U.S. Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era: A Case Study Analysis of Presidential Decision Making

Dennis N. Ricci
University of Connecticut - Storrs, dricci8842@verizon.net

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study is to explain presidential decision making, specifically whether to intervene militarily or not in a given circumstance in the Post-Cold War era. First, we define military intervention as the deployment of troops and weaponry in active military engagement (not peacekeeping). The cases in which we are interested involve the actual or intended use of force (“boots on the ground”), in other words, not drone attacks or missile strikes. Thus, we substantially reduce the number of potential cases by excluding several limited uses of force against Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan in the 1990s. Given the absence of a countervailing force or major power to serve as deterrent, such as the Soviet enemy in the Cold War period, there are potentially two types of military interventions: (1) humanitarian intervention designed to stop potential genocide and other atrocities and (2) the pre-emptive reaction to terrorism or other threats, such as under the Bush Doctrine. Therefore, we need to understand the logic of unipolarity and how the hegemonic power can be drawn into actions, especially in the absence of a great power rival.

The theoretical puzzle we seek to solve comprises the competing explanations for why a presidential administration will decide to intervene in one situation and not in another. This is the normative question on which we focus from the outset in order to solve the theoretical puzzle.
Since both the situations and decision makers vary across cases, we need to know precisely what is driving the outcome. Therefore, our theoretical perspective and goal-driven research objective are focused on standardized, generalized questions: Why intervene? Why use force or not? Under what conditions or circumstances are intervention decisions made?

Do outcomes depend primarily on presidents making decisions as the all-important dynamic versus other variables and different measurements as to what drives the “go” or “no-go” decisions? Our examination of the phenomena of interest will lead us to a generalized theory as well as a typology of military intervention in the post-Cold War era.

KEY WORDS: International Relations, United States Foreign Policy, Presidential Decision Making, Military Intervention.
U.S. Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era:
A Case-Study Analysis of Presidential Decision Making

Dennis N. Ricci

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M.A., University of Connecticut, 1978

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U.S. Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era: A Case Study Analysis of Presidential Decision Making

Presented by

Dennis N. Ricci, B.A., M.A.

Major Advisor

Stephen B. Dyson

Associate Advisor

Jeremy Pressman

Associate Advisor

Mark A. Boyer

University of Connecticut

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CHAPTER 1
U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this study is to explain presidential decision making, specifically whether to intervene militarily or not in a given circumstance in the Post-Cold War era. First, we define military intervention as the deployment of troops and weaponry in active military engagement (not peacekeeping). The cases in which we are interested involve the actual or intended use of force (“boots on the ground”), in other words, not drone attacks or missile strikes. Thus, we substantially reduce the number of potential cases by excluding several limited uses of force against Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan in the 1990s. Given the absence of a countervailing force or major power to serve as deterrent, such as the Soviet enemy in the Cold War period, there are potentially two types of military interventions: (1) humanitarian intervention designed to stop potential genocide and other atrocities and (2) the pre-emptive reaction to terrorism or other threats, such as under the Bush Doctrine. Therefore, we need to understand the logic of unipolarity and how the hegemonic power can be drawn into actions, especially in the absence of a great power rival. This study has found that interventions are more likely when international factors (support or pressure from allies and intergovernmental organizations), momentum from previous interventions, continuity from predecessor administrations, lessons learned from prior decisions, and an optimistic appraisal of the military situation are favorable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The question of U.S. military intervention and the direction (or drift) of American foreign relations since the end of the Cold War has received considerable attention in recent scholarship.
Kessler finds that past intervention experiences influenced “cognitive constructs” in the decision-making process; “reasoning by historical analogy” was crucial in the determination of how and when to intervene; and “past lessons linked perceived interests to policy preferences.” Peterson’s study of U.S. interventions in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia finds that piecemeal application of historical analogies, perceived pressure due to U.S. membership in international organizations (i.e., NATO, UN), and the tendency to “demonize” individuals or groups involved in a conflict are key to decisions of armed intervention. Norton analyzes the Somalia, Haiti, and Rwanda decisions during the 1990s, concluding that U.S. involvement was in each case “nontraditional,” resulting from “intrastate” conflict, and motivated, at least partly, by “altruistic” aims. Hence, we synthesize the foregoing “list” or “menu” of theoretical reasons for military intervention suggested by these scholars to construct the larger puzzle that we intend to solve by looking hard at the chosen cases.

THEORETICAL PUZZLE

The theoretical puzzle we seek to solve comprises the competing explanations for why a presidential administration will decide to intervene in one situation and not in another. This is the question on which we focus from the outset in order to solve the theoretical puzzle. On the one hand, does the president as an individual drive the decision-making process, or is the institutional presidency key, being his circle of key advisers? Thus, are “personality” and “informal factors”

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determinative? On the other hand, are decisions reactive or determined by a variety of external factors (for example, “hard” versus “soft” crises): systemic, domestic, institutional, and strategic variables (for example, the “ornithological” shift of uniformed doves and hawks in three-piece suits since Persian Gulf War)? Are our best explanations based on power defined as influence projected through presence, as Schelling posits, or false optimism or pessimism regarding the likelihood or easiness of success, as Van Evera maintains? By comparison, a “no-go” is likely when decision-makers see no “upside” to action (e.g., Bush I regarding Bosnia and Haiti, cited in Halberstam). Are decisions determined by the leadership (or management) style of the commander-in-chief, or mostly shaped by the self-motivated players participating in the decision-making process (i.e., what Condoleezza Rice called the “rarified staff”)? If the style and personality of the chief executive are the drivers, should we seek answers in personal ideology (e.g., “nontraditional” and “altruistic” goals, “rhetoric of justice”, and “legality” versus “morality”), generational experience (e.g., World War II and Vietnam War analogues in the Persian Gulf War, as noted by Woodward), and reasoning by historical analogies, or, as Greenstein puts it, the president’s “vision of public policy” and “cognitive style”? Conversely,

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5 Nye, Joseph S.: Redefining the National Interest. Foreign Affairs, July/August 1999.
15 Kessler, Military Intervention.
is the president’s final action the outcome of the quality of a collegial process, where the quality of the decision (output) is the result of the quality of advice (input)? Since both the situations and decision makers vary across cases, we need to know precisely what is driving the outcome. Therefore, our theoretical perspective and goal-driven research objective are focused on standardized, generalized questions: Why intervene? Why use force or not? Under what conditions or circumstances are intervention decisions made?

The Persian Gulf War of 1991-1992, as a prototype case, was precipitated by an action most readily defined as a destabilizing event in the international system, at least regionally, threatening the equilibrium of order and power. In a different vein, Gaddis argues that the second Bush administration designed a “new grand strategy” following the 2001 terrorist attacks, the Bush Doctrine, based on unilateralism, pre-emptive use of force, and hegemony.

After Eckstein, the problem with critical-case studies based on a single instance is that any political event can be explained by some minimally plausible explanation that is not contrary to fact. If all determinants are possible or probable, none are proved. Therefore, we employ several instances of intervention and nonintervention (to be presented below) in solving our theoretical puzzle.

After Waltz, we also consider the systemic environment, wherein the United States acted as the sole military superpower in the post-Cold War period. According to Waltz, “In

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21 Waltz, Kenneth, Man, the State and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
anarchy, there is no automatic harmony." Thus, without the counterbalancing force of a competitive superpower, use of force would be less hindered if not inevitable. However, there is no reason to assume war is inevitable. Likewise, in agreement with Stoessinger, the system is motivated by power, order, and perception, the latter often being at odds with reality. Hence, we consider the other levels of analysis and inform our study by considering systemic, national, individual, and strategic factors for each case under study. At the national or domestic political level, we need to weigh the scope and quality of information available to decision makers, the role of institutional players (for example, perceived pressure from Congress) and bureaucratic politics, as well as the impact of public opinion, interest groups, and other constituencies.

Given the unilateralism of Bush II’s key neoconservative advisers, or “Vulcans,” which would suggest “Groupthink,” how much did institutions factor into their decisions after 9/11? Unilateralism and interventionism may go hand in hand with executive decision making without recourse to Congress and the legal mechanism of the War Powers Resolution. To illustrate, members of Congress may at one point in time be calling for intervention in a particular case, but

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22 Ibid., p. 160.
23 Ibid., p. 186.
26 See Peterson, Stories and Past Lessons.
later may join the chorus of opposition. Therefore, while institutions like Congress try to exercise influence on the chief executive, they probably act mainly as a loose brake rather than a significant or truly determinative player, notwithstanding the War Powers Resolution of 1974.\textsuperscript{32}

Do outcomes depend primarily on presidents making decisions as the all-important dynamic versus other variables and different measurements (i.e., U. S. policy is fundamentally reactive, as Henry Kissinger and others maintain) as to what drives the “go” or “no-go” decisions? Our examination of the phenomena of interest will lead us to a generalized theory of military intervention in the post-Cold War era.

**METHODOLOGY**

After George and Bennett,\textsuperscript{33} this study employs a *structured, focused comparison method*, whereby we ask the same, general questions of each case study and focus on the same, specific aspects of each case.

First, we identify the class (or subclass) of events we are studying. As we mentioned above, the phenomena of interest involve the actual or intended use of force (“boots on the ground”). Second, following George and Bennett,\textsuperscript{34} we define our research goal as requiring the comparison of several cases, rather than a single instance. Third, the variables of interest will be divided into four categories: (I) international or systemic, (II) national or political, (III) individual, and (IV) strategic or military. These categories are addressed by corresponding questions regarding the determinants of the decision making. We attempt to answer these


\textsuperscript{33} George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennett: *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
questions with respect to each category of variables. Thus, our theoretical focus is maintained by
asking the same set of questions and presenting a common focus for each case.

The set of questions are as follows:

1. *Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition),
   where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?*

   Ideally, in any such case, one would expect success, one would want international
support, and one would want the result to be a more stable situation. As an example, the Persian
Gulf War satisfied these expectations, whereas Bosnia held rather less promise.\(^35\) Similarly, did
the perceived failure in Somalia cause the Clinton administration to hesitate in Rwanda, whereas
perhaps the cumulative success of efforts in Haiti may have led Clinton to intervene in the
Kosovo crisis three years later?\(^36\)

2. *Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have
   weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?*

   For example, why did the Clinton White House demur in the wake of political and ethnic
violence in Rwanda, but move to action in Haiti, a human tragedy of notably lesser scale in terms
of the loss of life? If geography counts, perhaps Haiti trumped Rwanda on tangible interests,
while Haiti became hostage to a domestic constituency, led by the Congressional Black Caucus,
something Rwanda lacked. Another factor could be timing, corresponding with the domestic
fallout from Somalia.

3. *How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management
   style) have a determinative effect?*

   Phrased differently, we may ask how much effect individuals have, since they do matter
and always will. As a product of the World War II generation, arguments involving terms such as

\(^35\) Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed.*
“aggression” and “appeasement” resonated with Bush I. However, for Clinton and Bush II, the paradigm may have been formed by “lessons” or “mistakes” of the Vietnam War. Also crucial is the quality and scope of advice available to, or solicited by, the president. Conversely, conflict and competition among key players can affect results. By way of illustration, George W. Bush’s jealousy of Secretary of State Colin Powell may have had an effect on decisional outcomes in addition to leveraging of different players’ preferences, such as those of Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. Therefore, the number of participants, how wide is the circle of advisers, and the quality of advice all count as well as the participants’ preferences. Hence, we ask how much the subordinate players stack the deck in terms of the options presented to the president.

4. How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?

Bureaucratic politics would suggest faithfulness to the Weinberger-Powell doctrine and make the military a reluctant intervener. General Wesley Clark might be a key “player” who pushed or pulled the chief decision-maker, the president, in Kosovo, but the end result was victory in what was, in Clark’s words, “not, strictly speaking, a war.” Likewise, conflicting goals, unfinished business, and limited resources come into play, such as, for example, the recall of General Tommy Franks from Afghanistan in late 2002 to start drafting the order of battle for Iraq. The expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait may have been a necessary correction to the regional strategic status quo, whereas the Iraq war after 2003 is seen as a “war of choice.”

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Our challenge is to measure the weight of each factor against the others. In the end, a president’s decision may be individually determined, based on his own strong perceptions and worldview, even if external events, advisers, and the bureaucracy try to push the decision in a different direction. We hope to solve the puzzle in the process of examining the cases in this focused, structural manner.

RESEARCH DESIGN: VARIABLES

Following George and Bennett, we formulate the objectives, research design (variables), and structure of our research; we carry out each of our case studies, based on the available data, according to the structured, focused comparison method; and then we will draw on our findings to construct a theory and anatomy of presidential decision making in cases of military intervention since the end of the Cold War. Thus, we identify our puzzle of presidential decision making as a building block study with respect to the phenomena of U.S. military intervention in the post-Cold War era.

As noted above, the categories of variables are given as follows: (I) International, systemic, or structural factors; (II) National, domestic, or internal political factors; (III) Individual, personal, and ideological factors; and (IV) Criteria for the use of force.

I. International, systemic, or structural factors:

We consider the identification of crises that threaten regional instability, local disorder, or other undesirable outcomes; crises that present direct or indirect threat to U.S. interests or hegemony; and crises that pose a physical threat to American territory, property, or citizenry, either domestically or outside the United States.

40 George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennett: Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.
41 Ibid.
The one constant is the unipolar or sole superpower moment. United States supremacy holds throughout the post-Cold War era, although the limits of American economic wherewithal to project such power has become more obvious. The United States still is “the indispensable nation” in the global environment. Therefore, if Bush I saw Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait as a systemic threat in 1990-1991, did Bush II perceive Iraq the same way after 9/11, armed with the Bush Doctrine as a guide to action? In other words, how did 9/11 change the way the U.S. perceived its post-Cold War goals and capacity to achieve them?

Additionally, the structural factors include institutional actors, such as NATO, UN, and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) that may influence decision makers, even driving or pulling the commander-in-chief in a different direction from the course preferred by his domestic or political advisers. An example may have been the policy shift toward diplomatic (but not military) engagement in Bosnia after the transition from Bush I to Clinton because of NATO’s influence.  

However, intervention in European crises such as Bosnia and Kosovo arguably were intended to stop the destabilization of an area of vital interest — in contrast to a reluctance to intervene in Africa because of its relative geopolitical unimportance. Additionally, so-called humanitarian intervention has involved other goals and factors. Similarly, actions such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003 could have had underlying motives related to superpower hegemony.

II. National, domestic, or internal political:

We consider the influence of the roles of key institutional players, including the chief executive, specifically, presidential leadership style as a push or pull factor (as a subset of institutional roles). An example was Clinton’s initial reluctance to play a leadership role in

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42 Holbrooke, To End a War.
Bosnia, thereby affecting the approach of Secretary of State Warren Christopher in his negotiations with the European allies. Public opinion and popular support are decisional factors as well, including the so-called rally effect, the public’s assumed tolerance for casualties over time, and the perceived success or failure of the operation.

Bureaucratic politics influences each scenario, where decisions and policy are impacted by the standing, stature, and influence of intra-governmental actors, including agencies involved in intelligence, national security, defense, and diplomacy. For example, General Wesley Clark’s military missions in Kosovo may have succeeded despite inter- and intra-agency rivalries. Institutional, constitutional, and legal factors, such as executive-legislative relations, unified or divided government, the War Powers Resolution, and budgetary issues may have exerted relative weight in a decisional scenario. Given the long-term budget-busting costs of military action after 9/11, one wonders how much, if at all, finances constituted any kind of brake. In the case of Iraq, setting the vote for war just before the 2002 Congressional elections may have been intended to dampen or mute opposition voices. The examples of Clinton and Bush II illustrate persistent Congressional deference to presidential decision-making, in effect, turning a blind eye, to the War Powers Resolution. While Congress has not repealed the War Powers Resolution, that legislation has been ignored since the 1980s, although the GOP actually raised it in a partisan response to President Obama’s “lead-from-behind” action against Libya in 2011.

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

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In addition to psychology, personality, and leadership style, historical reference points, including historical analogies and interpretation of historical events, are motivators as well as justifications for actions taken. For example, the appeasement-aggression model derived from the World War II experience apparently remained compelling for Bush I as a generational consensus that contributed to his response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the Persian Gulf War.\textsuperscript{47} A similarly generationally driven analogue on the issue of Iraqi nuclear, chemical, or biological weaponry in 2003 with the Cuban Missile Crisis was invoked at one point by George W. Bush.\textsuperscript{48} This last point is problematic in that it illustrates the misapplication or misunderstanding of historical analogies.\textsuperscript{49} The second war against Saddam Hussein went ahead without much overt concern about U.S. troops running into WMD casualties. Thus, Bush II’s team either misread the “lesson” of the Cuban Missile Crisis (and the caution exercised by JFK and his advisers), or perhaps simply expropriated this historical event to justify an already agreed upon decision to go into Iraq in 2003.\textsuperscript{50}

IV. \textit{Criteria for the use of force:}

Whether or not explicitly stated by decision makers, the Powell Doctrine or Weinberg’s Rules of Engagement, as applied to each case, are not only a key set of dependent variables, but also measurements of the relative necessity (or desirability) for deployment of the military option in a given case.\textsuperscript{51} The assumed criteria for the use of force are as follows: (1) the first criterion is that all other options (negotiations, sanctions, etc.) have been ruled out for sufficient reason; (2)

\textsuperscript{51} Powell, Colin, with Joseph E. Persico: \textit{A Soldier’s Way} (London: Hutchings, 1995).
the political, diplomatic, or military objectives are clear; (3) the military battle plan to be
employed is realistic (“doable”) and the military objectives can be effectively maintained
(“winnable”); (4) there are sufficient resources to go into the situation with “overwhelming
force”; and (5) there must be an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of
personnel once the mission’s goals have been accomplished. We may seek evidence of
consistency of criteria from clearly specified objectives through to an exit strategy. However, we
do not presume that our case study scenarios will sustain the usefulness of these ideal criteria.
Rather, the criteria serve as benchmarks for the selected case studies.

The cumulative effect of prior intervention or nonintervention decisions on subsequent
actions can be considered within the life span of an administration, particularly past adjudged
successes or failure. Somalia seems to have impacted Clinton’s Haiti and Rwanda decisions or
non-decisions.\footnote{Lake, Anthony: Six Nightmares: Real Threats in a Dangerous World and How America Can Meet Them (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 2001).} Somalia is instructive because the mission’s goals and parameters (i.e., limits)
evolved as events unfolded and was ultimately abandoned as a failure—a classic case of
“mission creep.”\footnote{Bowden, Mark: Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999).} By contrast, Haiti (1994) provides an instructive example of the decision-
making process because armed intervention against live resistance was avoided by the
unexpected, last-minute success in diplomacy.\footnote{Shacochis, Bob: The Immaculate Invasion (New York: Viking, 1999).}

**RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDIES**

We will analyze six decision-making scenarios – Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, Rwanda,
Kosovo, Iran (Iran’s nuclear development), and Iraq – on the basis of four sets of variables and
four corresponding questions from our focused, structured analytical framework, whereby we
ask the same, general questions of each case study and focus on the same, specific aspects of
each case. We devote the subsequent chapters to considering the selected case studies of military
intervention in more depth. The selected cases represent a “go” and “no-go” for each of the
presidents – Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II. For example, the Bush I administration moved
diplomatically, militarily, and politically toward intervention to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait
in the Persian Gulf War and yet the same group of decision-makers declined to participate in
NATO’s action in Bosnia one year later. Rwanda is instructive as a case of nonintervention to
affirm the theoretical assumptions regarding presidential decision making. In contrast to the “no-
go” decision for Rwanda, the Clinton team made a “go” decision for Kosovo. The Bush II
administration opted to go into Iraq in 2003 before “finishing the job” begun in Afghanistan in
2001. Among several notable crises during the Bush II administration, 2001-2008 – Georgia,
Darfur, North Korea, and Iran – Iranian development of a nuclear weapon capability was the one
most likely to have been perceived as a regional or systemic threat to U.S. interests. Bush II’s
decision-making team promoted weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as the primary _casus belli_
for the Iraqi intervention, but did little to counter Iran’s or North Korea’s nuclear weapon
development. Selection criteria rule out actions and decisions involving different kinds of
intervention, including retaliatory air raids or economic sanctions.55 A sufficient body of
literature, academic and popular, exists on U.S. military intervention since the end of the Cold
War to provide substantial qualitative information on the selected cases. There is a large body of
congressional, intergovernmental, and organizational reports on all of the cases under study as
well (see Select Bibliography: I. Documents). We will also consider the cases of Panama,
Somalia, Haiti, and Afghanistan (as well as Libya and Syria during the Obama administration) in

55 _See_ George and Bennett: _Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences._
a broad generalized survey of the question of decisions to intervene or not. Our goal is to build a
generalized anatomy of presidential decision making and typology of U.S. military intervention
in the post-Cold War era.

SUMMARY

The primary focus of this study is to explain presidential decision making, specifically to
intervene militarily or not in a given circumstance in the Post-Cold War era. Why had some
intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-
makers came to believe they were compelled to act? For example, why did Bush I choose to stay
out of the Serb-Bosnian conflict, while another president (Clinton) was convinced by staff and
the course of events that he had a moral and political responsibility to act? An example of this
case is to ask why the suspicion of Iraq’s development of weapons of mass destruction led to
full-scale invasion, whereas other nations’ clandestine nuclear weaponry (e.g., North Korea and
Iran) was considered a cause for concern rather than a cause for war. Why did a president decide
to intervene in one case and not in another, or decide differently from another, where his
predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same
scenarios at a different stage? As an example, why did the Clinton White House demur in the
wake of political and ethnic violence in Rwanda, but move to action in Haiti, a human tragedy of
notably lesser scale in terms of the loss of life? Do individual human factors (psychology,
ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect? Therefore, we consider
the commander-in-chief’s leadership or management style as well as the so-called lessons of
history or historical reference points, which, in turn, reflect an individual’s worldview, values,
and belief system. Finally, we ask how did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous
intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of
an administration and from one presidency to the next? The cumulative effect of successive intervention actions seems also linked to perceptions of success or failure. Thus, did the perceived negative outcome (or consequences) of the Mogadishu, Somalia operation factor in the decisions regarding Haiti and Rwanda in 1994? Hence, did the case of Haiti’s peaceful intervention present the chance to get a “win,” or was the decision not to intervene to prevent genocide in Rwanda the result of gun-shyness? To answer these questions leads to an anatomy and typology of presidential decision making.

The selected case studies are by consensus the most important military interventions since the end of the cold war. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the question of U.S. military intervention in the post-Cold War period and our structured, focused comparison framework. Chapters 2 and 3 cover the Bush I administration’s decision making in the Persian Gulf War and Bosnia, a “go” and “no-go” decision, respectively. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the Clinton administration’s “no-go” in the case of Rwanda and “go” decision for Kosovo. Chapters 6 and 7 consider the Bush II administration’s decision to “go” in the case of Iraq and “no-go” in the case of Iran. Chapter 8 reviews a range of additional cases of US military intervention since the end of the Cold War, including Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Afghanistan (as well as the recent cases of Libya and Syria) in order to build an anatomy and typology of presidential decision making.
CHAPTER 2

BUSH I: PERSIAN GULF WAR—GO

INTRODUCTION

The Persian Gulf War (January 15—February 28, 1991) was a military intervention against Iraq by the United States at the head of a 34-nation coalition to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The intervention was precipitated by Iraq’s invasion and occupation of neighboring Kuwait in August 1990. The primary actions were air and ground attacks in Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, resulting in the expulsion of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and causing Iraq’s leader, Saddam Hussein, to sue for a ceasefire. The conflict was largely confined to the Kuwaiti, Iraqi,
and Saudi border regions, except for Iraq’s Scud missile attacks on Israeli targets as a diversionary or provocative tactic. U.S. and coalition casualties (145 personnel killed in action) were minimal and equipment losses were considered insignificant.

What causes war? How do actors prevent conflicts? According to Van Evera, five conditions lead to the risk of interstate war: (1) false optimism with respect to the outcome; (2) first-strike capability advantage; (3) fluctuations of relative power among states; (4) one conflict spilling over into another; and (5) circumstances leading to easy conquest. In the post-Cold War era, false optimism persists as the salience of the other conditions has diminished.\^56

The Bush I administration’s decision to intervene in the Persian Gulf War was overdetermined: several factors contributed to the decision and no single factor was determinative. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait represented regional destabilization, disrupting the status quo, a threat to core economic interests (i.e., 10% of the world’s oil supply), and several breaches of international law and security, including aggression. No formal treaty or obligations related to international organizations were involved in the Persian Gulf War decision making. However, the United Nations Security Council approved “all appropriate means” to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Also contributing to the “go” decision was Bush I’s conclusion that economic sanctions would not be effective and the proposed military strategy, Operation Left Hook, involved minimal casualties.

1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was the most obviously destabilizing action in the Middle East since the outbreak of the first Persian Gulf War between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988). The strategic and economic importance of the region’s oil fields was a clear threat to U.S. global interests. Hans Morgenthau has suggested that states do not behave as rational unitary actors in the real world.\footnote{Morgenthau, Hans: \textit{Politics Among Nations}, 5\textsuperscript{th} Edition (New York: Knopf, 1973).} Hence, Spanier posits that realism, like utopian idealism, is prescriptive rather than descriptive, and thus normative in nature.\footnote{Spanier, John: \textit{Games Nations Play}, 9\textsuperscript{th} Edition (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1996).} However, the Persian Gulf War fits both a rational and realist scenario of destabilization, where a regional balance of power was disrupted and said disruption posed a threat to perceived and identified U.S. interests. As Spanier puts it, “the United States remains at the center of the unstable world.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 560.} Therefore, the “\textit{high politics}” of diplomacy, projected and potential military power, and “core” interests as well as the “\textit{low politics}” of economic and business interests, cultural interactions, political culture, nontraditional and nongovernmental actors drove U.S. military intervention to expel Iraq from Kuwait in the second Persian Gulf War. As evidence, we cite concerns of national security and regional stability as well as the economic threat to the region’s most crucial resource, oil, and principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and aggression.

President of the United States George Bush determined early on that the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait was “outright aggression.”\footnote{Bush, George H. W., and Brent Scowcroft: \textit{A World Transformed} (New York: Knopf, 1998), p. 303.} A factor often overlooked is that 3,000 Americans lived and worked in Kuwait at the time, making an issue of their protection. Most Westerners had been taken into custody by the Iraqis, but were not considered hostages.\footnote{Huchthausen, Peter: \textit{America’s Splendid Little Wars: A Short History of U.S. Military Engagements: 1975-2000} (New York: Viking, 2003), p.132.}

Preliminary to the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein got into a number of disputes
with neighbors, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait, over oil prices. Price cuts from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) led Kuwait, UAE, and others to overproduce, antagonizing Iraq, which was bound by agreement to the lower OPEC prices. Despite the fact that the Kuwaitis and Saudis had supported Iraq in its war with Iran, Saddam Hussein complained to the Arab League, accusing Kuwait of “theft” from the jointly held Ramaila oil fields, calling it virtually “military aggression.” Also, the Kuwaitis refused to cancel Iraqi debts.\(^{62}\) National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft was disturbed that key advisors at the Bush I White House saw Kuwait as the “crisis du jour” rather than considering the long-term implications of a doctrinal shift in U.S. foreign policy signaled by the largest military operation since the Vietnam War.\(^{63}\)

According to Francisco Parra, the Persian Gulf War was “the first oil war … other motives were at best secondary.”\(^{64}\) Bush I’s Secretary of State James A. Baker contends “the linkage between oil and a robust American economy was largely an abstraction: it had been more than a decade since American consumers had experienced gas lines.”\(^{65}\) Nevertheless, the facts of oil are compelling, but there is no “smoking gun” (or crumpled memo) that puts oil at the top of the list of U.S. interests to intervene. Additionally, as Duelfer and Dyson hypothesize, the never-ending cycle of conflict between the United States and Iraq that began in 1990-1991 was not inevitable or purposeful.\(^{66}\) As late as July 19, 1990, the United States had little or no interest in the issues between Iraq and Kuwait.\(^{67}\) President Bush sent special envoy April Glaspie to sit down with the

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Iraqi dictator, July 23-24, 1990, but Parra doubted the veracity of Glaspie’s diplomacy.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 296-297.} The bottom line for U.S. national interest was that, by invading and occupying Kuwait, Saddam seized 94 billion barrels or 10 percent of the world’s “proved oil reserves.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 298.} The core point is that the intervention was over-determined (i.e., there were many compelling reasons to do it, any one of which would have been sufficient on its own). Secretary of State Baker reflected that once the Bush I inner circle determined their efforts to moderate and accommodate Saddam Hussein had failed, Baker saw armed intervention as the likely outcome.\footnote{Baker, The Politics of Diplomacy, pp. 260-274.}

2. \textit{Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?}

There is a weak comparison to Reagan’s decision to intervene with air and naval forces on behalf of Iraq against Iran in the first Persian Gulf War, where the absence of “boots on the ground” looks like a half-way attempt to interfere without intervening. The reasons why the United States backed Iraq against Iran during Reagan’s administration after having “tilted” toward the Iranians earlier are complex and beyond the scope of the present study. Later actions taken by the Clinton administration against Iraq for violations of the no-fly zone, gassing the Kurds, and the Bush I assassination plot were limited uses of force, or non-interventions by our definition.\footnote{Clarke, Richard A., Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror (Waterville, ME: Thorndyke, 2004), p. 80.} A fair comparison is the Obama administration’s intervention in Libya in 2011. While there was no use of ground troops, the goal of the “lift and strike” strategy (to lift an arms embargo to supply rebels and to launch air and naval strikes) was to empower opposition forces to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi’s regime.

The Persian Gulf was not one of the Bush I administration’s major areas of concern at
first, although American policy makers had worried about the security and stability of the region since the British withdrew from the area at the end of the 1960s. The Bush I administration’s policy review (NSR-10) raised some concerns about Saddam Hussein’s regime. They possessed intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), were suspected to be working on developing a nuclear weapon capability, and they had used chemical weapons on Iranians and Kurds. Intelligence reports indicated Iraq was acquiring “nuclear triggering devices,” “long-barreled ‘super gun’ artillery piece,” and “special tungsten furnaces” in connection with its apparent nuclear weapon development. These unpleasant findings were not themselves sufficient triggers for considering U.S. intervention until Saddam Hussein’s incursion into Kuwait, which suggested Iraq had gone rogue and turned into an aggressor, threatening the pre-existing regional status quo. Hence, President Bush was convinced of the inevitability of force once the circumstances became clear. Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney soon came to the same conclusion, whereas Secretary of State Baker was cautious. General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, demanded sufficient force and freedom of action. Until a viable plan was on the table, Powell worried that no one was advising the commander-in-chief to be cautious before embarking on the most ambitious U.S. military operation in almost twenty years.

Thus, the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait was perceived as different in kind from previous crises in the Persian Gulf region, such as the Iran-Iraq war, because it involved a destabilization of the status quo and threatened core economic interests (i.e., oil). As mentioned above, the Bush I administration earlier saw the potential for a rapprochement with Iraq as a

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bulwark against Iran. Later scenarios did not rise to the same threatening level of destabilization because of Iraq’s subsequently weakened capability. Although the fear of Saddam accumulating more power and greater control over oil, not to mention WMDs, caused some concern. Nevertheless, Clinton followed Bush I and the new administration had little or no enthusiasm for military adventures abroad.  

3. How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?

The decision-making style of the Bush I administration was characterized by the president predetermining his position and then working to bring his key players in line. President Bush announced the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia and once they were already in place made World War II analogies and referred to the operation as a “principled moral crusade.” Bush said, Saddam Hussein’s forces “stormed in blitzkrieg fashion” and “appeasement does not work.” Bush further analogized the mistakes or lessons of the Vietnam War. Defense Secretary Cheney shared Bush’s Vietnam War lesson: to give the military sufficient force and not to tie their hands. Cheney said, “the president belongs to what I call the ‘don’t screw around’ school of military strategy.” Within twenty-four hours of the Kuwait invasion, Bush called a National Security Council meeting, talked to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and put United Nations Ambassador Thomas Pickering to work to get the United Nations Security Council to convene an emergency meeting. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of time elapsed before the president clarified what the nature of U.S. action would be, leaving key decision makers to

76 Ibid., p. 192.
79 Ibid., p. 307.
80 Ibid., p. 303.
cull hints from nuances. General Powell pored over Bush’s public remarks. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs sifted through the Commander-in-Chief’s words, even as he was preparing a plan of action. Powell’s operations chief, Thomas W. Kelly, wondered what they were supposed to be planning! Was it retaliation against Iraq? Was it to liberate Kuwait? Was it to defend allied Arab states?81

Even when Bush publically played the diplomatic card by enlisting the offices of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian King Hussein, the president’s real intention or expectation seems to have been that the Iraqi-Kuwaiti crisis was headed toward a “live” intervention. Powell surmised as much from the Aspen statement (August 2, 1990) issued by Bush, Mubarak, and Hussein, calling for Arab League mediation, describing the president’s words as “measured.”82 Although Bush and Scowcroft do not say so in their memoire, the president seems to be getting the diplomacy out of the way, expecting failure, so that they could move ahead to the next step.83 Meanwhile, in Washington, the Defense Secretary was sending staffers to excavate files of all four services for plans that might be useful and pitched to the president as military contingencies. This is what Cheney called “pulsing the system.” Cheney knew Powell had always sampled the various services for their ideas and used informal ties to forge alliances and get to a consensus. The Secretary of Defense did not want to be outmaneuvered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Chairman.84 Cheney and Powell in different roles would later clash in the Bush II administration during the advent of the next war with Iraq (see Chapter 6). Their differences were not so much over speed, objectives, duration, or allies, but rather turf. Cheney told Powell his job was to provide a range of military options, not to

81 Ibid., p. 234.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., pp. 234-235.
analyze or recommend policy. Therefore, competition among key players and bureaucratic rivalry spurred information gathering and may well have enhanced the quality of subsequent decision making. Nevertheless, Colin Powell could not pinpoint when Bush decided a major deployment of troops was the way to go.

Hence, the core question this section answers is whether another president would have done the same thing. From a generational context, the confluence of applying the lessons of World War II regarding appeasement of aggression and “kicking the Vietnam Syndrome” makes it hard to imagine a Kennedy, Nixon, or Reagan deciding differently. However, Powell and Cheney, two products of the Vietnam generational experience, held contrasting views with respect to the mistakes of the Vietnam War. Thus, Cheney was one of the first key players to align himself with the president’s push toward intervention, whereas Powell, in league with Secretary Baker, advocated caution even as he supervised the preparations for war.

4. How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?

It seems the U.S. invasion of Panama, December 20, 1989 to January 3, 1990, was a test case for a more active role for the military and less restraint on the use of intervention as a tool of foreign policy. However, one might be hard-pressed to identify the national interests at stake in the use of combat forces to grab a foreign political leader and bring him to trial on criminal charges in the United States. There is no indication a similar apprehension was planned for Saddam Hussein. According to Richard C. Clarke, “as troops swept Panama looking for Manuel

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85 De Young, Soldier, p. 195.
87 De Young, Soldier, p. 198.
Noriega … he had eluded our operations for days.”

Congressman John Murtha observed that President Bush referred to the inability to corral Noriega as a likely precursor to hunting down Saddam Hussein if coalition forces had continued toward Baghdad in 1991. Therefore, the lesson learned from “Operation Just Cause,” as the Panama invasion was dubbed, was that U.S. armed forces could go in, quickly achieve the objective, and exit. Whereas Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi military was much stronger than the Panamanian National Guard, there were, in fact, more resistance, casualties, and days spent on the Panamanian operation than planned for. However, the overall judgment was that the invasion of Panama was quick and easy, and could be viewed as a model for future action.

I. International, systemic, or structural factors:

“The motive driving international theorizing,” according to Spanier, “was to avoid another war.” (Spanier, p. 10) Therefore, we ask why states opt for war. We seek answers in actions that disturb the equilibrium or status quo. That Iraq’s action against Kuwait was destabilizing in the region was a necessary condition for the United States to react with force, but not sufficient to explain the decision. There were no formal, written treaties, agreements, or understandings that compelled the United States to aid the Kuwaitis, according to Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney. Nevertheless, Cheney was a key decision maker and he expressed a hard line from the outset: the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was itself a threat to U.S. interests and the president should be able to consider a wide range of options, including the use of military force.

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88 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p.198.
89 Astor, Gerald, Presidents at War: From Truman to Bush, the Gathering of Military Power to Our Commander in Chief (New York: Wiley, 2006).
The most likely restraint on United States military action would have been the counter force of the USSR. However, the Soviet Union failed to oppose U.S. intentions, as would have been the case during the Cold War. While Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev lent diplomatic and political support, effectively spurning their Cold War client, the Soviets did not join, participate, or contribute directly to the operation. The USSR supported UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq and cut off weapons shipments, and Eastern European “creditors” contributed humanitarian assistance and allowed “coalition” overflights. Thus, U.S. freedom of action is evidently due to the change in relative power in the international system, as illustrated by the Persian Gulf War. If looked at a bit differently, the second Gulf War was made possible, or U.S. military intervention was made feasible, due to a changed balance of actual or projected power between the United States and USSR.

Also, the Bush I administration saw the Iraqi move against Kuwait as a threat to Saudi Arabia as well. The United States commitment to Saudi security was given as “a word of honor” by President Bush to Saudi Ambassador, Sheik Bandar bin Sultan. Early in the crisis, in August 1990, Bush said, “This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait.” According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, the president’s quote equaled a “declaration of war,” but Bush didn’t think so. Rather than appearing to be acting unilaterally, the Bush I administration put together a “coalition of the willing” and built a bridge between the two superpowers. A joint U.S.-Soviet declaration was issued by Secretary of State James Baker and Foreign Minister Edouard Shevardnadze “condemning” the Iraqis’ invasion of Kuwait. Britain,

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92 Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars*, p. 133.
94 Ibid., p. 333.
France, Germany, Japan, and Turkey were all agreed. In October 1990, Schevardnadze offered Soviet mediation to Iraq, but Saddam refused. Thus, the Soviet Union gave full support for the United States to go to the UN Security Council. Resolution 556 (given a 13-0-2 vote) approved “all appropriate measures” to enforce interdiction through a naval blockade. United States envoys Haass and Kimmitt put together support at the UN for an independent coalition, deriving jurisdiction from Article 51 of the UN Charter on “Aggression.” On November 29, 1990, the Security Council set January 15, 1991 as Iraq’s deadline for compliance and authorized the U.S.-led coalition to use “all means necessary.” “Soviet help in particular was key,” according to Bush and his National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft.

The Bush I administration was meticulous in its efforts to build a coalition of support—including the USSR, NATO allies, Japan, South Korea, Arab friends, and others plus Japanese and German financial support—before acting. The president sent the Defense Secretary to Saudi Arabia to convince the king to accept U.S. troops on his territory, a controversial and risky move. Apparently, Cheney convinced King Fahd to let coalition forces on Saudi soil over the objections of key royal advisors. The leading coalition partners were Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Turkey. Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu wanted to send “non-lethal military assistance,” but faced opposition at home. Therefore, the foregoing illustrates how Bush I’s intervention flowed from an array of international activities with alliance partners as well as the United States’ erstwhile primary opponent.

