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Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

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OUTLINE

Thesis: The U.S. Strategic level leaders were responsible for the coalition victory during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

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Abstract

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was an international cooperation of armed intervention that resulted in a stunning decisive victory. Known as the Persian Gulf War, it was spearheaded by the United States armed forces with the help of 35 coalition nation forces. The operations' primary objective was to oust the Iraqi invaders from the country of Kuwait. For the first time since WWII, the largest air land battle liberated the country of Kuwait using superior technological advantage against the enemy. The ground war that followed with the protection of air supremacy was unstoppable; it sealed the fate of the Iraqi invaders and paved the way for the liberation of Kuwait. There were three strategic key leaders who orchestrated the liberation of Kuwait and validated the world leadership of the U.S. in world affairs and as the only remaining superpower. They were President George Bush, General Colin Powell and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

President George Bush

President Bush served in many leadership roles throughout his lifetime; it started during his military service. After President Bush finished his senior year in high school at the age of 18 he enlisted in the Navy at the grade of Seaman 2nd Class. President Bush commissioned and received his flight wings on 15 June 1943. President Bush was an active duty Soldier who served his country during World War II where he spent three years in a combat zone. His mission during the war was to fly United States bombers off Navy battleships at sea. While on a mission in September 1944 enemy fire damaged his aircraft approximately 600 nautical miles south of Japan. Even though his aircraft was on fire and severely damaged he completed his mission as ordered before he had to bail out at sea. He received four awards for his courageous service and leadership which include three Air medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross. Mr. Bush learned at an early age from a military stand point what leadership is all about while serving your country. Upon President Bush discharge from the Navy he entered Yale University the pursuit of an economics degree. While at Yale his peers on the baseball team chose him to be the captain of the team. After he finished college he co-founded three separate oil development companies and became the Corporate Executive Officer of the third firm. In 1964 President Bush started his political career and became a member of the ways and means committee a prestigious office for a newly elected member of congress. During the seventies President Bush worked in numerous leadership positions. One important job was at the United Nations as an Ambassador for the United States where he became the Republican National Committee chairman and the Leader of the United States Liaison office during critical renewing ties with China. He became the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and credited with building

self-confidence and strengthening the intelligence community. In the 1980's he served as Ronald Reagan's running mate. He led the fight on the war on drugs and international terrorism. In 1988 he was elected as President of the United States. His guidance proved crucial and answered some of the most frightening conflicts of the nineties. President Bush understood the importance of the Persian Gulf region and implemented National Security Directive 26. He acknowledged that access to the regions oil and security of strategic friendly states were essential to National security. He noted that the remains devoted to protect its vital interest and if needed use military force. He also stated the rules for arms sale to GCC states and Saudi Arabia that serve national interest but does not increase Israel's security threat.

President Bush's Role

In August when Iraqi invaded Kuwait President Bush promised they would be free as he rallied the United Nations. President Bush knew that he needed the UN support prior to going to war. The United Nations Security Council passed twelve resolutions that condemned the assault and demanded immediate extraction. They also placed sanctions to prevent Iraqi from seeking rewards. Once the President got the UN on board they approved a declaration authorizing the use of military force. Once the President met that goal the next step was to convince American citizens and Congress. President Bush stated that vital economic interests were at risk and with the addition of Kuwait; Iraq would control a large portion of the world's oil reserve. If Iraq kept Kuwait it would have the arrogance to intimidate its neighbors who by the way control a huge amount of the rest of the world's oil reserve. He stated that there is no replacement for American leadership and no one should distrust American creditability and dependability. He stated that our coalition partners were from 28 countries from 6 continents and stand as one. He explained that with leadership comes sacrifice and burdens but the hope of humanity turns to America.

America has an exceptional responsibility to do the solid work for independence. He explained that sanctions were not working fast enough. He had to convince everyone that this would not be a Vietnam. He stated that combat in the gulf was not a conflict we wanted. For 5 months the United States and the coalition nations tried a diplomatic approach. He explained the objectives of the coalition were to push Iraq out of Kuwait, restore Kuwait's government, and guarantee the stability and protection of the region. After approval of congress and the American people President Bush tried one last attempt to solve the Kuwait issue without going to war. He wanted the world to see that they had done everything possible diplomatically and politically leaving no stone unturned. The last and final meeting with Tariq Aziz was not prosperous in Geneva the meeting lasted 6 hours with no results.

