of course, the core of what U.S. forces do. Around that core, we speak of some larger strategic functions, like deterrence, presence, interaction with allies, and, of course, preparing for the future, currently referred to as transformation.

I have found it a little difficult to relate the American Way of War as it was practiced in the earlier eight cases to the strategic environment—whether emanating from it or shaping it—other than to note that there's no question that the world stands in awe of U.S. military power. (The exception may be Osama bin Laden, who has a stake in seeing us as weak.) As for the question of how this American Way of War reflects on U.S. leadership in the world, such leadership has been quite useful in the situations we have examined—possibly even indispensable—but must be set within the broad context of U.S. global leadership tasks, including in economics, maintaining alliances, encouraging peace, and otherwise operating as a leading citizen of the world. In short, the U.S. is in trouble if it thinks its foreign policy flows solely from its military actions.

The current success in the war in Iraq, and hopefully the creation of a peaceful country that works for its people, is going to create a dramatically new strategic environment, at least in the Gulf area, and will have repercussions around the world.¹ The Gulf has been of greatest strategic concern to the U.S. since the fall of the Shah back in 1979,

1. One immediate effect of U.S. military success in Iraq may have been North Korea's backing off its insistence that it talk only to the United States about its nuclear weapons program and its agreement to broader international discussions. Whether North Korea is really serious about an international dialogue remains to be seen.

and the removal of the Iraqi threat will relieve the greater part of those concerns. But the way the U.S. got to the war in Iraq has cast some severe doubts, both home and abroad, about the quality of U.S. leadership.

The American Way of War as it emerged after the Cold War

The American Way of War

We looked at 8 combat situations (including one near-combat situation—Haiti) beginning after the end of the Cold War with Panama in late 1989, and including Desert Storm, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, the Desert Fox strikes on Iraq, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Now the U.S. has successfully conducted a 9th operation, and I will comment on that a little later.²

We looked at these situations empirically: how the U.S. got into the situations, how the U.S. got international sanction, assembled the forces, conducted combat, and how it got out of the situation—or didn't. These front and back ends are extremely important for assessing the strategic effect of operations—too many assessments of The American Way of War concentrate on the tactical operations in the middle, without covering the broader political and strategic considerations. We did not go into the individual services' dreams and plans, nor into JV2020, nor all the other theoretical writings as to what the American Way of War ought to be. We were not concerned with contingency plans or abstract scenarios.

The American Way of War as it emerged had the following main characteristics:

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2. We might well have included the earlier instances of Grenada and the Tanker War, but we wanted to start clearly upon the end of the Cold War. We didn't think the experience in Lebanon fit at all, because it was supposed to be a peacekeeping force, not a combat force. Even in that role, U.S. objectives were not clear, and the couple of combat actions the U.S. engaged in (e.g., battleship shelling) only inflamed the situation and put our peacekeepers at peril.

- U.S. got involved in the cases we examined for reasons particular to the situations, not because the U.S. was pursuing some grand strategy. If there was one element in common among most of them it was that the U.S. was in pursuit of an obnoxious leader.
- The U.S. has been reactive, and deliberately so. That is, most of the situations in which it chose to engage in combat haven't arisen out of the blue, but have simmered for some time before U.S. intervention, nor has the U.S. reacted fast. In most cases, it carefully planned the operation before it started. The cases where the planning was not so careful—Somalia and Kosovo—turned out to be the messiest. The Combat Commander (the Unified Commander) got to do the planning. But this planning was subject to intense and prolonged iteration with Washington, including at the political level. This is not surprising, considering that most situations have had a high political sensitivity, especially since most have not been viewed as critical to U.S. national security, to say the least.
- The U.S. has generally sought international sanction for its operations—except for Panama.³ It has also sought coalition partners and other international support.
- The U.S. has been remarkably successful in getting bases. This explodes the myth the access around the world is drying up. Of course, it takes hard diplomatic work, not always successful—we don't get everything or everywhere we ask for.
- Operations tend to be under tight political control, in part because they have tended to be short. Political control also entails minimizing own casualties (which the U.S. military wants to do any way, especially in the age of the All Volunteer Force) and avoiding collateral damage. See the remark about political sensitivity above.

3. Given the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. has reserved the right to itself to intervene in the Western Hemisphere without further international sanction, but even for the Grenada invasion, the U.S. lined up the agreement of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

- The U.S. operates joint and combined. The operation is never given to just one service (though it was very heavy Army in Panama). The U.S. has preferred to use overwhelming force and not to enter operations piecemeal.
- The most salient characteristic of the post-Cold War period is that the U.S. likes to lead with air strikes. It has been dominant in U.S. strategic culture since World War II, and was also the essence of the Nixon Doctrine. In the new era, it goes hand in glove with minimizing own casualties and, as strike capabilities have evolved, controlling collateral damage.
- But air strikes have proved insufficient to end or resolve conflicts. The experience of the 1990s showed that either ground forces or diplomacy are needed to wrap up the conflict. Diplomacy can be problematic from the military point of view. It's not like a planned, coordinated military campaign leading to predictable results. But...“NATO bombed Chernomyrdin to the table,” and that's how Kosovo was resolved.
- The U.S. has gotten to test and evolve its capabilities across these cases. Especially important has been the growing networking of capabilities, especially for air strikes. But the U.S. did not get involved in these situations simply to get war-fighting experience—most situations were engaged only with the greatest reluctance. It did get war-fighting experience that it didn't get in the Cold War, except for Vietnam.
- U.S. forces can't go home easily. They did from Panama, Haiti, and Somalia. But they were saddled with long residual operations for Iraq, Bosnia/Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Most of the elements of the American Way of War had been developed during the Cold War