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95 Ibid., p. 326.
96 Ibid., p. 352.
97 Ibid., p. 356.
98 Hauchthausen, America’s Splendid Little Wars, p. 141.
100 See ibid., pp. 357-369.
102 Astor, Presidents at War, pp. 226-229.
103 Hauchthausen, America’s Splendid Little Wars, pp. 132-133.
II. National, domestic, or internal political:

In 1989, President George Bush issued a directive on United States policy toward Saddam Hussein’s Iraq (NSD-26): “Normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our long-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle East … [We recommend] economic and political incentives for Iraq to moderate its behavior and increase our influence with Iraq.” Military intervention in the post-Cold War era has been characterized by “nontraditional” and “altruistic” goals, involving “rhetoric of justice” and arguments of “legality versus morality.” While the Persian Gulf War could be argued on the basis of international security and the threat to core interests, the Bush I administration fell back on the language of justice and morality in its efforts to persuade the public and Congress to support its preferred course of action.

According to the War Powers Resolution (1973), only under very special circumstances can the President of the United States use force without Congressional approval. The president must get Congressional authorization for any deployment of thirty days or more and either the House or Senate may terminate an operation by cutting off funds after an additional thirty days. The president as commander-in-chief may use force to enforce treaties, multilateral security agreements, or support NATO and UN operations. The history of most presidential administrations contradicts the legislative history of the War Powers Resolution.

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104 Bush and Scowcroft, A World Transformed, p. 306.
Congressional support for an offensive plan was decisive. A resolution to continue sanctions narrowly passed the Senate 52-47, and the House 250-183. Congressional opponents may have been convinced by Iraqi intransigence.\textsuperscript{110} However, Bush and Baker maintained the president need not get a declaration of support from Congress because of the UN resolution, but then belatedly sought that support.\textsuperscript{111}

The invasions of Grenada and Panama ostensibly required “secrecy” and the news media were largely “kept in the dark,” but during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Pentagon made daily announcements and news crews were invited to photograph military dependents. There was also a propaganda blitz, for example, reporting on the “formidable force” amassed against Iraq.\textsuperscript{112} For the Bush I administration, taking the pulse of public opinion was a vital check on another coalition partner, the American people. However, the president thought the “magnitude” of the Persian Gulf crisis was not being covered sufficiently in the press and media.\textsuperscript{113} Issues of cost were also raised in Congress.\textsuperscript{114}

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State worried about opposition in Congress moving toward impeachment if Bush I went to war over Kuwait without a formal declaration of war.\textsuperscript{115} Bush decided on a major deployment at the end of October 1990, but waited until after the mid-term elections, November 7\textsuperscript{th}, to make an announcement. In Baker’s view, “Even with advance notice, many members would have opposed the decision.”\textsuperscript{116} Baker’s opinion was: “The stronger the

\textsuperscript{110} Hauchthausen, \textit{America’s Splendid Little Wars}, pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{111} Woodward, \textit{The Commanders}, pp. 355-358.
\textsuperscript{112} Hauchthausen, \textit{America’s Splendid Little Wars}, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{113} Bush and Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, p. 358.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 359.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 330-333.
coalition, the easier it was to get consensus at home.”\textsuperscript{117} However, the Secretary of State believed legislators preferred the “politically easier, let-sanctions-work approach.”\textsuperscript{118} Baker recalled key leaders, such as Sam Nunn in the Senate and Les Aspin in the House felt “blindsided.” \textsuperscript{119}

Another danger would be unacceptably high casualties. Bush I administration estimates ranged from 10,000 to 15,000, General Norman Schwarzkopf estimated 5,000, and Chairman Powell estimated 3,000.\textsuperscript{120} Thankfully, those numbers were wildly inaccurate. By the same token, James Baker miscalculated the popularity of the second Persian Gulf War. Nothing succeeds like success. However, while Secretary Baker was cautious, President Bush bragged about “kicking the Vietnam Syndrome.”\textsuperscript{121}

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

Foreign policy decision makers are susceptible to “reasoning by historical analogies.”\textsuperscript{122} Vietnam War and World War II analogies pervaded Persian Gulf War decision making.\textsuperscript{123} The president, a former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, was “optimistic,” but uncertain about the prospects for decisiveness from the UN Security Council, where a Cold War “stalemate” persisted for years.\textsuperscript{124} “We should not repeat the mistakes made at the beginning of World War II,” stated President Bush, which he understood to mean “appeasement of aggression.”\textsuperscript{125} After all, Bush was a very young enlistee in June 1942, citing then Secretary of War Henry L.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 333.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., pp. 333-335
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Parra, \textit{Oil Politics}, p. 300.
\textsuperscript{121} Baker, pp. 330-333.
\textsuperscript{124} Bush and Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, p. 303.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 326.
Stimson’s commencement speech at Phillips Andover Academy as an inspiration.\textsuperscript{126} Chairman Colin Powell, a Vietnam-era veteran, referred to “mistakes” or “lessons” of the Vietnam War, which ran the gamut from inadequate resources and mission creep (or “escalation”) to public opinion and political opposition.\textsuperscript{127}

Other important players also drew on historical analogues and first-hand experience. Saudi Ambassador Bandar asked if the United States would help if Saddam attacked Saudi Arabia. If so, how and what kind of help would come? Would the United States give the Saudis weapons? President Bush and National Security Advisor Scowcroft said they could not answer, but Secretary Cheney and General Powell would. Bandar responded with a sarcastic reference to former President Jimmy Carter sending unarmed jet fighter planes to the Saudis.\textsuperscript{128} In the aforementioned discussion with the Saudi ambassador, the President of the United States delivered a military security commitment in the form of a personal promise. “I give you my word of honor,” Bush told Bandar, as if there were no impediments on his ability to deliver.\textsuperscript{129}

Bureaucratic infighting was minimized when the Secretary of Defense met the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in a “come-to-Jesus meeting” for giving military options to the president as the Iraqi-Kuwaiti crisis unfolded. Cheney does not seem to have ever questioned the wisdom or likely effectiveness of an offensive operation, while Powell was cautious. There was a rivalry for the president’s ear as well as a suspicion between the uniformed and civilian bureaucracies.

\textsuperscript{126} The adolescent Bush seems to have taken the opposite point from the Secretary of War’s advice for the sons of the elite to continue their education before marching off to war. “My dad, Prescott Bush, with whom it was not easy to disagree, hoped I would listen to Secretary Stimson and go on to Yale.” Bush, George, \textit{All the Best} (New York: Scribner, 1999).

\textsuperscript{127} Bush and Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, p. 354.

\textsuperscript{128} In 1979, in the wake of the Iranian revolution, the Carter administration gave the Saudis F-15s partly to assuage their security fears, but, more importantly, to dissuade them from rumored nuclear weapon development. Russell, Richard, “Saudi Nuclear Option?” \textit{Survival}, 43:2 (Summer 2001): 70.

\textsuperscript{129} Woodward, \textit{The Commanders}, p. 241.
Powell and Cheney led. “The tension soon drained away. Both men knew that they needed each other.”

IV. Criteria for the use of force:

United States intervention in the Persian Gulf War might be the sole case study where the criteria of the Powell-Weinberger Doctrine were fully engaged: diplomacy; clear-cut political objectives; sufficient resources, money, and personnel; doable strategy and tactics; and an activated exit plan. Ironically, the last criterion is often criticized for leaving Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq as what some critics saw as “unfinished business.”

The progression of events leading to the Desert Shield and Desert Storm seems at once inexorable and cautious. One day after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait (August 2, 1990), Rear Admiral William A. Owens, Defense Secretary Cheney’s aide, was culling “surgical-strike plans” for Iraq at Cheney’s request. Even though Colin Powell did not know Owens was acting under Cheney’s orders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff admonished Owens: “The last thing I want is to execute something someone dreamed up that I just heard of.” General Powell had a philosophical and semantic objection to the “surgical” concept, considering its efficacy to be “illusion” and “fantasy.” The first deployment of troops authorized by President Bush on August 6, 1990, and the buildup continued for three months. The concentration of forces started out as a “trip-wire force” so that Iraq would have to confront U.S. troops in order to attack Saudi Arabia. Secretary Cheney and General Powell had their first meeting with Bush I in the “tank” (White House war room) regarding troop deployments. Powell was nervous about where the deployment was heading. What was the mission? Was it to defend the Saudis or expel the Iraqis

130 Ibid., pp. 241-242.
132 Ibid., p. 239.
from Kuwait? How much more personnel would be needed? Powell wasn’t looking for a new mission, but a clarification of the present mission in the Persian Gulf. As late as the end of September, Powell favored “containment” or “strangulation.” The economic embargo was already underway and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Paul Wolfowitz, thought it was effective. However, Cheney seemed uninterested and so Powell went to Secretary of State James Baker, who also preferred a diplomatic track. The idea of “containment” would give the president a wide range of options from which to choose, but Powell thought the idea was never given a chance.

By September 1990, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated economic sanctions and blockade would not be sufficient to force Iraq out of Kuwait. After being given short notice to prepare an offensive war plan, General Norman Schwarzkopf, U.S. commander in the field, was angry. His superior, Powell, told Schwarzkopf he still did not have a go-ahead on an offensive mission from the president, but they had to draw up a plan anyway.

By October 1990, Schwarzkopf and Powell knew they would need about twice as many forces as they had and they had to make sure they got them. Gulf War strategy was called “Operation Left Hook”: to outflank Iraqi forces with a quick finish, overwhelming force, and decisive action. Plans for the additional 200,000 troops Powell and Schwarzkopf wanted were approved by George Bush, October 30, 1990. Thus, the U.S.-led coalition operation expanded from defense (of Saudi Arabia) to offense. President Bush finally outlined his objectives, November 8, 1990: (1) complete and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces; (2) restoration of Kuwait’s

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133 Ibid., p. 281.
134 Ibid., pp.298-300.
135 Hauchthausen, America’s Splendid Little Wars, p. 140.
137 Ibid.
138 Hauchthausen, America’s Splendid Little Wars, pp. 142-143.
“legitimate” government; (3) guarantee Saudi Arabian security; and (4) safety of U.S. citizens in the region.\textsuperscript{139}

It is interesting to note the Bush I policy-making circle had no respect whatsoever for Iraqi intelligence and communication capabilities.\textsuperscript{140} A critical period ensued from mid-December 1990. Colin Powell still believed George Bush would opt for a negotiated settlement if he could get one. Powell furthermore believed Saddam Hussein did not think the United States would attack and thought Saddam might pull out at the last minute once he realized the U.S. threat was for real. However, Secretary Cheney thought that was “wishful thinking.”\textsuperscript{141}

President Bush gave orders to go in four days, January 11, 1991. Air Force launched attacks, January 16, 1991; the Normandy helicopter task force moved at 2:20 a.m. eliminating Iraqi offshore radar facilities and their “early warning” capacity; and the main attack began at 3:00 a.m. In the final phase of combat, Iraqis were “bewildered” and “routed, fled, and surrendered,” by February 28, 1991.\textsuperscript{142} The Bush I administration tried diplomacy, through Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and stated Iraq’s disputes (over oil) with Kuwait can only be solved by peaceful means.\textsuperscript{143} Scowcroft argued to use oil as a weapon to cut off Iraqi pipelines from Saudi Arabia and Turkey against Powell’s and Schwarzkopf’s “rehearsed plan for defending Saudi oil region” to use air strikes, naval strikes, and deploy troops to defend the Saudis, which would take twenty days.\textsuperscript{144} Scowcroft was “frankly appalled” that some key advisors saw Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait as “a fait accompli.”\textsuperscript{145} According to General Schwarzkopf, Iraqi weaknesses

\textsuperscript{139}Ibid., pp. 130-131.
\textsuperscript{140}Ibid., pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{141}Woodward, \textit{The Commanders}, pp. 344-346.
\textsuperscript{142}Hauchthausen, \textit{America’s Splendid Little Wars}, pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{143}Bush and Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, pp. 311-314.
\textsuperscript{144}Ibid., p. 316.
\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., p. 317.
were command and control, dependence on foreign spare parts, and “lack of offensive 
experience.” Schwarzkopf estimated the overall U.S. plan of attack would take four months.  

The plan was heavily based on air power. Secretary of Defense Cheney was a skeptic: “The 
history of air campaigns suggests that they are not terribly successful.” Scowcroft conveyed the 
Saudis’ worry that without combat troops our commitment could be seen as thin. Schwarzkopf 
said he was “not an advocate of air power alone,” but circumstances favored it. The Iraqi-
Kuwaiti borderlands offered a “target-rich environment,” there was “no cover at night” in the 
desert, the Iraqi forces had no experience under such an attack, and the United States had 
“sophisticated munitions,” i.e., fire power.  

Combat on the ground followed Bush I’s last ultimatum (February 22, 1991, 8:00 p.m.) and lasted five days (February 23-28, 1991).

Where the Bush I administration fell short was in the area of post-war objectives, as 
outlined by Secretary of State James Baker.  

Downright unrealistic plans comprised: 
rebuilding Kuwait; establishing new Persian Gulf security arrangements to include Iraq and Iran; 
withdrawing U.S. troops to be replaced by some sort of regional peacekeeping force; and 
settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.  

Unresolved issues included Iraq being left intact under the pre-existing regime and sanctions were imposed, but they were “leaky.” An additional consideration is the “unprecedented status” of Iraq following its conditional capitulation, which was not a “surrender,” but had external sanctions and internal controls imposed, including 
peacekeepers in Kurdish areas, no-fly zones, and embargoes on arms purchases and oil sales.  

Could the United States have overthrown the regime and gotten out? Should the United States

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146 Ibid., p. 327.
147 Ibid., p. 328.
148 U.S. Congress, Testimony of Secretary of State James Baker, House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs 
   Committee, 102nd Congress, February 6, 1991.
149 Parra, Oil Politics, p. 302.
150 Ibid., pp. 302-312.
have encouraged Shiite and Kurdish revolts? Would an even worse regime, most likely Islamist, have replaced it? Regime change might have provoked Russian and Saudi objections and the situation would not have been preferable to what actually transpired.\textsuperscript{151}

Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm seems to have touched all the bases of the Powell Doctrine: all other options explored and exhausted (international sanctions and back-channel diplomacy); clear-cut objectives (Iraqi expulsion from Kuwait), a winnable strategy (Operation Left Hook); sufficient commitment of resources, including overwhelming force (half a million troops in arms); and an exit strategy to avoid “mission creep.”

\textbf{SUMMARY & CONCLUSION}

The decision to use military force in the case of the Persian Gulf War was overdetermined, whereby a number of factors constituted sufficient justification in and of themselves: disruption of the international oil sector, regional stability, the territorial integrity of a sovereign state, and to take action against aggression, a crime in violation of the United Nations Charter. Moreover, Bush I diligently labored to build a broadly based coalition of allies, including the Saudis and Israelis, while courting Congressional and public support at home. Importantly, Bush I implemented a battle plan that was sufficient and clearly delineated to avoid a “quagmire,” thus avoiding the ghosts of Vietnam. Consequently, George H. W. Bush would consider the Persian Gulf War an unqualified success, marking the death of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome for U.S. policy makers. However, critics would view the decision to allow Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime to remain in power to be a mistake in light of the ten troublesome years to come, leaving “unfinished business” for George W. Bush in the next war with Iraq.

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid.}
CHAPTER 3
BUSH I: BOSNIA—NO-GO

INTRODUCTION

The Bush I administration’s “no-go” decision in Bosnia was determined by the consensus among the key players—Bush, Baker, Scowcroft, and Eagleburger—that there was no payoff in becoming bogged down in a Balkan quagmire. This viewpoint derived from Bush I’s worldview and management style (see Category III below). Although the Bosnian civil war would later be judged an international crisis and a human rights disaster entailing ethnic cleansing and other atrocities, the Bush I White House considered this case a European problem that should be handled within the region, without U.S. intervention.

Following the liberal democratic revolutions sweeping Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, four of the six states of Yugoslavia, an artificial nation-state cobbled together after World War I, sought to break away from the formerly communist confederation. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic offered minimal opposition to the Slovenian action, but directly supported an uprising of ethnic Serbs in Croatia, triggering a brief and bloody civil war. In December 1991, Germany
recognized the new Slovenian and Croatian governments, followed by the European Community (EC) and the United States. As for a more active U.S. role, James A. Baker, the Secretary of State during the Bush I administration, famously declared: “we don't have a dog in this fight.”

Macedonia was allowed to secede from the confederation, but after Bosnian Muslims (known as Bosniaks) participated in an independence referendum in multiethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina that was boycotted by Bosnian Serbs, warfare erupted against the Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks carried out by the Serbs, commencing in March-April 1992. The Bosnian Serbs were enthusiastically supported by Milosevic and their militia initiated a systematic “ethnic cleansing campaign” intended to redesign the republic’s borders, thereby isolating its Bosniak population.

“Ethnic cleansing” was a new term, though not a new idea in history, which became part of public discourse as the Serb war on Bosnia got underway. However, the term itself was first coined by Serbians with respect to their forced removal from Kosovo in the 1980s.

According to Von Hippel, the Western European community was unable to exercise effective influence over the rapidly deteriorating chaos in the former Yugoslav confederacy. The inability of the NATO allies, including the United States, to come to agreement on policy seriously undermined the credibility of the alliance itself. The UN position was that the breakup of Yugoslavia was a European regional crisis, but the institution was forced to play a bigger role when European diplomacy failed to put the brakes on escalating ethnic violence.

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The United Nations became actively involved in the Yugoslav crisis in September 1991, calling for “a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia.”156 The next month UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar appointed Cyrus Vance, former U.S. Secretary of State, to be in “constant contact” with all interested parties, including the UN, EC, and NATO.157 Subsequent resolutions provided for conditional implementation of a peacekeeping force, approved the Secretary General’s implementation plan, and authorized full deployment of the peacekeeping force (United Nations Protection Force, UNPROFOR) in five of the former constituent republics.158 The subsequent situation in Bosnia by May 1992 in the face of escalating violence led to withdrawal of all except a handful of observers, military personnel, and civilian staff. The “run and hide” response to hostilities is in the nature of objective peacekeeping, indeed its inbred defect. Hence, the Serbian-Bosnian war deteriorated in designated “no-fly zones,” “safe areas,” and border regions by the end of Bush I’s tenure in January 1993.159

1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

Realist arguments are strong explanations for international conflict.160 Thus, we seek an explanation based on core national interests. Additionally, United States military interventions in the post-Cold War era have been characterized by “multilateralism.”161 However, after the end of the Cold War there ensued a broader debate on national interests to incorporate new issues,

156 UN, Resolution 713, September 25, 1991.
157 UN, Former Yugoslavia—UNPROFOR, Department of Public Information, December 1996.
159 United Nations, Former Yugoslavia—UNPROFOR, Department of Public Information, December 1996.
including environmental threats, cross-border migration, and cyber-terrorism. Hence, U.S. forces were dispatched to several “complex humanitarian emergencies,” “military operations other than war,” and “non-traditional missions” as opposed to “traditional” military operations. These deployments did not involve a direct threat to the United States and there was no “large peer competitor,” as the Soviets had been during the Cold War days.\textsuperscript{162} Indeed, these crises were “intra-state conflicts” and U.S. motivation was seemingly partly “altruistic.”\textsuperscript{163}

On June 21, 1991, Secretary of State Baker told Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic that the United States supported “the unity and territorial integrity” of Yugoslavia. The statement gave Milosevic a stamp of legitimacy when he sent his troops into Slovenia and Croatia to prevent secession. Nevertheless, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence a few days later.\textsuperscript{164} The rationale for the shift in U.S. policy is not readily apparent. However, Baker’s position was that only a policy on which the Western allies agreed could succeed. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in December 1991, Germany recognized the new states almost immediately, and the other Western European governments (through the aegis of the EC) extended diplomatic recognition January 1992. The United States recognized all three secessionist republics in April 1992, followed by their being granted UN membership in May 1992. Ironically, Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia was denied member status by the United Nations.

Regardless of the change of thinking in Washington, the Bush I administration’s policy fell in line with that of its institutional partners—UN, EC, and NATO.\textsuperscript{165} Indeed, that was the


\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{164} Von Hippel, Democracy by Force, p. 131.

intention. The Secretary of State convinced the president of the necessity of a “unified Western position on recognition of individual Yugoslav republics.”

At the outset, the Bush I administration did not consider the intra-state conflict in Bosnia to be a destabilizing international event, nor one that threatened U.S. alliance partners; rather, the Bush I decision makers saw the Bosnian conflict as a European regional problem. Warren Zimmerman, U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, admits the United States made “damaging mistakes” and in Bush I’s first year there was “surprisingly little concern” about Yugoslavia among the U.S. diplomatic corps. Zimmerman relates how President Bush asked Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic for his take on the breakup of the Soviet Union during a brief visit to Washington rather than discussing the emerging threat of nationalistic secessionism in Yugoslavia.

Brent Scowcroft at the National Security Council (NSC) and Lawrence Eagleburger of the State Department were the most influential decision makers, after Bush and Baker, and had the most first-hand experience in Yugoslavia. The two were pessimistic about preventing war through any diplomatic means by May 1991. They agreed Yugoslavia was a “hopeless quagmire” and Eagleburger, a former ambassador to Yugoslavia, was “reluctant to invest the United States too deeply in Balkan affairs.”

2. Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

167 Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe, pp. viii, 41.
168 Ibid., p.48.
170 Clarke, Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror (Waterville, ME: Thorndyke, 2004), pp. 136-137.
The Bush I administration, while recognizing the independence of a Muslim-led Bosnia, maintained that the Balkans constituted a European problem and refused to send U.S. forces there as part of a UN “peacekeeping” operation, even though several members of NATO did so.\textsuperscript{171}

Therefore, the Bush I administration was not moved to act in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the basis of humanitarian or altruistic objectives. Said issues might have been contributing factors if there were necessary and sufficient conditions for intervention, such as a threat to U.S. citizens, property, long-term U.S. economic interests, or an actual attack. We may speculate Bush I did not perceive the Serbian-Bosniak conflagration as a threat to the international or regional status quo or U.S. economic interests. However, the subsequent campaign of violence and genocide in Bosnia was only one of four outbreaks of war in the ethnically fractured confederation in 1991 and 1992. Serbia, using militias and the Yugoslav army (known by the acronym JVA), waged war on the secessionist republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia as well as Bosnia. In fact, the Secretary of State saw the Macedonian conflict as most critical because of its potential to spill over the border of a NATO partner, Greece. According to Ambassador Zimmerman, Secretary Baker’s well intentioned efforts to keep Yugoslavia’s constituent parts together were doomed by the “collision course” of events, propelled by “top-down” nationalism.\textsuperscript{172} Baker’s goals were (1) a peaceful, consensual settlement, (2) human rights for the various ethnicities, (3) constitutional power sharing, and (4) economic development propped up by U.S. and European aid.\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{171} Melanson, \textit{op. cit.}, A Post-Cold War Policy.
A rational, though misdirected, assumption that an economic solution could work was shared by Prime Minister Markovic, whose economic policies were moderately successful, 1989-1990, but failed to affect the course driven by Milosevic’s Serbia. Perhaps undermining the U.S. position, Baker told Markovic: “If you force the United States to choose between unity and democracy, we will always choose democracy,” but the United States would not use force to do so.

3. How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?

President Bush and Secretary of State Baker controlled a non-intervention policy with regard to Bosnia. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft agreed, despite the horrific turn of events in the former Yugoslavia, where Serb paramilitary guerrillas pursued a campaign of “ethnic cleansing,” including forced removal and relocation, deliberate rape and impregnation of Bosniak women, and outright murder of unarmed civilians. The president repeatedly asked, “Tell me what this is about.” In other words, Bush saw no “payoff” in the United States getting sucked into a “Balkan quagmire.” Nevertheless, the Bush I team backed economic sanctions and an arms embargo against Yugoslavia (i.e., the formal union of Serbia and Montenegro).

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174 Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe, pp. 46-49.
175 Ibid., p. 138.
176 There has also been suggestion that Eagleburger was influenced by financial ties to two Yugoslav companies operating in the United States. See “Lawrence of Serbia,” New Republic, February 24, 1992, p. 18.
178 Melanson, op. cit., A Post-Cold War Policy.
179 Bush and Scowcroft, A World Transformed, pp. 316-328.
For President Bush, “personal alliances were everything.” Yet the president was “secretive” and prone to “compartment” information such that only he knew the totality of a particular puzzle, deliberately withholding pieces from key players. Bush’s most important foreign policy confidants were National Security Adviser Scowcroft and Secretary of State Baker. Both men concurred with the president that Bosnia-Herzegovina was a regional problem requiring a European resolution and not one necessitating direct U.S. involvement. There were no advocates close to Bush countering that viewpoint. Importantly, the definition of direct involvement meant introduction of combat forces and thus did not preclude an array of other options, including diplomacy and granting or denial of economic aid.

Scholars have given Scowcroft high grades for his leadership as National Security Adviser, even while criticizing the outcomes. Therefore, the decision-making process in the Bush I administration was highly consensual and cooperative with Scowcroft often presenting other people’s views as succinctly as his own. Of crucial import, however, was the National Security Adviser’s “unbreakable relationship” with Bush I and the two men’s “shared perspective” of key lessons of history, such as the Vietnam War experience. By contrast, Bacevich takes the Bush I team to task for being “morally obtuse” and trying to do “business as usual,” thereby neglecting the Bosnian Muslims. In a similar vein, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger said the Bush I administration was “lost without its Cold War map.”

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181 Ibid., p. 57.
However, there was an ideological undercurrent among mid-level players in the Bush I administration that articulated a divergent viewpoint. William Krystol, who was the Vice-President’s chief of staff and as such had little direct input in foreign policy, points to Paul Wolfowitz’s authorship of the Defense Planning Guidance. In Krystol’s mind, “Wolfowitz saw very early that the fundamental choice was American leadership, or increasing chaos and danger.” The document, which was leaked to the *New York Times* and subsequently published in a much watered down form, did not fit the cautious mooring of Bush I’s foreign policy.\textsuperscript{186} Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defense, envisioned several scenarios in which the United States might have to fight two large regional wars at one time.\textsuperscript{187} Wolfowitz was attempting to articulate a post-Cold War strategic vision, but there was some indication he was partly motivated by humanitarian concern. Albert Wohlstetter, Wolfowitz’s academic mentor, criticized the Western allies for prohibiting the victims of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia from arming themselves. In a *Wall Street Journal* article, Wohlstetter took Bush I to task, linking the Persian Gulf War’s outcome to the Yugoslav civil war: “The successful coalition in the Gulf War stopped too soon and ... told Slobodan Milosevic, who is not a slow learner, that the West would be even less likely, four months later, to stop his own overt use of the Yugoslav Federal Army to create a Greater Serbia purged of non-Serbs.”\textsuperscript{188} Richard Perle, another Wohlstetter protégé, was even more assertive from a human rights perspective: “We have become a party, in a very real sense, to attacks on civilians that approach genocidal proportions because we are enforcing an embargo that prevents Bosnians from defending themselves … then if we can be said to have contributed to that genocide.”\textsuperscript{189} Perle did not hold an official title in the Bush I administration.

but he was an important *insider-outsider*, an influential fellow traveler of neo-conservatives such as Douglas Feith, Wolfowitz, and Krystol. Significantly, Perle held both the EC and UN in disdain.\textsuperscript{190} The paradigm shift the neo-conservatives preferred was clearly based on unilateralism and U.S. hegemony. Gibbs argues that a “closely related” strategic policy goal was to define a new role for NATO as “a key instrument of U.S. hegemony.”\textsuperscript{191} Hence, Yugoslavia became the theatre where the United States and EU could put their capabilities and power into action.\textsuperscript{192}

4. \textit{How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?}

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote in his memoirs, “When ancient ethnic rivalries reignited in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 and well-meaning Americans thought we should ‘do something’ in Bosnia, the shattered bodies of the Marines at Beirut airport [in 1983] were never far from my mind in arguing for caution.”\textsuperscript{193} General Colin Powell’s cautious position was pilloried as a “no-can-do” attitude by a \textit{New York Times} editorial.\textsuperscript{194} In an op-ed piece published in the \textit{Times}, Powell wrote that successful policy outcomes derived from a clear-cut set of objectives, as in the Persian Gulf War and Panama, but when the goals were “murky or nonexistent,” the result was “disaster.”\textsuperscript{195} The Vietnam Syndrome is clearly operating in Powell’s thought. The Powell Doctrine offers only one answer: “We do deserts; we don’t do

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item 190 Ib. \textit{Ibid.}
\item 192 Ib. \textit{Ibid.}
\item 195 “Why Generals Get Nervous” (October 8, 1991), quoted in \textit{ibid.}, p. 559.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
mountains.” However, another viewpoint is that the Powell Doctrine has more to do with *how* to use force rather than *whether* to use force.

Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney was another key player in the Bush I administration who may have feared entrapment in a Balkan quagmire. Cheney came out firmly against participation of U.S. combat personnel in UNPROFOR in April 1992.

An intriguing question is how differently Bush I or any other administration would have perceived the crisis in Bosnia in an environment of bipolarity. The competition between superpowers might have attracted U.S. attention as an opportunity to undermine the rival Soviet Union’s influence in southeastern Europe. After the Cold War, the Balkan crisis did not seem to hold a compelling interest for the United States.

I. *International, systemic, or structural factors:*

United States military intervention decisions appear linked to “perceived pressure” due to U.S. “membership in international organizations,” such as UN and NATO. We will try to avoid conflating what came later under Clinton’s watch with Bush I’s “no-go” decision. However, considering the splintering of Yugoslavia occurred in the moment of the emergent unipolar hegemony of the United States, one might assume the sole superpower would have had complete freedom of action. However, the United States could not act in a vacuum. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, reporting in 1999 on the Srebrenica massacre, warned that “the tragedy will haunt our history forever. A deliberate and systematic attempt to terrorize, expel, or

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199 Peterson, *Stories and Past Lessons.*
murder an entire people must be met decisively with all necessary means and with the political will to carry the policy through to its logical conclusion.” Given that his commentary benefitted from hindsight following the Bosnian bloodbath and other unintended consequences, Annan implied the major responsibility for providing “political will” rested with the United States. Nevertheless, the UN’s institutional impotence comes into play. In the words of one analyst, the United Nations Security Council “experimented with almost every available form of coercion short of war.” The unsuccessful UNPROFOR military operation “only pushed the international community deeper into the quagmire.” UNPROFOR’s mission was intended to be neutral, but even the Secretary General recognized the combination of peacekeeping and enforcement of UN resolutions contradicted such objectivity. Also, coordinated international reaction time is slow; four years passed between the introduction of UN peacekeepers in 1991 and commencement of NATO’s bombing campaign in 1995.

In November 1991, NATO heads of state and government addressed the Yugoslav crisis and issued a statement calling for “peaceful resolution,” “self-determination,” and the “prospect of recognition of the independence of those republics wishing it.” A year later, speaking collectively, the NATO alliance partners were “profoundly disturbed by the deteriorating situation … [which is a] serious threat to international peace, security, and stability … [and] the

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200 Melanson, op. cit., A Post-Cold War Policy.
204 Von Hippel, Democracy by Force, p. 184.
present leadership of Serbia and of the Bosnian Serbs … [is responsible for] terrible gains by force and engaging gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.”

According to Ambassador Zimmerman, Secretary Baker’s failure to stop Slovenia’s and Croatia’s declarations of independence “cooled Western European ardor … for propelling the United States into the deepening crisis.” In the spring of 1991, Baker was more frustrated by Macedonia, where Greece, a NATO partner, placed major roadblocks for cultural and historical reasons. Throughout 1992, the government of Slobodan Milosevic contended that Serbia had nothing to do with Bosnia-Herzegovina, meaning Bosnian Serbs were operating on their own initiative, outside of Yugoslavian control. As reports of horrific violence reached Washington, the Secretary of State worked toward expelling “Yugoslavia” (in effect, Serbia and Montenegro) from the United Nations. Baker saw fatal shortcomings in Western coordination, the EC was incapable of reaching consensus or unanimity, and ancient relationships (for example, Croatia with Germany and Italy, Serbia with France and Britain) allowed the Balkan factions to play off the Western allies against each other. Another reservation was expressed by the most reliable U.S. ally. British Prime Minister John Major asked, “Once in, where does it end.” Bush, Baker, and Scowcroft shared similar skepticism regarding an exit strategy.

However, the Balkan crisis of the early 1990s was characterized by a lack of consistency and coherence among the United States and the Western European allies. As late as May 1991, the United States tried to prevent the breakup of Yugoslavia by withholding trade and aid, whereas the European Community offered additional aid and trade as a reward for unity. Of

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207 Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe, p. 164.
209 Ibid., p. 643.
210 Ibid., pp. 644-645.
course, neither approach prevented Slovenia and Croatia from breaking away. The EC withdrew economic and financial assistance in June 1991 when Serb (Yugoslav) troops used force against Slovenia. From July to December 1991, the United States joined the EC to impose aid and trade sanctions, followed by the UN at the end of the year. The U.S., UN, NATO, and EC tightened sanctions as the Serb-Bosniak war worsened and only after November 1992 did the sanctions reach the level of “classic embargo” as a diplomatic weapon.212

Why did the United States and the Western allies opt for sanctions? Simply, according to a commonsense rationale, they were loathe to use force. At the same time, the logic of the alliance’s policy led to identifying Serbs and Bosnian Serbs as aggressors if Serbia used military force to prevent Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian secession. As the breakup of Yugoslavia devolved into civil war and genocide, the UN, EC, and NATO as institutions ran the risk of appearing ineffectual if their collective efforts failed.213 Moreover, the United States had to prove its leadership was not only still needed, but even credible.214

To say diplomacy failed in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina would be a gross understatement. The European Community held a peace conference in February 1992 and charged Lord Peter Carrington, former British Foreign Secretary and NATO Secretary General, and Portuguese Ambassador José Cutileiro with drafting a peace plan for Bosnia. The result was a proposal for a decentralized confederation, whereby local communities would be designated as Muslim, Serb, or Croat. All three warring factions signed the agreement in March 1992, but the

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Bosnian Muslims reneged just ten days later.\textsuperscript{215} Carrington was replaced as EC representative by David Owen, a fellow former Foreign Secretary, and he collaborated with UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance on a new plan. The Vance-Owen plan divided Bosnia into ten ethno-regional “cantons” and was announced in January 1993.\textsuperscript{216} This time it was the Bosnian Serbs who rejected the proposed settlement in May 1993, following a referendum in which Bosnian Serbs lopsidedly voted down the plan.\textsuperscript{217} Vance had already resigned in April and Owen declared the Vance-Owen peace plan “dead” in June, by which time the Serb and Croat “ethnic cleansing” had proceeded apace, rendering the previous ethno-geographic map irrelevant.\textsuperscript{218}

II. \textit{National, domestic, or internal political:}

A powerful stimulus to intervention is “perceived domestic pressure.”\textsuperscript{219} There seems not to have been much interest in Bosnia or Yugoslavia on the part of the American public, from 1990 to 1992. To the extent the American public followed events in the disintegrating former Yugoslavia, the predominant theme in Western news media was the victimization of the Bosniak population and the portrayal of the crisis as a genocidal anti-Muslim campaign that invited eventual U.S. or multilateral intervention to save the lives of Bosnian Muslims.\textsuperscript{220} A further proposition is that the elite media, particularly the \textit{New York Times} and \textit{Washington Post} may have influenced public opinion and hence policy makers by framing the Bosnian crisis in terms

of both humanitarianism and security interests. The so-called “CNN effect” played a crucial role in the way the Bosnian drama played out. International dialogue was stimulated by televised coverage of Serb atrocities as U.S. and European public opinion pushed the Western allies in the direction of support for the NATO air strikes and establishing an International War Crimes Tribunal.

The Bush I administration’s non-intervention decision for Bosnia was in line with the current mood of public opinion. Some observers saw a re-emerging isolationism, while others asserted the American public would support interventions if the United States went in to win, with clearly defined goals, and avoided getting bogged down in other countries’ politics.

Although the initial “no-go” decision preceded Panama, the Persian Gulf War, and Somalia, where the Bush I administration sent peacekeepers in December 1992, a certain level of intervention fatigue might have set in.

Since August 1992, when George H. W. Bush was in office, most polls showed a majority, plurality, or relatively even split in approval of the president’s handling of the Bosnia situation. Specifically, an NBC poll conducted in Bush I’s last month in power showed only 34% of respondents supported “the United States sending troops to Yugoslavia to try to help stop the civil war there,” while 54% opposed and 12% didn’t know.

222 Von Hippel, Democracy By Force, p. 171.
224 Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was a United States-led multinational force that operated in Somalia, December 1992 – May 1993. UNITAF was charged with carrying out United Nations Security Council Resolution 794 to create a protected environment for conducting humanitarian operations in the southern half of Somalia.
Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina may have foundered on the banks of a hostile Democratic Congress if proposed by Republican Bush in the politicized election season of 1992. While expressing support for humanitarian interventions, Congress failed to appropriate money for UN peacekeeping in the Defense Department (DOD) budget and attached a series of concerns and stipulations to funds for peacekeeping operations supported by the State Department budget for FY 1993. The reservations expressed by mostly unfriendly Democratic members of Congress suggested a combination of intervention fatigue and skepticism about the value of peacekeeping in general. Initially, there was expressed and implied resistance to U.S. involvement in the failing state. One prominent Democratic leader on foreign policy in the U.S. Senate, Joe Biden, supported the “lift and strike” idea. Candidate Bill Clinton adopted the idea after previously opposing it, as a policy alternative to Bush I in the presidential campaign. Democratic leader George Mitchell and Republican leader Bob Dole endorsed the Bush I administration’s support for NATO airstrikes, but could not persuade a majority of the Senate. Resistance was led by Democrats such as Patrick Leahy and Republicans such as John McCain, who insisted the NATO mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina had “no clear-cut military objectives.”

In the Bush I White House, Baker, Scowcroft, and Eagleburger concluded intrastate war in Yugoslavia was unavoidable. Nevertheless, they were unconvinced as to what part the United States should take to influence events there. “Once in, where does it end?” was the way British Prime Minister John Major put it. Baker worried the American public would balk at sending

227 See ibid.
combat troops, “particularly having just fought another major war—this one in the Gulf.”231 As a result, the President was sanguine about the European allies shouldering the responsibility. Simply put by Baker, “our vital interests were not at stake.”232 Moreover, the level of threat posed by Milosevic’s Serbian irredentism and military capability were adjudged lesser than those of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Additionally, Secretary Baker alluded to the U.S. need to be “engaged” in a redefined relationship with Europe. While Baker and Bush were of one mind in that it was time for the Europeans to show they were capable of leadership, a “diminished U.S. role” was not in America’s interests.233

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

Top decision makers in the Bush I administration used a “story model” mode of problem representation in “armed humanitarian intervention” in Bosnia, according to Peterson.234 In addition, international crises invite the tendency on behalf of elite decision makers to demonize one actor or groups in those conflict situations.”235 In the Bosnian crisis, the villain of choice was Milosevic.236 The problem with such demonization as a policy motivator or propaganda tool for rallying public opinion is the obvious extension to a logical resolution: if this leader is the problem, then get rid of him. Instead, the villain Milosevic was his state’s negotiator and signatory of the subsequent Dayton peace accords.

The conventional wisdom is that the former Yugoslavia splintered after 1989 because of age-old ethnic rivalries, cosmetically plastered over during the long reign of Josef Broz Tito.

Richard Holbrooke, former Assistant Secretary of State, disagreed. Holbrooke stated,

231 Ibid., pp. 635-636.
232 Ibid.
233 Ibid., pp. 636-637.
234 Peterson, Stories and Past Lessons.
235 Ibid.
236 Astor, Presidents at War, pp. 236-237.
“Yugoslavia’s tragedy was not foreordained. It was the product of bad, even criminal political leaders …” Secretary of State James Baker said, “It seems to me that the U.S. can lead without having to fight its fourth war in history, in this century, on the ground in Europe.” Baker was a key player and Bush trusted his judgment; therefore, it is important to understand why he was so cautious on Bosnia. Consensus or unity among the NATO allies, promotion of democracy, a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and a firm belief that American public opinion would not stand for the use of combat troops in the Balkans were Baker’s priorities or decisional guidelines.