President Bush's Leadership Impact

Prior to the approval of Operation Desert Shield, the President called King Fahd to assure him of the American commitment in the protection of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi's did not trust American commitment. He promised the King and Saudi ambassador that General Powell would share with them the plan for troop deployment to the Middle East. On August 5 the President sent the Secretary of Defense to Riyadh to persuade the King to allow massive deployments of American troops to Saudi Arabia to deter Saddam's threat of invading. On the 8th of August he publicly announced the deployment of 125,000 U.S. Soldiers who will assume this defensive mission. In late September the President met with the Kuwaiti Emir and received a briefing on the events that were going on in Kuwait since the Iraqi invasion. He decided at that moment that he wanted to save Kuwait. He approved the deployment of the additional troops to support an offensive operation in early November. In late November the President visited the troops on Thanksgiving Day to build morale for the Soldiers as well as himself. After reading the

Amnesty International account of Iraq's mayhem in Kuwait he was convinced that military force was necessary to eradicate Saddam's armed forces from Kuwait. The UN council gave the Iraqi's a deadline to be out of Kuwait or military action would follow. The deadline was set of 15 January. President Bush ordered Operation Desert Storm to begin 17 January 1991 when U.S. units led an international coalition attack on the Iraqi Army. In response Iraq launched Scud missiles into Saudi and Israel hoping to pull Israel into the fight and turn the Arab coalition against the United States. President Bush reassured the Israelis that we would protect them and the Iraq attempt to provoke a holy war failed. The superior air campaign lasted until the ground offensive which started on 23rd of February and lasted until the 27th of February.

The victory of Desert Storm established the United States as the last super power, erased the Vietnam Syndrome, and improved the leadership stance of the President overseas and in the United States. The invasion challenged the United States leadership on a world stage, endangered the steadiness of the Middle East, and presented a risk to Saudi Arabia but in the end was a monumental success. As President Bush had promised at the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm, Kuwait returned to the Emir and its rightful government. As Commander in Chief, the President led the United States Armed Forces spearhead a 28 nation coalition to liberate Kuwait. Desert Storm will always stand as a steadfast validation of George Bush's presidential leadership.

General Colin Powell

The U.S. civic-military relationship rests on a concept of shared and separate powers and is symbolic of the integration of its components. The Founding Fathers did not want a military that operates independent of the people it serves. General Powell understood the military subordinate to civilian control to be an essential part of our democracy. Civilian bosses and

counter-parts possess unique perspectives derived from diverse occupations and experiences. Combined the thoughts, ideas, and concepts reflect the will of the entire nation and together represent the entire country. This was particularly important to General Powell, as he believed that the national strategy should include the gaining of a national sense. A skilled professional, he endeavored to maintain the relationship and adequately address the needs of both the military and civilian sector. An effective communicator who nurtured an atmosphere of increased cooperation, General Powell systematically won over opposition to his vision and ensured the battle remained under military control.

A veteran of the Vietnam War, General Powell was well aware of the necessity to have a unified civilian and military effort... Throughout the Vietnam conflict, he had witnessed a noticeable disconnect between his military leaders and their civilian counter-parts that in his view had a very negative impact on the overall success of the mission. Determined not to repeat the leadership failures of the era, the former National Security Advisor (NSA), who was very familiar with the ways of Washington legislators, lawyers, experts, lobbyist, and politicians used his diplomatic and political shrewdness to broaden the strategic vision of his civilian bosses. Powell's interactions resulted in the integration of military and political objectives. Both the government and the military would benefit from General Powell's leadership as it led to the clear defining of political objectives that in turn allowed the military to come up with a good plan.