In some ways, the progress in developing U.S. conventional capabilities had been blurred by the strategic overhang of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons became pure deterrence (i.e., they lost all war-fighting significance in the bipolar situation), especially when the two sides went to a detached, long-distance strategic nuclear stand-off. The two sides' nuclear postures were also strongly constrained by the

arms control negotiations that continued from 1969 on—and which obviated the possibility of direct conflict with the Soviets across the board. The strategic salience of theater nuclear weapons went into a fade from the time strategic nuclear weapons were removed from Europe. The evolution of conventional capabilities came to the forefront in the strategic competition with the Soviets around the world.

The scenarios the U.S. contemplated in the Cold War were big, messy global affairs, but would have been especially intense in Germany—though by the 1960s we didn't expect them to take place in actuality. The global dispersion of U.S. strategic thinking did prevent the defense establishment from recognizing a major characteristic of the American Way of War that emerged after the Cold War: all U.S. services piling into one spot under joint, centralized direction—which also raises the problem of avoiding fratricide.

Many of the capabilities we now see as part of the American Way of War emerged in the Cold War, from PGMs to AWACS to GPS to Stealth. I got intrigued with side-looking synthetic aperture radars with moving target capabilities on RF-4Cs in the 1970s; we now see the full realization of that capability in JSTARS.

But the U.S. didn't have much chance to practice using these capabilities during the Cold War, for reasons suggested above. The U.S. didn't consider Vietnam a test case—indeed, the American Way of War that emerged and as described earlier might well be described as “the anti-Vietnam way.” Grenada was too small and messy, though it pointed to the need for some improvements in command and control and jointness. Lebanon was an accident—and a main stimulus for jointness, according to the authors of Goldwater-Nichols. Altogether, the U.S. relied a lot on Israel's experience in the 1973 war for a number of lessons on war-fighting, e.g., in defeating some Soviet systems (SA-6) and on ammunition consumption rates.

How did the post-Cold War strategic environment permit this development of the American Way of War?

Much of the world was at peace after the Cold War. The globalized economy was expanding. The U.S. economy and politics sustained

the world's biggest defense effort, while defense efforts around the rest of the world essentially obsolesced, especially in the advanced countries. The only countries supposedly competing with us in military terms were those whose economies were unsuccessful at the same time. I had calculated back in 1994 that the U.S. spent 38 percent of the world's total defense budgets. That has risen to over half today.⁴

The end of the Cold War may have given the U.S. more latitude to intervene in Desert Storm and the Balkans. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev and Shevardnadze was quite cooperative in 1990-1991. Saddam might have thought the Soviets were still behind him, and he probably still does. It may have been that fear of the Soviets kept Tito's Yugoslavia together, but most observers said that the country was bound to fall apart upon Tito's death, and it did—but it took nine years for it to happen.

Some say that the Soviets inhibited us from actual war-fighting. I have scrutinized the list of all conflict situations across the Cold War, and I cannot say that there were opportunities that we passed up during that time, unless it was Hungary in 1956. Of course, we took the opportunities to fight in Korea and Vietnam, which wars we believed had been initiated for Soviet strategic advantage. There were the several two-sided wars, especially those between Arabs and Israelis and between India and Pakistan—but it would have been inappropriate for the U.S. to engage in combat in those cases, and it didn't. Through much of the Cold War, the U.S. assisted the locals to defend themselves, or in the cases of Angola, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua, to conduct guerrilla warfare themselves—it was the heyday of security assistance (in which I was deeply involved from 1979 to the end of 1989).

4. Including the Russians spending what they think and say they are spending-around \$9 billion in 2003. The IISS figure of up to \$60 billion seems to be based on a particular Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) calculation that does not relate to the actual costs of maintaining and improving a modern military establishment. Aside from its operations in Chechnya, the Russian military is hardly training, has trouble paying its electric bills, and is buying very little new equipment.

It is also said that the U.S. was inhibited in using capabilities for fear of compromising them to the Soviets. But the combat opportunities weren't really there to apply those capabilities. Such inhibitions didn't seem to be applied in Desert Storm when the Soviet Union still existed—even if Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were cooperative, the huge Soviet military establishment had not yet been dismantled (except that the process of the removal of their forward-deployed forces had begun in Europe).