The first priority of Western unity or consensus “came for naught,” as Baker himself phrased it, when Germany recognized the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in December 1991 and the European Community did likewise in January 1992. Thus, U.S. policy of non-recognition of the secessionist republics and support for an intact state was marginalized and irrelevant. The key point became moot by the time of the independence referendum in Bosnia-Herzegovina in March 1992, when Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles sketched out five policy options for the Bush I decision makers and each one assumed recognition of Bosnian independence. Ambassador Zimmerman hoped U.S. recognition of Bosnia would deter Serbian aggression. In Washington, Eagleburger warned against a “halfway policy” of granting recognition to Slovenia and Croatia, but not recognizing Bosnia or Macedonia, especially since the latter two states were considered more democratically inclined. Eagleburger

\[239\] Ibid., pp. 638-639.
\[240\] Ibid., p. 640.
\[241\] Ibid., p. 641.
convinced Baker; UN envoy Cyrus Vance and EC envoy Lord Carrington also agreed Bosnian recognition was necessary.\footnote{Ibid., p. 642.}

We can assert with some confidence that another administration would have decided differently from the Bush I team, since the successor Clinton administration eventually did so. The presence on the Clinton team of key players, such as Secretary of State Warren Christopher, National Security Adviser Lake, UN Ambassador Albright, Chairman Shalikashvili, and Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, constituted an assembled cast infused with an ideology of messianic democracy, American exceptionalism, and the United States being the “indispensable nation.” By contrast, the top Bush I aides—Baker, Eagleburger, and Scowcroft—shared the President’s more cautious and traditionally realist worldview. Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft was the President’s alter ego in foreign policy. Scowcroft’s diplomacy has been labeled “conservative realism,” but his conservatism was less ideological than simply cautious.\footnote{Judis, John B., “Statecraft and Scowcroft,” \textit{New Republic}, February 24, 1992: 206(8).} In his words, quoting John Quincy Adams, “We are the well-wishers of all who seek freedom. We are the guarantors only of our own.”\footnote{Scowcroft, Brent, “A Sit-Down with Brent Scowcroft,” \textit{National Interest}, 99, January-February 2009.} Thus, the Bush I administration’s guiding viewpoint was quite distinct from the liberal idealism of its successor.

\textbf{IV. \textit{Criteria for the use of force:}}

Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 satisfied none of the criteria of the Powell Doctrine. Von Hippel identifies three critical issues pertinent to Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s. First, military intervention and use of force; second, peace support operations; and third,
nation-building.\textsuperscript{245} If any one of these factors were to fail, the mission would fail. Additionally, Von Hippel informs us that inconsistent policy precedes intervention.\textsuperscript{246} The sources indicate repeated U.S. warnings were delivered personally, publically, or through diplomats to Milosevic, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, and other principals.\textsuperscript{247} Despite sincere and honest intentions, these warnings had little effect on events or actions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and therefore it is hard to give praise to Bush I’s efforts in this case.

According to Secretary of State Baker, critical U.S. interests in the Balkans were “peaceful settlement,” human rights, political power sharing among the ethnic communities, and the provision of economic assistance directed toward nurturing a free-market regional economy.\textsuperscript{248} The more experienced Balkan hands in the Bush I White House were Eagleburger and Scowcroft and their view was pessimistic about any prospect of the United States, United Nations, or NATO influencing or redirecting events in Bosnia-Herzegovina.\textsuperscript{249}

First, there were no vital interests or direct threats in play in Bosnia-Herzegovina in contrast to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti crisis.\textsuperscript{250} Second, nonmilitary options were being explored and the Bush I team was perfectly happy to let the European Union take the leading role in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{251} Moreover, the European governments participating in the peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia preferred a diplomatic settlement to an all-out ground war.\textsuperscript{252} Third, the calls for the United States to “do something” in Bosnia were not necessarily backed up by an expectation of a sufficient commitment of money and manpower. As understood by Powell, any

\textsuperscript{245} Von Hippel, Democracy by Force, p. 168.  
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid., p. 169.  
\textsuperscript{247} See Baker, op.cit., Zimmerman, op. cit., and Clarke, op.cit. Note Bush and Scowcroft’s collaboration does not discuss Yugoslavia.  
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., p. 635  
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., p. 636.  
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{252} Powell, My American Journey, p. 576
action in Bosnia-Herzegovina would be “limited.” Here Powell reflected the military’s institutional memory of Vietnam; a limited war spelled disaster.\textsuperscript{253} Powell further recalled the ill defined objectives in the Lebanon peacekeeping mission that climaxed in more than two hundred “shattered bodies” of U.S. Marines in 1983 whenever he heard the “well meaning” urgings to intervene in such bloody scenarios.\textsuperscript{254} Fourth, the strategic options were (1) air strikes around Sarajevo, (2) more widespread bombing of Serbian targets throughout the area, and (3) troops in ground combat.\textsuperscript{255} Powell’s opinion was that only the latter option could force the Serbians to quit in the absence of any other clear-cut objectives. The only preferable outcome seems to have been simply to stop the fighting. The Pentagon had little faith in the “lift and strike” strategy, proposed in early 1993, whereby the arms embargo against supplying the Bosniaks would be lifted to allow them to defend themselves in concert with “surgical” air strikes against Serb defensive and infrastructure targets. This is exactly the approach adopted by the UN and NATO in 1994 and 1995. What transpired were effective military countermeasures by the Serbians.\textsuperscript{256} In the end, Milosevic’s regime survived to broker a win at the negotiating table.

\textbf{SUMMARY & CONCLUSION}

In subsequent years, the Clinton administration, led by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright, argued that the United States should lift the UN arms embargo and initiate air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dismissed the “lift and strike” option, whereas Britain and France argued that their peacekeeping troops on the ground would be targets.

\textsuperscript{253} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 558.
\textsuperscript{254} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 576-577.
\textsuperscript{256} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 577-578.
of Serb retaliation. Initially, despite the worst fighting in Europe in half a century, the Clinton administration continued the Bush I administration’s non-intervention policy until August 1995, when reports of the heinous slaughter of Muslim civilians in Srebrenica and five days of NATO bombing of Serbian targets brought the warring factions to the negotiations in Dayton, Ohio.

Ultimately, U.S. troops participated in NATO peacekeeping in Bosnia, starting in 1995. In response to pressure from members of Congress, President Bill Clinton announced U.S. forces would be there for only a year, but those troops were still in place during the 2000 presidential campaign when George W. Bush and his advisers suggested the Balkans should be policed by Europeans.

Ambassador Zimmerman speaks of the EC’s “irresponsibility” and U.S. “passivity” in the Yugoslav crises. Ultimately, he asked rhetorically, who killed Yugoslavia? Zimmerman identifies Slobodan Milosevic’s repression of Bosnia as the decisive factor, ironically aimed at unity. Thus, U.S. policy was just plain ineffective due to the disinclination of key players in the Bush I administration to see any gain from deeper involvement (Category 3, individual factors). The President, Secretaries of State and Defense, National Security Adviser, and chairman of the Joint Chiefs held diverse but equally pessimistic views on the Bosnian case. Hence, Bush I left Bosnia as a mess for Clinton’s administration to clean up.

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257 Melanson, op. cit., A Post-Cold War Policy.
258 Ibid.
259 Zimmerman, pp. 178-179.
260 Ibid., p. 212.
CHAPTER 4
CLINTON: RWANDA—NO-GO

INTRODUCTION

Rwanda, called Mille Collines (“Land of a Thousand Hills”), is renowned for its beauty, its temperate climate, and its most lucrative exports, coffee and tea. However, Rwanda is landlocked, densely populated with few natural resources and minimal industry, and most of its people rely on subsistence agriculture to live. In 1990 the predominantly Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) began a civil war against the Hutu-dominated government of Rwanda. The 1994 genocide took an estimated 800,000 lives, and destroyed the country’s economy, governance, and social fabric.261

A variety of factors contributed to Clinton’s “no-go” decision in Rwanda. Internationally, the civil warfare seemed all too commonplace in Africa and was not considered even as troublesome as the situation in neighboring Burundi (see Category I). Unlike European or Middle Eastern crises, African affairs lack a domestic interest-group constituency and fail to stir the public’s attention (see Category II). The decision-making hierarchy did not respond to the questions raise by middle-level personnel and the policy makers tended to follow a pattern of “cognitive closure,” blindly adhering to a preferred policy line until reality undermined its logic (see Category III). Lastly, there was no consensus on a military strategy that could accomplish

the goals of preventing or stopping the genocide and ending the civil war. The operational plan proposed by the United States only sheltered refugees in camps, whereas the United Nations commander in the field sought sufficient force to bring the violence to an end (see Category IV).

1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

The 1994 genocide was not a spontaneous uprising, but rather a calculated and systematic program of violence carried out by Hutu government and military officials against Tutsis and moderate Hutus.262 Evident in most accounts is a tendency to paint events in simplistic good-guy/bad-guy terms. To the contrary, the final stages of bloodshed witnessed a number of innocent Hutus killed by Tutsi rebels in retaliation. Moreover, the ethnic civil war was neither inevitable nor unavoidable, as pointed out by the commander of the United Nations peacekeeping mission, Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire of Canada.263 On April 28, 1994, the nongovernmental charity organization, Oxfam, publically confirmed that a genocide of an estimated half million Tutsis was occurring in Rwanda.264 The tripwire had been set off three weeks earlier, on April 6, 1994, as Rwanda’s President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi’s President Cyprien Ntaryamira were assassinated when their plane was shot down. Habyarimana and Ntaryamira were both Hutu. To illustrate the confusing ethnic politics of the two former Belgian colonies, Burundi had recently replaced a Tutsi military dictatorship with a democratically elected Hutu regime, whereas insurgent Tutsi forces aimed at overthrowing a Hutu government in Rwanda. A matter of hours following the dual assassination, armed Rwandan soldiers and Hutu militia targeted supporters of a brokered peace settlement (the

Arusha accord), most prominently Rwanda’s female prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and within twenty-four hours “carefully planned” killings of targeted lists of victims began. According to Samantha Power, the “fastest, most efficient killing spree of the 20th century” took 800,000 lives in 100 days (from April 4 to July 14, 1994) and the “United States did almost nothing.”

Traditional U.S. security interests were not involved in Rwanda. The Pentagon saw Rwanda as another “Somalia waiting to happen” (see further discussion below). The U.S. State Department speculated the Rwandan “succession question will be difficult … the military intended to take over power temporarily.” Even after it became evident that the situation was more serious than a military coup, the “muted response” of the Clinton administration avoided the word “genocide” to sidestep the perception that the United States was refusing to send troops on a humanitarian mission. Arguably, the United States had a legal obligation if genocide were occurring. As policy analyst Milton Leitenberg contends, “the world’s indifference allowed mass murder.” There were 1,200 UN peacekeepers in the country before the slaughter began, but the United Nations’ response was to withdraw, as participating governments shied away from a combat operation. Brookings fellow Bruce Jones holds that the United States, United Nations, and world community erroneously and wishfully believed the situation in Rwanda could be

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266 Ibid., p. 333.
267 Ibid., p. 334.
270 Decontrolled/Unclassified, Released in Full: e-mail message from Prudence Bushnell to Warren Christopher, April 6, 1994.
easily solved because the two sides would quickly agree to a ceasefire in advance of a brokered settlement.\textsuperscript{273}

At the State Department, the Rwanda desk officer, Kevin Aiston, was the first to learn of the presidents’ plane being shot down. The UN peacekeeping mission’s command confirmed the reports within an hour. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Prudence Bushnell drafted an urgent memo to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Bushnell was concerned about violence breaking out in both Burundi and Rwanda. She wrote, “Our strategy is to appeal for calm in both countries, both through public statements and in other ways.” Bushnell later acknowledged she never received a response from Christopher.\textsuperscript{274}

How was the Rwandan crisis viewed from Washington in 1994? According to George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, “It’s ironic, in a way, that the preoccupation at the time in that part of the continent was not Rwanda; it was Burundi … I think it’s important to understand there were a lot of other things going on at the time …” \textsuperscript{275} Moose adds, however, the United States was committed to a diplomatic settlement as demonstrated by his personal meeting with RPF rebel leader Paul Kagame just one day before the presidents’ deaths.\textsuperscript{276} Power reports Romeo Dallaire began to employ the term “ethnic cleansing,” which had become part of the popular lexicon due to events in the former Yugoslavia, at this point hesitant to say “genocide” until he literally looked up the appropriate conventions and definitions in international law. By April 30, the UN commander labeled the calculated killings “genocide” and in so doing ought to have elevated the Rwandan conflict to the highest level of U.S. and

\textsuperscript{273} Jones, Bruce, \textit{Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure} (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001).
\textsuperscript{275} Moose, George, Interview, \textit{Ghosts of Rwanda}, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, November 21, 2003, \textit{www.pbs.org}.
\textsuperscript{276} \textit{Ibid.}
Washington’s view had been that Rwanda was just one of several African trouble spots, not meriting special attention other than continuing diplomatic efforts.

2. Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

National Security Advisor Anthony Lake notes: “I wish I could say [Rwanda] had even become an abstraction. I think the problem here for me, for the president, for most of us at senior levels, was that it never became a serious issue. We were focusing on the edges of the problem. We were focusing on what we could do, for example, in putting on the radio the names of some of those who were responsible for the killings in an effort to diminish it. We were concentrating on getting a peace process going, which became, in my view, a diversion from dealing with the underlying problems. We were focusing on and made a proposal on how to deal with some of the refugees and those most at risk.”

Rwanda and Burundi were barely blips on the Bush I administration’s radar, apart from perfunctory support for diplomacy and paying the U.S. portion (33%) of the UN’s peacekeeping tab. Once the reality of genocide in Rwanda was confirmed, however, President Clinton and his chief advisers seem to have been at a loss as to what to do. Power’s straightforward analysis for the Clinton administration’s lack of attention and concern is that acknowledging genocide by name would compel action by the United States as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and signatory of the 1948 Genocide Convention. Washington’s paralysis was due to an apparent desire to avoid being obliged to take action. Halberstam’s journalistic explanation proceeds thusly: “In the United States, in the months right after Somalia, a deliberate attempt

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was made to suppress the issue [of genocide in Rwanda] at the higher level so that the president would not be seen rejecting any option that included sending troops on an errand of mercy. Even the word genocide was to be muted in all public discussions …”

In hindsight, a major military mission by the United Nations or United States might have saved only a few of those killed, depending on how quickly the forces moved. According to Lake, “But we never came to grips with what in retrospect should have been a central issue—do we do much more to insist that the international community intervene and go out and find the troops that are necessary, or even contemplate an American intervention itself? That issue just never arose.” Following the genocide, the United States supported creation of an international tribunal to prosecute those responsible for the Rwandan genocide. Power writes, “American officials did not conspire to allow genocide, yet they ignored the warnings and the massacre itself. Competing and conflicting U.S. interests led to inaction despite U.S. ideals.” However, what those “conflicting” interests were is unclear, besides an inability to recognize the severity of the Rwandan crisis, a resistance to direct involvement in Rwanda in particular, and a reluctance to participate in peacekeeping missions in general as a result of the recent Mogadishu, Somalia fiasco. The record indicates the Clinton administration ignored warnings, refused to commit combat forces, and referred to defunct peace negotiations as if they were viable. The Clinton administration “rarely condemned the slaughter” and failed to take other simple actions, such as jamming Hutu agitation and propaganda via Radio Mille Collines or expelling Rwanda’s UN ambassador. Instead of a policy directed at ending the conflict, the Clinton White House

called for UN peacekeepers to pull out without reinforcements, even though there were U.S. and French troops available in the region.\textsuperscript{286} The United States dispatched Prudence Bushnell and Arlene Render, Director of the Central African Office at the State Department, to Rwanda in late March 1994, prior to the outbreak of the genocide.\textsuperscript{287} Bushnell met with President Habyarimana and RPF General Kagame, but no apparent progress resulted.\textsuperscript{288} Regardless, any understandings reached were moot, since the Hutu president would be dead and the Tutsi rebel leader would face a horrific new reality in a matter of days.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Bushnell later talked of “theatre” at her meetings with Rwandan military and government personnel, who claimed fidelity to the Arusha peace process while, in all likelihood, drawing up lists of enemies to be killed.\textsuperscript{289} Bushnell recollected, “We had put hope in the Arusha peace process. That was our winning horse … but I think there were fifteen peacekeeping endeavors going on around the world, five of which were in Africa … After the Somalia debacle, we didn't want to put money in something that was not going to be a success, both politically for President Clinton, and for the United States and the UN as a whole.”\textsuperscript{290} What Clinton and Christopher were thinking and hearing is not altogether clear from their memoirs. A reasonable assumption would be that the Secretary of State drove the policy. As Christopher put it himself, Clinton’s management style was: “To lay guidelines, then give broad authority to implement them. He wants to know what’s going on but not micromanage.”\textsuperscript{291}

Bushnell explained U.S. policy was influenced by the Rwandans’ apparently sincere interest in the Arusha accord and the expressed desire of the UN Security Council, led by France,

\textsuperscript{286} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{287} \textit{Ibid.}, p.346
\textsuperscript{288} Dallaire, \textit{Shake Hands With the Devil}, p. 209.
\textsuperscript{290} \textit{Ibid.}
for the diplomatic process to be successful.\textsuperscript{292} Bushnell explained, “Tony Lake had a keen interest in Africa, and so there was not significant push back from the White House, as long as it met the criteria for a successful peacekeeping operation …”\textsuperscript{293} Lake later spoke about this: “I’m hardly an African expert, and I did not know a whole lot about what was going on in Rwanda. I should have insisted that I knew …”\textsuperscript{294} Bushnell concedes U.S. policy makers overestimated the efficacy of peacekeeping, negotiation, and a transitional government followed by democratic elections. United States policy priorities were divided on African issues, according to Bushnell, whereby Rwanda was only one issue of conflict competing for policy makers’ attention.\textsuperscript{295} The Deputy Assistant Secretary’s trip to Rwanda was intended to cajole the opposing factions to iron out their differences and set up a transitional government. Bushnell noted only minor issues and the Tutsi RPF seemed to think they could be easily negotiated. She told Rwandan President Habyarimana, “this chapter of Rwandan history has your name in it. It can be a chapter of great glory, or it can be a chapter of great tragedy.”\textsuperscript{296} Ironically, Bushnell received a posthumous letter from Habyarimana: “I’m really sorry I didn’t implement the peace accords, but I’m going to do it.” Habyarimana could not deliver on his promise because he was dead.\textsuperscript{297} Bushnell also met with Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, the UN special representative, other diplomats in the country, RPF representatives, and Rwandan officials. However, the Hutu government was French-speaking, the Tutsi RPF was English-speaking, and neither the American Bushnell nor the Cameroonian Booh-Booh spoke the indigenous language, Kinyarwanda.\textsuperscript{298} The meeting became a futile diplomatic minuet, an unfortunate distraction on the eve of the genocide. The

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\footnotetext[292]{Bushnell, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, September 30, 2003, \url{www.pbs.org}.}
\footnotetext[293]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[294]{Lake, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, December 15, 2003, \url{www.pbs.org}.}
\footnotetext[295]{Bushnell, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, September 30, 2003, \url{www.pbs.org}.}
\footnotetext[296]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[297]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[298]{Ibid.}

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U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, expressed concern that there were lists of people targeted on both sides. The killing started within days of Prudence Bushnell’s departure from Rwanda. The hope was an interim government would be capable of stopping these killings. Bushnell admits such hope was “naïve,” but American diplomatic personnel in Rwanda were heavily invested in the Arusha accords, and added, “once you become energized with one solution, it’s very, very hard to let go and even consider something else.”

Lebow informs us about the phenomenon of “cognitive closure,” a kind of gross simplification of problem representation where individuals remained committed to an action plan, even after it ceased to make sense. Moreover, Bushnell acknowledges, “the greater concern at that time was in Burundi, right next door, where I was also heading, and where there [was] killing on a larger scale going on …” Bushnell’s take on the situation before the violence commenced only seemed naïve in hindsight.

Hence, when Rwanda’s bloody apocalypse unfolded, the priority in Washington was the evacuation of American diplomats and civilians from the country. According to Bushnell, the order to evacuate Kigali came from the Secretary of State, not President Clinton, despite protestations from the UN commander not to abandon innocents in the face of slaughter. Unless the United States and other countries left a few people behind, Dallaire believed they had no risk at stake in the Rwandan situation. This is an intriguing proposition, since there is a tradition in American diplomacy for the ambassador to stay behind, such as James Madison in Paris during the Reign of Terror in 1792 and William Bullitt in Paris after the fall of France in 1940.

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299 Ibid.
302 Ibid.
A task force in Washington directed the successful evacuation and the Secretary, President, and First Lady personally visited the State Department to thank the staff for their efforts, according to Bushnell.\(^{303}\) Thus, President Bill Clinton’s sole concern was getting U.S. citizens out of harm’s way. There was no additional deployment of troops, even though there were 300 U.S. Marines in Burundi.\(^{304}\) As 4,000 Americans and other foreigners were flown out of Rwanda, some 200,000 Rwandans died in a three-day period.\(^{305}\) Marines carried out a one-day rescue operation in Kigali and observed large-scale killings,\(^{306}\) and the Defense Intelligence Agency reported: “organized parallel effort of genocide.”\(^{307}\) Therefore, the U.S. failure to respond to the palaver, rather than just rescuing one’s own people, was not owing to a lack of information. However, the slaughter of 200,000 Rwandans occurred in three days (April 1994), which did not allow time to organize any sort of larger operation. Thus, saving U.S. personnel became almost axiomatic (i.e., self-evident) in such a situation.

3. How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?

In January 1994, an intelligence analyst predicted 500,000 Rwandans would be killed in “the worst-case scenario.”\(^{308}\) Earlier, in October 1993, the United States refused to deploy troops in the UN peacekeeping mission and approved paying for 2,500 peacekeepers, half the number Dallaire wanted.\(^{309}\) Prudence Bushnell wrote a memorandum to Secretary Warren Christopher regarding the violence in both Rwanda and Burundi.\(^{310}\) Lieutenant General Wesley Clark, director of strategic policy and planning for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confessed to being

\(^{303}\) Ibid.
\(^{305}\) Ibid., p.353.
\(^{306}\) Ibid., pp.354-355.
\(^{307}\) Ibid., p.355.
\(^{308}\) Ibid., p.338; see also OAU, Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide, Ch. 9, p. 5.
\(^{310}\) Ibid., p.330.
unschooled in the “ethnic dimensions” of Rwanda, which he described as “marginal” at the
time.\footnote{Ibid.} Presidential Decision Directive 25, (PDD-25), authored by Richard C. Clarke of the
Member of Congress David Obey said PDD-25 laid out “zero degree of involvement, zero
degree of risk, and zero degree of pain and confusion.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 342.} According to Clarke, however,
“peacekeeping was almost dead.” Thus, the minimalist approach saved the peacekeeping concept
in Clarke’s view. Regardless of the lack of U.S. participation in the UN mission, when Romeo
Dallaire was in New York at United Nations headquarters for three weeks in March 1994, the
State Department’s attitude was that the United States ought to withdraw its support if no
progress were made toward a transitional government.\footnote{Dallaire, \textit{Shake hands with the Devil}, pp. 208-209.} This was before the killing began and
hence should not be confused with a misdirection of policy in the midst of the one hundred days
of slaughter.

Susan Rice was director for international organization and peacekeeping and worked for
Clarke, as coordinator of the NSC’s counterterrorism group, when the Rwandan genocide broke
out in April 1994. UN Ambassador Madeline K. Albright “was instructed,” presumably by
Christopher or Clinton, to support withdrawal of UN peacekeepers. Albright wanted an
alternative proposal and asked NSC to come up with something. However, Rice and Clarke did
not argue against withdrawal. “Observers recall blowout fights.” Rice asked, what if the U.S.
used the “g-word” and did nothing?\footnote{Joffe, Julia, “State of Siege,” \textit{New Republic}, December 31, 2012, pp. 10-12.} Rice visited Rwanda after the killing season and regretted
that U.S. policy steered clear of taking action. “What we did most wrong in the U.S. government
was that we never even actively considered or debated whether we should do anything to stop the
genocide … [i.e.,] intervention … But we never debated it … and it wasn’t debated in Congress.” By *intervention* she meant combat troops on the ground, but that option was not on the table.

Prudence Bushnell’s Rwanda task force at State was “implementing a policy of non-intervention.” The task force discussed ideas such as encouraging journalists to shoot video in Kigali in the hope that the militia commandos were not so shameless as to carry out the genocide on camera. Yet any commitment of U.S. government resources required senior-level approval. According to Bushnell’s account, she never considered appealing to Warren Christopher, much less pressuring him to change the U.S. policy commitment. In his memoir, Christopher states (somewhat clinically) that “depleted resources and swollen population exacerbated the political and economic pressures.” Unfortunately, the solution was not to restate the problem. Bushnell confessed to being captive to the bureaucratic culture. She and Assistant Secretary George Moose briefed the Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, “but we are a very hierarchical organization … Somebody of a deputy assistant secretary level doesn’t get on the telephone to [give] her opinion to the Secretary of State or the Director of the NSC, especially since we knew they were getting information.” Certainly in retrospect, Bushnell expressed regret at her inability to take a risk and tell her superiors their course of action was wrong.

Joyce Leader, the second-in-command at the U.S. embassy in Kigali, said, “the general tenor in Washington was not favorable to large peacekeeping operations.” Clinton’s crisis

315 Ibid.
319 Ibid.
managers were not only hostile to U.S. participation in peacekeeping, but also to any large-scale operation in Rwanda. This viewpoint hardened after eighteen Army Rangers were killed in Mogadishu, just six months earlier, despite insistence by Leader and David Rawson that a strongly supported peacekeeping mission was vital to the success of the Arusha accord, the diplomatic track the U.S. had committed to support.\footnote{Leader, Joyce, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, September 30, 2003, \url{www.pbs.org}.} Moose, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, recalled the discussion was about how large a force was needed, financial cost, and how to sell a Rwandan mission to a skeptical Congress. The error of U.S. policy was not understanding the motivations and objectives of the Hutu extremists.Initially, there was little enthusiasm for getting between the Hutu and Tutsi rival forces. Subsequently, Moose concluded, “I think frankly that our major mistakes were the mistakes we made before it started … I think we were severely limited in what we could have done to actually prevent this from going the way it went.”\footnote{Moose, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, \textit{Frontline}, PBS, November 21, 2003, \url{www.pbs.org}.} If we consider bureaucratic politics, the culture didn’t allow for dissonant information to alter policy and an array of available options, such as a rapid deployment force in Africa, simply did not exist.

4. \textit{How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?}

Rwanda suffered from bad karma due to Haiti and Somalia, since the Clinton administration adjudged those cases as policy failures they were loath to repeat.\footnote{Von Hippel, \textit{Democracy by Force}, pp.55ff.} In the case of Somalia, beginning in August 1993, U.S. Army Rangers attempted to capture Mohammed Farah Aideed for attacking UN peacekeepers; Aideed eluded capture for months, set a trap for the U.S. peacekeepers, and ultimately killed eighteen troops in the well-known incident at Mogadishu.
In addition to the obvious negative lesson learned by the loss of lives, the “Black Hawk Down” scenario tempered the Clinton administration’s enthusiasm for peacekeeping missions. Clinton ordered increased U.S. presence in Somalia, while informing UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali of a six-month time limit. Bush I had sent U.S. troops, which, according to National Security Adviser Lake, Clinton had expected to be replaced by UN peacekeepers before the end of January 1993, but Boutros-Ghali did not want to commit to that timetable. According to Richard Clarke, the change of mission from humanitarian aid to a manhunt was not a presidential-driven decision, but was driven by President Clinton’s macho dictum: “we will respond massively” to such an attack. George Stephanopoulos recalls the President cursing and vowing, “When people kill us, they should be killed in greater numbers.” Whereas Stephanopoulos was uncertain as to whether Clinton’s outburst was due to frustration or conviction, the chief of staff indicated the commander-in-chief agreed with New York Times columnist William Safire’s determination that the “new impotence” of the United States “is the unwillingness of too many Americans to expend blood and treasure.” Projecting this precept to Rwanda, Clinton might have concluded that what he could do and what he ought to do were two different things. Ironically, Clinton seemed to have been afflicted by the Vietnam Syndrome in reverse.

The dramatic events in Rwanda followed a parallel timeline as the political crises in Somalia and Haiti. United States troops were prepared to enter Haiti in September 1993, but the plan was suspended when the Haitian military regime reneged on a previously negotiated

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323 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 199.
324 Ibid., p. 87.
325 Stephanopoulos, George, All Too Human (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 214.
326 Ibid., p. 216.
agreement to give up power. Only eight days after the October 3rd incident in Mogadishu, organized protestors taunted the USS Harlan County in Port-au-Prince harbor, prompting the U.S. Navy ship’s withdrawal.\textsuperscript{328} Hence, the Clinton administration demonstrated its hesitance after Somalia and the emptiness of its resolve to intervene. Not without irony is the fact of the U.S. intervention in Haiti by way of a diplomatic initiative and bloodless invasion in September 1994, following the seeming “mistake” of non-intervention in Rwanda.

In the wake of the Rwandan genocide, in William Jefferson Clinton’s own words, “I ordered evacuation of Americans and sent troops to guarantee their safety.”\textsuperscript{329} Policy analyst Alan Kuperman maintains that ground troops should not be deployed for humanitarian interventions during civil wars, but cases of genocide should be an exception.\textsuperscript{330} Former diplomat C. A. Crocker contends Clinton’s performance in Rwanda was “worthy of criticisms.”\textsuperscript{331} Specifically, UN Ambassador Albright said the mistakes in Somalia offered the wrong lessons for Rwanda: “Somalia counseled caution; Rwanda demanded action …”\textsuperscript{332} According to Prudence Bushnell, continuing civil strife in nearby Liberia was seen as being much more in U.S. interest and received a good deal of attention.\textsuperscript{333} George Moose perceived apprehension from the NSC, State Department, and Defense Department about adding Rwanda to a growing list of ongoing peacekeeping operations, five of which were in Africa.\textsuperscript{334} Madeline Albright conceded that only a broad-based coalition led by the United States could have

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\item\textsuperscript{328} Bermeo, Sarah, Clinton and Coercive Diplomacy: A Study of Haiti, WWS Case Study 2/01, Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs, January 18, 2001, Revised April 24, 2001.
\item\textsuperscript{329} Clinton, My Life, p. 593.
\item\textsuperscript{330} Kuperman, A. J., Rwanda in Retrospect. Foreign Affairs, January/February 2000.
\item\textsuperscript{331} Crocker, C.A., “A Poor Case for Quitting: Mistaking Incompetence for Interventionism,” Foreign Affairs, January/February 2000.
\item\textsuperscript{332} Albright, Madame Secretary, pp. 154-155.
\item\textsuperscript{333} Bushnell, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, Frontline, PBS, September 30, 2003, www.pbs.org.
\item\textsuperscript{334} Moose, Interview, Ghosts of Rwanda, Frontline, PBS, November 21, 2003, www.pbs.org.
\end{itemize}
intervened effectively in Rwanda, but the Pentagon was dead-set against any such idea.\footnote{Albright, \textit{Madam Secretary}, p. 152.} The commander-in-chief said, “We were so preoccupied with Bosnia, with the memory of Somalia just six months old and with opponents in Congress to military deployments in faraway places not vital to our national interests that neither I nor any on my foreign policy team adequately focused on sending troops to stop the slaughter.”\footnote{Clinton, \textit{My Life}, p. 593.} Even as Clinton approved dispatching 4,200 U.S. troops to Rwanda and Zaire (where many Rwandan refugees fled) in July 1994, he insisted “Mission creep is not a problem here.”\footnote{White House Briefing, July 29, 1994.} The President clarified “the immediate and sole purpose” of the mission was humanitarian aid and relief rather than peacekeeping.\footnote{Power, \textit{“A Problem From Hell.”}, p.381.} Therefore, Somalia was not the \textit{model} for U.S. policy toward Rwanda, but it was the \textit{lesson} applied to Rwanda.

\textbf{I.International, systemic, or structural factors:}

One body of opinion holds the world community’s “willful indifference” responsible for Rwanda’s genocide.\footnote{Barnett, Michael, \textit{Eyewitness to a Genocide} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p.2.} Michael Barnett, who worked for the U.S. Mission at the UN (1993-1994), contends the United States “muzzled the call to intervene” in a “cowardly act of abandonment” at the United Nations Security Council.\footnote{Ibid.} The UN Secretary General has since claimed he “begged” the Security Council to act to intervene. Yet Barnett implies Boutros-Ghali lied, insofar as he apparently disregarded General Dallaire’s reports of “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide” as well as the mission commander’s plea for reinforcements.\footnote{Ibid.} Madeline Albright further contends Boutros-Ghali was “disengaged,” but never acknowledged his failure to act effectively at the onset of the Rwandan holocaust. Additionally, secret documents reportedly
implicate French President Francois Mitterand for publically supporting the Hutu government prior to the genocide, despite his knowledge of attacks ordered against Tutsis.\textsuperscript{342} Thus, there was plenty of blame to share.

Anthony Lake holds the sole superpower’s “perception of military omnipotence” did not mean the United States had to use it wherever and whenever it could.\textsuperscript{343} At the same time, “the pernicious corollary” had been the alliance partners’ unwillingness and inability to share a leadership role.\textsuperscript{344} According to the Arusha peace agreement, signed August 8, 1993,\textsuperscript{345} Phase 1 of the Arusha plan: the United Nations Aid Mission In Rwanda (UNAMIR) would monitor a demilitarized zone and put unarmed military observation teams in place. UNAMIR Commander Romeo Dallaire was confident of accomplishing his mission with 1,200 troops. Phase 2 called for an added 2,500 troops over three months, and was “the most dangerous part of the mission.” A combat battalion and an engineering company would get between the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Hutu-dominated Rwandan Government Forces (RGF). The warring units would surrender their positions and the enhanced UNAMIR force would collect their weapons. Dallaire believed the mission required “robust rules of engagement,” supported by reserve forces overseeing the demilitarized zone. Phase 3, planned to take ten months, would be “actual demobilization and reintegration process,” creating a National Guard from RPF, RGF, and gendarmarie (Hutu militia) with most given pensions, retraining, and civilian jobs. Phase 4, planned to take twelve months, would organize multiparty, democratic elections, during which time there could be renewed violence. Dallaire’s “hope” was that his UN peacekeepers would be relieved of their duties and replaced in phase 4. “In UN terms, the mission was to be small,

\textsuperscript{342} Smith, Alex Duval, \textit{The Independent} (London), July 3, 2007.
\textsuperscript{343} Lake, \textit{Six Nightmares}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{344} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{345} Dallaire, \textit{Shake Hands With the Devil}, p. 55.
cheap, short and sweet.” While future UN Secretary General Kofi Anan, who was the official in charge of peacekeeping at the time, was sincere and honorable, he could only give limited resources to the Rwandan mission and its order-of-battle was not to engage either side in combat. However, both the United States and United Nations dismissed or ignored Dallaire’s calls for help in the midst of the bloodbath commencing on April 6, 1994. According to Power, U.S. policy weaknesses included: (1) bias toward states and negotiations; (2) “naïve policy optimists” such as Ambassador David Rawson; (3) “blindness bred by familiarity” of experts accustomed to violence (for example, 50,000 killed in Burundi, 1993); (4) Rawson assessed the Rwandan civil war would be “quick”; and (5) Assistant Secretary of State George Moose was “psychologically and imaginatively too limited.” Thus, Moose and others transmitted the stereotyped assumption that “these people do this from time to time.”

When the United Nations decided to send the small UNAMIR mission in late 1993, consisting of about 1,500 troops, as in Bosnia, the exact mandate of UN peacekeepers was unclear. The UN peacekeeping office, under the direction of Kofi Anan, was preoccupied with the Balkans circa 1992-1993. In January 1994, when Dallaire faxed UN headquarters with information from an informant that planning for mass murder was underway, the peacekeeping office told Dallaire to bring the allegations to the Rwandan president for him to investigate. Madeline Albright explains those allegations competed for attention with horror stories and dire predictions all over the planet.

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346 Ibid., pp.87-89.
347 Ibid.
349 Ibid.
351 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 148.
352 Ibid., pp. 148-149.
President Clinton’s speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1993 was widely interpreted to have said, “The UN should learn to say no,” foreshadowing Presidential Decision Directive 25. The person closest to Clinton in worldview was Lake, who explained, “In that speech, the president began by calling for stronger peacekeeping operations by the UN—not say no, but learning how more effectively to say yes … If you think about it, if the UN were to intervene in every country which has internal armed conflicts, either large scale or small scale, and takes them over, the UN is going to become the greatest colonial power in history, which is hardly its mandate. So you have to make choices. The choices have to be based on the degree of need, on the one hand, and our ability, or the UN’s ability, to act practically on the other. That became the purpose of PDD-25—not to provide answers to those questions, but to ask the questions. That leads to, in my view, good policy. While some argue that PDD-25 said stay out of Rwanda, the problem in Rwanda, I think largely was that we never had a coherent discussion based on PDD-25 of whether we needed to go in or not.”

The Clinton administration’s after-the-fact spin was contained in a telegram where the White House recounts how the United States closed its embassy in Kigali, ordered American personnel to go home, demanded the Rwandan government vacate office, consulted with the UN Security Council to boot Rwanda’s ambassador, and froze Rwandan assets in the United States. Romeo Dallaire said he was “dumbfounded” by Clinton’s claim that the United States had sent $9 million in relief aid to the people of Rwanda, whereas Washington was $8 million in arrears for UNAMIR operations. The lack of U.S. policy coherence is partly due to the unfulfilled promise of the peace accord. In the view of U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda David

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Rawson (who was in that post 1993-1996), the Arusha accord was “fundamentally flawed” because it was brokered by “self-appointed” factional leaders disconnected from a consensus of popular support, and thus fell apart, just as a similar multi-party agreement failed in neighboring Burundi. \(^{356}\) Hence, in hindsight, we can only wonder why Rawson, Leader, Moose, Bushnell, and Christopher at the top put all their chips on the accord in the first place. Clearly, wishful thinking leads to a best-case analysis when the potential costs and risks of the alternative are too high. In the words of Albright, weeks passed before outsiders realized the scope of the genocide. The same day the prime minister and ten Belgian peacekeepers were murdered, UN headquarters rejected Dallaire’s request for permission to use force because UNAMIR might seem to be choosing sides. Albright further states there was not only a lack of information, but also confusion as to who was doing what to whom. \(^{357}\) To quote Albright directly, “I am struck by the lack of information about the killing that had begun against unarmed Rwandan civilians, as opposed to the fighting between Hutu and Tutsi militias.” \(^{358}\) By May 17, 1994, the Security Council approved a resolution calling for an expanded peacekeeping operation, but the United States was admittedly “unenthusiastic about the prospects for the mission as designed by the UN.” \(^{359}\) With the United States doing little to bring coalition partners aboard, the mission was an institutional failure for the United Nations, by its own official admission. \(^{360}\)

One issue on which General Dallaire and Ambassador Albright concurred was the obstructionist role played by France in the UN and NATO. French President Mitterand gave strong support to the Hutu regime before the genocide came to light and might have been

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\(^{357}\) Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 149.