General Colin Powell's Role

Field Manual 6-22 defines leadership as the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission (p 1-2). It also serves to improve personal growth, relationships, and planning. An inclusive process that is naturally beneficial for every stakeholder, strategic leadership is the proactive development of

each possible course of action through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, and evaluating. General Powell was the definition of a leader. As the CJCS, he put forth a bold and clear vision. It was Powell's view that the U.S. should adopt a strategy that would include the correct mix of diplomatic overtures, which could gain popular support from the citizenry, gain a national sense, and define political goals prior to developing military options that would achieve decisive victory. His view met opposition from some very powerful and influential members of the National Security Council including his boss the secretary of Defense who wanted General Powell to abstain from the politics of war and immediately provide military options. However, Powell was a skilled diplomat. A former NSA he had a polished sense of foreign policy and doctrine for how and when to use military force. He was adamantly against developing military options for loosely or undefined goals. His desire to have his civilian bosses clearly define the political objectives would slow the rush to war and provoke greater thought and better planning. Within the Presidential Administration was no lack of "War Hawks". Simultaneously, the United States Air force presented a bold plan to bomb the Iraqi regime into submission. "Instant Thunder" would elevate airpower as the premier source of military power and in the absence of a ground plan; the air-war looked attractive. It was Powell's view that air power is one element of military power and to obtain the decisive victory he envisioned would take a combination of ground, sea, and air power.

General Colin Powell's Leadership Impact

Due to the inability to obtain clear guidance and no unity of effort, there is often a lack of attention to planning and more of an emphasis on execution, which often leads to a poor plan and subsequent hardships and failures. General Colin Powell's leadership served to unify and eliminate the misapplication of effort. The successful integration of all elements of national

power is the measure of success for a nation. Likewise, the successful integration of all elements of military power on the battlefield is the measure of success for the profession of arms. Outside the context of using total military power was a devised air campaign. “Instant Thunder” was a snapshot of a perspective service trying to win the war single-handedly in an unprecedented manner. The Navy called the plan “Instant Blunder”.

The “1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act” relies on the CJCS to organize military capabilities to form a balanced and mixed total force. An expert at skillfully wielding the powers of his office, General Powell worked to ensure the air-war plan was a significant part of the total plan that would include ground troops. Though distant from traditional Army doctrine, General Powell seen “Instant Thunder” as useful and ensured the focus was on when and where to use the plan as opposed to why. General Powell understood that success of the military strategy would entail an integration of ground, air, and sea forces. He further understood that a totally integrated force would increase operational efficiency and lead to the decisive victory he envisioned.

A leader is one who because of assuming a role or responsibility inspires and motivates other stakeholders regardless of authority over them to accomplish specified goals.

General Powell’s determination to obtain clear political goals that would be consistent with achieving his vision of decisive victory would force the “War Hawks” to slow down, focus, and think. He had a clear sense of what the objectives should include and exclude and was able to use his superior diplomatic skills and intellect to lead and guide discussions towards that direction. Despite a myriad of competing interest and perspectives by experts, think tanks, civilian agencies and military services, his ideas, thoughts, concepts and philosophy above all others would shape the national strategy. General Powell’s remarkable display of leadership unified a team that would produce an excellent plan, which ultimately resulted in a quick victory

in the Gulf War.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Norman Schwarzkopf is arguably the most prolific military general of modern combat. His role as the commander-in-chief during Desert Storm and Desert Shield solidified him in the annals of history as the epitome of the modern combat leader.

General Schwarzkopf was born in Trenton New Jersey. His father was the superintendent of the Police force in New Jersey and so his exposure to public service was known to him at a very early age. Because of his father's requirements to spend time in Iran for a multitude of training missions, Young Norman was exposed to the cultures and people of the middle east at the age of 12. He attended school in Tehran and came to be very familiar with the region, culture and people. This early exposure and understanding of that region would later play a major part in the basic tactical decisions that he would make many years from then.

Upon graduating from West Point he was commissioned as infantry Second Lieutenant. He served as platoon leader and later served as the executive officer of the 2nd Airborne Battle Group at Fort Benning Georgia. It was here that he received advanced infantry and airborne training. His subsequent assignments were with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and the 6th Infantry Regiment in West Germany. He was aide-de-camp to the Berlin Brigade in 1960 and 1961, which, at the time, was in history that divided a city (the Berlin Wall was erected by East German and Soviet forces only a week after he left). By 1965 he was back at West Point, teaching engineering.

General Schwarzkopf also volunteered to serve in Vietnam as the task force advisor to the South Vietnamese Army. It was during these years that the general mastered the art of learning, understanding, and being able to train indigenous forces. These skills would also serve

critical in developing key relations with various coalition forces in the preparation for the offensive in Desert Storm.