Perhaps the most salient change in the strategic environment that prompted U.S. combat interventions was taking place at about the same that the Cold War ended (i.e., in coincidence): the enervation and collapse of post-colonial leaderships. Noriega in Panama, the Duvaliers in Haiti, Siad Barré in Somalia, were representative. The death of Tito and the rise of Milosevic and the collapse of the monarchy in Afghanistan also signaled the end of old regimes. The fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was also representative of the end of an era. These failures of governance set new conditions for conflict. Perhaps some of these leaders were sustained for too long in office by the Cold War, but in any case, they all lost their capabilities to govern. We also saw classic aggression by one of the six rogue nations in the world—Iraq.⁵

The post-Cold War strategic environment and its reflection in continuing U.S. military involvement around the world was much broader than the instances of combat we studied. By my calculation, U.S. forces spent only six percent of the time in intense combat operations in the eight cases across 13 years. Moreover, these operations did not involve much of the forces, except in Desert Storm. I am not counting the long build up for Desert Storm (during Desert Shield), for Operation Iraqi Freedom, or peacekeeping operations.

5. The six rogues are Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Syria, and Cuba. Syria and Cuba have long been neutralized, but now Syria is under pressure from the U.S. as a spillover from the war in Iraq. Qaddafi has put Libya on the sidelines for the moment. Milosevic was a rogue, but is now being tried in The Hague.

In addition, U.S. forces remained stationed in Europe and Northeast Asia, maintaining alliances, deploying naval ships, and exercising with other countries. U.S. forces did not intervene much in internal conflicts—I counted around three dozen such conflicts during the period, and the U.S. intervened in only four (half the 8 combat cases we examined)—we know the four, but to repeat them: Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo. There was a lot of talk of U.S. forces somehow stabilizing the world so globalization could proceed. Indeed, the services seemed sometimes to consider the combat situations to be diversions from their maintaining these stabilizing functions.

I would say that the major shaping of the American Way of War by the strategic environment in the 8 cases before Operation Iraqi Freedom took place in Desert Storm early and Afghanistan late in the period. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait constituted a major threat to the system of nation-states, i.e., to the notion of sovereignty. Its continued presence there would have threatened the entire Middle East—bullying the other Gulf states and eventually threatening Israel. As for Afghanistan, 9/11 changed the entire strategic environment. The U.S. response in Afghanistan was only the beginning of the global war on terror.

How did U.S. combat interventions affect the strategic environment?

The 8 combat situations we studied prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom really amounted to the U.S. tidying up on the edges of the world. The U.S. had the means to do so, while the rest of the world was generally at peace. There were a number of internal conflicts in Africa, but the U.S. was not interested in intervening in them, especially after its bad experience in Somalia.

Otherwise, as noted above, the U.S. maintained large, ready, capable forces and this enabled other countries to reduce their Cold War defense efforts. To put it another way, the awesome military power that the U.S. demonstrated in Desert Storm probably discouraged other countries' defense efforts for the rest of the decade and longer. Some in the U.S. defense establishment have striven mightily to assert that countries would have learned lessons from Desert Storm and

improved their capabilities to defend, but those improvements are not very evident, as was seen in Iraq's disintegrating defenses.

Desert Storm cemented the U.S. role as the stabilizer of the Gulf region, a role it had assumed upon the fall of the Shah and the enunciation of the Carter Doctrine. In turn, this stabilized the oil market. It also enabled the U.S. to jump-start the Middle East peace process, leading to Madrid and Oslo, though the peace efforts fizzled out despite efforts at Wye and Camp David at the end of the Clinton Administration. At the same time, the unfinished effort in Iraq and the need to continue to contain Saddam meant continued U.S. presence in the Gulf and operations from Saudi Arabia, which was one of Osama's grievances against the U.S. that led to 9/11.

In its actions in Bosnia and Kosovo, the U.S., albeit reluctantly, helped to bring about a final clean-up of conflict in Europe (although Bosnia and Kosovo still require close international supervision and Macedonia could still fall apart any day). In a way, the resolution of conflict in the Balkans has been the final resolution of Versailles and the mess it created in Europe. Of course, Russia and China attributed greater strategic significance to U.S. actions in Kosovo than the U.S. itself did. They thought it was a precursor of a U.S. preemption strategy, and they thought they somehow might be next. They got over those feelings upon 9/11, but they may once more have their suspicions.

Finally, 9/11 created a new strategic environment, and the U.S. retaliation in Afghanistan meant that the U.S. would track down al Qaeda wherever it was in the world. The global war on terror, coupled with the coincident U.S. telecoms bust, plus the slowdowns of economic growth in Europe and Japan, meant that globalization went into a kind of pause—reflected in the drops of business and tourist air travel.

Now the U.S. has successfully undertaken a new operation— Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

The war in Iraq unfolded in accordance with the patterns we had seen in the earlier cases, with some important differences. Most important, it was the first comprehensive operation since Desert Storm. The ele-

ments of the Desert Storm toolkit had been greatly improved across the 1990s, but had been applied piecemeal in the other 7 combat situations we studied. All the elements were reassembled for OIF. The elements least practiced or challenged since Desert Storm had been those of ground forces—Somalia, Haiti, and peacekeeping operations don't quite count. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, ground forces were launched simultaneously with the air assault.