\(^{358}\) *Ibid.*


reluctant to reverse policy so abruptly and fully. The French approach was to impede decision making in the UN Security Council by undermining the plan proposed by Dallaire in January, prior to the carnage, and then again in April and May, forcing acceptance of weakly worded resolutions, even as Albright was trying in vain to get U.S. policy off the dime. Moreover, France was the only NATO ally with a significant, deployable military presence in Africa.

II. National, domestic, or internal political:

Factions embroiled in insurgencies are able to take advantage of opportunities created by public debate within democracies.\textsuperscript{361} Leadership is challenged by the media and intelligentsia opposed to brutal methods and significant casualties. Democratic actors cannot employ brutal methods of suppression and annihilating oppositional elements.\textsuperscript{362} Therefore, interventions with combat troops are limited by nature to exclude brutal suppression of warring factions.

Warren Christopher’s point of view on “whether to intervene for purposes that are quite different from the traditional missions of our armed forces … While there is no magic formula to guide such decisions, I do believe that the discrete and careful use of force in certain circumstances … will be essential to our success in diplomacy and foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{363} Yet the general proposition did not resonate in the specific case at hand. In terms of military intervention, Lake offers: “it was almost literally inconceivable … I would think, especially in the wake of Somalia, that there was no chance that the Congress would ever have authorized

\textsuperscript{361} Inbar, Efraim, \textit{Democracies and Small Wars} (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).
\textsuperscript{362} Meron, Gil, \textit{How Democracies Lose Small Wars} (London: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
\textsuperscript{363} Christopher, \textit{In the Stream of History}, p. 27.
funds to send American troops into Rwanda. Indeed, we were struggling to get the funds for our relief operations.”

Notwithstanding Lake’s assessment, a bipartisan group from Congress went to President Clinton in April 1994 and asked him to send troops into Rwanda to halt the slaughter. “We are writing to express our strong support for an active United States role in helping to resolve the crisis in Rwanda,” wrote member of Congress Robert Torricelli of New Jersey. Clinton declined, saying it was the UN’s responsibility or that of the Rwandans themselves. The spin the Clinton administration put on the unfolding genocide was that if they could not put a stop to it, they would still use military transport planes for food drops. Clinton faced intervention fatigue and peacekeeping skepticism, plus the fact that U.S. dues pledged to the UN were half a billion dollars in arrears. The Pentagon saw no U.S. interests on the line in Rwanda. Thus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense James Woods was told by the Pentagon brass: “Just make it go away.” The Senate Republican leader, Bob Dole, weighed in that Rwanda held “no vital interests.” Clinton’s decision-making team definitely voiced more reasons to stay out than to go into Rwanda. There then ensued an Orwellian exercise in “bureaucratese” as Christine Shelly, State Department spokesperson, obfuscated, “the use of the term genocide has a very precise legal meaning, although it’s not strictly a legal determination.” Thus, Shelly and others were

369 Samantha Power cites this quote with anonymous attribution. Ibid., p. 342.
370 Ibid., p. 352.
given specific guidance not to speak the word *genocide*. “I have a phraseology which has been carefully examined and arrived at.”

The Rwandan storyline on BBC, CNN, and NPR stressed “ancient tribal hatreds [and] violence.” Would better intelligence have persuaded Clinton, Christopher, and Lake to act more assertively to intervene? One scholar blames poor interagency communication and bureaucratic inertia for information not reaching the top-level officials. Indeed, there has emerged a decided “if-we-had-only-known” nuance in the recollections through hindsight. Bushnell said, “I have no recollection” of Romeo Dallaire’s informant’s prediction of an impending genocidal catastrophe in January 1994. Madeline Albright explains, “Even though my instructions came from the State Department, I thought I might be able to get faster action from the NSC … where Tony Lake’s knowledge of Africa was crucial … I first asked for more flexible instructions, then yelled into the phone, demanded them. I was told to calm down. The NSC would look again at what to do.” The result was inaction and Albright’s “deepest regret.” Despite the “alarms” sounded by Dallaire and others, “Rwanda was not cited either prominently or frequently.”

The Clinton administration eventually sent U.S. troops, after the Tutsi RPF had stopped the genocidal killing spree, even as another 2,000 Rwandan refugees died daily, mainly Hutus fleeing the RPF advance. Clinton asked Congress to authorize $320 million for assistance and

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372 Ibid., p. 277.
376 Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 147.
377 Ibid., pp. 147-148.
378 Ibid., pp. 148-149.
dispatched 4,000 troops to refugee camps in Zaire and 200 Marines to guard the airport in Kigali. However, Congress appropriated $170 million, barely half the amount requested, and set an October 1st cutoff date. Oblivious to 800,000 souls having perished, Ambassador David Rawson, as quoted by Power, was still voicing commitment to the dysfunctional Arusha accord.

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

“Is what he’s saying true? … How did this happen? … I want to get to the bottom of this.” Despite these presidential lamentations, Samantha Power’s thesis was that Bill Clinton showed no real inclination to stop the genocide. In fairness, however, as Prudence Bushnell said, “it was so counter to the thinking of an American mind certainly, that one would [be] behind the scenes, planning the slaughter of the people. Never mind that there was still violence, it never crossed anybody’s mind that something on the scale of what happened would be actually deliberately planned.” Some observers viewed the Rwandan cataclysm through a prism of racism, wherein Westerners were indifferent to faceless African victims of violence. As we have stated, the historical analogy for Rwanda was Somalia, not the Holocaust. Albright concurs with Power on this position: “History is written backwards, not forwards.” The United Nations Ambassador candidly states, “When the violence exploded, we tried to fit the situation in Rwanda into the framework we had created … Tragically, the lessons we thought we had learned in Somalia simply did not apply to Rwanda. Somalia was something close to anarchy. Rwanda

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380 Ibid.
was planned mass murder.”³⁸⁵ As we mentioned above, the Clinton administration was loathe to speak the word *genocide.*³⁸⁶ Christine Shelly at State split hairs regarding “intentions,” even while asserting an “absolute requirement … to intervene directly” did not exist.³⁸⁷ As actual genocide witnessed its third week, the UN Security Council argued about the *g-word*, April 27, 1994. Secretary Christopher cabled U.S. diplomatic personnel to warn that if the Security Council acknowledged the existence of genocide, the United States would be compelled to act by virtue of the UN Charter. Given British and American pressure, the Security Council statement published April 30th condemned “breaches of international humanitarian law,” sidestepping the *g-word.*³⁸⁸ Christopher implicitly allowed Geraldine Ferraro, the U.S. Representative to the UN Human Rights Commission, to use the term and Tony Gati, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, quoted Shakespeare (“a rose by any other name”) in his report dated May 18th. Yet the Secretary of State warned against characterization of any specific incident as an act of genocide, or the Rwandan slaughter in total as genocide.³⁸⁹ Perhaps the most damning indicator of Clinton’s lack of urgency or indifference is that there was never a high-level policy meeting about Rwanda between April and July.³⁹⁰ After American diplomats and civilians were rescued from Rwanda, there was no political cost in avoiding taking further action, since no American lives were at stake there.³⁹¹ Personally, early on in the crisis, Clinton was concerned for the safety of a Rwandan activist whom he had met. Power quoted an anonymous official, who observed, “Sometimes it felt as though she was the only Rwandan in danger.” When the

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 360.
³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 366.
woman was ushered safely into exile, the President’s personal interest was over. Clinton’s inaction fit Janis and Mann’s concept of *unconflicted inertia* leading to *defensive avoidance*. In late July, after the genocide had effectively ceased, Clinton authorized a massive Rwandan relief effort, including food, medicine, fresh water, and sundries. In his memoir, the President says the effort cost $500 million and put 4,000 troops into the region (based in Uganda, not Rwanda or Burundi). Clinton writes, “…even after all the slaughter, it would still save many lives.” Regardless of U.S. intentions, the mission was humanitarian aid and rescue, not peacekeeping or peace enforcement, and thus had no impact on the state of civil warfare that had swept away hundreds of thousands of souls in a genocidal undertow. As the Secretary of State recalled, “we now felt compelled to act,” but nonetheless stressed avoidance of “mission creep” and “the shadow of Somalia loomed large over our internal planning.”

Romeo Dallaire wrote, “Canada and other peacekeeping nations have become accustomed to acting if, and only if, international public opinion will support them.” Unquestionably, what the Canadian general called “moral relativism” pervaded the Clinton administration’s thinking. “Some governments regard the use of force itself as the greatest evil. Others define ‘good’ as the pursuit of human rights and will opt to employ force when human rights are violated … The concept of human rights assumes that all human life is of equal value. *Risk-free warfare* [emphasis added] presumes that our lives matter more than those we are intervening to save.”

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396 Dallaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil*, pp.516-517.
IV. Criteria for the use of force:

Do civil wars end without some form of foreign intervention? If not, this means the United States will be involved sooner or later. Recent scholarship by Fotini Christia suggests the United States ought to recognize it will eventually intervene if its strategic interests or principles are at stake. Christia prescribes funding factions and shaping alliances, not simply sending in the U.S. Marines. However, while foreign intervention might influence the outcome, civil wars historically end with a decisive military outcome. In the case of Rwanda, the superior RPF force prevailed.

Had the Clinton administration decided to intervene in Rwanda, how could it have done so? An effective strategy would emphasize nation-building and economic development, not only “fire-power intensive strategies.” A task force investigating the Rwandan debacle found that the genocide could have been prevented, or, at least, significantly curtailed. The UNAMIR mission came to Rwanda in January 1994 with 1,200 to 1,500 soldiers, most of them from Bangladesh, commanded by two Canadian officers. For example, the mission had eight armored personnel carriers at its disposal, but needed at least fifty for transit and transport. The incompetence and futility of UN and U.S. efforts is shown by the failure to deliver a handful of American-made armored personnel carriers due to Department of Defense paperwork issues. In contrast to the United Nations’ offensive operation in Somalia, UNAMIR was a “traditional” peacekeeping mission, based on the idea that Hutus (RGF) and Tutsis (RPF) would negotiate in

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398 Inbar, Democracies and Small Wars.
401 Similarly, UNAMIR received only two of eight helicopters requested. When broken, the wrong parts were shipped. Dallaire, Shake Hands With the Devil, p.356.
good faith.\textsuperscript{402} General Romeo Dallaire charged the UN with undermining its own mission in Rwanda. Dallaire understated that he faced life-and-death moral choices on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{403} Secretary General Boutros-Ghali submitted three options to the UN Security Council, April 20, 1994. Note this was early enough in the progression of the genocide to have saved most of the dead. Option 1 was immediately reinforcing UNAMIR, beefing up its manpower to 5,000 troops. Option 2 was downsizing UNAMIR’s force from 1,500 to 170 and trying to broker a ceasefire. (Note most of the innocents were butchered with machetes that do not “fire” \textit{per se}.) Option 3 was total withdrawal. At the Security Council, Madeline Albright recalls, “The instructions that angered me were to support option 3—complete withdrawal …”\textsuperscript{404} Albright records in her memoir that the bloody events in Rwanda in late April 1994 corresponded to the issuance of PDD-25 on May 3 and a report from the Stimson Center, which concluded: “the UN should refrain from intervening in circumstances precisely like those in Rwanda.”\textsuperscript{405} Lake counters that the report, developed under heavy pressure after the Mogadishu, Somalia debacle of August to October 1993, contributed to U.S. reluctance to intervene actively in Rwanda, but was not the decisive factor.\textsuperscript{406}

According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council had to choose between a “Chapter VI mission” (peacekeeping) and a “Chapter VII mission” (peace enforcement). Two alternatives were considered. The first was Romeo Dallaire’s plan, which called for an added 5,000 combat troops to secure Kigali, “fan out” to protect tens of thousands of Rwandans fleeing their homes, and “create safe havens” for refugees and displaced persons. Only the United States

\textsuperscript{402} Albright, \textit{Madam Secretary}, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{403} Dallaire, Romeo, Interview, \textit{Frontline: Ghosts of Rwanda}, PBS, WGBH Educational Foundation, Fall 2003.
\textsuperscript{404} Albright, \textit{Madam Secretary}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{405} Ibid. p. 152.
\textsuperscript{406} Lake, \textit{Six Crises}, p. 152.
had the capability to bring the air power and logistics called for by this plan. Author Samantha Power contends Vice-President Albert A. Gore, Jr. met Boutros Boutros-Ghali and promised U.S. support through airlift.\(^{407}\) At the White House, Richard Clarke and Anthony Lake opposed Dallaire’s “inside-out” plan. The alternative “outside-in” plan was to create “protected routes” for refugees on Rwanda’s borders without use of air cover. However, the problem with the U.S.-backed plan was that most refugees were not fleeing to the borders; rather, most Tutsi refugees were trapped or hidden inside Rwanda. Clarke insisted the U.S. plan was “feasible, doable … in the short term” and Dallaire’s plan was unworkable. However, the mission commander disagreed, stating: “My mission was to save Rwandans. Theirs was to put on a show at no risk.”\(^{408}\) The new peacekeeping doctrine, PDD-25 (as mentioned above), circumscribed U.S. participation, aid, and support to other states joining peacekeeping operations.\(^{409}\) After “haggling” at the Security Council and with the UN peacekeeping directorate, the Clinton administration approved “a version of” Romeo Dallaire’s plan—albeit after most Tutsi victims were dead.\(^{410}\) Moreover, U.S. logistical support, including heavy artillery, guns, ammunition, and vehicles, was delayed by “squabbles” between the Pentagon and UN peacekeeping office until President Clinton personally interceded, but shipments were delayed till June and July.\(^{411}\) The revised compromise plan was not a complete pullout, yet the operation was scaled down and too slowly implemented. By the time the enhanced UNAMIR mission was up and running, Tutsi rebels led by Kagame secured Kigali and most of Rwanda, except for a “safe zone” established by 2,500 French troops sent by President Mitterand, June 23, 1994. Afterward, Clinton ordered

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\(^{408}\) Ibid., p. 378.

\(^{409}\) Ibid.

\(^{410}\) Ibid., p. 379.

\(^{411}\) Ibid., p. 380.
the Rwandan embassy in Washington closed and froze Rwandan assets in U.S. banks. The Clinton administration’s response was too little, too late, and out of sync.

The U.S. military’s attitude toward UN peacekeepers, as recounted by James Woods, was not complimentary. When ten Belgian peacekeepers were among the first victims of the Hutu gendarmerie, Woods heard the comment: “…our rangers died fighting in Somalia. These guys [Belgians], with their blue berets, were slaughtered without getting a shot off.” This comment was not only disrespectful, it missed the point: the Hutu militia believed the UN would pull out if some of its peacekeepers were immediately killed (in a kind of low-tech “shock and awe”). As UNAMIR Commander Dallaire requested an additional 2,500 troops, peacekeeping director Kofi Anan warned him not to compromise “impartiality.” Then, a thousand NATO troops from three alliance member states came to Rwanda to evacuate only! The disagreements in NATO centered on French antagonism toward Dallaire’s plans. French opposition and American reluctance combined to undermine any sentiment for decisive action from NATO beyond getting foreign nationals out, and the later French mission to create a “safe zone” for Rwandan refugees and displaced persons had limited effect on the death toll. United Nations headquarters downplayed the carnage as an internal matter, just a flare-up within an ongoing conflict. The UN officers on the ground were vexed by the fact that unarmed civilians were not being murdered by an organized army, but rather by armed thugs. President William Jefferson Clinton’s only statement at the height of the genocide in Rwanda “reassured” the public about the safety of 255 Americans. Journalists and scholars familiar with Rwandan events suggest a tactical force along the lines of the expanded UNAMIR force proposed by Romeo Dallaire could have halted

412 White House News Briefing, July 15, 1994; Ibid., p.381.
414 Ibid., p. 353.
the genocide and rounded up the armed militia commandos. There was simply no international effort attempting to stop the genocide.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili (Colin Powell’s successor) said the Pentagon worked on a system of air drops to provide food, medicine, and supplies to refugees rather than Dallaire’s “way-station plan.”\textsuperscript{416} The United States had promised to pay $30 million for UNAMIR and another $30 million for a second operation.\textsuperscript{417} UNAMIR 2 was designed to secure the country to facilitate the safe return of two million refugees, but when Dallaire proposed this plan to the UN Security Council in September 1994, France and the United States opposed the idea.\textsuperscript{418} Dallaire’s operational plan, called \textit{Homeward Bound}, sought to return two million refugees outside Rwanda’s borders and 1.7 million internally displaced or homeless Rwandans in coordination with nongovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and the Tutsi RPF and RPA. Dallaire insisted refugees and displaced persons should not be kept in camps, where they would be vulnerable to attack from the Hutu militia, whom the Canadian General called \textit{genocidaires}.\textsuperscript{419} At the Security Council, France’s UN Ambassador labeled UNAMIR 2 as “unworkable,” which “infected” others, led to “cold feet” for a “risky” mission, but it was U.S. “apathy” that “stifled any urge to act,” in Dallaire’s opinion. Hence, thousands of defenseless people were attacked by gendarmerie in camps on both sides of the Rwandan border until Congo/Zaire invaded to force the Rwandans to go home. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands more, mostly Hutus, were killed or died fleeing the RPF. Prudence Bushnell observed that there was great reluctance among the U.S. military to support a multinational African peacekeeping

\begin{footnotes}
\item[416] Dallaire, \textit{Shake Hands With the Devil}. p. 490.
\item[417] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 498.
\item[418] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 518.
\item[419] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 517-518.
\end{footnotes}
force. To airlift supplies as a humanitarian aid and relief operation was more acceptable.\textsuperscript{420} Dallaire suggested U.S. conscience was soothed by the aid airlifted over the Goma refugee camps.\textsuperscript{421} Ironically, the U.S. decision to put its resources into the Goma operation cost $170 to $320 million, compared to the $30 million price tags for UNAMIR and UNAMIR 2\textsuperscript{1}.\textsuperscript{422}

The first criterion for the use of force is that all other options, such as negotiations and sanctions, have been tried or ruled out. In Rwanda, the Arusha accords indeed failed. The second criterion was not satisfied, as the political, diplomatic, or military objectives were unclear. This was a two-sided conflict, wherein the genocide erupted as a variation of “ethnic cleansing” or “final solution” that jettisoned objectivity between parties as a viable position. There was no confidence on the part of Clinton’s decision makers for Romeo Dallaire’s military battle plan. By design, the Clinton administration’s plan lacked sufficient resources to go into Rwanda with “overwhelming force.” There was no exit strategy apart from a timetable imposed by Congress and the President’s determination to avoid the slightest possibility of American casualties. Rwanda was a case of non-intervention to the utmost.

**SUMMARY & CONCLUSION**

Although lamentable, Clinton’s “no-go” decision in Rwanda resulted from a variety of international, domestic, individual, and military factors. First, the civil warfare was considered the unfortunate norm for sub-Saharan Africa. Second, African affairs lack a domestic constituency and held the potential for a negative blowback in public opinion on the order of the recent Somalia fiasco. Third, the decision-making hierarchy did not respond to the concerns of

\textsuperscript{421} Dallaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil*, p. 518.
middle-level personnel, such as Prudence Bushnell, who saw the erupting violence as more acute, while policy makers tended to blindly follow to a preferred policy until reality rendered it moot. Finally, there was no consensus between U.S. policy makers and the UN peacekeeping commander on a military strategy that could accomplish the goals of preventing or stopping the genocide and ending the civil war.\footnote{A. J. Kuperman notes the real-world military and logistical constraints on humanitarian operations in \textit{The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda} (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).}

The Rwandan civil war ended in July 1994; Tutsi forces won the war and lost the genocide. The killing fields of the Land of a Thousand Hills were not yet clean. Tutsi RPF soldiers would massacre unarmed Hutu civilians at the Kibeho refugee camp in June 1995. Arlene Render of the State Department protested the atrocity on behalf of the United States, a government that had no operational capacity in place to prevent such a thing from happening.\footnote{Memo to [Assistant Secretary] George Moose, On Your Central Africa Trip with Senator [Paul] Simon [Democrat of Illinois], May 24, 1995.} General Romeo Dallaire had asked rhetorically: “Who is grieving for Rwanda and really living it and living with the consequences?” Bill Clinton flew to Kigali, Rwanda in 1999 “to offer a partial apologia” and said “genocide” eleven times, but, as the late David Halberstam noted sarcastically, the President stayed in the country only three and a half hours.\footnote{Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, pp. 277-278.} Once again, the Clinton administration’s response was too little, too late, and out of sync. However, Clinton claims in his memoirs that the Secret Service was dead-set against a trip to Rwanda, which is why he limited his visit to the airport in Kigali only.\footnote{Clinton, \textit{My Life}, pp. 781-782.}

The Kigali Memorial Centre opened in April 2004, the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, on a site where over 250,000 people had been buried. These graves and the Centre

\footnotetext[423]{A. J. Kuperman notes the real-world military and logistical constraints on humanitarian operations in \textit{The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda} (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).}
\footnotetext[424]{Memo to [Assistant Secretary] George Moose, On Your Central Africa Trip with Senator [Paul] Simon [Democrat of Illinois], May 24, 1995.}
\footnotetext[425]{Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, pp. 277-278.}
\footnotetext[426]{Clinton, \textit{My Life}, pp. 781-782.}
became permanent memorials to the victims of the genocide and a reminder of the cost of inaction and apathy.\textsuperscript{427} It is important to note the failure to intervene in this case has fueled so-called humanitarian interventions ever since, subsequently playing on false analogies presented by the Rwandan genocide.

\textbf{CHAPTER 5}
\textbf{CLINTON: KOSOVO—GO}

\textbf{INTRODUCTION}

As the Yugoslav federation began to break apart in March 1989, Slobodan Milosevic declared a state of emergency, effectively ending the autonomy of the predominantly ethnic Albanian region of Kosovo. Kosovar Albanians protested elimination of their autonomy, which dated back to the days of Tito’s dictatorship, and they suffered repression, police raids, mass arrests, jobs lost, and Albanian-language schools shuttered. Yugoslavia’s Serbian President Milosevic was at the height of his power and Kosovo, as a region rather than a state or republic, was not qualified for independence.\textsuperscript{428} The legal distinction distinguished Kosovo from Bosnia, at least in the view of some outside observers, although the Serb-Kosovar antagonism had festered just as long.

\textsuperscript{427} Kigali Memorial Centre, www.kigalimemorialcentre.org.
Pressure from allies, particularly the British, as well as NATO and the UN would drive U.S. intervention in Kosovo (see Category I). Successful interventions in Haiti and Bosnia made the Kosovo adventure more feasible to Bill Clinton, a reluctant interventionist. Domestic opposition was present, but largely impotent (see Category II). Of considerable importance is the personal ideology and worldview of the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and her moral suasion of the President (see Category III). The case of Kosovo also highlights military strategy (see Category IV) where the effective use of air power and the credible threat of force proved decisive.

1. **Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?**

In 1995, Kosovar Albanians hoped the United States and United Nations would press Serbia to restore autonomy in conjunction with the peace settlement in Bosnia, but they were disappointed. In March 1998, the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA) killed a Serbian official, leading to widespread reprisals. Whether the repressive response was intentional or not is arguable, insofar as some observers commented the KLA had made a strategy of provocation since its creation. By early 1999, Milosevic indicated his intention to purge Kosovo of its ethnic Albanian and largely Muslim majority. After rejecting a demand that NATO forces be allowed to enter Kosovo to prevent “ethnic cleansing,” Serbia-Yugoslavia was subjected to a seventy-seven day bombing campaign, Operation Allied Force, leading to Milosevic’s troops forcing hundreds of thousands of Kosovars to flee for the Albanian and Macedonian borders, thus creating the kind of humanitarian crisis the air-strike campaign had been initiated to prevent

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and thereby threatening the unity of NATO itself.\textsuperscript{431} From the onset, President William Jefferson Clinton ruled out the use of combat troops and limited direct U.S. involvement to minimize casualties and to avoid a prolonged commitment in an intractable regional conflict.\textsuperscript{432}

In October 1998, Clinton’s envoy, Richard Holbrooke negotiated with Milosevic to accept the presence of 2,000 peacekeepers in Kosovo. Milosevic used the introduction of the peacekeeping force as an excuse to retaliate against the Kosovar Albanians.\textsuperscript{433} Under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), an unarmed 700-member mission was responsible for overseeing the Serb withdrawal from Kosovo. The ceasefire was broken by both sides in short order. In January 1999, U.S. Ambassador William G. Walker, head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, accused Serb-Yugoslav forces of massacring forty-five Kosovar Albanians in the village of Racak.\textsuperscript{434} It was almost as if Milosevic allowed the peacekeepers in so that he could challenge or humiliate NATO. For the Serb leader this proved to be a fatal mistake in judgment as international attention honed in on Kosovo. In the words of U.S. General Wesley Clark, “The UN was engaged early and continuously. NATO, rather than the U.S., bilaterally seized the problem.”\textsuperscript{435} Clark emphasized that post-operations planning and commitments were first put in place and force was only “a last resort.”\textsuperscript{436} The NATO commander and his political overlords hoped for a quick end. Yet when the air strikes led to the killing and expulsion of Kosovar Albanians by Serbs, Clark moved to switch from a casualty-

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{432} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{433} Power, Samantha, “A Problem from Hell,” p. 446.
\textsuperscript{434} United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199, September 23, 1998; Statement by the Secretary General following the ACTWARN decision (press release), NATO, September 24, 1998; Statement to the press by the Secretary General following decision on the ACTORD (press release), NATO, October 13, 1998; Serbian Mayor Slain in Kosovo, New York Times, December 19, 1998.
\textsuperscript{436} Ibid., p. 100.
\end{footnotesize}
avoidance strategy to a more offensive strategy, using ground forces supported by Apache helicopters, to put a stop to the Serbs’ ethnic cleansing. As might be expected, the NATO leaders were reluctant to change the mission. Milosevic had 40,000 soldiers, militia, and police on the ground in the province. The UN and NATO commitments to Kosovo had not anticipated that Milosevic’s answer to the air strikes would be to heighten violence against the Kosovar population.

In the opinion of some observers, international sanctions failed and led only to inflation, unemployment, social disorder, and economic disintegration. To the extent that economic sanctions were effective, they made control over land and resources even more important and worsened Serb repression of the Kosovar Albanians. Albanian nationalists established a shadow government, headed by Ibrahim Rugova, but only Albania granted it formal recognition. Rugova’s organization set up schools and health care facilities, but was helpless in the face of Milosevic’s troops and police. Until 1998-1999, U.S. policy remained ambivalent, denouncing Serbians’ repression of the Kosovars, but insisting that Kosovo must remain part of Serbia. Robert Gelbard, U.S. envoy to the Balkans, condemned the KLA rebels fighting the Serbs as “terrorists.”

Kosovo became important as a regional conflict with international implications for all the same reasons why Bosnia was important five years prior. The Serbian repression and Kosovar insurgency threatened not only the Balkans, but potentially undermined liberalization of

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438 Ibid., pp. 454-455.
439 Ibid., pp. 451-452.
440 Ibid.
southeastern Europe. The conflict also challenged the NATO alliance, which had, to some extent, proved its mettle in Bosnia by 1995, insofar as it now had to show its resolve to end conflicts could be sustained and repeated. The international implications of taking action against ethnic cleansing and genocide compelled the United States to become directly involved, as was the case of Bosnia, and were significant beyond Europe. Potential disagreement over interpreting events in Kosovo set up a potential conflict with Russia, the first such crisis since the collapse of the former U.S.S.R.

The context of the Kosovo crisis as a post-Cold War test with Russia was the expansion of NATO to include former Soviet satellites. NATO’s addition of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland was opposed for obvious reasons, considering the alliance’s original purposes. 443

2. Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

Kosovo could be viewed as Yugoslavia II or even Serbia II for the post-Cold War United States. In both Bosnia and Kosovo, President Bill Clinton started on a diplomatic track and ended up on one of direct military intervention. 444 Saunders posited that an “internally focused” chief executive would act in a transformational intervention in response to an internal threat to the “target state.” Saunders explains that the perception of the cause of the conflict, internal or external, will determine the decision maker’s actions, being more likely to intervene in response to an externally provoked scenario. 445 Clinton definitely saw the threat to the rump Yugoslav state as internal, not due to external forces. According to Saunders’s paradigm, the goal of

intervention thus would tend toward removal of the regime. However, the case of Kosovo
contradicts Saunders’s expectation with respect to Clinton’s non-transformative intervention,
whereby “decapitating” Slobodan Milosevic’s Serb regime was never a core objective.\footnote{Ibid.}

According to former Acting Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in the Bush I
administration, the successor Clinton administration aimed to support the Muslims in Bosnia and
Kosovo in order to repair the perception of anti-Muslim bias that they believed tarnished U.S.
image in the Islamic world. This concern seems not to have been a consideration for Bush I,
perhaps because of the concurrent and successful grand alliance with the Saudis and other Arab
partners to liberate Kuwait. Nonetheless, it is not clear to what extent preoccupation with the
Persian Gulf War may have dampened the Bush I administration’s interest in involving itself in
the former Yugoslavia.\footnote{Melanson, A Post-Cold War Policy.} Perhaps, for the elder President Bush, it was as Abraham Lincoln once
said, “only one war at a time.”

The U.S., NATO, and UN response in Kosovo was “humanitarian,” but not exclusively
so. There were tangible U.S. interests, including credibility, stability, and a problem that
threatened the Bosnian peace settlement.\footnote{Power, “A Problem From Hell,” pp. 448-449.}
In March 1999, Serb military, police, and militia
initiated “Operation Horseshoe,” using an artillery assault to frighten the Kosovar population,
coercing them to flee, laying siege to towns, and executing young men over age sixteen.\footnote{Ibid.}
Even
as the United States and its NATO allies intervened, Serbs drove more than a million Kosovar
Albanians from their homes, three-quarters of a million fleeing to Macedonia and Albania.
NATO air power seemed not to have inhibited Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing orders.\footnote{Ibid., p. 450.} As

\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Melanson, A Post-Cold War Policy.}
\footnote{Power, “A Problem From Hell,” pp. 448-449.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid., p. 450.}
Samantha Power asserts: “The decision to bomb Serbia marked a radically assertive break from past American responses to atrocity.” However, NATO repeated the mistake of fighting the “last war,” anticipating Serbian capitulation in the wake of the bombing campaign and not expecting the bloodthirsty march against the Kosovars.451

According to Madeline Albright, as early as December 1992, “U.S. diplomats informed Milosevic that the United States would be prepared to respond militarily if the Serbs initiated an armed conflict in Kosovo.” (One might be curious to learn what “dog” the Bush I team had in that “fight” as opposed to Bosnia.) Clinton’s first Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, “reaffirmed this position in February 1993.”452 However, Albright’s comment was casual and informal. Albright’s “early warnings” are pretty cryptic and referred to after the fact. There is no evidence that her ultimatum was taken seriously by Milosevic or communicated to him at all. Hence, five years later, as Clinton’s second Secretary of State, Albright, said publically, “We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with in Bosnia.”453 Still unclear is whether this language was intended for quiet diplomacy or public alarm and in either case if the Serb-Yugoslav regime believed any such U.S. threat was credible. Therefore, by 1998-1999, United States policy was determined by linkage with Bosnia, lessons learned from the Bosnian experience, and the driving force of America’s chief diplomat. Other factors may have predisposed Clinton to favor intervention, but Albright drove the policy in Kosovo, not the President.

From his memoirs, Bill Clinton shows no hint of doubt about the correctness of the Kosovo policy for which Madame Secretary pushed. In hindsight, Clinton seemed to have

453 Ibid., p. 381
absorbed Albright’s policy line, illustrating that a decision maker could be persuaded to a particular course of action if it was compatible with his ideology and worldview; in this case, their commonly held idealist viewpoint that the United States was, as Albright famously said, the “indispensable nation.”

3. How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?

Anthony Lake, outgoing National Security Adviser, set the tone for the idealism of Clinton’s foreign policy. “It is dangerous hubris to believe we can build other nations. But … we can help other nations build themselves …” Policy making with respect to Kosovo demonstrated Clinton’s “ad-hocracy in action.” Key players such as Lake, his successor Sandy Berger, Albright, and her predecessor, Warren Christopher, all saw Kosovo as fundamentally different from Bosnia under Bush I and Clinton during the 1992-1993 period. When the Serb-Yugoslav regime launched its ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians, U.S. officials were reportedly “revolted” and “outraged.” At this point, there were no longer any illusions regarding Milosevic. In particular, Secretary of State Albright was “anxious to make amends” for Bosnia and Rwanda, as Samantha Power ascertained. Slobodan Milosevic was a “repeat offender” in the Clinton administration’s “institutional memory.” The President identified the Kosovar Albanians as “defenseless people,” but recognized war in the former Yugoslavia “could drag U.S. allies into a wider conflict.” Clinton’s rationale for involvement in Kosovo was a

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457 Ibid., p. 447.
458 Ibid., pp. 448-449.
combination of (1) the historical analogy of the Holocaust, (2) U.S. self-interest in preserving the gains of the Bosnian peace settlement, and (3) European stability.  

Secretary Albright clearly found the Serb assault on the Kosovar Albanians as unacceptable and a crisis to which the United States and NATO had no choice but to respond and worked to rally support. “We had to approve concrete measures that would expand our leverage over Belgrade … that was the only language [Slobodan Milosevic] would respond to now.” Thus spoken like a true child of the Cold War. Albeit such tough talk sounds like a simplistic truism from a politician on a campaign stump rather than the policy pronouncement of the distinguished “Madam Secretary.” In her own words, Albright was convinced that a diplomatic settlement was impossible unless there was a credible threat to Milosevic. The U.S. position statement to the effect that “nothing has been ruled out” was weak in her opinion. She said, “It was a clear step back from our earlier position and a reprise of our early timidity on Bosnia …” The Secretary of State and National Security Adviser clashed, Berger calling Albright’s advocacy of air strikes “irresponsible” and “you sound like lunatics.” Albright believed from the beginning that economic sanctions would not work unless backed by force. Thus, she argued for removing Milosevic’s regime from power. Albright sympathized with the KLA’s opposition to Milosevic’s dictatorship, the rebels’ dream of independence and self-determination, and conceded their need to use force. Yet, the Secretary lamented, “there did not appear to be much Jeffersonian thinking within the KLA.” In sum, Madeline Albright

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459 Ibid.
460 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 381.
461 Ibid.
462 Ibid., p. 383.
463 Ibid.
464 Ibid., p. 387.
465 Ibid., p. 386.
articulated an ideology of Wilsonian idealism, American exceptionalism, and messianic democracy.

President Clinton’s Secretary of State was determined to persuade the NATO allies to renew the threat of air strikes. She emphasized that Milosevic was central to the problem and had to be removed if any resolution was to succeed. As stated earlier, Madeline Albright became the driving force in the administration on Kosovo. In April 1998, Clinton said, “I was determined not to allow Kosovo to become another Bosnia.” He had earlier stated, in a radio address in February, “Bosnia taught us a lesson: in this volatile region, violence we fail to oppose leads to even greater violence we will have to oppose later at greater cost.” Nonetheless, the cautious president sent Richard Holbrooke to “reason” with Milosevic, still avoiding the option of the use of force. Holbrooke’s stature and rapport with the Serb-Yugoslav president signaled Washington’s seriousness. Clinton again tapped Holbrooke to sit down with Milosevic after the European meeting at Rambouillet (February 1999), “but even Dick couldn’t budge him.” The events unfolding drew Clinton into line with Albright’s position in support of air strikes. NATO launched its bombing campaign March 24, 1999 and continued for almost four months, as killings and displacement of refugees persisted. It is important to note Clinton and Albright put their faith in the persuasive power of air strikes rather than ground troops. In his memoirs, Clinton addressed the argument that U.S. policy would have been more effective with boots on the ground. The commander-in-chief countered that the Serbs would have inflicted large civilian casualties before combat troops could be put in place and “that would cost more American lives

466 Ibid., p. 392.
469 Clinton, My Life, p. 850.
without enhancing the prospects of victory.”470 The Clinton policy makers were dealing with a more hard-line and insular Milosevic regime than they had dealt with in the case of Bosnia, circa 1995.471 When Clinton announced the U.S.-NATO intervention in Kosovo to the American public, he made it clear he had no intention of using combat troops.472

The Clinton administration’s freewheeling management style pitted his hawkish Secretary State against his dovish National Security Adviser. The need for consensus in the situation room imposed limits on the president’s range of options, even as events propelled the United States toward direct involvement. Thus, the use of air power without ground combat or its credible threat emerged as the limited consensus and became Clinton’s officially stated policy. Whether it changed depended on the way events unfolded, in particular the belligerence and recalcitrance of the Milosevic regime.

4. How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?

General John W. Shalikashvili’s appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1993 was key to changing Clinton’s policy toward Bosnia, due to his compassion and work with Kurds in Iraq in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War.473 Shalikashvili’s advocacy of humanitarian intervention represented a change in culture at the upper echelon of the Pentagon. Shali’s successor, General H. Hugh Shelton, appointed in 1997, added the Dover Test as a criterion for deployment of combat forces, whereby popular support was judged anecdotally by

470 Ibid., p. 851.
the reaction of people to wartime casualties that returned to Dover (Delaware) Air Force Base.\textsuperscript{474} Shelton’s sensitivity was compatible with the president’s “zero tolerance” attitude toward casualties. An early advocate of direct action, Madeline Albright wielded much more power as Secretary of State than she had as UN Ambassador. “Five years ago, when I proposed using force in Bosnia, Tony Lake never let me finish my argument. Well, now I’m Secretary of State and I’m going to insist we at least have this discussion.”\textsuperscript{475} Albright predicted: “Bosnia’s past would become Kosovo’s future.”\textsuperscript{476} Her resolve not to repeat the mistakes of Bosnia and Rwanda influenced the chief executive.

The Pentagon’s lesson learned by historical analogy placed greater emphasis on “force protection” in military planning.\textsuperscript{477} The policy choice of using force by air without boots on the ground suited the military’s general reluctance to commit to putting troops in harm’s way, although the U.S.-NATO theatre commander disagreed. The Pentagon argued against fulfilling Wesley Clark’s request for Apache helicopters because the Joint Chiefs suspected it was a potential backdoor entry with combat troops.\textsuperscript{478} Additionally, presidential aide Sidney Blumenthal holds Clark was handicapped because he was “not one of the boys” immersed in the military’s subculture and thus his views were disregarded by the brass.\textsuperscript{479} Power analyzes that allied commanders suffered from “fighting the last war” (in this instance, Bosnia) and “wishful thinking.”\textsuperscript{480} Bill Clinton and his decision-making team expected NATO bombing to bring a

\textsuperscript{474} CNN, November 11, 2003.
\textsuperscript{475} Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 391.
\textsuperscript{476} Ibid., p. 392.
\textsuperscript{478} Blumenthal, The Clinton Wars, p. 640.
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid., pp. 640-641.
quick end to fighting in Kosovo as was the result in Bosnia. Contrary to this hope, no two wars are the same. The air strikes continued much longer—eleven weeks instead of two.