General Schwarzkopf served in Vietnam and was awarded the Silver Star for his heroism. He has also served at the pentagon on the Army general staff and was Deputy Commander of forces in Alaska. He served as commander 24th Infantry Division. Later, he served as deputy task force commander to help plan actions in Grenada. General Schwarzkopf was later assigned as assistant to General Vuono, commander I Corps, Commanding General Army training and doctrine command, and later Army chief of Staff.

General Schwarzkopf's role

So what made Norman Schwarzkopf the ideal leader for this mission and why was he successful in this campaign? The answer can be traced back to his time spent in Iran, as previously alluded to; this cultural indoctrination gave him a better perspective, understanding, and respect of the people of the Middle East. It allowed him to have a cultural understanding that was crucial in developing relationships and rapport with the Arab armies that supported the war efforts in the region. His advisory role in Vietnam also was key in honing his skills in working with foreign services. His deep understanding of working with foreign services and earning their respect and confidence not only helped to win a decisive campaign, but also foster peace and good will towards all forces participating in the war. There are two additional key factors that made the general so ideal for this mission besides his ability to work well with foreign services and nations. Although highly qualified as a warrior, one of his distinguishing qualities is that General Schwarzkopf is a member of Mensa. This highly intelligent club touts the world's most intelligent people on the planet. This strong characteristic also made a highly qualified leader to head the operation in the Gulf. His intelligence allowed him to devise and

execute one of the quickest and most decisive victories in recent history, a 100 hour war resulting in the defeat of Saddam Hussein and his army.

The last key issue that made the general the premiere leader for this type of joint taskforce, multi nation mission, was his strong and unquestionable belief and trust in his subordinate commanders. He allowed his commanders to plan and execute the missions as they saw fit, under his guidance. The major American Forces commanders were given the latitude to plan within their sectors Under the General's watchful eye and guidance. The subordinate commanders had the ability to execute a plan of their own choosing. These plans were then carefully integrated into the overall scheme of maneuver to allow for maximum logistical support and prioritization of fires and support throughout the multi-phased operation.

The Impact of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's leadership

Although the success of desert storm was due in large part to great planning and actions by coalition forces, the most significant aspect of this victory was the leadership, trust, and tenacity displayed by Norman Schwarzkopf. A plan is nothing without people to carry it out, and more importantly, to lead it. General Schwarzkopf's unique combination of international experience and Foreign Service exposure, his cultural awareness and understanding, and a staunch belief and trust in subordinate commanders was crucial to the success of the Gulf War. It may be argued that no single leader in service at that time could have enjoyed the quick and phenomenal success that General Schwarzkopf enjoyed. There are many who believe that we did not go far enough, and that the ground war ended too quickly resulting in long and exhausting showdowns with Iraq in years to come. However one may look at it, there is no denying the General Schwarzkopf acted with tactical brilliance and earned the adoration and support of the American people.

Counter Argument

On January 17, 1991, the U.S. spearheaded and led the coalition in Operation Desert Storm by launching a massive air strike aimed deep into pre-determined targets in Iraq. The coalition forces, with the aid of the most up to date technology in existence dominated the airspace. Coalition air supremacy followed a ground attack spearheaded by U.S. armor divisions west of Kuwait completely catching the Iraqis off guard. This was the initial stages of liberating Kuwait from the hands of Saddam Hussein. The monumental task of rallying members of the coalition, planning the attack and the execution of Desert Storm was owed to the strategic level leaders of the United State. One hundred hours into the fight, and 150 miles from the outskirts of Baghdad president Bush declared a ceasefire. He strongly believed the main goal was to liberate Kuwait. Because of this decision President Bush was criticized for failing to topple Saddam Hussein from power. The Bush administration along with the strategic level leaders, victory in Desert Storm was hollow. The Bush's administration failure in toppling Saddam from power when they had a chance would haunt the United States and the free world for years to come until the next Iraqi invasion of 2003.

In President Bush's book written in 1998, "A World Transformed", he argued his decision not to push to Baghdad because it would fracture the alliance and cause excessive political repercussions and human lives. The Secretary of state James Baker also echoed the same statement.

The meeting that decided the fate of the war was held in the White house on February 25, 1991. Present with President Bush were, Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, James Baker and Brent Scowcroft. They met with the British foreign minister, Douglas Hurd. During the meeting the British foreign minister asserted his position by stating that since the Iraqis were softened by

bombing he recommended using sanctions more than military action. He had instructions from the British prime minister to discuss ending the war as soon as possible.