Reviewing the list of previous patterns that we say characterize the American Way of War:

- OIF was closer to preemption than all the previous cases, which were reactive. The other exception may have been Panama. The decision-making by the U.S. in this case was long and agonizing, though, having begun right after 9/11. In a way, the operation was to finish the unfinished business of Desert Storm (though the U.S. had clearly stated objectives for Desert Storm—kick the Iraqis out of Kuwait—and stopped when it had reached them). The putative connections to WMD and to al Qaeda were major reasons enunciated by the Administration for this operation. The U.S. was once more pursuing an obnoxious leader.
- The U.S. sought international sanction for military action, in the UN, but did not get it (the lawyers would assert that the language of Resolution 1441 is sufficient, but the attempt at a second resolution makes that point moot). There were rumbles throughout the news magazines about inept diplomacy. The U.S. formed a coalition, but it was hardly as broad as that formed for Desert Storm. There were, for instance, no Arab states participating in combat (except for Kuwaiti Patriot batteries), not to speak of the French (other European countries have provided small contingents to the forces).
- The U.S. planned the operation carefully, leaving the initial planning to the Combat Commander, but subjecting it to the usual intense interaction with Washington, with an apparently more engaged Secretary of Defense than previously. There seems to have been more economizing on force this time than for Desert Storm, with Washington willing to accept more risk.

Some associated with the current Administration have derided the Powell doctrine of “overwhelming force” as “old think.”

- The U.S. had bases for the operation—at least in the south. It had essentially the same bases as for Desert Storm. It was unsuccessful in getting bases in Turkey, settling only for overflight rights and ultimately some transportation of supplies and humanitarian relief by land. But then all the action in Desert Storm was also mounted from the south.
- Tight political control was reflected in the rules of engagement and concern for collateral damage in this operation, but the air targets and day-to-day operations seemed to have been less subject to iteration with Washington than, say, the targets in Kosovo and Serbia.
- The operation was joint and combined from the start, and ground and air forces were involved and closely coordinated from the start, as opposed to the 39 days of air strikes before ground operations began in Desert Storm. Air strikes may have assumed less dominance for strategic effect than in previous operations, except in support of ground operations. In a way, the “shock and awe” of attacks on Baghdad were not successful in “changing behavior”—it never has been—except as it may have disrupted Iraqi command chains. On the other hand, the Republican Guard Divisions practically vanished, and it appears to be largely due to the air attacks on them.
- In an interesting parallel to Afghanistan's Northern Alliance, the Kurdish militias, supported by U.S. Special Forces and the 173rd Airborne Brigade carried out ground actions in the north of Iraq.
- But the operation traveled through far more complex terrain than Desert Storm, over much longer distances, with urban engagements the ground forces had not encountered since Somalia. Moreover, the U.S. was surprised by the behind-the-lines harassment of the Fedayeen Saddam, a phenomenon not encountered in Desert Storm.

- The longer the operation went on, the more casualties and collateral damage. But since the major combat took only 21 days (whereas Desert Storm took 43 days, Kosovo 78 days, and the intense air campaign in Afghanistan took 73 days), the killed-in-action among coalition forces was less than those for Desert Storm despite the deep penetration into Iraq on the ground.
- As I have noted, an enormous number of the elements of the war-fighting toolkit have been improved or are new since Desert Storm. Of special note was that all had the picture of what was going on. Special Forces assumed far more extensive roles than in any previous operation, especially Desert Storm. It was reported that 9,000 were inside Iraq. Patriot definitely knocked down missiles this time. (In an appendix to this paper is a list of the differences between the toolkit in Desert Storm and that of Operation Iraqi Freedom, based in part on articles by James Kitfield and Michael Gordon.⁶)
- Operation Iraqi Freedom definitely entailed roll-up by ground forces, as they rolled through Baghdad and cleaned up other cities. The Administration did not seek a diplomatic solution.
- The residual operations will be far more extensive than the U.S. has experienced in the 8 previous cases. For the first time, some in the U.S. are describing it as an occupation, with allusions to Germany and Japan rather than Bosnia and Kosovo. The scale will be far greater, and tasks of creating a new nation unlike anything the U.S. has attempted since Germany and Japan—and has been reluctant to attempt in Afghanistan. And the tasks will be largely up to the U.S. to perform and to pay for, given the sour diplomacy that preceded the operation.
- Notwithstanding, the conquest of Iraq will allow the U.S. to finally stand down Northern Watch and Southern Watch and to disband the maritime interception operation (MIO) in the Gulf, except as some surface combatants remain to patrol for

6. James Kitfield, "The Same, but Different," *National Journal* (March 15, 2003), 804-805; Michael R. Gordon, "A Sequel, Not a Re-run," *New York Times* (March 18, 2003).

possible al Qaeda movements by sea. These operations had been going on for 12 years and in some ways were the major source of stress for the HD/LD (high demand/low density) assets like AWACS and EA-6B.

How Operation Iraqi Freedom may change the strategic environment

Assuming that:

- The U.S. restores order in Baghdad and occupies and rules the country and that residual combat dies down in Iraq;
- Wars and terrorist incidents haven't broken out elsewhere, i.e., al Qaeda hasn't attacked the U.S., U.S. embassies haven't been burned down, Jordan hasn't collapsed, North Korea hasn't attacked South Korea, Kashmir hasn't flared, and Ariel Sharon hasn't taken the opportunity to drive the Palestinians into Jordan;
- Neither Turkey in the north or Iran have attempted to penetrate an Iraq in turmoil;
- The U.S. will be tied down in Iraq with great resources, including the Army's occupying force, without much help from other countries other than the UK;
- Much disorder continues in Iraq as scores are settled, looting takes place, corruption and black markets blossom, and sporadic sniping continues—and lots of turnovers of Iraqi leaders take place until the U.S. finds those that are trustworthy, honest, and competent...