Halberstam described the Kosovo campaign as an “incomplete and in many ways unsatisfactory war” that led to “an incomplete and difficult peace.” The ethnic hatred in Kosovo went far deeper than the antagonisms in Bosnia, thus making concessions and compromise more problematic.\textsuperscript{481} The foregoing assumption is subjective and may be true or not. Nonetheless, this logic led to a widespread conviction that Kosovo called for actual force, not just a believable threat. Yet the Clinton White House’s decision making was underpinned by institutional or personal memory of the failure of Rwanda, the success of Bosnia, which seemed to follow from proxy warriors and bombing without ground troops, an idealistic worldview amenable to military intervention for humanitarian reasons, and the unflinching determination of the Secretary of State. General Wesley Clark, as NATO force commander, might have been a key player who pushed or pulled Clinton to act in Kosovo, but the end result was victory in what was, in Clark’s words, “not, strictly speaking, a war.”\textsuperscript{482} As a result, the President of the United States “owned” the Kosovo policy’s outcome, although his earlier inclination had been much more cautious. Even though pundits and critics were calling Kosovo “Madeline’s War,” Clinton said, “Well, it’s my war and we’re going to see it through to the end.”\textsuperscript{483} The President was not very introspective or self-critical in his coverage of Kosovo in his memoirs, but, as Blumenthal summarizes, “He had learned the harsh lesson of Bosnia: diplomacy without the threat of force would not work in

\textsuperscript{481} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, p. 481.
\textsuperscript{482} Ignatieff, Michael, \textit{Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond} (London: Metropolitan Books, 2000).
\textsuperscript{483} Blumenthal, \textit{The Clinton Wars}, p. 639.
the Balkans.\footnote{484} This lesson was learned very late in the game, as Tony Blair had to push the alliance to its limits to get Clinton to commit.

Furthermore, the so-called “Vietmalia Syndrome” might have been at work. The term was coined by diplomatic envoy Richard Holbrooke to describe habits of thinking resulting from the Vietnam War trauma that had been reinforced by the Somalia fiasco.\footnote{485} Colin Powell, on hiatus from government service at the time, noted the change in political thinking since the days of the Vietnam conflict, when as few as eighteen casualties in a single day resulting from one skirmish would not have merited media attention or public outrage, as was the conspicuous case in Somalia.\footnote{486} As a result, there was a reluctance to deploy force in situations where hostilities were threatened or underway. Given that these are the very circumstances under which soldiers normally operate, it is ironic that such concern for potential casualties became a priority for military leaders as well as civilian politicians.\footnote{487} In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the values of both the military culture and the civic culture had evolved.

\textit{I. International, systemic, or structural factors:}

Richard Holbrooke, Clinton's chief negotiator, revealed that French President Jacques Chirac delivered an ultimatum to the president on June 13-14, 1995, demanding greater U.S. involvement in a Kosovo resolution; otherwise, France would withdraw.\footnote{488} According to Holbrooke, the Bosnia scenario (1992-1995) had brought U.S. relations with its European allies to their lowest ebb since the Suez Crisis of 1956. The problem was not owing to a lack of

\footnote{484} Ibid., p. 631.  
\footnote{485} See Halberstam, op. cit., p. 265.  
\footnote{486} Baumann and Yates with Washington, “My Clan Against the World.”  
\footnote{487} Ibid.  
direction from Clinton’s White House, but rather “too much leadership.”[^489] Another factor would be the four-year Serbian siege of Sarajevo, which began in 1992. Holbrooke wrote, “NATO finally did what it should have done years earlier: it launched massive air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions.”[^490] Hence, due to these factors, U.S. policy changed from non-intervention under Bush I to intervention under Clinton. Yet we should also conclude U.S. decision making was reactive rather than pro-active in the case of Bosnia. Ultimately, NATO and UN pressure spurred a change during the successor administration. The international system had changed profoundly and ironically NATO was fighting its first war in 1999, the year of its fiftieth anniversary. As the United States and the Atlantic alliance were struggling to come to grips with the post-Cold War environment and exploring expansion into Eastern Europe. If NATO enlargement was perceived as a threat by Yeltsin’s Russia, the official admission of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland on March 12, 1999 could not have been more poorly timed[^491] NATO’s very existence was called into question and a perceived failure of will in Kosovo could spell the organization’s demise. Clinton understood those to be the stakes. Speaking of the British Prime Minister, German Chancellor, and himself, he said to Blumenthal, “[Tony] Blair and [Gerhardt] Schroeder and I could ride into the sunset, but we’ve got to do this with NATO intact, having done this as an alliance.”[^492]

In the case of Kosovo, there were two competing narratives concerning how the war against Milosevic’s Yugoslavia was won: the supremacy of NATO air power, or the indirect intervention of Russia on the side of the NATO allies (similar to the case of Syria in 2012). Did

[^490]: See Holbrooke, *op. cit.*
the *de facto* Russian alliance with NATO and threat of conventional follow-up (combat forces) and negotiations force an end to the war, or (as military historian John Keegan argued) was it “air power alone”? Secretary of State Madeline Albright undertook a “double magnet” policy: pulling Russia toward the U.S. and NATO and pulling Serbia toward Russia. Wesley Clark noted “international authority was invoked in a diplomatic effort to resolve the prospect of additional ethnic cleansing … The application of force was measured at the outset.” Clark correctly pointed out that no Americans were killed in action, but two military personnel died in a non-combat accident and three soldiers were taken prisoner. To some degree, the Clinton administration might have been “boxed in” by its no-combat-troops commitment, but the Kosovo intervention was judged a success in ending “ethnic cleansing” and thus could be seen as a test case for deterring such atrocities elsewhere. In that sense, the case of Kosovo served the systemic objective of order and stability, especially in the testing ground of the post-Cold War order and may have made it easier to think the United States could do more under the next administration.

The Russian government, headed by Boris Yeltsin, supported the Kosovo autonomy agreement, but long opposed any international military intervention. Boris Majorski, the Russian delegate to the Paris peace talks in March 1999, stated, “Problems which have accumulated over decades cannot be resolved with bombing.” The Russians warned that separation of Kosovo from Serbia-Yugoslavia would establish a dangerous precedent with ominous implications for not only Chechnya and Crimea, but also places like Scotland and Quebec. Russia’s Foreign

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494 Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 413.
496 Ibid.
Minister Igor Ivanov was more blunt, telling Albright: “we have many Kosovos in Russia,” including Chechnya. In addition to the Russian Federation, the European Union was opposed to Kosovo’s independence and the United States could not accomplish its goals in Kosovo without European support. The U.S. plan in the period from July to September 1998 was to coerce Milosevic to stop the violence and reduce the numbers of Serb-Yugoslav troops and militia in Kosovo to the level prior to their offensive. On September 23, 1998, United Nations Security Council declared conditions in Kosovo to be a threat to peace and security. On September 24, 1998, NATO formally threatened bombing if the offensive continued. In response, Milosevic’s forces murdered hundreds of Kosovar Albanians. Hence, the United States formulated its policy in response to pressure from allies.

Among the alliance partners, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook were described as “far more aggressive” against Slobodan Milosevic than previous U.K. leadership. On October 8, 1998, Albright and Cook lobbied for the UN Security Council’s authorization to threaten the use of force. Russia promised to veto any such resolution. Rather than thwarting the Clinton White House’s preferences, this set the stage for NATO to take action, despite the European allies preferring that the UN take responsibility. NATO authorized the use of force October 13, 1998 and Milosevic agreed to terms (later reneged) with Holbrooke the same day. At this point, U.S. intelligence from Serbs indicated Milosevic was ready to make a deal, but the Kosovar Albanians were not. As Albright recalled, the Kosovars were divided among themselves, growing bolder and regaining strength, and unwilling to compromise.

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498 Talbot, The Russia Hand, p. 301.
499 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 385n.
500 Ibid., p. 388.
501 Ibid.
503 Albright, Madam Secretary, pp. 389-390.
Additionally, the NATO allies were reluctant to condemn Serb actions while the KLA remained on the offensive.\(^{504}\) When Albright admonished the NATO ministers that the threat of the use of force had to be credible, she recorded their reaction as “There goes Madeline again.”\(^{505}\)

France and several other European governments voiced considerable misgivings about the efficacy of air strikes. They feared setting a too easy precedent for military intervention because a state would not accept foreign troops on its soil or an externally imposed solution to its internal conflict. Yet, even as European military brass warned against issuing an ultimatum, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who opposed the use of force in the former Yugoslavia a few years earlier, became one of NATO’s strongest voices calling for sending an ultimatum to the Serbs.\(^{506}\) As Albright lined up support for the U.S. position, the NATO allies were particularly keen on maintaining strict compliance with international humanitarian law and minimizing collateral civilian casualties, especially since the operation was characterized as a “humanitarian intervention.”\(^{507}\)

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, reporting in 1999 on the Srebrenica massacre, warned that “the tragedy will haunt our history forever. A deliberate and systematic attempt to terrorize, expel, or murder an entire people must be met decisively with all necessary means and with the political will to carry the policy through to its logical conclusion.” Annan implied the major responsibility for providing “political will” rested with the United States.\(^{508}\) Madeline Albright remembers the European allies were less solidly committed at first. France and Italy were reluctant to push sanctions against Milosevic’s regime and were concerned about


\(^{508}\) Melanson, *op. cit.*, A Post-Cold War Policy.
provocations by KLA rebels and arming them. For their part, the Russians did not want to meet at all.Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov defended Milosevic and told Albright and Cook that he considered the Kosovar Albanians to be the troublemakers. Subsequently, in the spring of 1999, as the NATO intervention transpired, U.S. diplomat Strobe Talbot called it “the most severe, dangerous, and consequential crisis” in Russian-American relations since the end of the Cold War. In other words, in a post-Cold War world, Russia remained a crucial, and hence structural or systemic, source of pressure.

Throughout the year 1998, according to Talbot, Clinton had been eager to engage Yeltsin on the Kosovo issue, but met with no success. After Yevgeny Primakov became Prime Minister, there seemed to be more interest in Kosovo, but it came in the form of stern disapproval of NATO’s threatened air strikes. For the Russians, the innuendo was that the United States could intervene whenever and wherever it chose, even in regions where Russia had interests, such as the Balkans. More ominously, nationalists in the Russian Duma called for intervening on the side of Serbia and President Yeltsin warned President Clinton: “Don’t push Russia into this!” Yet, as Talbot saw the situation, increasing Russian frustration with Milosevic’s regime moved Yeltsin, Primakov, and Ivanov from opposition to NATO’s incursion to acquiescence.

Therefore, despite illusions about a unipolar system after the evaporation of the USSR, the United States faced two major sources of structural constraints: (1) the pressure from alliance partners, and (2) the need to accommodate a still influential and engaged Russia.

II. National, domestic, or internal political:

509 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 381
510 Ibid., p. 382.
511 Talbot, The Russia Hand, p. 297.
512 Ibid., p. 311.
513 Ibid., pp. 298-301.
The NATO victory in Kosovo benefited the Clinton presidency, but the potential risks of intervention outweighed the payoff. Success in these “teacup wars” would give the President some domestic capital, but the potential downside was catastrophic.\textsuperscript{514} Clinton’s aide Blumenthal wrote: “[Clinton’s] entire foreign policy rested on his ability to carry out a campaign that faced intense opposition from both right and left …”\textsuperscript{515} In the spring of 1999, Clinton was looking at impeachment and the “vast right-wing conspiracy” that First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton saw coming after the liberal Democratic President. According to an article in the \textit{New York Times}, the dangerous situation in Kosovo was made worse because of the impeachment drama by distracting the White House and narrowing the administration’s options. The \textit{Times} piece by Scolino and Bronner speculated that an earlier decision could have prevented the Serb assault on Kosovo and might have given Clinton a freer hand to risk some political capital on the use of combat troops.\textsuperscript{516} However, except for advocates such as Albright and Clark, there is no hard evidence the United States would have been any less reluctant to put soldiers in the field absent the impeachment distraction. Moreover, no ally apart from Britain seemed to have any interest in a real hot war in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{517} Senator Larry Craig of Idaho, head of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, charged Clinton was: “… a president embroiled in a sex scandal that threatens to bring down his administration. He sees the only way out in distracting the nation and the world with a foreign military adventure. So, he orders his spin-doctors and media wizards to get to work. They survey the options, push a few buttons, and decide upon a suitable locale:

\textsuperscript{514} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, pp. 481-482.
\textsuperscript{515} Blumenthal, \textit{The Clinton Wars}, p. 629.
As for the tolerance for casualties, U.S. forces lost eighteen in a single day in Mogadishu compared to zero in Kosovo. This worked to Clinton’s advantage, although there was an undercurrent of opinion that charged the Balkan intervention was a self-serving distraction for an administration beleaguered by scandal. The omnipresent Lewinsky scandal held the public’s attention throughout 1998 and 1999. More than a few pundits and critics made allusions to the 1997 film *Wag the Dog*, in which a president orchestrates a fake war to deflect attention from a domestic scandal. While some Republicans questioned the timing of the air strikes, an *Economist* editorial even suggested provocation, implying that the bombing “created 10,000 new fanatics where there would have been none.” Simultaneously, both liberals and conservatives urged an “all in” strategy. An influential opposition party spokesperson, John McCain, and National Security Council chief Sandy Berger were using the term “win” to characterize the U.S. goal in Kosovo. Ironically, the drive toward intervention was led by Madeline Albright and the State Department, whereas the Defense Department and others in the administration were reluctant to become embroiled in a second operation in the Balkans while there were still troops in Bosnia. Although the Clinton administration’s standing was enhanced by the success of its policy in Kosovo, there is little to indicate U.S. actions were motivated by political considerations, or anything other than a desire to resolve a very messy scene in Kosovo.

Public opinion seemed to rally in support of Clinton’s Kosovo policy rather than driving it or pushing back. In April 1999, a Pew poll found 47% of Americans in favor of U.S. and

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518 Ironically, Craig himself would be brought down by a sex scandal. Quoted in Greenwald, Glenn, Unclaimed Territory, Reminder of GOP Attacks on Clinton's Motives and Honesty re: Iraq and Kosovo. Posted on blogspot.com, 2005.


520 *The 9/11 Report*, Chapter 4, Section 4.1, p. 172.

NATO military action in Kosovo and 48% opposed. However, when military action was specifically designated “to end [the] conflict,” 51% approved and 42% disapproved. Nevertheless, while 62% supported the Clinton administration’s policy, 72% said it was “very important” for the Clinton administration to get Congressional approval. In June 1999, 62% approved NATO air strikes, 32% disapproved, and 6% did not know. When asked if air strikes were right or wrong, 68% said they were right, 22% said they were wrong, and 10% did not know. Interestingly, polling on June 9, 1999 found that 46% favored and 49% opposed the possibility of 7,000 U.S. troops deployed in Kosovo (5% did not know). When an agreement was reached that in fact called for those 7,000 troops, 56% favored and 37% opposed in polling June 10-13, 1999 (7% did not know). Clearly, public support lined up behind the President once the commitment was a “done deal.” In July 1999, 54% of Americans polled were in favor of U.S. troops being deployed as peacekeepers in Bosnia and Kosovo and 43% were opposed (3% did not know). The strongest opinions were at the fringes, where 15% were “strongly in favor” and 18% were “strongly opposed.” Thus, President Clinton could rely on moderates in the center, who favored his policy of active engagement in the former Yugoslavia, 39% to 25%.  

The Republican-controlled House of Representatives resisted the Clinton administration’s move toward intervening in Kosovo, but failed to assert its constitutional authority, voting 427-2 against declaring war (which Clinton never requested) and tied 213-213 on a resolution to continue the air war. The House voted 249-180 to require the President to obtain Congressional approval before sending ground troops, apparently doubting his sincerity to keep his word or his capacity to control events. Tellingly, none of these votes had a binding effect on the Clinton administration’s actions. A few Republicans in Congress criticized the Kosovo mission,

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522 Pew Research Center for People and the Press, Poll Data, April, June, July 1999.
including Representative John Kasich of Ohio, who called Clinton’s policy “a terrible decision.” McCain criticized the Kosovo intervention as a replay of the Bosnian scenario, a “supposedly one-year mission” that continued for five years. An early hawk from the sidelines, McCain now said the Clintonians lacked clear-cut goals and a coherent policy in the Balkans. Another Republican Senator, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, suggested U.S. peacekeepers might be targeted by the KLA rebels as well as Milosevic’s forces.\footnote{McLaughlin, Martin, World Socialist Web Site, February 16, 1999.} Former Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole asserted an effective Kosovo policy was a casualty of the “all consuming” Clinton-Lewinski scandal.\footnote{Sale, Clinton’s Secret Wars, p. 345.} From the opposite viewpoint, Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi suggested the use of force in Kosovo would look like “blatant manipulation” of public opinion to distract attention from scandal and impeachment.\footnote{Ibid.} According to Representative Peter King of New York, Minority Leader Tom DeLay decidedly prematurely saw Kosovo as “act 2 of impeachment.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 650} While the storyline highlights Congressional opposition, political distraction, and not much potential gain in resolving a faraway foreign crisis, President Bill Clinton put a positive spin on his Kosovo policy. “We haven’t allowed the White House to become paralyzed. Under the most adverse circumstances, we have got a lot done.”\footnote{Blumenthal, The Clinton Wars, pp. 645-646.}

**III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:**

Early in the Kosovo scenario, U.S.-NATO commander General Wesley Clark underestimated Milosevic’s potential for resistance. General Clark also had a contentious and antagonistic relationship with Clinton’s third Defense Secretary, William Cohen.\footnote{Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace, pp. 455-457.} Clark
conceded that Clinton’s proscription against ground troops limited the NATO operation’s effectiveness. The theatre commander felt he had no support from the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff. Clark was left out of high-level meetings where the policy he would be expected to carry out was decided. Recently departed National Security Adviser Anthony Lake wrote, “It is not enough to say we have no choice but to act, that the alternatives to intervention are horrible.” In Lake’s view, what happened in Kosovo was “a response – not a strategy” and lacked a clearly defined political goal. (Lake compared the undefined political solution in Kosovo to Vietnam.) The political solution allowed Kosovo to remain a part of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, but there was serious doubt the Kosovar Albanians would live happily ever after under Serbian sovereignty.

President William Jefferson Clinton was not initially inclined to intervene directly. The wording is instructive in that any variations of the modifier direct implied ground or combat forces. The President’s NSC gurus, Lake and Berger, were equally dovish. Culture, formative experiences, and ideology can be crucial determinants: Madeline Albright and John Shalikashvili saw things differently due to their similar formative influences owing to their family, personal, and ethno-cultural histories. In league with Wesley Clark, they pushed Clinton in a more active direction, toward direct intervention. Their motivations were humanitarian and out of concern for political stability. A counter argument was that U.S. military intervention in the Balkans was triggered by ethnic nationalities refusing to live in peace with one another. Ironically, the result of U.S. activism was a patchwork of ethnically pure mini-states in the Balkans, quite dissimilar.

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531 Lake, Six Nightmares, p. 166.
532 Ibid.
533 Ibid.
Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot championed the principle of self-determination to promote integration, but the unintended result of U.S. diplomatic efforts was disintegration. In contrast to the Bosnian peace settlement, Talbot sought to resolve the region’s politics “without this time having to redraw the map …” Talbot’s fluency in Russian no doubt aided the agreement negotiated with Russia. Moreover, Talbot had as much credibility with Yeltsin as Holbrooke did with Milosevic, and Talbot had entrée with Clinton due to their long friendship, the capstone being the simple fact Talbot entered government service at Clinton’s behest.

Clinton’s ideology, worldview, and interpretation of history heavily influenced his decision making, which resulted in what might be called a “half-in” approach (perhaps similar to Barak Obama’s approach to Libya and Syria). The use of force was constrained to air power only, the President repeatedly stating before and during the seventy-seven day war against Serbia-Yugoslavia that combat troops were not an option. In this manner, Clinton was able to outmaneuver a bi-directional opposition of anti-intervention doves and hard-line hawks with a moderate, inherently limited approach. Additionally, the president skirted the big “never again” of Vietnam or the little “never again” of Somalia as mistakes of the past to avoid repeating. Within the Clinton administration the war hawks were led by Secretary of State Albright and field commander Clark, countered by a dovish NSC Director Berger and a passive-aggressive Defense Secretary Cohen in cahoots with a reluctant Pentagon. This cast of players, wittingly or not, bubbled up a policy that was perfectly suited to the commander-in-chief’s political

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535 Ibid.
philosophy—a limited, moderate intervention compelled by humanitarian and human rights concerns rather than strategic or economic interests. The resulting end to ethnic cleansing and deposition of Milosevic fit Bill Clinton’s idealistic worldview.

IV. Criteria for the use of force:

Let us begin by restating the Powell Doctrine and then assess the case of Kosovo in light of those principles. First, all other options should have been explored, such as diplomacy, sanctions, or negotiation. Second, the political, diplomatic, or military objectives are clearly understood. Third, the battle plan to be employed is realistic and the military objectives can be effectively maintained; in other words, are the strategy and tactics “doable” and “winnable”? Fourth, there are sufficient resources to accomplish the mission, often translated to mean going in with “overwhelming force.” Fifth, and lastly, there must be an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of personnel once the mission’s goals have been achieved.

According to Martel, NATO’s credible threat of combat troops on the ground after the protracted bombing campaign led to victory in Kosovo. The goal of the United States was a diplomatic solution agreed upon by the Serbs and Kosovar Albanians that would provide the latter with a degree of autonomy. Secretary Albright recalled Milosevic’s strategy was to blame the KLA insurgents for the crisis, labeling them as “terrorists.” Then Ambassador William Walker’s international inspection team verified the horrific Racak massacre (January 1999). A high-level meeting at the White House led to President Clinton’s decision to call Richard Holbrooke out of civilian life and send him to negotiate with Milosevic (September 30, 1998).

538 Martel, Victory in War, p. 287.
539 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 384.
540 Ibid., p. 385.
The ceasefire deal brokered by Holbrooke in October 1998 was breached by the Serbian leader in March 1999 and a second Holbrook mission came for naught. Thus, all other options, sanctions and diplomacy, were tried to no avail.

Operation Allied Force began March 24, 1999 and ended June 10, 1999. Some 300,000 Kosovars had been displaced by that moment in time. The Serbs apparently believed they could defeat the KLA in “Operation Horseshoe,” an offensive launched on the basis of an erroneous assumption that the U.S. and NATO would not follow through on their threats. When Slobodan Milosevic broke the ceasefire he negotiated with Holbrooke, the Serbian president did not think NATO would go “all in.”

The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1199, endorsing the air strikes (March 19, 1999). Serbia’s air defenses were “highly redundant” and “suffered little degradation.” Other targets were leadership and infrastructure. NATO and U.S. objectives were as follows: (1) destroy installations with minimal casualties (presumably allied); (2) effectively destroy Serb-Yugoslav targets (defenses, leadership, and infrastructure); and (3) target selection was controlled by President Clinton, Secretary Cohen, Chairman Shelton, and in consultation with General Clark. We might question whether such micromanagement, with the President of the United States being involved in target selection, is a workable model for this kind of intervention, especially when things go wrong, such as accidentally hitting the Chinese embassy.

General Wesley Clark points out that NATO deployed 60,000 troops in Bosnia for a population of four million and 40,000 troops in Kosovo with a population of two million, a

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541 Martel, Victory in War, pp. 212-213.
542 Ibid., p. 212.
543 Ibid., p. 214.
proportionally heavier commitment by 33%, reflecting the depth of the blood feud.\textsuperscript{544}

Negotiations commenced with Milosovic and Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin’s envoy, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Vice-President Albert A. Gore, Jr. and Finnish President Martii Ahtisaari. Sandy Berger of NSC detailed: (1) “We will win”; (2) “Serbs out, NATO in, Albanians back”; (3) “The air campaign is having serious impact”; and (4) Clinton was ready to use ground troops if necessary. “So go back to one. We will win.”\textsuperscript{545}

The issue of sufficient resources illuminates the coming of age for the belief in the invincibility of high-tech air power as an attractive coercive method that entails little loss of life compared to front-line war fighters. Not only could air strikes be directed from long distances or by remote control, but also advanced technology could put a safe distance between logistical support and would-be targets. CIA Director George Tenet further holds that command, control, communication, and intelligence (called C3I) was not “over-centralized” by Washington during the Bosnia and Kosovo warfare insofar as soldiers in the field had access to intelligence data “in foxhole and cockpit.”\textsuperscript{546}

As Undersecretary of State Talbot recollected, the presence of twenty-four Apache helicopters was supposed to indicate U.S. intention to follow up the air strikes with a ground war, although the President had virtually ruled this out.\textsuperscript{547} (As mentioned above, Cohen denied Clark’s request for the Apaches.) When a final ultimatum was ignored, NATO undertook the air

\textsuperscript{544} Clark, \textit{Winning Modern Wars}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{545} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, pp. 476-478.
\textsuperscript{546} Tenet, George, with Bill Hartlow, \textit{At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA} (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 503.
\textsuperscript{547} Talbot, \textit{The Russia Hand}, p. 307.
strikes. Power analyzed that allied commanders suffered from “fighting the last war” and “wishful thinking.” As discussed above under lessons learned, the “Vietmalia Syndrome” acted as a bit of a brake. NATO had an overwhelming advantage in numbers of troops; American leadership thought the air strikes unambiguously signified U.S. seriousness; and NATO commanders predicted the bombing campaign would last for a week since Bosnia had taken two weeks. Power suggested NATO’s risk-avoidance for its air force pilots by using missiles (“drones”) might have heightened civilian casualties. NATO drones hit Kosovar refugees, passenger trains, Serb civilians, bridges, TV and radio stations, satellite head-ends, and power generators. On August 7, 1999, a United States Air Force plane bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, causing a number of deaths and no small amount of embarrassment. (Talbot was informed that Chinese officials believed the bombing was deliberate and a mob in Beijing stormed the U.S. embassy.) By the end of May, British Prime Minister Blair and American President Clinton met to come up with a strategy to win the war, or, at least, forestall the possibility of losing. The NATO commander, Wesley Clark, offered the “Wes plan,” which called for 175,000 NATO troops to invade the province of Kosovo. The Pentagon’s Shelton and the Defense Department’s Cohen stood opposed to the idea, but NSC’s Berger endorsed it, saying, “All options are on the table.”

Thus commenced NATO’s “virtual war,” so named by Canadian journalist Michael Ignatieff. American commentator David Halberstam concurred, invoking the imagery of H.G. Wells and George Orwell. Jet planes took off from bases in the western hemisphere, carried out

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549 Ibid., pp. 451-452.
550 Ibid., p. 459.
551 Clark, Waging Modern War, p. 200.
552 Talbot, The Russia Hand, p. 315.
554 See Ignatieff, Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond.
missions over Europe, and returned home the same day.\textsuperscript{555} Unmanned drones and missiles were directed to targets by operators in front of viewing screens far from the battle zone. Laser-guided and photo-guided weapons honed in on targets selected by computers. Air Force B-2 stealth bombers from U.S. bases penetrated enemy defenses undetected, testing technology developed since the Persian Gulf War.\textsuperscript{556} While these advanced military technologies performed well, “winning” the war proved elusive, since the agreed-upon targets were so limited and Serb leadership stubbornly resisted surrendering.\textsuperscript{557} Only months later did the \textit{New York Times} report that NATO was much closer to undertaking a ground war in Kosovo than most observers recognized.\textsuperscript{558} After six years of Balkan crisis management, President Bill Clinton, a reluctant commander-in-chief, sent in air power against Serbia and was ready, despite his reluctance, to follow up with a ground invasion of Kosovo.\textsuperscript{559} Serb-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic believed the threat of U.S. combat troops was real, though Clinton’s memoirs speak to his steadfast opposition to sending in ground forces. The truth may be somewhere in the middle. Blumenthal recalled Sandy Berger’s “Plan B-minus,” presented in a memorandum to the President dated June 2, which called for 100,000 American, 50,000 British, and 25,000 other troops to invade Serbia in early September.\textsuperscript{560} (Note that an expected ninety-day buildup, during which time the tyrant could murder at will, was always put forward as an impediment to a direct intervention.) The viability of Plan B-minus became moot. Milosevic capitulated June 3, 1999, and agreed to evacuate his forces from Kosovo June 9, 1999.\textsuperscript{561}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{556} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, p. 457.
  \item \textsuperscript{557} \textit{Ibid}.
  \item \textsuperscript{559} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace}, p. 480.
  \item \textsuperscript{560} Blumenthal, \textit{The Clinton Wars}, pp. 648-649.
  \item \textsuperscript{561} Power, \textit{“A Problem From Hell,”} p. 460.
\end{itemize}
Observers credited Wesley Clark with “winning” NATO’s first war. However, Clark wrote about the frustration of air force pilots’ desire to apply strategic theory in practice. Clark indicated that they were eager to initiate what would later be dubbed “shock and awe” to decimate the enemy’s capacity to fight and bury his will to resist. The air warriors were frustrated and angry at the NATO high command for not letting them “turn out the lights in Belgrade.” Martel’s analysis confirmed his opinion that mobilization of air power without deployment of troops in country led to a favorable outcome and limited the duration of the operation. This conclusion, shared by Wesley Clark himself, contrasted with Ignatieff’s view as well as Keegan’s and Halberstam’s proposition that de facto alliance with Russia, Russian withdrawal of support for Milosevic’s regime, and Russian collaboration with NATO peacekeepers comprised the “game changer.” Indeed, it was a kind of “perfect storm” wherein air power, the credible threat of ground combat, and Russian turnabout coalesced, but no factor alone was decisive or determinative.

The Clinton administration’s direct intervention adhered fairly well to the Powell Doctrine. (Anecdotally, the then-retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said as much.) The objective of restoring Kosovar autonomy and ending ethnic cleansing was limited yet clear. The war-fighting logistics, including troop strength, proved adequate. Sanctions and diplomacy were tried again and again. Plus, the Secretary of State undertook a multi-faceted approach to securing support within the administration and among the allies, while separating the Russians from the Serbs. The two-part strategy of air strikes for seventy-seven days followed by an invasion with combat troops on the ground ready to go was successful in forcing Milosevic’s regime to sue for peace. Public opinion was divided, but not bitterly so and there was nonpartisan support for the

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562 Clark, Waging Modern War, p. 34.
administration’s decision to intervene, greatly aided by the total absence of battlefield deaths. As far as an exit strategy is concerned, U.S. and allied forces did not get bogged down in a prolonged military operation, never-ending occupation, or insurgency. Nonetheless, the Kosovo picture was far from perfect. Clinton and his decision-making team expected NATO bombing to bring a quick end to fighting in Kosovo as was the result in Bosnia. The air strikes continued much longer—eleven weeks rather than two. When Russia’s President Boris Yeltsin withdrew his support from Milosevic, he capitulated and allowed UN peacekeepers to enter Kosovo, where they encountered some hostility from Kosovar Albanians and Serbs.  

CONCLUSION

Slobodan Milosevic was out of power by 1999 and died in prison in 2006. Martel and other scholars concluded the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo were “political-military victories that led to comprehensive changes in the status quo, involved limited mobilization for war, and protracted post-conflict obligations for the United States and its allies…” With the benefit of hindsight, said obligations turned out not to be onerous, bloody, divisive, and expensive.

At the international level, the United States faced two major sources of structural constraints: (1) the pressure from alliance partners, and (2) the need to accommodate a still influential and engaged Russia. Of equal importance was the passionate advocacy of intervention by the chief U.S. diplomat and her influence on the chief executive. Additionally, strategic factors helped make Kosovo a “win” for Clinton: (1) successful use of surgical air strikes, (2) a

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564 Melanson, op. cit., Post-Cold War Policy.
566 Ibid., p. 231.
“cost-free” intervention with zero casualties, and (3) proving that the credible threat of force could be as effective as the actual use of force.
The most compelling rationale for the invasion and occupation of Iraq launched in March 2003 in the context of post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy was to move the frontline of the eponymous War on Terrorism to the Arab Middle East, to fight the enemy in their own backyard instead of Manhattan. To quote Condoleezza Rice, testifying before the 9/11 Commission: “We were at war and we didn’t know it.” Iraq did not represent a direct threat to the United States. The United States did not target Iraq because of its strength, but rather it was the weakest potential target in the region due to twelve years of sanctions, international isolation and ostracism, and softening up from at least eleven bombing campaigns and more than a hundred “surgical” air strikes in retaliation or warning for myriad transgressions throughout the 1990s. While the American public might not have fully appreciated the underlying rationale for what Richard Haass labeled a “war of choice,” the President of the United States implicitly acknowledged that Iraq redux was Phase II of a “long war,” following Phase I in Afghanistan. In George W. Bush’s words aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, under the banner of “Mission Accomplished”: “the battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terrorism that began on September 11, 2001.”

The defining moment for the Bush II administration was the 9/11 attack; hence, all decisions and their justification derived from that event and all policy planning referred back to it. During the 2004 electoral campaign, the President said, “We know that throughout the 1990s the terrorists were training and plotting against us. They saw our complacency as weakness and so their plans became more ambitious and their attacks more deadly until finally the twin towers

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became ground zero and the Pentagon was in flames ... My outlook was changed on September the 11th."\textsuperscript{570}

General Tommy Franks, the commandant of U.S. and allied forces in what was dubbed Operation Iraqi Freedom (an ironic code name for invading a sovereign state and overthrowing its government), sent a message to the men and women in his charge: “Our mission is clear. We will disarm Iraq and remove the regime that has refused to disarm peacefully. We will liberate the Iraqi people and we will help the Iraqi people to start anew to build a future of their own with a government of their choice.”\textsuperscript{571} His words, dripping with idealism, failed to acknowledge any objective U.S. interests in play or anticipate an eight-year-long protracted occupation.

Our hypothesis is that the stated causes of war with Iraq, Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction and Iraqi harboring of terrorists, were trumped up for popular consumption and the underlying national interests were prosecuting the War on Terrorism and promoting U.S. superpower hegemony. Thus, Bush II’s policy was based on a set of interrelated international factors—combating Islamist terrorism, jihadism, and militancy; pre-emption; and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (category I). The arguments were assembled for public consumption to justify the second war with Iraq, although it was, in fact, driven by the Bush II administration’s ideology, worldview, and belief in American power as a force for good in the world (category III). This vision went awry due to unanticipated consequences deriving from an unrealistically optimistic war plan.


\textsuperscript{571} Franks, Tommy, \textit{American Soldier} (New York: Regan Books, 2004), p. 734.
1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

In his memoirs, George W. Bush made the case for going to war with Iraq by casting Saddam Hussein as a villain who waged “low-grade war against the United States,” paid money to terrorists, fired on U.S. aircraft, violated or defied UN sanctions, “ruled brutally,” and “didn’t just pursue weapons of mass destruction. He used them.”

In the words of Vice President Richard B. Cheney, Saddam Hussein’s willingness to use weapons of mass destruction was “well-known to the world.” Saddam was ready to add nuclear weapons to his arsenal after Iraq’s defeat in the Persian Gulf War and United Nations Security Council resolutions had had “little impact.” The Bush II team was concerned about how close Saddam had been to getting a nuclear weapon in 1990-1991, but subsequent U.S. intelligence in the ensuing years was outdated and inaccurate.

Thus, Saddam Hussein and Iraq posed a “mortal threat,” quoting Cheney. The President and Vice President discussed Iraq in the days following September 11, 2001. This is factual, not speculation; therefore, what logic would dictate waiting and making Iraq the number two priority after the less powerful rogue Taliban state, Afghanistan? Cheney was one of the first key players in the Bush II administration to employ the syllogism: If 9/11 had used weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the attack would have been all the more deadly. Hence, if Saddam Hussein had WMDs, the United States would be justified in pre-emption. Although there was no compelling evidence of WMDs or delivery capability, the rhetoric suggested otherwise and they became the major selling point for the Iraq War. However, alternatives to the use of force existed and there was no urgency or decision-

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making timetable. The only timetable was whenever the Bush II team determined they were ready to go.

In August 2002, George W. Bush’s introduction to *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* asserted that at the “crossroads of radicalism and technology … we cannot let our enemies strike first …”576 This statement established the Bush II administration’s intention, but did it express any distinguishable national interest other than an aggressive defensive posture or self-help? In the case of Iraq, the United States under Bush II proceeded significantly differently from the “go” decision for Afghanistan. The United States had an opportunity to bring the United Nations, and indeed NATO, into the Iraqi operation, but did not do so. Hence, the Bush II administration clearly chose to go essentially unilaterally in Iraq redux, except for the United Kingdom, its most predictably reliable partner. The objective was not to please friendly states, but to intimidate America’s foes. This approach would appear to be in response to the Bush II ideological environment, whereby, unlike the prerequisite of the Cold War era, solidifying alliances and honoring commitments to win and hold friends in the “free world” camp, the United States could work its will and would project its power during the “unipolar moment.” This was an article of faith for the Bush II circle of neoconservative ideologues.

The atmosphere in which the decision to go into Iraq was made had been crucial. Vice President Dick Cheney recounted the “fog of war” immediately after the 9/11 attacks.577 “We needed a new way forward, one based on the recognition that we were at war.”578 In so doing, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those that

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harbor them."  Cheney recalls, “We were confident that we would have help in the effort ahead.”  However, what was the logic of linkage between Afghanistan and Iraq in the scope of the new policy framework?  Iraq was under discussion from the outset.  Whereas Cheney said he indicated Afghanistan should be first, Iraq was always a target.  

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld shared Cheney’s interest in “getting Iraq,” just a day after 9/11.  Rumsfeld lamented there were no easy targets in Afghanistan, whereas Iraq had better targets!  At Camp David, September 15, 2001, Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz argued in favor of hitting Iraq.  President Bush himself had suspected immediately after the 9/11 attack that Saddam Hussein’s regime was involved.  Terrorism expert Richard Clarke reported to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice that evidence linking al-Qaeda with Iraq and 9/11 was “anecdotal” and there was “no compelling case” for Saddam Hussein’s involvement in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks.  Clarke, a holdover from the Clinton administration, later said bombing Iraq “was like our invading Mexico after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.”  We caution that Clarke was outside the Bush II inner circle.  Thus, his influence did not equate with his status as counter-terrorism czar and his dissent would appear to have been regarded as unwelcomed dissonance.