President Bush discussed his concern of political and public factors affecting the war such as the brutalization of the Iraqis and the treatment of the POWs. He recommended an end to the conflict. Dick Cheney on the other hand insisted on finishing the business, but James Baker reinforced the argument of ending the war by saying the job was done. Upon hearing this, Powell suggested using the threat of air strikes to ensure the Iraqis complied with the proposed ceasefire. In the end, Bush and his aides all agreed on ending the war, and arrived at the decision to end it in exactly 100 hours (Gordon, 1995, p.414)

General Colin Powell backed the president and immediately informed General H. Norman Schwarzkopf of the White house's intentions on the following day. General Schwarzkopf immediately held a meeting with his staff and informed General McCaffrey of the XVIII Airborne Corps and General Franks of the VII Corps of the ceasefire. On February 28 General Schwarzkopf received the final call from the JCS to impose the ceasefire.

The war cost the U.S. 61.1 billion dollars. Kuwait shed \$52 billion along with the other Persian Gulf countries. Germany and Japan provided &16 billion. The rest of the Coalition countries paid \$52 billion.

After the war, Iraq suffered 35,000 estimated civilian casualties and 100,000 Soldier deaths. The number of Soldiers dead is disputed to be lower than reported according to scholars. The U.S. lost 148 Soldiers, U.K. 24, France 2, and the Arab countries 39. As of the year 2000, 183,000 Soldiers who participated in the gulf war are permanently disabled.

In April, Saddam's armored vehicles and air force that escaped destruction during the war was used to ruthlessly crush a Shiite rebellion in Basra. After they were done with their work they

focused their attention to the Kurds in the north. To crush the Kurdish revolt Saddam Hussein resorted to using poison gas.

If the coalition would have pushed to Baghdad and overthrown Saddam Hussein from power, there would be no Operation Iraqi Freedom. If the Coalition forces totally destroyed Saddam's army and air force there would be no Shiite uprising and the Kurdish massacre. Saddam's regime violated the U.N. Resolutions with regards to weapon inspections, and had to be threatened by the U.S. with force to comply. Saddam and his Baathist party were also guilty of human rights violations throughout their term. He continued to rule with an iron fist and crushed all opposition violently. Saddam Hussein was a hero to the Arab world until 2003, because he was funding Palestinian suicide bombers' families, and in the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom he fired scud missiles into Israel.

In conclusion, the strategic level leaders who led the coalition to victory in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm made a tactical blunder by leaving Saddam Hussein in power. Secretary of defense Dick Cheney knew the mission was not complete when the President advised his staff to call a ceasefire. He voiced his opinion but secretary of state James Baker insisted and believed the liberation of Kuwait was enough. He also needed the backing of General Colin Powell, but the General opted to compromise and agree with the president. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf not wanting to take a stance in completing the mission, also compromised and reeled in his combatant commanders, especially General McCaffrey, commander of the XVII Airborne Corps from pushing all the way Baghdad. It is no question that the number of ground troops was adequate to provide security and stabilization in Iraq once Saddam was ousted from power during Operation Desert Storm. Humanitarian aid to Iraq at this time would have been more effective, swift, and the rebuilding of Iraq immediately established.

Even if the key goal was to just liberate Kuwait, the Key U.S. leaders should have at least destroyed all of Saddam Hussein's armor and air force. This would have left an opportunity for the Shiites' to stage a coup which the president was hoping for. However, this action was still not feasible because Saddam still had a lot of supporters and this would have led to a bloody civil war.

The decision to halt the war by the president and his aides was a tragic mistake left unchecked by the strategic level leaders. The underlying reason why he wanted to end the war so soon was because of public opinion. The air campaign proved to be a turkey shoot for the allied forces and the last straw was the Highway of Death incident. President Bush did not want the American led forces portrayed as bullies for pursuing and destroying the Iraq armed forces. However, had the president known that Iraq's stocks of chemical weapons weren't completely destroyed the outcome would have been different.

The U.S. strategic level leaders were responsible for the coalition victory during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. President George Bush, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, Generals Colin Powell and H. Norman Schwarzkopf were the architects of the success of the coalition force during the Gulf War. Their outstanding leadership, decisiveness and assertiveness were key turning points that led to the ultimate goal of liberating Kuwait.

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