If all of these contingencies are under control, the U.S. will have established an entirely new strategic environment in the Gulf and rest of the Middle East:

- The Iraqi threat to invade its neighbors, particularly Kuwait, will be gone.
- The U.S. will have established a substantial base of operations in Iraq, initially to support the huge occupation, but since that

occupation will last a long time, and given the U.S. say over the future of the country, it may well become a permanent base.

- This will permit the U.S. to withdraw forces and installations from Saudi Arabia, thus greatly relieving the pressure on the royal family and possibly giving them some latitude to start the reforms Crown Prince Abdullah knows he has to pursue.
- Iran will be frightened and may hunker down. For one, the U.S. may be in a position to cut off the lifeline Iran extends through Syria to the Hezbollah in Lebanon. But Iran may be strengthened in its resolve to build nuclear weapons.
- Altogether, the Gulf, which had been the prime cockpit of world conflict since the fall of the Shah in 1979, will be less so, assuming the U.S. will be engaged in stabilizing Iraq for a long time to come. But the U.S. will still not be able to walk away from the area easily so long as it fears instability in Saudi Arabia and so long as Iran is hostile.
- There is, however, a real chance for Iraq to become a new kind of Middle Eastern country, given its resources, its urban nature, its core of educated people, etc. It would take long American tutelage.

However, al Qaeda will be seen as just as much of a threat after as before the war on Iraq. The U.S. will not be able to relax on homeland defense or in the pursuit of al Qaeda from country to country.

The U.S. may be able to turn back diplomatically to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, though it remains to be seen how really serious this Administration is about it.

Around the rest of the world:

- The U.S. military will be seen even more to be an overwhelming military juggernaut, with a tendency to crush any opposing force or state if it feels disposed to. The U.S. will have discouraged state-on-state aggression, but it may not seem so easy for the U.S. to wade into some other hornet's nest of a country. Moreover, it will have been demonstrated once more that just

bombing in the capital doesn't break a country or the will of its leadership.

- Nonetheless, the U.S. military juggernaut has demonstrated its prowess through a combination of technological preeminence, quantity, the extensive netting of the forces through communications, satellites, and command centers—all secure—plus the extensive training and maintenance that contribute to the readiness that no other country seems to match, nor will attempt to match.
- Repairing relations with France, Germany, and Russia will be hard, but not impossible. The U.S. will either question the continued utility of NATO or try to work in that forum. But the whole idea of repositioning U.S. forces from Germany to Romania and Bulgaria because the latter countries are better jumping-off places to conflict in the Gulf area may seem moot, given the likely continuing occupation and establishment of a U.S. base in Iraq.
- The Administration may turn back to negotiations with North Korea, but the solutions won't be any easier. In all these restorations of relations, much will depend on how much the U.S. president has to function as the president of Iraq at the same time he is running the U.S. or whether governing Iraq can be effectively delegated.
- Whether the preemption strategy was an excuse to attack Iraq (a rationalization, like the Brezhnev Doctrine) or is to be seriously applied by the Administration to Syria, Iran, or North Korea remains to be seen.

Before 9/11, the world seemed to be manageable. Globalization was progressing—it was especially important that China had joined WTO. NATO was expanding. Potential conflicts were confined to the “arc of crisis,” especially the Gulf, and were contained—even the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Nuclear proliferation was very slow, though still a worry among many with regard to the rogues—the U.S. had even thought North Korea's nuclear program was under control.

The world had somehow adjusted to India and Pakistan having nuclear weapons, even though troubles in Kashmir kept flaring.⁷

After 9/11, and with its denouement in the war in Iraq, this rather good picture has been drastically changed. Proliferation is now apparent in Iran and North Korea. The U.S. is at odds with France and Germany, and thus possibly with the EU. Russia sees its economic future as lying with Europe more than with the U.S., and sided with France and Germany in the UN on the issue of war with Iraq. The economies of the advanced countries, including that of the U.S., seem to be in trouble. The al Qaeda threat is widespread, at least for the U.S. and across the Islamic world (but not in Europe, Russia (except in Chechnya), China, Japan). The world is nervous about the U.S. preemption strategy.

Removing the Iraqi threat and establishing Iraq as a civilized nation-state, a participant in the global economy in more than oil and dates, should be a source of substantial stabilization. For one thing, the periodic wars that threaten to disrupt oil supplies may be a thing of the past (Iran is not that aggressive). In another sense, the reform of Iraq may provide a further exemplar for the obsolescence of classic defense establishments around the world. For some time to come, the U.S. will have something to say about how Iraq gets to reconstitute its forces in the future. How big should those forces be? Why would they need to buy new tanks and advanced fighter aircraft? Why would they need a navy? About the only reason they would need any of these things is to maintain a minimal defense against Iran. The time will have come for the Iraqi government to provide for its people, not to waste revenues on defense.