At a subsequent Camp David crisis-management meeting, Rumsfeld told Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Richard Myers that the United States should consider attacking Iraq and Afghanistan at the same time.  Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, as both Rice and Secretary of State

579 Ibid.
580 Ibid., p. 331.
581 Ibid., p. 334.
583 Clarke, Against All Enemies, pp. 30-31.
586 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 150.
Colin Powell recalled, was obsessively concerned with Iraq and saw an opportunity to get rid of the problem.\footnote{The 9/11 Report, pp. 478-479.} Therefore, the Bush II administration made a case against Iraq based on fear of Saddam’s regime taking advantage of 9/11.\footnote{Ibid., p. 479.} (Ironically, this led to the neoconservative ideologues in the Bush II team to take advantage of 9/11 to hit Iraq.) George W. Bush had ruled out action against Iraq by September 15\textsuperscript{th} or 16\textsuperscript{th}, but Wolfowitz continued to press the case for moving against Iraq at a September 17\textsuperscript{th} National Security Council meeting.\footnote{Ibid., p. 480.} General Tommy Franks testified before the 9/11 Commission that the President told him Iraq was “off the table,” and rejected Franks’s request to draft a war plan. Regardless, among the small circle of Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Franks, there was a clear presumption that Afghanistan was “round 1” of a longer war, one not limited to the hills of Afghanistan.\footnote{Ibid., p. 481.}

\textit{Cause of War 1: WMDs—} Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological weapons or a nuclear bomb) made Saddam Hussein’s regime a threat to regional stability. However, as an anonymous Central Intelligence Agency staffer told the 9/11 Commission, the Bush II administration’s “preliminary judgment” of Iraqi WMDs was based on an \textit{intelligence standard of proof} rather than a \textit{legal standard of proof}.\footnote{Ibid., p. 287.} Rumsfeld rationalized somewhat disingenuously, “Though the intelligence failures surrounding Iraq are now well known, recent history is abundant with examples of flawed intelligence that affected key national security decisions and contingency planning.”\footnote{Rumsfeld, Donald, \textit{Known & Unknown: A Memoir} (New York: Sentinel, 2011), p. 431.} The Defense Secretary added, “the intelligence community reported near total confidence in their conclusions.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 432.} CIA Deputy Director John
McLaughlin concluded in August 2002: (1) Iraq had reconstituted its weapon facilities; (2) Iraq had a mobile biological warfare capability; (3) teams of weaponry experts were reassembled; and (4) the Iraqis were “clearly working” on a platform or delivery system.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 432-433.}

A Report of the Project for a New American Century succinctly saw the issue as “The Right War for the Right Reasons” in \textit{Iraq: Setting the Record Straight}.\footnote{A Report of the Project for a New American Century, “The Right War for the Right Reasons,“ \textit{Iraq: Setting the Record Straight}, April 2005, p. 78.} The Iraqi Survey Group (ISG), headed by David Kay and Charles Duelfer, was unable to verify the story that Iraqi officials had scuttled their stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons in 1999 with documentation or any physical evidence. Although the ISG and UN inspectors accepted the story about the destruction of weapon stockpiles as factual, being “not able physically to verify that story” constituted “a weakness in our analysis.”\footnote{Report to the Security Council (Duelfer Report), March 6, 2003; “Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD,” September 30, 2004, p. 32 (chemical section); Unresolved Disarmament Issues: Iraq’s Proscribed Weapons Programmes,” March 6, 2003.} It is important to note that the Bush II administration relied on essentially identical intelligence as had the Clinton administration and the most reliable information was gathered prior to the Persian Gulf War.\footnote{United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Report on U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq, July 7, 2004, pp. 14-17, 24.} Therefore, the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on which the Bush II White House based its decision making was outdated and flawed. Subsequently, the Presidential Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction reported that the NIE “simply didn’t communicate how weak the underlying intelligence was.”\footnote{Overview of the Report, Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, March 29, 2005, p. 10.} The commission’s cover letter to the President states: “We conclude that the Intelligence Community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgments about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction …
After a thorough review, the Commission found no indication that the Intelligence Community distorted the evidence regarding Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. What the intelligence professionals told you about Saddam Hussein's programs was what they believed. They were simply wrong.\textsuperscript{599} Whether due to wishful thinking or single-focus myopia, the Bush II principals “cherry-picked” the intelligence to support their WMD claims.

\textit{Cause of War 2: Iraqi harboring of terrorists}—Defense chief Rumsfeld wrote after the fact: “Documents discovered after the coalition’s invasion of Iraq in 2003 shed more light on the depth of the regime’s links with terrorism … My view rested on the fact that previous attempts” to prove linkage “had failed.”\textsuperscript{600} Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Hugh Shelton “strongly opposed” an attack on Iraq in 2001 because he believed it would undermine allied support for the Afghanistan war.\textsuperscript{601} Nevertheless, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz persisted, keeping Iraq in their crosshairs. The Defense Secretary quoted CIA’s George Tenet: (1) there was “senior level contact” between Iraqis and al-Qaeda; (2) Iraq was a “safe haven” for Islamist militants; (3) there was “solid evidence” of al-Qaeda operatives in Iraq; and (4) al-Qaeda had sought aid to acquire a WMD capability from the Iraqis.\textsuperscript{602} The infiltration of al-Qaeda and other Islamists, jihadists, or militants into Iraq accelerated after the 2003 invasion and occupation. Iraqi participation in the guerrilla insurgency was subsequently fueled by popular resentment against the United States, United Kingdom, and their allies. Subsequently discovered evidence of Saddam’s defunct regime harboring, financing, or cooperating with outside militants was simply an example of the ancient

\textsuperscript{600} Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, p. 422.
\textsuperscript{602} Letter, George Tenet to Bob Graham, United States Senate, October 7, 2002; Department of Defense News Briefing, Secretary Rumsfeld and General Pace, September 26, 2002; see Rumsfeld, Donald, \textit{Known and Unknown}, p. 421n.
maxim: the enemy of your enemy is your friend. The underlying motivation for the Bush II policy makers was to make Iraq the primary base of operation for the War on Terrorism and a magnet to attract the radical forces to carry on an insurgency that would destroy them. The clearest evidence that the Bush II policy makers understood Iraq would become a magnet was the inseparability of the mission in Iraq and the global War on Terrorism in the public utterances of administration officials, none blunter than the President himself, who boasted, “Bring ‘em on!”

2. Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

The case of Iraq redux suggests pre-existing involvement may well be a factor in “go” versus “no-go” decisions. Intuitively, the positioning of troops in or near the country of interest would facilitate any intervention under consideration and actions taken against the targeted country could have a cumulative effect, whereby each successive decision sets a precedent for further actions, or a kind of “escalation ladder.”

There was undoubtedly a history of conflict between the United States and Iraq. Going back to the Carter administration (1977-1981), Paul Wolfowitz, Jeffrey Kemp, and Dennis Ross (later a Clinton advisor) drew up the Limited Contingency Study to reform U.S. military policy in the Persian Gulf region, based on three essential questions: Could the United States get troops into the region to repel a possible Soviet invasion? Could the United States defend Saudi oil fields? Or should the United States seize Saudi oil fields under the threat of a future oil embargo? The Limited Contingency Study further hypothesized a threat to Persian Gulf oil resources from within the region. Thus, a decade and a half before the first Persian Gulf War, Wolfowitz’s team projected Iraq as the “pre-eminent” military power in the region and anticipated its potential
threat to the Saudis and Kuwait. In July 1990, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens warned Bush I administration officials about Iraqi nuclear weaponry only one month before Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. Arens and Deputy Chief of Staff Ehud Barak met with Dick Cheney and unfurled reams of data on European assistance in Iraqi uranium enrichment. Arens said a nuclear-armed Iraq posed an existential threat to Israel. For Washington, the imperative was to keep Israel out of the war so as to keep the Saudis and other Arab partners in the coalition. The solution, as related by Cheney, was for the U.S. to guarantee anti-Scud missile defense for Israel, as the Iraqis provoked Israel with Scud attacks. Blackwill and Carnasale speculated that a single, crude, half-megaton nuclear bomb on the back of a flatbed truck could have inflicted 50,000 casualties on the U.S. and coalition forces during Desert Storm. CIA intelligence also raised warnings regarding Iraq. The consensus in 1990 was that Saddam Hussein would make some move against Kuwait, but not an invasion and occupation of the whole little country. Thus, Cheney, Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, and cohorts were all “consistently wrong” in their immediate expectations of what Iraq would do next. The precedent of having been wrong in 1990-1991 meant that those same decision makers would err on the side of the worst-case analysis in 2002-2003.

There also may well be a pattern of policy continuity from one administration to the next, though not quite a “seamless web.” Following the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), the June 1993 Tomahawk missile attack was one of four retaliatory raids against Iraq; there was an earlier strike in January 1993, another in response to Iraqi bombing of a Kurdish city in 1996, and

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604 Ibid., pp. 182-183.
607 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, pp. 182-183
Operation Desert Fox in 1998. January 19, 1993, Iraq refused to allow UN inspectors to fly into the country, and the Iraqi military began operations in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait, and the northern no-fly zone. The United States fired Tomahawk cruise missiles at factories identified with Iraq’s nuclear weapons development. Henceforth, Iraq capitulated and allowed the UN weapons inspectors to resume their flights. The biggest U.S. action in the 1990s was Operation Desert Fox. George W. Bush quoted William Jefferson Clinton: “The best way to end that threat is with a new Iraqi government.” While the foregoing four actions taken in the form of surgical air strikes between 1993 and 1998 against Iraq by the predecessor administrations do not fit our criteria for intervention, targeted action by the Bush I regime to rescue the Kurds in northern Iraq in March 1991 is interesting because there was no push to follow up by “finishing the job” (i.e., regime change) begun in Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Retaliation for the attempted assassination of Bush I on an April 1993 trip to Kuwait provided the circumstances for Clinton’s second hit on Iraq. On June 23, 1993, after Kuwaiti police thwarted an Iraqi intelligence plot to assassinate former President George H. W. Bush, Secretary of State Warren Christopher asked counter-terrorism chief Clarke “to plan retaliation, but insisted that it had to be limited to Iraqi intelligence headquarters and it had to be carried out on Saturday evening to minimize casualties” President Bill Clinton waited for verification that the missiles had successfully met their targets before making an announcement of the air strike. CNN reported “relative certainty,” following Clinton’s warning to Saddam Hussein, there had been no further Iraqi support or involvement in terrorist acts against the U.S.

608 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 227.
609 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 80.
610 Ibid., p. 82.
611 Ibid., p. 83.
612 Ibid., p. 84.
According to Clinton’s Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, “The U.S. has repeatedly said that any state that sponsors or supports terrorism against us will pay a price for its conduct.” Christopher wrote, “the president [Clinton] made it clear that he wanted to send an unmistakable, dramatic message to Iraq.” Christopher insisted the strike caused “relatively few casualties in the civilian population.” (Perhaps “relatively few” adds up to wishful thinking.)

Operation Desert Fox (1998) followed, in association with the British, against Iraq’s “repeatedly unwilling cooperation” with the UN Special Commission on Weapons Inspection. Overall, under the Clinton administration, U.S. forces executed 130 air strikes for violations of no-fly zones between northern and southern Iraq. Note that Clinton failed to consult Congress in the 1993, 1996, and 1998 incidents. Significantly, the Clinton administration seems not to have considered a ground invasion, despite the Iraqi regime’s repeated infractions. Clinton’s successor, George W. Bush, pointed out that “Congress overwhelmingly passed and President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act” in 1998. According to Bush, “as Colin Powell put it, [the U.S. was] keeping Saddam in his box. Then 9/11 hit…,” thus leading the Bush II administration to take “a fresh look at every threat in the world.” Yet the cause-and-effect relationship is not clear and the sequence of events suggests the momentum for acting against Iraq was already underway. As early as December 2001, George W. Bush was considering two possible avenues toward Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi regime: (1) “coercive diplomacy” involving economic sanctions, no-fly zone enforcement, arms embargo, and weapons inspections; (2) a

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614 Ibid. See also Von Drehle, David, and R. Jeffrey Smith, U.S. Strikes Iraq for Plot to Kill Bush, Washington Post, June 27, 1993.
615 Hendrickson, Ryan C., Clinton, Bush, Congress and War Powers (Eastern Illinois University, 2004), pp. 4-8.
616 Ibid.
617 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 228.
618 Ibid.
military build-up aimed at overthrowing the regime by force. Condoleezza Rice explained that over time the two avenues “merged into one”: diplomacy and force.\(^{619}\)

Vice President Cheney, in hindsight, asserted, “Saddam Hussein did not find Desert Fox persuasive. In 1999 he began firing on U.S. and British planes that were enforcing the no-fly zone in northern and southern Iraq.”\(^{620}\) Cheney further revealed he and the president-elect were given intelligence reports that Iraq was steadily pursuing WMD capabilities in December 2000.\(^{621}\) However, a pattern—indeed, a progression—of retaliation under Clinton provided a precedent for Bush II as well as momentum.

Richard Haass, NSC staffer for the Bush I administration and director of policy planning at the State Department during Bush II, contrasted the two very different U.S. wars in Iraq. The 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War was a “traditional war” to oppose aggression and restore equilibrium to the regional order. (See Chapter 2.) The 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom was a “radical” pre-emptive war designed to overthrow Iraq’s government and remake the Arab Middle East on new premises, presumably democratic and secular ones. (Albeit Saddam’s regime was secular, not Islamist, but decidedly undemocratic.) The Persian Gulf War cost an estimated $100 billion with considerable contributions from allies, and Operation Iraqi Freedom cost $70 billion the first year, with cumulative costs approaching $1 trillion after eight years. (Exact cost of the Iraqi war is not definitively known, since all expenditures were essentially off-budget by way of supplemental appropriations, with much of the specifics classified.) The Persian Gulf War cost


\(^{621}\) Ibid.
about 150 U.S. personnel killed in action (KIA), \(^{622}\) whereas Operation Iraqi Freedom cost 5,000 KIA plus as many as 40,000 wounded in both Afghanistan and Iraq. \(^{623}\)

The Persian Gulf War to liberate Kuwait gave the U.S. military “semi-permanent” presence in Iraq. In contrast, Iraq’s army, defense budget, and arms imports decreased to a fraction of their previous levels. Iraq had also suffered measurable social and economic decline after its previous eight years of war against Iran. With Iraq weakened and vulnerable, Paul Wolfowitz, then a private citizen, wrote Bill Clinton a letter in 1998, urging a U.S. invasion and occupation of southern Iraq. The letter, co-signed by a number of notables including Donald Rumsfeld, received no reply from Clinton. \(^{624}\) The transition between the Clinton and Bush II administrations is symbolized by a “no-fly zone” versus a “mushroom cloud” or surgical air strikes versus tanks rolling across the Iraqi border, insofar as Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith (but perhaps not so much Powell and Rice) had more ambitious political-military objectives in U.S. policy toward Iraq and the Arab-Muslim Middle East than the Clintonians. \(^{625}\)

An unambiguous conclusion is that (1) pre-existing involvement or previous intervention and (2) continuity of policy weighed significantly in the “go” decision in Iraq redux, facilitating and contributing a momentum to the 2003 intervention. Rather than the “sea change” in thinking following 9/11, to which President Bush II attributes his decision-making, the Wolfowitz letter, for example, was part of the paper trail linking the second Iraq War to a larger, evolving strategic vision of U.S. post-Cold War hegemony.


\(^{623}\) Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, pp. 7-9.


\(^{625}\) Ibid., pp. 96-97.
3. How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?

The first place to look for answers defining the Bush II administration’s decision-making style is the National Security Council and the National Security Advisor. “George W. Bush had no trouble making decisions when the search for consensus failed,” according to Condoleezza Rice. One observer wrote: “Of all the top-level officials, she was by far the closest to Bush … She operated at the interface between the president and his advisors.” Rice was a “tough-minded” realist whose worldview transitioned from cautious conservatism to assertive idealism in Bush II’s apocalyptic first year in power. During the 2000 presidential campaign, she said the United States “should avoid becoming bogged down in nation-building enterprises.” After 9/11, Rice guided Bush II toward “realism in the service of ideals.” According to political scientist Jean Edward Smith, in contrast to Dwight David Eisenhower, who convened some 300 NSC meetings, George W. Bush met once with the full NSC (January 30, 2001) and thereafter delegated titular authority over the body to Rice. Yet, the personalities with the real power, Rumsfeld and Cheney, were openly disdainful of Rice. According to Rice’s biographer, Elisabeth Bumiller, she and the Defense Secretary openly argued in meetings, requiring Andy Card’s mediation. Worse, Rumsfeld withheld vital war plans for Iraq from Rice and her staff. Her relationship with Rumsfeld improved somewhat with her promotion to Secretary of State. Conversely, Rice’s working relationship with the Vice President deteriorated from 2005 onward, she and Cheney sparring over the troop surge in Iraq plus other issues, including policy toward

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627 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, p. 316.
Advisers exercised a decisive hand in Bush II’s foreign policy for the simple reason the President was largely inexperienced and unknowledgeable in world politics. According to Condoleezza Rice, Bush II’s decision-making style “requires a very good administrator who can ‘keep the trains running on time’ internally and work seamlessly with the other agencies … [where] there is a kind of bureaucratic continuity.” As Rice explained her role: “The national security advisor is staff—rarified staff, to be sure, but staff nonetheless.” Regardless of the expressed administrative theory at work, Bush II policy decisions appear to have emerged from trench warfare among the key players and the bureaucracies they controlled.

The respective staffs of the National Security Advisor, Vice President, and Secretaries of State and Defense were the loyal facilitators of their bosses’ power-driven egos. Vice President Cheney’s “fresh wrinkle” was to create his own shadow national security council, headed by Lewis “Scooter” Libby, his chief of staff. Cheney’s “footprints” started from a January 2, 2002 meeting with CIA Director Tenet to “review possibilities” to overthrow Saddam Hussein. “Within a month” Tenet presented a plan to Rumsfeld. Concurrently, Wolfowitz asked the CIA to investigate the chief UN weapons inspector, Hans Blix—there proved to be no evidence of complicity, dishonesty, laxity, or that intelligence findings on WMD data were “fudged” or “cooked.” The point was not to implicate Blix, but rather to add a building block in the case for war. Cheney’s “freedom of action” contrasted with and contributed to Rice’s “weakness.” She had been one step down in status from Powell, Cheney, and Rumsfeld during the Bush I and

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630 Ibid., p. 319.
631 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 129.
632 Rice, No Higher Honor, pp. 13ff.
Nixon-Ford administrations (in the case of Rumsfeld), hence “outclassed” by the alpha males at the table.\footnote{Quoting Prados, \textit{ibid.}, p. 108.} As John Prados notes: “Rice had also determined to stay close to the president, usually a good recipe for a security advisor, except that in this White House the line of action ran through Cheney’s office.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

“To be sure, tensions between Defense and State are almost endemic,” Rice conveyed in her memoirs, and “there are many times when the secretary of state is more willing to use force than the Pentagon … Nonetheless, secretaries of state find the Pentagon all too willing to exert influence on foreign policy.”\footnote{Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, p.15.} Rice witnessed the antagonism between Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld as “beyond such almost inescapable tensions.” Much of the infighting was carried on by way of Rumsfeld’s “slices” or “snowflakes,” cryptic little notes that floated through the corridors of the Pentagon, hence evading direct or face-to-face confrontation.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 16.} Additionally, Rice had to contend with the meddlesome Vice President. “The problem was [Cheney’s] staff, which seemed very much of one ultra-hawkish mind, was determined to act as a power center of its own.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.} The internecine bureaucratic warfare further inhibited a more efficient policy-making process, as Rice envisioned, whereby lower ranking staff could iron out details and leave higher strategy to the departmental secretaries. “The truth is that we would have had fewer Principals’ meetings had the distrust between Don [Rumsfeld] and Colin [Powell] not made the levels below the secretaries incapable of taking decisions.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.} With all due respect to the future Secretary of State, this might have been the result of the overbearing personalities of the players involved. Moreover, the National Security Advisor lacked the clout to contain these

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  \item \footnote{Quoting Prados, \textit{ibid.}, p. 108.}
  \item \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
  \item \footnote{Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, p.15.}
  \item \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 16.}
  \item \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.}
  \item \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.}
\end{itemize}
conflicts in the service of a commander-in-chief with scant expertise and little inclination to force his will on policy outcomes.

The staff’s paralysis in information gathering and policy recommendation led to decisions being made on the basis of limited, rather than diverse, input. The contest in bureaucratic politics became a mismatch: State had 57,000 employees and a $45 billion budget; whereas Defense had 700,000 employees and a $700 billion budget (ca. 2012). Thus, Powell faced challenges from Rumsfeld at Defense, Cheney, and key appointees such as the ultra-hawk Undersecretary of State John Bolton, who owed loyalty to Bush and Cheney, not Powell. Therefore, Powell’s assistant, Richard Armitage, and chief of staff, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, lacked entrée and influence in the Bush II White House. Powell wanted foreign policy decision making to be “inclusive” and “transparent.” Unlike Bush I’s “collegiality” and Clinton’s “messiness,” Bush II’s NSC meetings were “rehearsed” with “formality” and “run behind the scenes … with Condoleezza Rice orchestrating.” However, Rice was the conductor, but not the composer; she didn’t write the score. According to O’Sullivan, “A back channel existed by which Cheney and Rumsfeld, with Rice’s complicity, made most of the important decisions.” Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill was surprised to see the “deepest division” and “open combat” between Powell and Cheney so early in the new administration’s tenure. Colin Powell was “confounded by Cheney,” who “played by his own rules.” The Vice President became a confident crusader. Dick Clarke described Cheney as “quiet and soft-

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641 Ibid., p. 19.
642 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 130.
643 Ibid., pp. 130ff.
644 Ibid., p. 130.
645 Ibid.
spoken,” which hid “almost extreme views … out of place if aired more broadly.”

Who was in charge? Without a doubt, Cheney wielded enormous authority under Bush II. He picked O’Neill to head Treasury and Rumsfeld to run Defense. Rice’s assistant Stephen Hadley and Rumsfeld’s assistant Paul Wolfowitz had served on Cheney’s Defense/Pentagon staff during Bush I’s term, 1989-1993. Thus, strong personal ties, combined with institutional memory of Bush I’s Persian Gulf War, predisposed key players as war hawks. As historian O’Sullivan ascertained, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Feith ran the government. Journalist Woodward “speculated” about Powell’s “deep-seated anger” at Cheney. “The relationship between the two was so bad that they could not even discuss their differences.” A direct line of access to the chief executive might have mitigated this toxic environment, but Bush and Powell had “little personal chemistry” and never achieved any general rapport. As British Ambassador to the United States, Christopher Meyer, opined, Bush and Powell’s was “not a relationship made in heaven.” Anecdotally, since Powell was the most highly regarded Bush II official, domestically as well as internationally, the fledgling president might have been jealous or intimidated by the former general. The Bush II administrative structure further undermined Powell’s ability to influence outcomes. Powell was described as a “shrewd briefer” who presented all “available options” while “shading briefings” to illustrate the efficacy of his preferred course. Unfortunately, George W. Bush “did not like debate or discussions about policy.” Clarke claimed the President “looked for simple solutions, the bumper sticker

648 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 19.  
649 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 132.  
651 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 132.  
653 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 133.
description of the problem.” Powell’s nemesis Rumsfeld was known to be “as bold and as relentless as any modern ministerial figure,” allowing him to dominate policy making for the time being. As policy toward Iraq coalesced, Bush and Rice made compelling “mushroom cloud” analogies regarding WMDs, even as Cheney and Rumsfeld alleged al-Qaeda operated from Iraq. By February 2003, Colin Powell found himself investigating the triangular connection between al-Qaeda, Iraq, and WMDs, although he doubted its validity.

The Secretary of Defense came to be identified with his press conference allusion to “known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns.” Rumsfeld wrote: “The idea of known and unknown unknowns recognizes that the information those in positions of responsibility in government, as well as in other human endeavors, have at least disposal is almost always incomplete.” Nevertheless, incomplete information should not be an excuse for incompetence. Rumsfeld further elaborated: “It emphasizes the importance of intellectual humility, a valuable attribute in decision making and in formulating strategy.” Humility was a character trait he showed inconspicuously and the resultant strategy was undercut by “unknown unknowns” that were overlooked by a policy process that was a backformation, whereas the decision was predetermined in search of an acceptable rationale. Interestingly, Rumsfeld applauds Bush II’s “leadership” and “sound stewardship” and notes that “even the New York Times called for “a fundamental reassessment of intelligence and defense activities”

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654 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 219.
655 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 133. Several observers concur on this judgment; see Newhouse, John, Imperial America (New York: Knopf, 2003); see also Risen, James, State of War (New York: Free Press, 2006);
658 Rumsfeld, Donald: Known and Unknown: A Memoir (New York: Sentinel, 2011), Author’s Note.
659 The Unknown Known, Documentary, Produced by Errol Morris, 2014.
following 9/11. As one of the key insiders driving the Iraq war policy, Rumsfeld curiously revealed: “While the President and I had many discussions about the war preparations, I do not recall his ever asking me if I thought going to war was the right decision.” Although the Pentagon boss implied Bush’s decisiveness, this revelation also exposed the limited range of voices involved in policy formulation. Tellingly, Rumsfeld reiterated, “Not one person” on the Bush II team was “opposed to, even hesitant, about the President’s decision.” This statement would indicate the absence of contrary and divergent viewpoints at the table, a process bordering on groupthink.

4. How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?

Vice President Dick Cheney recollected September 11, 2001: “On this day, all our assumptions about our own security had changed. It was a fundamental shift … The first war of the 21st century wouldn’t simply be a conflict of nation against nation, army against army. It would be first and foremost a war against terrorists who operated in the shadows, feared no deterrent, and would use any weapon they could get their hands on to destroy us.” The evidence, factual and subjective, does not bear this vision out. International political terrorism and its transnational character was nothing new. Neither were the Twin Towers and the Pentagon the first symbolic or high-value American targets attacked by Islamist militants. Previous terrorist assaults (e.g., Kobar Towers and U.S.S. Cole) were simply outside U.S. borders, except for the Twin Towers bombing in 1995.

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660 Ibid., p. 350.
661 Ibid., p. 436.
662 Ibid., p. 437.
663 Cheney, In My Time, Prologue.
Unburdened by self-doubt or countervailing logic, President George W. Bush saw “[t]he lesson of 9/11 … We would confront the threat from Iraq, one way or another.” CIA Director George Tenet proposed a counterterrorist strategy combined with regime change in Afghanistan, relying primarily on covert operations, special forces, and domestic allies inside Afghanistan. Even though Tenet saw Iraq as “a different matter,” Dick Cheney wanted to know what the CIA could do “inside Iraq.” The Vice President emphatically recalled Bush I’s “mistake” in standing by while Saddam Hussein’s regime “slaughtered” Kurdish rebels in the wake of Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Ironically, Cheney, then Defense chief, was one of the voices that worried what worse evil might replace Saddam if the U.S.-led coalition had deposed the dictator. “During the first Gulf War,” Rumsfeld recounted, “[t]he question was whether the U.S. should end the conflict or move to Baghdad … I remember very clearly Colin Powell saying that this was turning into a massacre.” Rumsfeld added: “A campaign to take Baghdad and oust Saddam was a daunting notion [in 1991] … Colin Powell, who had played such a prominent role in the decision not to attempt regime change, responded to the criticism: ‘[I]n due course, Saddam Hussein will not be there.’” In terms of a diplomatic alternative for Iraq redux, Rumsfeld put forward a particularly bizarre proposal: “I thought a diplomatic overture on Iraq from the Bush [II] administration—a ‘Nixon goes to China’ approach” might be possible. Iran and Iraq were still hostile, reasoned Rumsfeld, but both were hostile to the United States, so maybe Saddam could be wooed to befriend the enemy of his enemy. Rumsfeld had been

664 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 229.
668 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 413.
669 Ibid., p. 415.
670 Ibid., p. 420.
Ronald Reagan’s emissary to Iraq in the 1980s to try to do just that, but there was no indication Rumsfeld actually made this suggestion to Bush II in 2002-2003.

The immediate antecedent of the second Iraq War was Operation Enduring Freedom. In Afghanistan, Day 1: losses were forty wounded and eight killed in action; al-Qaeda and Taliban were more heavily concentrated than expected, but essentially the war was over in fifteen days, although, as General Wesley Clark pointed out, the U.S. Air Force was brought into planning “only at the last minute.”671 According to Dick Clarke, “when we attacked, we treated the war [in Afghanistan] as a regime change rather than a search and destroy against terrorists.”672 The Afghan War commenced on October 7, 2001, “by implementing the bombing plans … that had been prepared but unused during the Clinton administration.”673 The pre-existing plans illustrated continuity and momentum rather than the highly touted sea change after 9/11. As Clarke affirmed, “Not until November 25 [2001] … did the U.S. insert a ground force unit [Marines].”674 Thus, the Afghan intervention was the prototype for Operation Iraqi Freedom, but Operation Enduring Freedom was the wrong lesson for Iraq.675 Colonel Gian Gentile has determined that counterinsurgency failed in Vietnam and it failed in Afghanistan as well. Likewise, nation-building failed. Why? Gentile’s thesis laid the blame on an ideology that held, “War can be made to work (if only the right general can be brought in to fix it).” Failure of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan was tied to an unproved capability to reconstruct the country,

672 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 274.
673 Ibid., p. 275.
674 Ibid.
economically and politically. Another factor was that the American public was not “morally connected” to the war.676

A number of elements contributed to the debate over strategy within the Pentagon prior to the second Iraq War. In September 2001, the Pentagon’s boss was thoroughly disheartened by the war plan briefing presented by CENTCOM. Two problems were that it was essentially a reprise of the first Iraq War and it assumed chemical and biological weapons would be used against U.S. troops with no provision for counteracting them. Rumsfeld related three additional assumptions woven into the fabric of prewar planning: Saddam’s loyalists would concentrate around Baghdad, leading to a protective siege; anti-Saddam opposition groups would support U.S. intervention; and Iraqi forces would launch diversionary attacks on Israel, as they had done in 1990-1991.677 A year later, in November 2002, Rumsfeld was dismayed that the war plan revised by Tommy Franks called for 450,000 troops, described as “the mother of all deployment orders.”678 Rumsfeld ultimately approved Franks’s war plan because it initially put 150,000 troops on the ground with an additional 300,000 in reserve.679 The unanticipated contingency omitted from war planning that had the deadliest consequences was the insurgents’ use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the concomitant vulnerability of U.S. lightweight trucks and Humvees.680 Rumsfeld later denied forcing a minimalist approach on the war in Iraq, but even George W. Bush characterized the Franks battle plan as a “light footprint.”681

677 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, pp. 427-431.
678 Ibid., pp. 437-440.
679 Ibid., p. 438.
680 Ibid., pp. 645-649.
681 Bush, George W., Decision Points, pp. 250-251.
Secretary of State Colin Powell was in charge of the effort to line up international support for the U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the first NSC meeting after the 9/11 attacks, Powell tried to steer the Bush II focus toward the threat from Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, and Islamist militancy, as he worried that Iraq would be a dangerous distraction. Powell applied lessons learned from his first-hand experience. For example, Manuel Noriega evaded U.S. forces for several days in December 1989 and Afghanistan was eightfold larger than Panama. As Donald Rumsfeld suggested that bin Laden would be “bottled up” in Afghanistan, Powell rebutted, “Bottled up! They can get out in a Land Rover.” In addition, Powell feared a replay of the Vietnam War’s “conspiracy of illusion,” where wishful thinking undergirded a policy of continuing more of the same based on a flawed initial premise. Powell realized that international consensus was vital to the legitimacy of the Iraq War, but his predecessor James Baker had traveled to dozens of capitals to enlist support for the Persian Gulf War, whereas Powell traveled no further than London and New York. The Secretary of State acquiesced to a policy for which he had serious doubts and as a result Iraq redux came to be perceived as a unilateral American operation. Iraq could be seen as Powell’s failure, but not his alone. Ten years afterward, Vice President Cheney said, “sure and swift victories are likely to be rare.” At the time, U.S. forces took “a remarkably short time” to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan, casting the “fast-forward” mold for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Moreover, Cheney interpreted further rhetorical flourishes: “two dangerous lessons learned” by terrorists in the 1980s and 1990s was that the militants could attack U.S. targets “with impunity” and in response the United

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682 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 151.
684 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 172; see also Powell, My American Journey, pp. 100, 144.
685 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 168.
States would likely cut its losses and withdraw.\textsuperscript{687} The only problem with Cheney’s two lessons was that they had no empirical basis in fact. The Bush II White House did not lack good intelligence about the “lessons” drawn by al-Qaeda. The President’s Daily Briefs (PDB) from the CIA mentioned specific threats from Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda forty times between January 20th and September 10th, 2001.\textsuperscript{688}

The so-called “neocons” or self-styled Vulcans brought a “grand strategy” to foreign policy decision making, beginning in 2001. The Project for a New American Century (PNAC) proposed a “blueprint” for maintaining the pre-eminence and power of the United States, precluding any rival superpower from emerging, shaping the international security order in support of U.S. interests, and molding the global civic culture to conform to American values.\textsuperscript{689}

Although PNAC predated 2001, this worldview actuated U.S. foreign policy in the post-9/11 universe. At the same time, historical lessons were applied to serve policy justification. Historical analogies are usually distorted and so are lessons of history. After his perceived success in the first Iraq war, President Bush I said, “We’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all.” Nevertheless, the Vietnam syndrome haunted Colin Powell, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and later Secretary of State. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld was not plagued by such nightmares: “It’s a different era … It’s a different place.”\textsuperscript{690} That bald claim might be true, but neither was Iraq the same place as Afghanistan, nor was 2003 a re-enactment of 1991.

The Iraq War plan of attack was the outcome of a confluence of applied historical lessons and perceived opportunities: adjudged successful counterinsurgency and regime change in Afghanistan; resolve to confront the threat from Saddam Hussein’s Iraq; a robust commitment to

\textsuperscript{687} Ibid., p. 419.


\textsuperscript{689} Porter, op. cit., p. 98.

\textsuperscript{690} Gardner and Young, op. cit. p. 15.
the War on Terrorism; and applying the “lessons” of the Persian Gulf War without repeating its “mistakes.” Underlying the foregoing was a deeply rooted belief in the objectives of United States military assertiveness and dominance in the PNAC principles to which key Bush II players ascribed.

I. International, systemic, or structural factors:

In the week after 9/11, Paul Wolfowitz proposed Iraq as the third target in the first round of the “War on Terrorism”: al-Qaeda, Taliban, and Iraq. Colin Powell objected that the Allies would balk (using the terminology of a “bait and switch”), whereupon George W. Bush returned the focus to al-Qaeda and Afghanistan. Secretary of State Powell was unquestionably the most highly regarded and credible spokesperson in the Bush II administration, but his stature in Europe was eventually undermined by his connection of Iraq to al-Qaeda at the United Nations in February 2003. At a more fundamental level, the Bush II administration clearly did not consider the West European allies as the essential foundation of U.S. foreign relations. The Bush II White House built strong ties with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s right-wing Likud bloc and was sympathetic with Israel’s strategic objectives. Thus, Secretary Powell’s influence on policy toward the Arab Middle East was limited. This liability allowed the Bush II neocons to push their radical idealist agenda of regional transformation through regime change in Iraq. Richard Haass, State’s head of policy planning, noted “Powell saw 9/11 as an opportunity … The tragedy could be used to rebuild damaged relationships” with Europe. Immediately after that catastrophic event, NATO declared an attack on the USA would be

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691 Anderson, *Bush’s Wars*, pp.75-76.
693 Ibid., pp. 142-143.
considered an attack on all member states (NATO Charter, Article V). Rumsfeld revealed that the NATO allies even sent AWACs to help patrol U.S. airspace in the days following 9/11, thus illustrating the initial goodwill subsequently squandered. Powell was optimistic: “We are engaging the world … We want to make this a long-standing coalition.” If allies were necessary, the premier ally, UK’s Tony Blair, insisted that the use of force required United Nations authorization. That was the rationale for Powell’s “show and tell” performance at the UN. Such was the context in which Powell was working that he became the “go-to” communicator for a military policy he disagreed with. The soldier turned diplomat had envisioned an altogether different direction from the foreign policy conceived by the Bush II inner circle. Meanwhile, the president himself boasted America could indeed go it alone.

Prior to Bush’s “Axis of Evil” reference in his State of the Union address, January 29, 2002, the president asked for Iraq war plans. He was briefed on revised war plans for Iraq in February, April, May, June, and August (when the final plan of attack was approved). Yet, from February to April, George W. Bush said there was no war plan or (cryptically) he was holding it close to his vest if there was one. By the “Axis of Evil” moment, the Bush II administration had “progressively shifted the focus” of the War on Terrorism: from retaliation for 9/11 to stopping terrorists from acquiring WMDs to preventing states from supplying WMDs to terrorists. In an odd twist, presidential speechwriter David Frum recalled that the target of the “Axis of Evil” speech was Iraq; Iran and North Korea were afterthoughts. Curiously, if the

694 Ibid., p. 149.
695 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 349.
696 Woodward, Bush at War, p. 65.
698 Ibid.
699 Woodward, Bush at War, p. 81.
700 Prados, op. cit., p. 111.
701 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, pp. 317-318.
threats from Iraq were multifaceted and quite clear, why confuse the issue by bringing other actors into the discussion? Frum’s contentions would appear dubious insofar as intelligence not only confirmed the North Koreans’ possession of nuclear weaponry, but also that they were sharing nuclear technology and materials with Iran, Syria, and Libya. (See Chapter 7.)

Although simmering on the back burner for a year and a half, the run-up to war with Iraq was nonetheless “hasty.” The anticipated participation of Germany, France, and Russia never materialized. In August 2002, Powell obtained Bush II’s approval of a “diplomatic track” to take the U.S. case to the United Nations. British Prime Minister Tony Blair had said the UN’s stamp of approval was the only way that the UK could support the United States. Jack Straw replaced Robin Cook as British Foreign Minister largely because of Cook’s doubts about the wisdom of invading Iraq. Then, on August 26, 2002, Cheney gave a speech accusing Iraq of having nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons – immediately, the Vice President’s words were interpreted as a “virtual declaration of war.” Cheney’s speech, deliberately or not, undermined Powell’s diplomatic track and appeared to call for “pre-emption.” Also alarmed were Bush I veterans, including Baker, Brent Scowcroft, and Lawrence Eagleburger. (What a pity there was no reconstituted “wise men” group!) The President of the United States addressed the United Nations, September 12, 2002. In less than two months, the UN Security Council voted 15-0 for Resolution 1441 (November 8, 2002). “This was seen as a Powell victory,” and for Iraq it was “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations” and to renew weapon inspections. Still, as had been the case in the Persian Gulf War, Powell found the diplomacy,

702 Condoleezza Rice maintains “axis of evil” was a literary phrase penned by Frum, devoid of any doctrinal or policy substance, in No Higher Honor, pp. 150-151.
703 Powell, My American Journey, p. 125.
704 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 164.
705 Ibid., pp. 164-165; see also Woodward, Bush at War, pp. 163-167; Daadler, Ivo, and James Lindsay, America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy (New York: Wiley, 2005), p. 136.
sanctions, and inspections would not allow enough time to work and could not slow the advance preparations for war that were well underway.\footnote{O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 165.}

The United States failed to bring allies, France and Germany, on board. On January 22, 2003, France and Germany went public with their opposition to an attack on Iraq.\footnote{Rumsfeld, \textit{Known & Unknown}, p. 443.} Donald Rumsfeld hence disparagingly referred to Germany and France, “That’s the old Europe.” The Defense Secretary contended his use of the phrase “old Europe” was exaggerated, but he meant what he said.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 444-445.} The Secretary of State was caught off-guard when French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder opposed the United States over Iraq.\footnote{O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 166.} Indeed, Powell’s worldview was more in line with Chirac’s and Schroeder’s than with that of the Bush II neocons. Also, support for Bush II in Iraq seriously undermined Blair’s popularity with the British electorate. Hence, Bush’s public criticism of Germany disregarded and devalued Germany’s active engagement in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 167.}

Powell ordered the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs to recruit exiles and organize some seventeen committees to work on postwar planning and nation-building; this effort resulted in the thirteen-volume “Future of Iraq Project” under Thomas Warrick. President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive Number 24, incorporating the “Future of Iraq Project,” on January 20, 2003.\footnote{National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 198 (posted September 1, 2006).} Subsequently, Rumsfeld and Feith excluded Warrick from postwar planning and worked with Ahmad Chalabi, an Iraqi expatriate, who had no support or credibility in Iraq.\footnote{O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, pp. 173-174.} In terms of Iraqi WMDs, Powell pored over CIA data and UN weapons inspectors’
reports before his presentation to the Security Council.\textsuperscript{713} However, Powell found the CIA’s intelligence weak, not Tenet’s “slam dunk.”\textsuperscript{714} Rumsfeld acknowledged “Powell left no room for doubt” at the UN based on “more than a decade of proof” regarding Iraqi pursuit of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and connections with terrorism, in particular, the “Zarqawi network.”\textsuperscript{715} In effect, Powell’s public position contradicted his private misgivings, as he expressed later. Note Robin Cook resigned his post in the UK because of the use of discredited British intelligence in Powell’s evidence.\textsuperscript{716}

At the outset of the invasion of Iraq, Deputy Secretary Douglas Feith presented the Bush II advisers with a plan to transfer power to an Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA), composed of exiles and Kurdish leaders. The Defense and State Departments disagreed on the wisdom of using “externals” (i.e., Iraqi expatriates and exiles) and State was overall much more pessimistic about the prospects for a peaceful postwar Iraq.\textsuperscript{717} The State Department reportedly paid $33 million to Ahmed Chalabi and the expatriate Iraqi National Congress, from 2000 to 2003, according to the General Accounting Office (GAO).\textsuperscript{718} At one time called the “George Washington of Iraq,” Chalabi and his group fell out of favor by 2004 amid allegations of fraud. Any plan to install Chalabi in power in the immediate aftermath of the invasion was described by Dick Cheney as possibly substituting a new demagogue for the old one and would be “immoral.”\textsuperscript{719} Instead of Feith’s transitional body, Bush II put Jerry Bremer in charge of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) with full executive power, apparently with Rumsfeld’s blessing. According to

\textsuperscript{713} Franks, \textit{American Soldier}, pp. 656-657.
\textsuperscript{714} O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{715} Rumsfeld, \textit{Known & Unknown}, p. 445.
\textsuperscript{716} O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{717} Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{719} Cheney, \textit{In My Time}, pp. 387-388.
Condoleezza Rice, the CPA was “overblown and grandiose” and made mistakes. In September 2003, a twenty-five-member Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) was created, but it had only an advisory capacity. In January 2004, Chalabi (who had been forced to resign as head of the IGC after a month) told Rice: “We need you to respect our need for sovereignty.” She hence told the president: “We’re running out of time and the Iraqis are running out of patience.”  