Concluding thoughts on the U.S. as a world leader

In a way, the U.S. changed from leader to victim on 9/11.

7. In the latest threat of war between India and Pakistan, Bangalore persuaded New Delhi to back down because of the huge amount of business they were losing in the midst of the uncertainty.

But the U.S. seems to have compromised its leadership role in the world by its obsession with Iraq.⁸

The U.S. now awes the world with its military strength. It probably spends a little more than half of the world's defense budgets. Its procurement and R&D budgets each are larger than any other country's defense budget. The U.S. has essentially discouraged most of the countries of the world from doing much in defense, especially in the area of technology. It is the only country with a substantial power projection capability, able to take military power to any corner of the earth. And the U.S. has a national security strategy that says it will use that power projection capability as it pleases, and whoever wants to come along under its direction can.

The question that now arises is whether the U.S. and this Administration would be regarded as only a military power, and an arrogant one at that.

The U.S. had been quite reluctant to go to combat in the 1990s, except with regard to Panama, which it had always regarded as its own bailiwick. Desert Shield/Desert Storm was defense of Saudi Arabia in the first place and then defense of the principle of sovereignty, that is, of the international system as it existed. The U.S. worked the international circuit carefully on that occasion, and other countries even paid for the mostly U.S. operation. The U.S. was dragged into Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia (Kosovo was an extension of Bosnia). The U.S. skipped Rwanda and all other internal conflicts. The U.S. had no choice but to react and retaliate in Afghanistan after 9/11.

In the 1990s, the U.S. also led on the economic side. The Clinton Administration found early on that interventions in internal conflicts for humanitarian reasons wasn't the way to really engage in the world. They shifted to a series of institutional initiatives: NAFTA (started by previous Republican administrations), APEC, GATT/WTO, the G-7 (expanded to G-8), the expansion of NATO, Kyoto, the Agreed Framework with North Korea, etc. Now we see that the economic ini-

8. On U.S. world leadership, see Fareed Zakaria, "The Arrogant Empire," *Newsweek* (March 24, 2003), 19-33.

tiatives seem to have become a one-man show conducted by Robert Zoellick, the U.S. Trade Representative.

Forming coalitions of the willing seems an entirely sensible idea to me. NATO, for instance, has always been more of a forum for reconciling country positions and actions than a bureaucratic and military juggernaut. It is the way that these coalitions of the willing are formed that would seem to be crucial. In an article in the *New York Times* on March 19 describing Pentagon decision-making, Secretary Rumsfeld is quoted as saying, “By the time you end up with a product, it's almost impossible to know who it came from or how it evolved.”⁹ This is an apt characterization of consensus and is usually the way it works in NATO and other international discourses. Contrast this with the statement of William Safire in the same newspaper, on March 24, “President Bush sent a firm message to troublesome Turks, ‘We expect them not to go into northern Iraq.’”¹⁰ Leadership does not necessarily involve dictation. And the process of consensus formation is not, as one prominent member of the Administration said once, “We will form a consensus around our view.” But all these issues depend on the problem that is to be tackled. It will be for the good of the world that Saddam is removed, whatever rationalizations have been advanced to justify the action.

Iraq has been a special case. For this Administration, it appears to be wrapping up unfinished business of 1991, aggravated by 9/11 and the frustrations of definitively clearing out WMD from Iraq. We do not know how soon we can say, “after Iraq...,” for the U.S. will be bogged down there for some time to come—a rather good strategic location to be bogged down in, however.

In any case, after Iraq, the immediate problems that would require U.S. initiative and leadership would be the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the North Korean nuclear problem. We are all aware of the paradox of nearly-unilateral preventive action in Iraq without UN

9. Tom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, “Rumsfeld Seeks Consensus Through Jousting,” *New York Times* (March 19, 2003).

10. William Safire, “Turkey's Wrong Turn,” *New York Times* (March 24, 2003).

sanction, while at the same time the U.S. wants the North Korean problem to be addressed multilaterally and in the UN. And the global war on terror against al Qaeda must still be pursued. I would note, as in the case of the Philippines, that the global war on terror takes close cooperation with other governments, and that they would still have a say on how U.S. forces enter their territories, whatever global mandate SOCOM may have from Secretary Rumsfeld. This reality has an impact on U.S. leadership style. Beyond that, I would expect to see attempts at patching up relations with France, Germany, and Russia—but not right away, and on some new kind of basis.

Beyond the war with Iraq, and assuming no other war for a while (depending on North Korea), the question may remain what the U.S. defense establishment would revert to. Does it step back from the world and concentrate on introspective transformation? Does it swing back to the never-fulfilled East Asia strategy and become a general balancer and deterrent out there? We won't know for a while.