George W. Bush admitted, “There was one important contingency for which we had not adequately prepared. In the weeks after liberation, Baghdad descended into a state of lawlessness …” as police “collapsed” and military “melted away.” Note Bush’s use of passive voice, begging the question – Why did anarchy or chaos break out? De-Ba’athification, disarming and dismantling of Iraqi military and police were executed at U.S. direction! As for the de facto alliance or protective umbrella for the Kurds, Tenet of the CIA told Iraqi Kurds that this time the United States was “really on the march,” implying a decade-long abandonment of them. Great Britain’s Blair and allies in the Arab Middle East (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait) were on board with Iraq redux, but not France, Germany, Italy, and Turkey (a potential base of operations). While the Bush II war planners did not expect Iraqi forces to capitulate in five days as they had in the Persian Gulf War, the expectation once the ground war began was that resistance would peak as U.S. and allied forces converged on Baghdad, which was projected to fall in three weeks. What did not happen was winning the “hearts and minds” of the Iraqi people. Four years into the war, General David Petraeus would argue that U.S. military personnel had to

720 Rice, No Higher Honor, p. 267.
721 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 258.
722 Prados, op. cit., p. 112.
get out of their compounds and ensure the security of Iraqi civilians, as the prerequisite to the “troop surge” in 2007-2008.\footnote{Hanson, Victor Davis, \textit{The Savior Generals} (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), p. 281n.}

\textbf{II. National, domestic, or internal political:}

John Prados argued that a factor common to the Iraq and Vietnam Wars was “congressional sanction short of declarations of war and deceptive measures to obtain those approvals.”\footnote{Prados, op. cit., pp. 106-123.} The Bush II administration went into Iraq in 2003 with wider bipartisan support than Bush I had enjoyed for Desert Shield/Desert Storm, partly because of the backlash some liberal Democrats suffered for voting against what turned out to be the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century’s most popular war. John Kerry was one of these reinvigorated Democrats. In the subsequent presidential electoral campaign, when Kerry became the Democratic nominee, the incumbent did not home in on Kerry’s roundtrip flights from dove to hawk and back to dove, but rather the “shallow illusion of peace” that had existed under Clinton and to which the United States would allegedly return under Kerry.\footnote{Buel, Meredith, in “Bush, Kerry Trade Charges on Iraq, Clinton Joins Campaign,” Voice of America News, Washington, October 25, 2004.} For his part, Senator Kerry charged Bush II was “acting alone” in Iraq redux, though Rumsfeld and Cheney noted correctly Kerry had voted in favor of the original decision in the U.S. Senate alongside fellow liberals, Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden.\footnote{See Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, p. 445; \textit{see also} Cheney, \textit{In My Time}, pp. 392-393.} Upon his re-election to the Senate in 2002, Kerry had stated, “No military in history has conquered as much territory and given it back to the people who live there.”\footnote{WBZ Radio News, November 8, 2002.} This circumstance illustrates an ideological idealism of “messianic democracy” and “American exceptionalism” that transcends Democratic-Republican and liberal-conservative dividing lines.
October 4, 2002, the House of Representatives voted 296-133 and the Senate voted 77-23 to use force against Iraq. By contrast, the U.S. Senate narrowly voted 52-47 “to authorize the use of force” in the Persian Gulf War, 1990-1991. The congressional authorization of the use of military force against Iraq cited (1) violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions; (2) the 1993 attempted assassination of Bush I; (3) al-Qaeda’s presence in Iraq; and (4) Iraq’s continuing to aid and harbor terrorist organizations. The Bush II strategy of holding the vote just before the 2002 congressional election effectively circumscribed Democratic opposition to the Iraq War for fear of a backlash at the polls.

The Bush II administration’s promotion of the “War on Terrorism” created a “siege mentality,” in the words of former National Security Adviser Zbigniev Brzezinski. Historian Terry Anderson identified “a cult of fear in America,” which persisted for several years. On March 18, 2003, George W. Bush broadcast to the nation about the need to end Iraq’s “history of reckless aggression … For the sake of peace in the world and security for our country and the rest of the world.” Initially, the rally effect contributed to a solid foundation of support for Bush II, based on the erroneous assumption that this second Iraq War would be cost-free like the first one twelve years earlier. Bush II also benefited from the public’s consensus against Saddam and the belief that decapitating his regime was justified for multiple reasons: WMDs, War on Terrorism, and the heinous nature of the Ba’athist regime. The war’s popularity would fade against the impact of the American public’s casualty sensitivity. As was the case for Bill Clinton in places like Somalia and Kosovo, the American public supported military combat so long as

728 See Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 226; see also Rumsfeld, Donald, Known and Unknown, pp. 435-436.
729 Anderson, Bush’s Wars, p. 73.
730 Speech quoted in Franks, American Soldier, pp. 671-672.
the casualties were minimal.\textsuperscript{731} Public enthusiasm for the Iraq War faded as the death toll approached 5,000 and the number of wounded ballooned to 40,000 over the course of the next eight years.

Congressional deference has given wide latitude to the commander-in-chief ever since the Cold War era, beginning with the Korean War, 1950-1953. The uptick in congressional opposition—or, at minimum, criticism—of Bush II’s war in Iraq was uncharacteristic of an otherwise acquiescent legislative branch that essentially abdicated its constitutional war powers.\textsuperscript{732} The friendly bipartisan consensus dissolved as Iraq redux deteriorated into a guerrilla insurgency, dysfunctional nation-building, billions of dollars in unbudgeted costs, more than minimal casualties, and not a trace of WMDs found by Paul Bremer or Jay Garner, the bureaucrats in charge.

Therefore, the rubber stamp of Congress was preceded by the Bush II team’s flawed assumptions and preconceived determinants of their decision making. The nonexistence of weapons of mass destruction, more than any other factor, poisoned the atmosphere within ninety days of Bush’s erroneous assertion of “mission accomplished.” The scandal involving Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Valerie Plame, and Scooter Libby began with a \textit{Washington Post} article (June 12, 2003), followed by Wilson’s Op-Ed piece (“smoking gun”) in the \textit{New York Times} (July 6, 2003), and syndicated columnist Robert Novak “outing” Plame as a CIA officer.

\textsuperscript{731} Gelpi, Christopher, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler, Casualty Sensitivity and the War in Iraq. Duke University, June 2005.
(July 14, 2003).\textsuperscript{733} The imbroglio revealed that Bush II had relied on corrupted data to support its belief in Iraqi WMDs. “When Saddam didn’t use WMD on our troops, I was relieved … [and] surprised,” Bush said. “The press corps constantly raised the question: ‘Where are the WMDs?’ I was asking the same thing.”\textsuperscript{734} CIA Director Tenet enlisted David Kay to lead a weapons inspection team, as he had done for the UN in 1991.\textsuperscript{735} Simply, “We were all wrong.” President Bush II hastens to add, so too were Hillary, Kerry, Edwards, and the “vast majority of Congress.”\textsuperscript{736} David Kay’s inspection team would find Iraq’s nuclear weapon progress was at “the very most rudimentary.”\textsuperscript{737}

The salience of the WMD issue is its implication that the underlying premise for the Iraq War was not only false, but fabricated. A poll conducted between June and September 2003 asked people whether they thought evidence of WMDs had been discovered in Iraq since U.S. forces invaded the country. They were also asked which media sources they relied upon. Those who obtained their news primarily from Fox News (33%) were three times as likely to believe that evidence of WMDs had been discovered in Iraq than those who relied on PBS and NPR (11%) for their news, and one-third more likely than those who primarily watched CBS (23%), and twice as likely than readers of print media (17%).\textsuperscript{738} Recall Wolfowitz’s admission that the WMD argument was the one that most justified war.

\textsuperscript{733} Woodward, State of Denial, pp. 218-219.
\textsuperscript{734} Bush, George W., Decision Points, pp. 261-262.
\textsuperscript{735} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{736} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{737} Priest, Dana, and Walter Pincus, Washington Post, October 3, 2003.
\textsuperscript{738} Misperceptions, the Media and the Iraq War, PIPA, October 2, 2003.
A month after invading Iraq, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich demanded Powell’s resignation for misleading the American public and the world. Rumsfeld, for one, said Powell and everyone else in the Bush II administration did not lie. “The far less dramatic truth is that we were wrong.” Might we ask at what price error?

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

Mann argued that the decision to invade Iraq derived from the ideology and worldview of the key Bush II foreign policy mavens, especially those neocons known as the Vulcans. First, the centrality and the efficacy of American military power was essential to a stable world order. Second, the United States was a force for good around the globe. Third, they held “an extraordinarily optimistic” opinion of U.S. capabilities. Fourth, despite the historical importance of alliances, the neocons were ready and willing to see the United States act unilaterally. Fifth, the U.S. military should be so powerful that it would be impossible for any other nation-state to compete with it.

The Bush II foreign policy makers envisioned something of a new world order well before 9/11 as a function of the new post-Cold War reality. Paul Wolfowitz said, “The world of 2001 is fundamentally different from that of 1972.” Even Condoleezza Rice stepped away from her previous pragmatic realism. “Then September 11 greatly accelerated the administration’s willingness to rethink cold war ideas about national security,” as she explained

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739 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, p. 170.
740 Rumsfeld, Known & Unknown, p. 449.
741 Condi Rice herself coined this term, although she and Colin Powell did not adhere to the neoconservative social and political views of Wolfowitz, Perle, Feith, Bolton, William Krystol and other ideologues in the Bush II administration; see Rice, No Higher Honor. Stephen Dyson downplays the neo-con narrative in Leaders in Conflict: Bush and Rumsfeld in Iraq (U.K.: University of Manchester Press, 2014).
742 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, pp. 362-363.
743 Ibid., p. 313.

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Bush II’s “sense of impatience” in foreign policy formulation, unlike the Bush I and Reagan administrations.\footnote{Ibid.}


One cannot disregard the ideological lens or prism through which events are understood and decisions are made by politicians in response. George W. Bush recalled, “The bombs that fell on Iraq that night [March 19, 2003] marked the opening phase in the liberation of Iraq.”\footnote{Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 225.} It does not take a heavy dose of cynicism to see an Orwellian touch in labeling the invasion and occupation of a sovereign state as “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” Neither is it an indictment of
human nature for an individual leader to promote his policy as serving a greater good rather than selfish interests. Yet such a crusade-like pursuit might incur compromised principles or even laws. “In responding to terrorism, Paul Wilkinson warned, a democracy must not use “methods which are incompatible with liberal values of humanity, liberty, justice.” Wilkinson, Paul, *Terrorism versus Democracy* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p. 115. Unfortunately, Bush II’s crusade mentality invited acquiescence, if not instigation, of actions at variance with liberal democratic values. The conservative Cato Institute published a study that characterized the Bush II administration’s activities as “a ceaseless push for power” based on the belief in “a president who can launch wars at will.” (Note this is a generic POTUS to which the authors refer, not a cult of personality centered on Bush II.) Similarly, Bacevich argues that 9/11 gave the Bush II administration an unprecedented opportunity to advance their ambitions for American hegemony. “They seized that opportunity with alacrity.”

Bush’s “moral clarity” coincided with a “protective bubble,” where the president’s information was provided “by a small coterie of advisors,” including Rice and chief of staff Andrew Card. According to O’Sullivan, “His White House was airtight, not unlike Reagan’s, with his schedule rigidly controlled by his gatekeepers.” Francis Fukuyama has observed, “[The] neocons became extremely distrustful of anyone who did not share their views … [and] that extended to Secretary of State Powell and much of the intelligence community.” Quoting O’Sullivan: “They believed America had entered a postmodern, postdiplomatic age, where raw

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military power created radically new realities.” General Tommy Franks saw that “these advisors’ deep and inflexible commitment to their own ideas was disruptive, as they sought to influence their bosses—and ultimately George W. Bush—with respect to Iraq policy.” Powell reportedly told British Foreign Minister Jack Straw he thought the neocons were “[expletive] crazies” Powell was of a much different mindset and worldview from the neoconservatives’ “fundamentalist faith in the indispensability of American military power” and their “illusion of America’s unchallenged military dominance.” Basic ideological and philosophical differences made conflict “inevitable” for Powell with Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the neocon coterie. In the final analysis, Colin Powell was a soldier, loyal to his commander-in-chief to the bitter end. His style was to lay out the options, weighted in his preferred direction. “But once the decision is made, the debate ends.”

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, pompously or piously, opened a cabinet meeting shortly after 9/11 by invoking the blessing of “ever faithful God.” Tellingly, Rumsfeld’s opening statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, in August 2006, bordered on paranoia and flirted with conspiracy theory on an apocalyptic scale: “If we left Iraq prematurely …” the forces of militant jihad would be emboldened to move against “Afghanistan … the Middle East … [and former Muslim territories] from Spain to [the] Philippines.” Secretary Rumsfeld additionally invoked American folklore, equating the U.S. mission in the world to the

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758 Franks, American Soldier, p. 376.
760 O’Sullivan, op. cit., p. 139.
761 Ibid., p. 141.
762 Powell, My American Journey, p. 309.
763 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, pp. 351-352.
triumphal narrative of courageous ancestors to “cross oceans” and “settle a wilderness.”

Rumsfeld is also on record as saying the large number of troops in Kosovo led to a “culture of dependence,” hardly an evidence-based finding, but rather an ideologically biased assumption. Likewise, proposals from Ambassador Paul Bremer’s Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to build a market economy in a “free and democratic” Iraq indicated an ahistorical ignorance of the fact that Mesopotamia was where marketplaces were invented 5,000 years ago, thus illustrating the skewed and truncated worldview of staffers recruited by ideological criteria rather than professional or academic expertise. Rumsfeld dismissed the idea of Bush II finishing Bush I’s “unfinished business.” This disdain was in keeping with Rumsfeld’s belief in the “limits of future knowledge” and “inability to predict the future,” negating hindsight as well as foresight. According to Douglas Feith, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, “[Rumsfeld’s] big strategic theme is uncertainty.” As a result, dissonant information, including contradictory intelligence, could be dismissed. However, Mann rejected the viewpoint that considered the Iraq War to have been “a mismanaged effort with tragic consequences,” akin to conservative revisionism on the Vietnam War. The Iraq War was a stepping stone in a strategic vision, based on Mann’s assertion of an historic mission annunciated by Condoleezza Rice and the Vulcans in the wake of 9/11. This vision was encapsulated in the document, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, co-authored by Rice, Phillip Zalikow, her academic collaborator, and Stephen Hadley, her assistant. The document contained three key elements of neoconservative strategy: (1) preemption; (2) the United States as unchallenged sole superpower; and (3) to promote democratic

767 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 418.
769 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, p. 317.
values.\textsuperscript{771} Alongside the stratagem of idealism in pursuit of hegemony, or hegemony as the vehicle for ideality, the propaganda impact of the belief that interventionism was necessary for “our freedoms,” as parroted by Bush II, would be long-lasting.

\textit{IV. Criteria for the use of force:}

Simply, the policies of the Bush II administration completely contradicted the Powell Doctrine, notwithstanding the presence of that canon’s author in a key position.\textsuperscript{772} This section presents the five criteria for the use of force and examines the Bush II White House’s adherence to the principles. First, have all other options been explored, such as diplomacy, sanctions, or negotiation? Second, are the political, diplomatic, or military objectives clearly understood? Third, is the battle plan realistic and can the military objectives be effectively maintained? (In other words, are the strategy and tactics “doable” and “winnable”?) Fourth, are there sufficient resources to accomplish the mission, in effect, going in with “overwhelming force”? Fifth, is there an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of personnel once the mission’s goals have been achieved? Let us examine the evidence.

\textbf{#1 – Have all other options been explored, such as diplomacy, sanctions, or negotiation?}
Sanctions were not given enough time to work, and weapon inspections yielded no fruit. For Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, “one of the more complex strategic challenges we faced was how to fight an enemy that was present in numerous countries.” He thus contended, “The mission must determine the coalition … The coalition ought not determine the mission.”\textsuperscript{773} However, disregarding the reservations and objections of those unwilling to join the coalition—Canada, France, and Germany in particular—imperiled not only the North Atlantic alliance, but

\textsuperscript{771} Mann, \textit{The Rise of the Vulcans}, pp. 381-383.
\textsuperscript{772} O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{773} Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, p. 354.
potentially other global interactions as well. As discussed above, the “go” decision caused a rift with Germany and France; discredited intelligence prominently featured in Powell’s Security Council presentation compromised the position of Blair’s UK government; and disregarding the findings of UN weapon inspectors strained the credibility of the United States at the United Nations, a body whose support the United States had very publically courted.

#2 – Are the political, diplomatic, or military objectives clearly understood? From the outset, General Tommy Franks saw the interrelationship of functions: “In addition to boots on the ground, we would need ‘wingtips’ on the ground” to rebuild Iraq’s government, economy, and society. Franks, as the would-be “MacArthur of Iraq,” saw the double-edged sword of military occupation: “improved security” counterbalanced by the United States “perceived [as] occupying bully.” The three legs of Iraq’s occupation and reconstruction: (1) CENCOM commanded by Franks; (2) retired general Jay Garner’s occupation headquarters; and (3) the Iraqi provisional authority during the transition to a new national government. Franks’s tour of duty as CENCOM commander was quintessentially post-modern or 21st century warfare insofar as he spent the run-up to the invasion of Iraq “shuttling to Washington regularly.” Franks said Garner was a good choice to lead the occupation and transformation, but the war against Iraq required a plan derived from a concept based on the two equal imperatives, “security” and “civil action.” The problem was that the people on the scene in Iraq ignored State’s research on security during occupation in the “Future of Iraq Project” directed by Thomas Warrick.

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774 Franks, American Soldier, p. 659.
775 Ibid.
776 Ibid., p. 661.
777 Ibid., p. 662.
Former ambassador Jay Garner was tied up looking for WMDs when the Iraqi government, military, and police were being dismembered by Paul Bremer’s Iraqi Governing Council in carrying out nation-building, without the benefit of Mideast, Arabic, or diplomatic expertise. De-Ba’athification and privatization were therefore inept. Hence, insurgency began within 90 days! Bremer’s authority dismembered the Ba’ath party and dismissed the army. The president said in retrospect, “I should have insisted on more debate.” The decapitation of Iraqi governance “cut too deep.”

The most profound miscalculation of the Bush II administration was not their failure to predict the insurgency—because the architects of the War on Terrorism conspicuously invited it. They should have expected infiltration, based on intelligence about Iraqi links to Islamist militants, even if they exaggerated the threat to “hype” or “sell” the war. Rather, the Bush II team failed to anticipate that the media and public would see the confluence of Fedayeen (Ba’ath guerrillas), foreign militants affiliated with al-Qaeda, and Iranian-backed Shi’ia and other Islamists as evidence of a “hopeless and unwinnable” quagmire like Vietnam. George W. Bush countered this perception with respect to three audiences: first, the American public; second, U.S. troops; and third, the enemy. Thus, we have the context of his comment: “Bring ‘em on.” What is puzzling is that Bush maintained his words were misconstrued, whereas the evidence suggests this was the desired result, to make Iraq Act II of the “long war” a.k.a. War on Terrorism—whereby U.S. troops constituted a magnet to draw militant forces into battle. It follows that a guerrilla insurgency should have been expected. Yet Rumsfeld denied guerrilla warfare was underway for weeks

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778 Anderson, Bush’s Wars, pp. 141-156.
779 Bush, George W., Decision Points, pp. 258-259.
780 Ibid., pp. 260-261.
until the commander of troops in the field, General John Abizaid, acknowledged it, using the term *insurgency*, in July 2003.\(^781\)

#3 – *Is the battle plan realistic and can the military objectives be effectively maintained?* Franks characterized Operation Iraqi Freedom in idealistic political terms: “The goal of this campaign was not conquest, not oil, but freedom for twenty-six million Iraqis.”\(^782\) Under the direction of Franks, the invasion kicked off with the largest special forces operation in history, deploying American, British, and Australian veterans of the Afghanistan war. The first mission was to destroy the Iraqis’ visual observation posts, followed by air strikes to “blind” the enemy forces.\(^783\) Early on, Franks worried about the Rumilyah oil fields, fearing that Saddam would order them burned.\(^784\) Thus, Franks’s modified “shock and awe” strove to preserve vital economic assets in the midst of the conflagration.

As the Vice President remembered the first NSC briefing by videoconference, Tommy Franks presented an operational plan that was the same blueprint as the Persian Gulf War, calling for 450,000 troops and a six-month build-up.\(^785\) That did not happen. With the expressed support of Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, the CENTCOM commander told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Leave me the hell alone to run the war.”\(^786\) General Franks disagreed with the prevailing logic of the top brass, saying, “in their view numbers and weight of fire counted.” This viewpoint has been around since Ulysses S. Grant in the American Civil War. Although promoting modernization, the military, by nature, took a cautious approach

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\(^785\) Cheney, *In My Life*, p. 370.
to reworking standard procedures.\footnote{Gordon, Michael R., and Bernard E. Trainor, \textit{Cobra II} (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), p. 53.} Thus, Rumsfeld exploited the disconnect between Franks and the JCS. In December 2002, the Pentagon’s boss recommended that Franks and his planners review a study titled \textit{Shock and Awe}.\footnote{Ullman, Harlan K. and James P. Wade, \textit{Shock and Awe} (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1996) \footnote{Ibid., p. 35.}} The doctrine argued for “rapid dominance” of the enemy’s communication, command, and control by deploying technology-intensive weaponry.\footnote{Gordon and Trainor, \textit{Cobra II}, p. 35.} According to Gordon and Trainor, “Franks appropriated the term ‘shock and awe’ but not the details.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.} The rapid dominance concept comprised four core components: (1) “total” knowledge; (2) “rapidity”; (3) “brilliant execution”; and (4) “control of the environment.” The shock and awe doctrine also included “decay and default,” defined as: “The imposition of societal breakdown over a lengthy period, but without the application of massive destruction.”\footnote{Ullman and Wade, \textit{Shock and Awe}, \textit{op. cit.}} However, Rumsfeld further recommended U.S. Air Force General Charles Hoover’s article: “How and When to Use Shock and Awe,” which stated: “In the end, if we are going to lead[,] then we must be considered the madmen of the world … It is only our ends that must be admired … If we are to achieve noble purposes[,] we must be prepared to act in the most ignoble manner.”\footnote{Gordon and Trainor, \textit{Cobra II}, p. 517.} This extraordinary statement that emerged from the recommended reading of Pentagon personnel set the stage for the introduction of extraordinary interrogation techniques and still cruder actions, whether openly authorized or not, that tainted Bush II’s legacy in Iraq as well as Afghanistan.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld disputed the idea that Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki and Marine Corps Commandant James L. Jones opposed the Iraq War plan due to
minimal troop levels (130,000 versus 400,000-500,000 in the Persian Gulf War), or their disagreements with Franks. On February 25, 2003, Senator Carl Levin (Democrat-Michigan) questioned General Shinseki, who responded that “a significant ground-force presence … of several hundred thousand soldiers” would be required, seemingly implying the force level assembled was inadequate. Shinseki claimed his comments were “misinterpreted” and Rumsfeld disingenuously denied forcing the General into early retirement in June 2003. When the President asked Rumsfeld and the Pentagon chiefs if they had enough manpower, “I accepted Don and the military’s judgment.” The Iraq War’s operational planning essentially failed to match the Powell Doctrine’s necessary condition of committing sufficient resources to accomplish the job. The invading force was just too small. Whereas Cheney charged Powell with undermining the Bush II administration by openly criticizing the minimalist battle plan behind the scenes to the Western European alliance partners, George W. Bush wrote that Powell honestly expressed his reservations to Tommy Franks, but promised to support the war, notwithstanding those concerns. Rumsfeld, as the “transformational” leader and “war minister,” doggedly pushed through a course of action that suited his ideological proclivities and bullied anyone who stood opposed. Franks was “eager to please Rumsfeld [and] went along with the Defense Secretary’s desire to prove the days of half-million troop mobilizations were a thing of the past.” The basic problem was that the only previous large-scale military action taken by the United States in Iraq had passed the performance test. Powell told

793 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 452.
794 Ibid., p. 454.
795 Ibid., p. 455.
796 Bush, George W., Decision Points, pp. 258-259.
797 Ibid., p. 251.
798 Gardner, Lloyd C., “Mr. Rumsfeld’s War,” in Gardner and Young, op. cit., p. 185.
Franks: “I’ve got problems with force size and support of that force.” Franks responded that Powell “no longer wore Army green.” One might counter that Rumsfeld, Cheney, and the other neocons never wore green, while the officer turned diplomat was applying his experiential education (acquired from Vietnam and the first Iraq War) to the problem at hand. In the words of Marine General Anthony Zinni: “all others who have never fired a shot and are hot to go to war see it another way.” Zinni, who preceded Franks as CENCOM commander, charged that Bush II “had to create a false rationale for going in to get public support … the books were cooked, in my mind. The intelligence was not there.” Zinni criticized the “lack of planning” for post-war Iraq because the administration should have expected that chaos would result from “regime change” by force. Zinni’s plan for Iraqi nation-building, “Desert Crossing,” predicted post-war stabilization and reconstruction would be “a massive challenge.” Moreover, no one addressed the tacit illogic: If the United States was engaged in a new kind of struggle against a new kind of enemy, comprised of nonstate and substate actors, then why did the U.S. deploy conventional combat forces in a “traditional” military invasion and occupation?

A recurring theme in the history of warfare is the personalization or villainization of the enemy. As Bush II’s forty-eight-hour deadline approached, CIA Director Tenet reported the possible location of Saddam Hussein and his two sons. “We discussed the possible outcome if a strike were ordered.” All favored it, as Rumsfeld recounted. Special forces hit Dora Farms, where Saddam and sons were reportedly holed up—but they were not not there! Franks succumbed to this impulsive side issue by recommending the raid “to decapitate the

800 Franks, American Soldier, p. 394.
801 Newhouse, Imperial America, p. 48.
804 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, pp. 450-460.
regime and end the war early” during Bush II’s final ultimatum before boots hit the ground. The Dora Farms raid failed to corral the Iraqi leader and was a complete waste of time. Moreover, the failed attempt was enough of a warning for the deposed Iraqi leader to avoid capture (literally “holed up”) for months.

#4—Are there sufficient resources to accomplish the mission, in effect, going in with “overwhelming” force? Gordon and Trainor observed, “For years, conservatives had seen the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force as an impediment to action and an inhibition against the exercise of American power.” Bacevich argued that Rumsfeld’s strategy was flawed, convoluted, and contradictory. Rumsfeld’s grand plan for “transformation” of the 21st century military into a downsized, technology-intensive, global fighting force contradicted the neocon’s new vision for democratizing the Arab Middle East. “Imperial projects don’t prosper with small armies that leave quickly; they require large armies that stay.” Or, in the words of journalist Tom Friedman, Rumsfeld sent in “just enough troops to lose” Iraq redux. Rumsfeld has countered that no one in the Pentagon thought the “Desert Storm on Steroids” plan, calling for a six-month build-up of half a million troops, was workable. The former Defense chief added that millions if not billions of dollars’ worth of equipment had been unused and thus wasted after Desert Shield/Desert Storm. “Shock and awe,” the post-modern reincarnation of blitzkrieg, aims at demolishing the enemy’s morale as much as its infrastructure. The variant directed by Tommy Franks missed both targets. “I had decided to leave Iraq’s electric power grid untouched,” said Franks, a decision that would have caused the precursors of modern “total” war, Grant and William T.

805 Gordon and Trainor, Cobra II, p. 53.
806 Bacevich in Gardner and Young, op. cit., p. 134.
808 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, pp. 428-429.
809 Franks, American Soldier, p. 750.
Sherman, to cringe. Those winning generals ripped and crumpled the enemy’s infrastructure so that they could never again use it. The president told Tommy Franks, “we’re not going to destroy Iraq. We’re going to liberate the country from Saddam Hussein’s regime.”\textsuperscript{810} The commanding general concurred, “excluding power plants [etc.] … preserving the national infrastructure outweighs any momentary tactical advantage.”\textsuperscript{811} Hence, in the following weeks and months, unemployed Iraqi soldiers, police, and militia would take their weapons home to well lighted houses, where they could communicate over hard-wired and wireless telephones and watch CNN coverage of the unfolding insurgency they would sooner or later join. As informed observers predicted and witnessed, the armed insurgents did not join any sort of war for the true faith or against the infidel, but simply to compel the foreign invading and occupying army out of their country.

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In June 2003, Franks retired to accolades as the guiding hand that “won” two small wars, whereas in reality Franks presided over two early phases of a “long war,” which might be considered superficially successful if taken independently of unintended consequences. On March 19, 2003: “The invasion went ahead … with almost effortless success.” Some 135,000 troops reached Baghdad in three weeks.\textsuperscript{812} Instead of erroneous and irrelevant discussion of 9/11, al-Qaeda, and WMDs, there needed to be a policy-making debate in Congress and the media about why the war was necessary, postwar goals for Iraq, and actual costs. An initial figure of $70 billion in total rose to $70 billion per year as a modest estimate. Who paid for the war? Instead of Iraqi oil revenue, as the President ventured at a June 2003 press conference, it would be the U.S. national debt. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Richard Myers said al-Qaeda comprised
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\textsuperscript{810} Ibid., p. 751.
\textsuperscript{811} Ibid.
only a small fraction of the Iraqi insurgency, even as President Bush called Iraq the “central front of War on Terrorism.” Australian author and consultant David John Kilcullen proposed a new strategic approach to the global War on Terrorism, arguing that the strategy is best understood as a “global Islamic insurgency,” initiated by a diffuse group of Islamists with conflicting goals. Kilcullen questioned the relevance of classical counterinsurgency theory to modern conflict. There may be numerous competing insurgencies in one theatre, meaning that the counterinsurgent must control the overall environment rather than defeat a specific enemy. Therefore, Kilcullen called for “conflict ethnography: a deep, situation-specific understanding of the human, social and cultural dimensions of a conflict, understood not by analogy with some other conflict, but in its own terms.” The absence of such a culturally specific political track illustrated one of the major shortcomings of Bush II’s handling of Iraq redux: the wrong strategy. One is reminded of General Omar Bradley’s famous quote about extending the Korean War into China: “The wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.”

#5—Is there an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of personnel once the mission’s goals have been achieved? As Franks himself described, the morale of Iraqi loyalists was not snuffed. “A pattern soon emerged: The Fedayeen [Saddam Hussein’s martyrs] would attack our convoys, and then the surrounding enemy would gather in the cities inside walled compounds.” The U.S. and allied troops tried to weed out such pockets of resistance to little avail insofar as “the Fedayeen continued to fight savagely … The enemy’s tactics became even more unorthodox and brutal,” for example, dropping

815 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Testimony, Senate Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations—Military Situation in the Far East, hearings, 82d Congress, 1st session, part 2, May 15, 1951.  
white flags and using women and children as human shields.\footnote{Ibid., p. 765.} Three months after the invasion, the Sadrist movement, led by Shi’a imam, Muqtada al-Sadr, which had opposed Saddam and applauded U.S. intervention, announced it was time for United States and coalition troops to go home. In short order, the Sadrist militia joined the insurgency.\footnote{See Cochrane, Marisa, Iraq Report 12: The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement, Institute for the Study of War, 2009; \textit{see also} Seymour, Richard, The Sadrist Revolt and the Sign of God, \textit{Academia.edu}, 2013.}

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The Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command in Afghanistan and Iraq, Stanley McChrystal, recalled: “Over the summer [of 2003], the post invasion elation of April and confidence of May had quickly muddied, turning to growing unease in June. By August, nervousness tempered the halls and offices of the Pentagon.”\footnote{McChrystal, Stanley A., \textit{My Share of the Task} (New York: Portfolio, 2013), pp.100-108.} As for WMDs, Paul Bremer inspected 900 sites (from a list compiled by CIA) and found zero evidence of chemical, biological, and nuclear weaponry.\footnote{See Woodward, \textit{Plan of Attack}; \textit{Bush at War}; and \textit{State of Denial}.} There would be no exit strategy or timetable for withdrawal until 2007-2008, when a “troop surge” finally, in the opinion of many, put sufficient personnel and firepower in place to weaken the insurgency and reduce it to a dying ember.
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CONCLUSION

How could we judge the second Iraq War as a success? Even if we return to our initial proposition that Iraq redux was designed to go on the offensive in the War on Terrorism, a good deal of research would rebut the effectiveness of fighting a tactic (terrorism as the tactic of the weak) rather than a specific enemy. Jay Garner, a retired military man, told Rumsfeld that the United States under Bush II made “three tragic mistakes” in Iraq: (1) de-Ba’athification went too far; (2) the foregoing purge unemployed 30,000 to 50,000 soldiers and police and drove them “underground”; and (3) Jerry Bremer could not be “the face of the government to the Iraqi
people” during the extended transition period to self-government. When Garner returned to Washington in June 2003, he told Rumsfeld, “There’s still time to turn it around.” The Pentagon boss answered, “We’re not going to go back.” Garner never told George W. Bush about his “three tragic mistakes.” The president joked to Garner, “Hey, Jay, you want to do Iran?” Garner replied in jest, “we want to hold out for Cuba.” (Was this just Bush II’s meaningless little joke? See Chapter 7.)

The 9/11 Commission stated, “the global conflict against Islamist terrorism became a different kind of struggle.” The apparently successful model of Afghanistan, where the CIA employed intelligence, covert capabilities, and cash while the U.S. military supplied firepower and logistics against an insurgency, was applied to Iraq with deleterious effects. The 9/11 Commission’s final report went on to say, “Our enemy is twofold: al-Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists … and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world.” Thus, the United States was engaged in “more than a war on terrorism … Terrorism is a tactic … Calling this struggle a war accurately … Our effort should be accompanied by a preventive strategy that is as much, or more political as it is military.” This is where Bush II’s policy misfired and fell short, leaving aside whether it was a war of necessity or choice. The 9/11 Report concluded, “If the United States does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world, the extremists will gladly do the job for us.”

Donald Rumsfeld summed it up: Saddam’s regime collapsed twenty-one days after the war began … Less than two years after 9/11, the U.S. military had changed the regimes

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821 O’Sullivan, Colin Powell, pp. 219-220.
822 Ibid., p. 225.
823 Ibid., p. 224.
824 The 9/11 Report, p. 484.
825 Ibid., pp. 519-520.
826 Ibid., pp. 538-539.
in Afghanistan and Iraq, two of the world’s leading sponsors of terrorism.” However, the United States under Bush II failed to “close the deal” in Iraq as well as Afghanistan, both wars requiring escalation ("troop surge") before an exit strategy or protracted timetable for withdrawal could be installed. (See Chapter 8.) As for exercising superpower hegemony by projecting power in Iraq, the United States was handicapped from intervening in any other wars of choice or necessity that might have popped up while being weighed down in Iraq and Afghanistan for the next eight years. For example, if a hypothetical threat from Iran or North Korea materialized, the United States would have been hard-pressed to deploy troops rapidly and effectively.

The unintended consequences of Iraq redux highlight that the decision-making process was flawed from the outset. The decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was driven by international factors, but failed to enlist the support of important allies (Category I). The Iraqi decision was driven by an ideology of messianic democracy, American exceptionalism, and a belief in the efficacy of American power (category III). The occupation of Iraq floundered due to myriad misconceptions and wishful thinking regarding strategy and tactics on the ground during an unplanned, under-resourced, and overextended counterinsurgency (category IV).

One is reminded of Napoleon Bonaparte’s caveat: “Never ascribe to malice that which can be adequately explained by incompetence.”

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827 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 469.
828 Perhaps apocryphal, there are numerous attributions of the quote to Napoleon, but the author found no documentation of where or when he might have said it. A close approximation is Heinlein’s Razor (1941), which inserts “stupidity” for “incompetence” and the similarly named Hanlon’s Razor (1980), which adds the addendum: “But don’t rule out malice.”
CHAPTER 7
BUSH II: IRAN—NO-GO

INTRODUCTION

All of the factors that contributed to the Bush II administration’s “go” decision in the Iraq War, 2003, were present in the circumstances surrounding a possible strike against Iran. The two primary causes of war with Iraq, weapons of mass destruction and support for terrorism, applied to Iran, especially during the period of 2006 to 2008. One could argue that the case for action was even more compelling given Iran’s real potential nuclear threat and its close ties to Hezbollah. The momentum toward intervention and continuity from one administration (Clinton) to the next (Bush II) were equally applicable to Iraq and Iran. Systemic factors, including alliance issues, were present in the case of Iran as well. Intuitively, we suspect military factors might have been decisive in keeping direct intervention against Iran off the table: there was an
established operational base in the region, but it was not clear whether a surgical strike against
Iranian nuclear facilities would have been effective by itself; the scope and scale of an Iranian
intervention, beyond a simple air strike, would be far greater than the Iraqi and Afghan
operations because of Iran’s larger geographic area and population; while counteraction by other
states was unlikely, there was weak cooperation from diplomatic partners, particularly Russia;
and the ongoing campaigns, including troop surges, in Iraq and Afghanistan, precluded opening
up a third theatre. At the same time, we ought not rule out the influence of public opinion
(casualty sensitivity and intervention fatigue) and potential partisan opposition. The evidence
strongly suggests a larger recognition of the limits of projected power by the Bush II “Vulcans,”
however belatedly in their tenure. Additionally, provocation by Iran was much less in
comparison to the excessive WMD and terrorist-support claims made by Bush II in the case of
Iraq. The “cry wolf” phenomenon had seriously undermined the administration’s credibility.

Similarly to the case of Iraq, an array of international (category I) and ideological
(category III) factors would have driven Bush II to intervene militarily had it not been for the
reality that U.S. military power (category IV) was overextended.

1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition),
where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

Gaddis posits that the response to “surprise attacks” altered the strategy of U.S. foreign
policy three times in diplomatic history: (1) initiating continentalism and unilateralism after the
1814 burning of Washington, D.C. by the British; (2) instituting the intercontinental grand
alliance strategy after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese; and (3) declaration of the
so-called Bush Doctrine, “unilateralism,” and “pre-emption” after 9/11. 829 Rather than a sea

change, we propose a gradual evolution in the direction of intervention, occupation, and nation-building. Gaddis’s view seemed logical in the near term, but became less so as 9/11 receded into history.