Appendix

The American Way of War: How it has evolved from Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

General Political Situation

- A “preemptive” initiative rather than a reactive response by the United States.
- Rather than responding to a gross violation of sovereignty (the invasion of Kuwait), the major rationale is Saddam Hussein's defiance of UN resolutions for the last 12 years (which might be expected of imposed measures, as with Versailles). Rationales for the U.S. initiative have also been advanced based on the tenuous evidence of WMD and connections to al Qaeda.
- The U.S. got UN sanction in 1990, but did not succeed in doing so in 2003 (although the U.S. asserts Resolution 1441 and the preceding resolutions were sufficient authority).
- The Administration used the UN resolution in 1990 to convince Congress (by a narrow vote in the Senate) to support evicting the Iraqis from Kuwait. In 2002, the Administration got the strong support of both houses of Congress before approaching the UN.
- Public support was not strong in either case—until the U.S. went to war, and the public rallied 'round.
- The coalition was broad in 1990-1991, but much narrower in 2003. The other Arab countries were supportive and provided forces in 1990, but not in 2003 (though Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait have allowed the use of their bases in 2003 and Saudi Arabia and Jordan have allowed transit and use of facilities for support).

- The U.S. got other countries (especially the Saudis, Germans, and Japanese) to cover most of the \$62 billion cost of Desert Storm in 1990-1991, but will have to finance OIF itself.

Goals of the operation

- In Desert Storm, the goal was stated simply and repeatedly: drive Iraq out of Kuwait. The U.S. also took advantage of the situation to try to destroy Iraq's WMD capabilities.
- In OIF, the primary goal was regime change, and with it, the final disposition of Iraq's WMD capabilities, by forcible elimination by the U.S. on the ground, not through UN inspections or voluntary Iraqi actions.

Estimate of the enemy

- For Desert Storm, the Iraqis were assumed to be fierce fighters, dug in, with air defenses thicker than those that the Soviets had mounted in Central Europe, and artillery that could out-range U.S. artillery. Their use of WMD was feared, but the assumption was that they were deterred by U.S. threats to retaliate “by any means necessary.”
- For OIF, the assumption was that only the Republican Guard divisions, and especially the Special Republican Guard Division, would fight, and that the rest of the Iraqi ground forces might capitulate or melt away. The U.S. knew that Iraqi air defenses could be defeated, especially as they had been attrited during Northern Watch and Southern Watch. But the U.S. fear of Iraqi use of WMD was greater this time, given that the survival of the regime was at stake. In the event, use of WMD did not occur. Perhaps the U.S. had not anticipated the kind of guerrilla warfare the Iraqis conducted—which would have been less feasible out in the Kuwaiti desert and was not attempted by them in Desert Storm.

Assembly of forces

- In 2002-2003, the U.S. got around six months in which to build up again, despite the assertion that persisted ever since 1991

that Saddam would never again give the U.S. that much time in which to build up.

- U.S. and coalition headquarters were in Riyadh for Desert Storm, but are in Qatar for OIF. The JFACC remains in Saudi Arabia.
- For Desert Storm, the U.S. built up to 500,000 military personnel, plus the forces from UK, France, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. For OIF, the figure given is 250,000 U.S. military personnel and 45,000 UK, plus small contingents from some other countries.
- For Desert Storm, the full force was in place from the beginning. For OIF, the reserves were to arrive on a rolling basis.
- For Desert Storm, all the ground forces were assembled in Saudi Arabia, with air forces in Bahrain, UAE, Oman, and at sea as well. For OIF, all the ground forces were assembled in Kuwait—the U.S. did not obtain a northern staging area in Turkey. The air forces for OIF were assembled in practically the same places as in Desert Storm—but the Saudis seem to have restricted air operations from their territory in OIF to support, unlike in Desert Storm.
- For both Desert Storm and OIF, the U.S. seems to have obtained ample overflight and transit rights, even from France, though those from Turkey came late.
- For Desert Storm, the U.S. had enough sealift, including charters, but a shortage of RO/ROs. For OIF, the U.S. had a lot more of its own RO/ROs.
- C-17 is now available for airlift. Presumably, these aircraft have flown into the Kurdish strips and H3 or H5. They demonstrated in Afghanistan their ability to fly to relatively unimproved airstrips in the face of some hostile fire.

Nature of operations

- For Desert Storm, the U.S. conducted 39 days of air operations first, before launching the ground operations. For OIF, air and ground operations have begun nearly simultaneously.
- In Desert Storm, the ground operations involved the Marine units going up the middle (though they were initially intended as a pinning down force) and the Army executing the Left Hook. In OIF, Marines and Army have gone side-by-side, both over much longer distances and more complex terrain than in Desert Storm. Their logistics were stretched out much further than those of Desert Storm and were much more vulnerable. Instead of the four days of ground force operations in Desert Storm, they took 21 days to the fall of Baghdad, plus a few more days of mopping up in Baghdad and in Tikrit and other bypassed cities. The stamina of those ground troops was sorely tested.
- There was a greater fear that Saddam would use CW/BW (more likely CW) in OIF than in Desert Storm, because the stakes for his survival were greater and it seems less likely that he would be deterred. On the other hand, Saddam may have had less WMD capability in 2003 than in 1991 as a result of both Desert Storm, Desert Fox, and inspectors' destruction and international sanctions.
- In Desert Storm, on the ground, it was coalition divisions against Iraqi divisions. In OIF, the aim was to bypass Iraqi regular divisions, or persuade them to capitulate, eventually to take on just the Republican Guard divisions around Baghdad. But, unlike Desert Storm, when the Republican Guard divisions escaped the closing ring intact, they just melted away this time, especially under air strikes.
- In Desert Storm, the air operations shut down electricity in Baghdad. In OIF, the attacks on Baghdad were much more discriminate, attempting to shut down command functions while leaving the infrastructure for the reconstruction effort later, after Saddam and his regime had been eliminated.

- Urban combat was anticipated in OIF, whereas there was none in Desert Storm (except for Kafji). In the event, there was not too much of it, except perhaps in Basra and Nasiriya.
- Special Forces took more diverse roles from the beginning in OIF, especially in the west and north of Iraq where it was necessary to airlift forces in. We even hear that they were operating in Baghdad. In Desert Storm, Special Forces were apparently used mostly for CSAR and belatedly in Scud-hunting.
- In Desert Storm, the Maritime Interception Operation (MIO) was set up from the beginning (during Desert Shield). Air attacks and mining were expected and encountered back then in the Gulf itself. In OIF, the Gulf has not been under attack. The Iraqis got to lay extensive minefields in the Gulf before Desert Storm. In OIF, despite having plenty of warning, they did not lay mines in the Gulf, but did in the Khwar abd Allah (the channel to Umm Qasr), with other mines loaded in boats. These mines did not interfere with military operations, but the arrival of humanitarian supplies was delayed while the channel was cleared.
- The Iraqis torched 700 oil wells in Kuwait during Desert Storm. They managed to torch only nine in southern Iraq on this occasion, and they have already been put out. No oil well fires have been reported in northern Iraq.

The improvement of the toolkit

General: OIF over Desert Storm

- Better situational awareness.
- Uninterrupted stream of intelligence.
- JFACC/CAOC more experienced and better connected to all units, especially naval units at sea.
- Reaction times to hit time-critical targets much shorter, but whether short enough is not known yet (but there were no tests of chasing Scud launchers in OIF).
- Fully joint and combined operation.

- Ground force units had better tracking of own and other friendly units, but fratricide was still a problem.

Specific: systems improved and added (a selection)

- Far greater inventory of PGMs—from 10% used in Desert Storm to 90% in OIF. JDAMs, guided by GPS, added. Some JSOW too. TLAM now uses GPS guidance. LGBs have been further refined. Javelin now available. Better penetrating weapons (e.g., EGBU-27). More naval aircraft can use PGMs and are better netted in (e.g., to AWACS) to deliver them without knowing what targets to head for when they take off.
- MOAB? Microwave weapon? Available, but not used.
- Apache Longbow was now available.
- Patriot PAC-3 available and shot down missiles (as well as own aircraft).
- B-1 and B-2 used in addition to B-52.
- F/A-18E/F now available. F-14D can drop weapons.
- F-16CG and CJ now available.
- CW/BW defensive equipment and suits may be better, as may be detection devices.
- JSTARS fully operational (was in R&D during Desert Storm).
- UAVs, especially Predator, and even armed Predator, have come into their own after earlier trials in Desert Storm.

Personnel (per James Kitfield)

- Many had experience in Desert Storm, and are now more senior.
- Aviators gained much experience in Kosovo and Afghanistan.
- More women.
- Reserves are older than they were in Desert Storm.
- Uncertainties

- In both cases, not known how hard the Iraqis would fight.
- Use of CW/BW in both cases.
- In Desert Storm, great uncertainties as to how many casualties would be taken. In OIF, expectations were that they would be low—unless the U.S. were to have engaged in extensive urban warfare.
- In both cases, whether the Iraqi leadership would break under the bombing.
- The patience of the American public if the operation had been prolonged.

The end-game

- In Desert Storm, driving the Iraqis out of Kuwait was sufficient, with sanctions, negotiations, and inspections afterward meant to complete the disarmament of Iraqi WMD.
- In OIF, the end-game was nothing less than the end of the Saddam regime, and this was achieved.

Residual

- In Desert Storm, the U.S. ended up having to sustain the MIO, and Northern Watch, and Southern Watch all the way from the early 1990s through 2003.
- In OIF, the residual will be nothing less than the occupation and reform of Iraq. But the MIO, Northern Watch, and Southern Watch can be ended. Northern Watch was officially terminated on April 14, 2003.

Summary: The evolution of the American Way of War from Desert Storm to Iraqi Freedom

- The diplomacy to get international sanction and coalition partners was less successful this time.

- Bases were available, except in Turkey, and the forces were assembled deliberately—in part as pressure on Saddam to accede to the inspections.
- Command and direction of operations has become far more sophisticated, given the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) improvements, all facilitated by greater bandwidth.
- The forces are even more joint, especially as naval aviation has become more fully integrated in the joint force (Navy SEALs were already part of SOCOM). U.S. forces also coordinate well with the British forces, even though Patriot shot down a British Tornado on this occasion.
- The toolkit has greatly improved in detail, with more and more accurate PGMs, their delivery means, GPS, etc.
- Air and ground operations were conducted simultaneously.
- But the operations and the fight were far more complex than Desert Storm, with more ambitious objectives.
- The U.S. occupation force is going to be in Iraq for a long time to come—but not as long as the MIO, Northern Watch, and Southern Watch were carried on (12 years).