At the time of Desert Storm and Desert Shield, Colin Powell had stated: “For the previous ten years, Iran, not Iraq, had been our Persian Gulf nemesis. We wanted Iraq to continue as a counterweight to Iran.” Even as the first war with Iraq wound down, in March 1991, “our practical intention was to leave Baghdad enough power to survive as a threat to an Iran that remained bitterly hostile to the United States.” There were also concerns about the economic impact of disruption in the flow of Persian Gulf oil. Parra has written: “The collapse of the [worldwide oil] market and the reluctance to accept the need for some collective action to restore supply was considerably delayed by reductions in production that were forced on Iraq and Iran by the appalling war that Iraq so rashly started in September 1980.” Thus, Iran was of longstanding strategic and economic importance to U.S. foreign-policy interests.

Cause of War 1: WMDs—In May 2001, Bush I’s Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld “reminded the president of the intelligence community’s reports [that] Iran was pursuing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.” The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was launched by the Bush II administration in 2003 as a voluntary intergovernmental program to inhibit the global trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, delivery systems, and related materials. As Condoleezza Rice explained in 2005, PSI did not have a “formal support

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831 Ibid., p. 531.
structure, secretariat, headquarters or chairperson,” but instead was based on commitments from participating states to cooperate with interdiction efforts through national legal channels.\textsuperscript{835} PSI operated according to a “broken tail-light scenario,” whereby member states interdicted the transportation of WMDs or related cargo in their own ports when the shippers violated the host country’s national laws.\textsuperscript{836} PSI members (U.S., U.K., Australia, France, Italy, and Bahrain) conducted multilateral exercises and war games (for example, a live exercise to find a nuclear detonator aboard an oil tanker) to enhance cooperation in interdiction. In February 2005, based on U.S. intelligence, a European government denied an export license in accordance with national export law for an Iran-bound shipment of coolers that might have been used in the Iranians’ heavy water reactor program.\textsuperscript{837} In October 2006, the PSI held its first training exercise in the Arabian Gulf with an intelligence-sharing war game.\textsuperscript{838} In accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696, a “third country” denied the transfer of missile components to Iran in November 2006, and a shipment of material used for ballistic missile propellant intended for delivery to an Iranian entity was denied access to an Asian port and rerouted to its port of origin.\textsuperscript{839}

The advancement of Iranian nuclear weaponry development was indicated by an unclassified Defense Department report to Congress in 2010: “In late 2008 and early 2009, Iran launched the Safir, a multi-stage space launch vehicle, which indicates progress in some technologies relevant to ICBMs.” The report also predicted: “With sufficient foreign assistance,

Iran could probably develop and test an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching the United States by 2015. Iran could also have an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) capable of threatening Europe.”

Thus, if not the actual WMD, the Iranian nuclear delivery capability seemed neither fabricated nor exaggerated, unlike the case with Iraq. While the evidence in the 2010 CDA is post-Bush II, the logical conclusion is that U.S. military capacity was already stretched to the limit by two concurrent wars. Moreover, the level of threat from Iran seemed more of a long-term concern than a short-term one. This perception of threat continued into the Obama administration.

Cause of War 2: Iranian sponsorship of terrorists—Defense chief Rumsfeld summarized the malignant character of U.S.-Iranian relations: “Since the radical Islamist regime came to power there, no other nation in the world has been responsible for as many deaths to U.S. troops as Iran.”

Although that claim is not credible, Rumsfeld’s exaggeration highlights the degree of enmity toward Tehran in Washington, where the hardliners in the Bush II administration had been weighing their options for dealing with Iran as early as the summer of 2003. The Quds Force, Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), was founded by Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini in the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution as a paramilitary militia to defend the Islamic Republic against internal and external threats. The Quds Force’s power has expanded far beyond its original mandate to include managing Iran’s ballistic missile arsenal and insurgent

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841 Gareth Porter has contended that the documentation allegedly proving Iran’s pursuit of WMD was a fabrication put forward by Iranian dissidents and created by Israeli intelligence. Porter, Gareth: Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare (Charlottesville, VA: Just World Books, 2014).

842 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 638.

843 According to a series of leaks by U.S. officials, after the occupation of Iraq, the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush appears to be torn between moving from Baghdad on to Tehran, or refocusing on al-Qaeda as the main target in the “war on terrorism.” Lobe, Jim, “Bush Administration Divided Over the Road to Tehran,” Foreign Policy in Focus, August 11, 2003.
operations through its elite guerrilla force and proxies such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{844} According to Reidel, the Revolutionary Guard was created as a “counterweight to the regular military, and to protect the revolution against a possible coup.”\textsuperscript{845} In establishing the Quds Force, Khomeini was seeking to avoid a reprise of the successful 1953 coup that overthrew Mohammed Mossadegh’s reform government and reinstated Shah Reza Pahlavi. The Quds Force’s activities since 1979 had been aimed at fishing in troubled waters far beyond Tehran, including involvement in the insurgency in Iraq. In 2007, Bush II accused Iran of providing roadside bombs to networks inside Iraq, coalition forces captured several militants in Iraq with alleged links to the Quds Force and Hezbollah, and the Treasury Department designated the Quds Force as a supporter of terrorism for aiding the Taliban and other terrorist groups. Whereas some analysts held that Iran’s role in Iraq and Afghanistan was exaggerated, analyst Mehdi Khalaji stated, “the Revolutionary Guards are the spine of the current political structure [in Iran] and a major player in the Iranian economy.”\textsuperscript{846}

The Quds Force’s political influence grew in opposition to reformist president Mohammad Khatami, 2001-2005, and a number of Quds Force members entered politics when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the presidency in 2005. Despite a lack of evidence of excessive deaths at the hands of Quds in Iraq, institutional players such as Treasury and State were building a case against the Revolutionary Guards, even if their influence was exaggerated in the Iraq insurgency. The State Department’s \textit{Country Reports on Terrorism} pointed to a “marked resurgence of Iran’s state sponsorship of terrorism, through its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force, its Ministry of Intelligence and Security, and Tehran’s ally Hezbollah … [and] have reached a

\textsuperscript{845} Riedel, Bruce, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, \texttt{http://www.brookings.edu/scholars/breidel.htm}.
\textsuperscript{846} Khalaji, Mehdi, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, \texttt{www.washingtoninstitute.org} (2007).
tempo unseen since the 1990s.”847 The Quds Force exploited the antagonism between Ayatollah Ali Khomenei and Ahmadinejad because the second Supreme Leader became dependent on the group’s power, in the opinion of Iran expert Milani.848 The Quds Force policed the streets of Tehran, carried out domestic surveillance, conducted foreign intelligence operations, and also controlled Iran’s ballistic missiles.849 According to a RAND study, released in January 2009, “much of the institution’s rise to prominence over competing militias and paramilitaries in the revolutionary period was due to its effectiveness in suppressing internal dissent.”850 Quds Force guardsmen and Basij militia were accused of violently crushing demonstrations in cities and on campuses,851 and the Ashura Brigades were created in 1993 to suppress civil unrest.852 The Quds Force was without question cut from the same cloth as al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Hezbollah. However, the Quds Force was not seen as directly attacking U.S. interests beyond the immediate Middle East environs. At this point, however, Rumsfeld’s alarmism came to no avail.

After 9/11, Rumsfeld maintained: “we had little specific intelligence to support targeting terrorist operatives themselves.”853 Nonetheless, Iranian organization and sponsorship of Hezbollah in Lebanon was widely known.854 Hezbollah’s anti-Western militancy began in 1983 with attacks on Western targets in Lebanon, expanded to attacks on Israel and other activities in retaliation for threats to the organization or Iran’s interests, and aimed to intimidate foreign

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847 United States Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism, May 2013.
851 The Basij (The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed) was founded in 1979 and in 1988 volunteer Basiji organizations were established on college campuses to fight “Westoxification” and potential student agitation against the government. “Basij Militia,” The New York Times, December 2, 2011.
852 Cordesman, Anthony H., Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., August 2007.
853 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 346.
governments into releasing imprisoned operatives.\footnote{Levitt, Matthew, “Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran’s Shadow War with the West,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 123, January 2013, p. 1.} Hezbollah and the Quds Force executed joint missions, including the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 1-2.} The symbiotic relationship between Iran and Hezbollah was not only based on ideological and religious affinity. Hezbollah was heavily dependent on its Iranian mentors for financial support, estimated by the Pentagon to have been between $100 and $200 million annually.\footnote{U.S. Department of Defense, “Congressionally Directed Action (CDA)—Military Power of Iran,” Unclassified Report on Military Power of Iran, April 2010, http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/dod_iran_2010.pdf.} Therefore, Hezbollah became Iran’s primary militant proxy. Although Hezbollah continued its guerrilla warfare against Israel, it ceased terrorist activities against American or Western targets after the Khobar Towers incident.\footnote{Levitt, Matthew, “Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran’s Shadow War with the West,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 123, January 2013.} Thus, once the Quds Force ceased attacking U.S. targets, the pressure to pre-empt or prevent would be less. Regardless, the Iranian-Hezbollah connection clearly indicated that Tehran fit the Bush Doctrine’s definition of a state sponsor of terrorism.

More directly, the Quds Force was accused of aiding the Taliban resistance in Afghanistan and assisting the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia.\footnote{Hersh, Michael, Babak Dehghanpisheh, and Mark Hosenball, “The New Enemy?” Newsweek, February 15, 2007.} Given that Iraq redux was the overriding preoccupation of U.S. military and foreign policy from 2003 onward, the Iranian Quds Force was “deployed to challenge the United States presence” as a deterrent in Iraq.\footnote{Wright, Robin, Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East (New York: Penguin, 2008), pp. 333–334.} The collaboration between the Quds Force and Shi’ite militia groups predated the Bush II invasion, originating in the clandestine opposition to Saddam Hussein’s Sunni-dominated regime.\footnote{Ibid.} General John Abizaid charged the Quds Force with sponsoring
“Shi’a death squads” in November 2006. As sectarian violence continued, U.S. Army commanders in Iraq accused the Quds Force of having a hand in planning a raid on the city of Karbala in January 2007. Later that year, General Ray Odierno concluded that Iranian support for Shi’a insurgents escalated as U.S. forces carried out the “troop surge” policy in 2007.

At this time, considering Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s inflammatory remarks about Israel and the assertion of his country’s right to pursue a nuclear program, one could argue that Ahmadinejad could prove to be a legitimate impending threat, like Saddam and Iraq circa 2002-2003, thereby justifying a pre-emptive response by Bush II, as per the vaunted Bush Doctrine. Yet the evidence would suggest the meddling of Iran in the Iraq insurgency was exaggerated. For example, CNN cited studies that reported half of the foreign insurgents infiltrating into Iraq were Saudis. Additionally, counterterrorism expert Richard Clarke observed that the Ayatollah, not the Iranian president, controlled the Quds Force. Moreover, a prominent Iranian defector, Mohsen Sazegara (Deputy Prime Minister, 1981-1989), stated: “Not only the foreign ministry of Iran; even the president does not know what the Revolutionary Guards does [sic] outside of Iran.” Thus, the evidence of state sponsorship of terrorist activity was ambiguous at best, if not a rogue elephant.

According to Donald Rumsfeld, Iran was supplying insurgents in Iraq with deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as early as 2004. The Defense Secretary queried the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a November 2006 memorandum: “If we know so much

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862 Abizaid, John, Interview, 60 Minutes, CBS, November 26, 2006.
about what Iran is doing in Iraq, why don’t we do something about it?” Rumsfeld answered his own question some years later: “a country strained by two wars and an administration battling criticism and declining public approval was not ready to be firm with Iran.”

Dick Cheney might have been inclined to rally the Vulcans to beat the tom-toms for war with Iran, but the vice president had become increasingly marginalized in Bush II’s second term.

2. Why did a president decide to intervene (or not) where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

As noted earlier, the momentum toward intervention and continuity from one administration (Clinton) to the next (Bush II) was equally applicable to Iraq and Iran. As with the case of Iraq, there was a prior history of conflict involving military action with Iran as well. The most significant and infamous dispute between the United States and Iran came during the Iranian hostage crisis, November 1979 to January 1981. The Carter administration’s military intervention, Operation Eagle’s Claw, failed in April 1980.

On April 21, 1980, a Delta Force team of 132 elite soldiers, commanded by Colonel Charles Beckwith, nicknamed “Charlie’s Angels,” was dispatched to a staging area in Egypt, where they deployed by transport plane in a two-step trip to Iran’s Dasht-e-Kavir, an inland region known as the Great Salt Desert, some 200 miles away from Tehran. Three days later, eight Sea Stallion helicopters took off from the USS Nimitz in the Gulf of Oman, between the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. The helicopters were to refuel and rendezvous with Beckwith’s commandos at a location identified as “Desert One.” From there, Charlie’s Angels and the Sea Stallions would proceed to a mountain location sixty-five miles outside Tehran. The commandos would move on to the capital by truck, infiltrate the embassy, rescue the hostages, and then the

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868 Rumsfeld, Known and Unknown, p. 638.
helicopters would fly in and pick up everyone. Meanwhile, U.S. Army Rangers would seize an abandoned airfield thirty-five miles out of the city and wait for Charlie’s Angels to arrive with the freed hostages, who would later be flown to safety by transport planes standing by. The intervention commenced April 24, whereupon a fiasco of errors ensued. The operation unexpectedly encountered a busload of civilians and a fuel truck at Desert One, and the Sea Stallions never arrived. The combat helicopters suffered a broken rotor, malfunctioning gyroscope, and failed hydraulic pump. The mechanical failures put three of the eight choppers out of commission, and Beckwith aborted the mission. In a macabre finale, one of the helicopters collided with one of the transport planes during the evacuation, killing eight Delta Force members. Author Mark Bowden wrote that Carter’s “go” decision in Operation Eagle Claw “defined the word ‘debacle.’” The official investigation by the Holloway Commission attributed the mission’s failure to “the ad hoc nature of the task force and an excessive degree of security.”

The next controversy in U.S.-Iranian relations was the Iran-Contra Affair during the Reagan administration. A small circle of advisers within Reagan’s White House, led by the National Security Adviser, Admiral John Poindexter, illegally sold arms to the Iranians in the Iran-Iraq War and secretly funneled the money paid to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. In addition to aiding the right-wing insurgents to overthrow Nicaragua’s Sandinista government, the Reagan administration’s objectives were to appease Iran and to facilitate Iranian influence with

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militant groups to release a number of American hostages in Lebanon.\(^{873}\) The ill-conceived scheme failed in both regards: only three hostages were freed over the next eighteen months\(^{874}\) and the U.S.-Iran relationship remained hostile and would soon lead to a second intervention in less than a decade.

To keep Persian Gulf oil flowing to the outside world, the U.S. Navy skirmished with Iranian naval forces in 1986; two years later, U.S. air and sea power intervened against Iran to compel a ceasefire to end the war with Iraq.\(^{875}\) On April 14, 1988, the frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts sailed into a floating minefield and within twenty minutes was nearly blown apart by an Iranian mine. In the space of seventy-two hours, the U.S. Joint Task Force—Middle East carried out Operation Praying Mantis in retaliation.\(^{876}\) During a two-day period, units from all four armed services destroyed two Iranian oil platforms that had been utilized in attacks on merchant shipping. The U.S. forces subsequently destroyed three Iranian warships and disabled half a dozen Iranian speedboats.\(^{877}\) After U.S.A.F. aircraft destroyed one Iranian frigate and crippled another, Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci and Joint Chiefs Chairman William J. Crowe ordered American forces to stand down in order to give the Iranians an opportunity to end the combat. Operation Praying Mantis concluded the next day and cost the lives of two service members.\(^{878}\) In contrast to the Desert One fiasco, Operation Praying Mantis provided a positive precedent for future intervention, albeit one in which U.S. forces went in and out quickly.


\(^{875}\) Manning, *The Eighties Club*, Chapter 11.


Momentum toward intervention continued from Reagan to Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II. In 1992, the Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act (Gore-McCain Act) was passed to give the president authority to impose sanctions against individuals or foreign governments that “knowingly and materially” enhanced Iran’s or Iraq’s WMD capability or certain types of conventional weapons.879 The legislation was motivated by concerns about Russian conventional arms exports to Iran.880 In 1996, Congress amended the Gore-McCain Act to sanction arms suppliers to state sponsors of terrorism, including Iran. In 1997, the Clinton administration opted not to sanction China under Gore-McCain for transferring cruise missiles to Iran because the weaponry was not considered “destabilizing,” but the ensuing debate in Congress indicated the increased worries about Iran.881 The Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act (Glenn Amendment), enacted in 1994, called for penalties against individuals that might assist in the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Glenn Amendment also empowered the president to impose sanctions on non-nuclear countries for acquiring or exploding nuclear devices.882 Lastly, the Iran Sanctions Act bolstered attempts to deny the Iranians access to resources that contributed to their nuclear program as well as support for terrorist organizations.883 The act, passed by Congress in 1996, enabled the President to impose financial sanctions on foreign individuals, businesses, or organizations that invested in the Iranian energy sector, WMD technology, or advanced conventional weapons.884 Indeed, there began preparations for possible war with Iran under Bill Clinton. Specifically, intervention was under consideration in response to the Khobar Towers

882 Nikitin, Kerr, Bowman, and Hildreth, Proliferation Control Regimes, pp. 27-29.
884 Ibid.
attack (June 25, 1996), but, as explained by Richard Clarke, the Iranians subsequently ceased or suspended terrorist activities against the United States from 1997 onward.\footnote{Clarke, Richard, \textit{Against All Enemies} (Waterville, ME: Thorndyke, 2004), pp. 111-121.}

Momentum and continuity were evident in U.S. policy toward Iran as the Bush II administration followed the Clinton administration, employing sanctions with the threat of force ever present in the subtext. “The possibilities of military pressure and diplomatic engagement were not mutually exclusive,” Defense Secretary Rumsfeld contended. “DOD policy officials wrote a number of memos suggesting ways to reach out to the Iranian opposition movement … Ultimately, the President decided that negotiations were the best way to deal with Iran.”\footnote{Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, p. 639.} In the following section, we will examine Bush II’s perceptions of Iran in the context of coercive diplomacy and the potential use of force.

3. \textit{How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?}

By 2006, George W. Bush faced a crucial moment of decision with regard to Iran. The president analogized the situation as “two ticking clocks.” One counted down to Iranian nuclear weapons; the other marked time to political reform in Iran. “My objective was to slow the first clock and speed the second.”\footnote{Bush, George W., \textit{Decision Points} (New York: Crown, 2010), p. 416.} Bush II wrote: “I had three options to consider. Some in Washington suggested that America should negotiate directly with Iran. I believed talking to Ahmadinejad would legitimize him and his views and dispirit Iran’s freedom movement, slowing the change clock … The second option was multilateral diplomacy conducted with both carrots and sticks … [i.e.,] a package of incentives … [plus] tough sanctions … [thus] slowing the bomb clock … The final option was a military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities. This goal [sic] would
stop the bomb clock … Some thought destroying the regime’s prized project would embolden the opposition; others worried that a foreign military intervention would stir up Iranian nationalism and unite the people against us.”

The Texan “decider-in-chief” entertained a broad mix of opinion in considering which way to go with Iran. “I discussed the options with the national security team extensively in the spring of 2006. I consulted closely with Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, and Tony Blair … In May, [Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice] announced that we would join the Europeans in negotiating with Iran, but only if the regime verifiably suspended its enrichment.” The United Nations Security Council backed the United States and set a deadline of August 31, 2006 for Iran’s response. “The summer passed and the answer never came.”

More than a year later, the Bush II White House was thrown off course by the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of November 2007. The President lamented with some consternation: “Despite the fact that Iran was testing missiles that could be used as a delivery system and had announced its resumption of uranium-enrichment, the NIE opened with an eye-popping declaration: ‘We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program.’ [emphasis added] … I decided to declassify the key findings so that we could shape the news stories with the facts. The backlash was immediate. Ahmadinejad hailed the NIE as ‘a great victory.’ Momentum for new sanctions faded almost immediately among the Europeans, Russians, and Chinese.”

The president seemed to fault his own government’s intelligence for undermining his policy, but his decision to make the finding public seemed to contradict his apparent goals. “The NIE didn’t just undermine diplomacy. It also tied my hands

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888 Ibid., p. 417.
889 Ibid.
890 Ibid., pp. 418-419.
on the military side.” Bush II listed the major concerns for military intervention in Iran as: “its uncertain effectiveness and the serious problems it would create for Iraq’s fragile young democracy. But after the NIE, how could I possibly explain using the military to destroy the nuclear facilities of a country the intelligence community said had no active nuclear weapons program?” With inadvertent irony, Bush II reasoned: “I wondered if the intelligence community was trying so hard to avoid repeating its mistake on Iraq that it had underestimated the threat from Iran.”

If there was a forward-looking vision in the Bush II worldview that could be applied to Iran, it was elaborated in the transformational diplomacy initiative promoted by National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in order to reinvigorate the Foreign Service. As an ideological hybrid of the liberal “indispensable nation” and neoconservative quest for hegemony, Rice and Bush II championed the expansion of democratic governments. Therefore, any war goals for Iran would implicitly include regime change and nation-building rather than simply eliminating uranium-enrichment and ending sponsorship of terrorism. Rice stated that the 9/11 attacks had been rooted in “oppression and despair” and the United States must support democratic reform and human rights throughout the Middle East.

Rice also tried to reform and restructure the Foreign Service and State Department as a whole. She described transformational diplomacy as a grand design to “work with our many partners around the world … [and] build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international

891 Ibid., p. 419.
system.” As Secretary of State, Rice worked at the intersection of Bush II’s military and diplomatic tracks. She proposed: “We will not meet the challenges of the twenty-first century through military or any other means alone. Our national security requires the integration of our universal principles with all elements of our national power: our defense, our diplomacy, our development assistance, our democracy promotion efforts, free trade, and the good work of our private sector and society. And it is the State Department, more than any other agency of government, that is called to lead this work.” Unfortunately, the Department of State’s influence on the nation-building and political operations in Afghanistan and Iraq was minimal—with the Pentagon’s civilian and military policy makers dominating the post-invasion occupation and reconstruction. There was little reason to expect that a post-intervention Iran would have been handled differently by the Bush II White House.

According to National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, Bush II attempted engagement, but became frustrated over time at Iran’s failure to respond. Mid-year 2003, Iranian officials reportedly offered to turn over three suspected al-Qaeda terrorists to the United States and promised more of the same in exchange for ending operations of an Iraq-based Iranian rebel group, the People’s Mujahedin (MEK). The Iranian offer was discussed by Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell, and Rice at Bush II’s ranch in July 2003. Powell and Rice wanted to engage Iran and the State Department held one meeting with the Iranians soon afterward. However, “hard-liners” in the Pentagon and the vice president’s office opposed a deal with Tehran, which they saw as a sponsor of terrorism, nuclear weapons proliferator, and on the verge of being overthrown in a

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popular revolution—through either covert U.S. action or outright military intervention.\footnote{After the occupation of Iraq, the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush appears to be torn between moving from Baghdad on to Tehran, or refocusing on al Qaeda as the main target in the “war on terrorism.” Lobe, Jim, “Bush Administration Divided Over the Road to Tehran,” \textit{Foreign Policy in Focus}, August 11, 2003.} The Islamic Republic fit into the worldview of Bush II as an implacable enemy, engaged in actionable offences—nuclear weapons development and sponsorship of terrorism—that might have invited U.S. military intervention were it not for overstretched resources during the critical period of 2006-2008.

4. \textit{How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?}

As stated above, the case of Iran might have been part of a belated recognition of the limits of projected power by the Bush II “Vulcans.” George W. Bush hinted at a lesson learned from the experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq when he offhandedly recounted: “others worried that a foreign military intervention would stir up Iranian nationalism and unite the people against us.”\footnote{Bush, George W., \textit{Decision Points}, p. 417.}

The Bush II administration engaged Iran in diplomatic initiatives on several occasions. In May 2003, U.S. and Iranian officials met in Geneva “under U.N. auspices” to discuss Afghanistan, Iraq, and related regional issues.\footnote{Wright, Robin, “U.S. in ‘Useful’ Talks with Iran,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, May 13, 2003.} The United States and Iran cooperated on Afghanistan issues, including enforcement of an arms embargo on the Taliban, counter-narcotics operations, humanitarian relief, and planning and intelligence assistance for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).\footnote{Dobbins, James, and Hillary Leverett, Prepared Remarks before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, D.C., November 7, 2007.} The Bush II administration reportedly assigned Foreign Service Officers as “Iran-watchers” in embassies and consulates in countries neighboring Iran and in cities with a
significant Iranian exile presence.\textsuperscript{900} Late in Bush II’s tenure, Secretary Rice explored the idea of opening a diplomatic interest section in Tehran, a step toward normalization, but such a controversial move never came to a formal decision.\textsuperscript{901} In the period from 2006 to 2008, Bush II attempted to support civilian nuclear programs in the Middle East through nuclear cooperation agreements so that nations developing nuclear energy would not need to engage in uranium-enrichment that could be diverted to nuclear weapons. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mary Alice Hayward bluntly asserted, the intent of the initiative was to counter Iran’s expressed need to develop nuclear power for civilian uses. She stated, in December 2008: “We believe that, within the region, [civilian nuclear agreements] can serve as powerful counter-examples to Iran’s irresponsible enrichment program.”\textsuperscript{902} In January 2009, upon signing a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement between the United States and the United Arab Emirates, Condoleezza Rice called the agreement a “powerful and timely model,” but the Bush II administration had failed to end Iran’s uranium-enrichment by either diplomacy or coercion.\textsuperscript{903}

The failure to divert Iran’s movement toward nuclear weapons development through other means left the Bush II White House with the military option, even as the Pentagon was elaborating its “long war” doctrine. David Kilcullen, an adviser to General David Petraeus, stated the long war concept was born in “a series of windowless offices deep inside the Pentagon” and the term was coined in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).\textsuperscript{904} Hence, George W. Bush adopted the term in his State of the Union address: “our own generation is in a long war

\textsuperscript{902} Hayward, Mary Alice, Remarks of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy and Negotiations at the Exchange Monitor Conference, Washington, D.C., December 3, 2008.
against a determined enemy.” Andrew Bacevich questioned the origin of the long war doctrine, by a “small, self-perpetuating, self-anointed group of specialists.” Tom Hayden critiqued the contradiction between the QDR’s recommendation to finish “our current wars before thinking about the next,” on one hand, and how “we fight wars that bleed into each other without clear end points,” on the other. The term was absent from the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review issued in February 2010 by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates. However, the phrase might have disappeared, but the rationale of the long war continued to underlay the U.S. military posture in the Middle East.

The Bush II team failed to cement a diplomatic solution to the perceived Iranian threats of terrorism and WMDs, thus leading to consideration of military options, which hence became increasingly unrealistic under the shadow of the extended stalemates in Iraq and Afghanistan, eroding public support, and declining international prestige.

I. International, systemic, or structural factors:

Systemic factors, including alliance issues, were present in the case of Iran as well. George W. Bush recalled Condoleezza Rice’s first European trip abroad as Secretary of State: “‘They’re not talking about Iraq,’ she said. ‘They’re all worried about Iran.’” Bush II characterized the threat to peace posed by “the world’s leading sponsors of terrorism.” Additionally, an Iranian opposition group brought information to the attention of U.S. intelligence to show the Islamic Republic was pursuing uranium-enrichment and heavy-water

909 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 415.
production in August 2002. “All of a sudden there weren’t so many complaints about including Iran in the axis of evil,” the President noted. Iran suspended its uranium-enrichment in exchange for financial aid and trade from the U.K., Germany, and France in October 2003, but, by June 2005, according to Bush II, “everything changed” when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to power. Russia and the European Union offered Iran help in developing civilian nuclear power, but these offers were rejected. Therefore, the Bush II administration followed a two-track policy on Iran: sanctions plus diplomacy. The President consulted with the British, German, and Russian heads of government. The Secretary of State told the European allies that the United States would join them in negotiations with Iran on the condition that the Ayatollah’s regime verifiably suspended its uranium-enrichment activities. At this time, Rice said, “we’d taken a number of small steps to unify the international community on the Iran issue … but there seemed to be little motivation to levy Security Council sanctions against Tehran … with the Russians signaling publicly that they didn’t favor punitive actions … The big carrot for the Iranians was U.S. participation in the negotiations.” The international level was only half the problem for Rice. “Getting consensus around a U.S. policy shift of this magnitude would not be easy. I wasn’t even sure that I could get the President to that point,” said Rice. “The President was not immediately convinced that we ought to offer to join the negotiations.” To complicate the matter further, in May 2006, “the stepped-up aggression against our forces led by Iranian allies in Iraq … made the President and other members of the NSC wonder whether ‘rewarding’ the Iranians with an offer to talk made any sense while they were killing our soldiers.”

910 Ibid., pp. 415-420.  
911 Ibid., pp. 415-416.  
912 Ibid., p. 416.  
913 Ibid., p. 417.  
914 Rice, Condoleezza, No Higher Honor, p. 461.  
915 Ibid.  
916 Ibid., pp. 461-462.
discussed the idea with Tony Blair of the U.K. and wondered whether the Europeans would follow up with tough sanctions if negotiations failed. Blair supported the idea of sanctions and carried it to Angela Merkel of Germany and Jacques Chirac of France, who promised they would not “go soft.” Vladimir Putin was glad the United States was “taking Russia’s advice.” The Secretary of State’s statement was described by her successor as National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley, as “pretty tough.” Hence, Secretary Rice explained: “I didn’t want Tehran to think that it had gained the upper hand.” Rice made the offer public May 31, 2006: the U.S. was ready to negotiate in exchange for “verifiable suspension” of uranium-enrichment and reprocessing facilities. She said “all issues” were open to negotiate; in effect, a “political thaw” between the Islamic Republic and the United States was key. “Left unsaid was the central point: we were not, in the short run, seeking regime change,” she later admitted.918

Iran replied to what they interpreted as the “disrespectful tone” of Rice’s message. First, talking tough had backfired, contradicting the conciliatory intention. Second, the U.S. required Iran to capitulate on the main area of contention, uranium-enrichment, as a condition for negotiating.919 Third and finally, to Rice’s disappointment, the Russians were less cooperative than she had hoped.920 In July 2006, UN Security Council Resolution 1696 demanded that Iran suspend uranium-enrichment and reprocessing activities. Then Tehran’s chief negotiator refused to meet with the EU representatives while Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attended the UN General Assembly in New York. Rice considered this a ruse to cover Ayatollah Ali Khomeini’s pulling the plug on the negotiations.921

917 Ibid., pp. 463-464.
918 Ibid., p. 464.
919 Ibid., p. 465.
920 Ibid., pp. 692-693.
921 Ibid., pp. 535-536.
“The next challenge was to develop effective sanctions,” as the President saw it. “I directed the Treasury Department to work with its European counterparts to make it harder for Iranian banks and businesses to move money. We also designated the Iranian Quds Force of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization, which allowed [the U.S. government] to freeze their assets.” In December 2006, Resolution 1737 condemned Iran and imposed sanctions, followed by Resolution 1747, which tightened those sanctions, in March 2007. Bush II considered Resolutions 1737 and 1747 to be major successes; they banned arms exchanges, froze assets, and prohibited sale or transfer of nuclear equipment. “Persuading the Europeans, Russians, and Chinese,” he later boasted, “was a diplomatic achievement.”

Not all of the players in the Bush II White House thought diplomacy was the right road to take. On October 9, 2006, President George W. Bush publically accused North Korea of transferring missile technology to Syria and Iran. Vice President Dick Cheney hoped for a more forceful U.S. stance. “I believed that our intelligence would have a far greater chance of being effective if the North Koreans and Iranians understood that they faced the possibility of military action if the diplomacy failed.” To the contrary, the bottom line for the Bush II “Vulcans” was expressed by Condoleezza Rice: “It was well understood that we didn’t have the bandwidth for unilateral confrontation with Iran and North Korea, given the situation in Iraq.” Thus, the gap between capabilities and desire imposed realistic limitations on action.

The United Nations Security Council voted five times to sanction Iran for its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability during the 2006-2008 period. The objectives of these sanctions

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922 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 418.
924 Rice, No Higher Honor, p. 537.
were to stop WMD-related trade; freeze Iranian assets associated with nuclear development; inhibit Iranian arms exports; monitor international travel by Iranians; subject Iranian sea and air cargo shipments to inspection; and restrict Iranian banking and financial activities.\textsuperscript{926} The long-range success of the policy of isolation and sanctions against Iran seemed to bear fruit as of November 23, 2013, with the tentative agreement with the United States and P5+1 partners, whereby Tehran agreed to suspend uranium-enrichment activities and centrifuge production.\textsuperscript{927}

By 2008, the Bush II White House was attempting to reassemble the diplomatic coalition against Iran, push sanctions on “dual-use technologies” (materials and equipment that could be diverted for weaponry development), and proposing a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe (Poland and Czech Republic). “I worked to speed the reform clock by meeting with Iranian dissidents, calling for the release of political prisoners,” among other activities, including propaganda against the Islamic Republic’s regime. “I regret [leaving the presidency with] the Iranian issue unresolved,” Bush recalled.\textsuperscript{928}

The Bush II administration primarily worked on the issue of Iran’s nuclear program through the P5+1 group, an \textit{ad-hoc} cooperative consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China. At a P5+1 meeting with Iranian envoys in Geneva, July 2008, Undersecretary of State William Burns conveyed the Bush II administration’s position that Iran must suspend uranium-enrichment before negotiations would proceed.\textsuperscript{929} The Bush II brain trust made ending Iran’s enriched-uranium production its policy priority.\textsuperscript{930} This policy

\textsuperscript{928} Bush, George W., \textit{Decision Points}, p. 420.
\textsuperscript{929} Rice, Condoleezza, Interview with Wolf Blitzer, CNN, Washington, D.C., July 18, 2008.
\textsuperscript{930} Negroponte, John, Remarks at the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs, Baltimore, MD, October 16, 2008.
comprised disincentives and inducements to alter Iranian behavior and to coax them into suspending uranium-enrichment and committing to a verifiable civilian nuclear program. Secretary of State Rice reiterated Bush II’s preference for a diplomatic approach to Iran, while also insisting that “President Bush never took any of his options [regarding Iran’s nuclear program] off the table.” According to Rice, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah “somehow held out hope George W. Bush would ‘take care of Iran’ before leaving office.” Instead, the Secretary of State told foreign ministers at the Gulf Cooperation Council: “We’re not in a position of strength right now.” Thus, by January 2009, outgoing National Security Adviser Hadley identified Iran as the most serious foreign policy challenge that the next administration would face in the Middle East.

The reason for Bush II’s failure to resolve the Iranian situation was simply that the United States was precluded from utilizing military force or a credible threat of doing so because of its overextension in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. posture had been based on the use of force since 2001, but the situation had changed to the effect that concepts such as the Bush Doctrine, pre-emption, and the long war were no longer practicable. Once again, the gap between capabilities and desire was apparent. As the memory of 9/11 receded into history, the more frustrating the war in Iraq and the less likely the United States became to intervene anywhere else, especially when the threat was distant rather than immediate.

II. National, domestic, or internal political:

932 Rice, No Higher Honor, p. 625.
933 Ibid., p. 543.
While lessons learned from prior interventions affected Bush II’s range of options, at the same time we ought not rule out the influence of public opinion (*casualty sensitivity* and *intervention fatigue*) and potential partisan opposition.

By the second half of Bush II’s second term, the logic of military intervention against Iran was implicit in the Bush Doctrine, War on Terrorism, and long war policies. At an October 2007 press conference, a reporter asked about Iran and the President responded: “I’ve told people that if you’re interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon.” There followed a hailstorm of criticism for the World War III reference. “They all missed the point. I wasn’t looking to start a war. I was trying to hold our coalition together to avoid one.”

Be that as it may, George W. Bush understood the point: There would be no “rally round the flag” this time. The media and informed public were not inclined to accept Bush II’s third intervention on blind faith.

Among the general public’s concerns about Iran, an existential threat to Israel loomed as ominously as nuclear weapons and sponsorship of terrorism. After Bush II left office, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) found that Americans were still very concerned about Iranian development of nuclear weapons. An overwhelming majority of opinion believed Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons, which presented a real threat to U.S. national security. They doubted that the prospect of nuclear retaliation would be a deterrent against Iran’s attacking Israel with a nuclear weapon.

Nevertheless, U.S. public opinion favored sanctions over military force. Only 33 percent of

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respondents favored imposing sanctions to stop Iran from uranium-enrichment, but even fewer, 13 percent, supported military action and fewer still, 8 percent, would accept a nuclear-armed Iran. A German Marshall Fund (GMF) survey revealed that a near majority, 49 percent, of U.S. opinion would support military action as a last resort. Yet a clear-cut majority of the U.S. public preferred engagement with Iran through diplomacy, 55 percent, rather than action, 15 percent. According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, public opinion was pessimistic about the consequences of military strikes and unconvinced they would deter Iran’s nuclear weapons program. Other polling results indicated over 80 percent of Americans believed that military strikes alone would fail to stop Iran’s nuclear program, increase support for the Iranian regime, and potentially lead to retaliation in the form of terrorist attacks. By an overwhelming majority, 74 percent of the American public thought the United Nations Security Council should deal with Iran, compared with 20 percent that preferred the United States acting unilaterally. Important to note is that most polling questions assumed bombing or a similar “surgical” strike could effectively eliminate Iran’s nuclear weapons stockpiles, whereas, in reality, there were no such guarantees.

Public opinion on hypothetical military intervention against Iran followed an evolution from support for the use of force to a decline of support and increased distrust of the Bush II administration. In April 2003, a Los Angeles Times poll found 50 percent of respondents supporting the use of force if Iran continued to pursue developing nuclear weapons and 36 percent opposed. Support was strongest among Republicans (59 percent) and Democrats (52

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percent) as compared with independents (45 percent). In 2006, a Fox News survey found 54 percent support for using air strikes versus 35 percent opposed, but only 42 percent support for using ground troops versus 48 percent opposed. In addition, support for “whatever military force is necessary” dropped from 59 percent (with 33 percent opposed) to 50 percent (with 42 percent opposed) between January and March 2006. When registered voters were asked whether they supported the United States taking military action if Iran obtained a nuclear weapon before Bush II left office, 48 percent said yes, 44 percent said no, and 8 percent were unsure, as of May 2006. The next month, a similar question produced an even stronger result: 52 percent in favor, 37 percent opposed, and 12 percent unsure in a Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg survey. Here support for military intervention to halt the Iranian nuclear program peaked and began to decline, even as the Bush II administration increasingly focused attention on the issue during the summer of 2006. By autumn, a Newsweek/Princeton poll found that a majority (54 percent) would not support air strikes against suspected nuclear sites, while 38 percent would support them. More tellingly, a mere 18 percent supported sending in ground troops and an overwhelming 76 percent said they would not. In 2007, on the issue of the Iranians supplying insurgents in Iraq with explosive technology, 55 percent supported taking military action and 45 percent did not. However, a similar poll asked respondents if they trusted the Bush II administration. Only 14 percent believed the administration was telling the “entire truth”; 24 percent thought they were “mostly lying” and 56 percent thought they were “hiding

947 NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart (Democrat) and Neil Newhouse (Republican), March 2-5, 2007.
something.” By late 2007, 54 percent of those surveyed preferred that Bush II should “let the next President deal with Iran,” while 29 percent supported military action and 16 percent were unsure. The public mood concerning Iran in Bush II’s final year expressed a preference for diplomacy (61 percent) rather than military action (10 percent) and some 20 percent thought Iranian WMDs were not a threat.

Israeli diplomatic pressure and the pro-Israel lobby (such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, APIC) had been repeating the mantra that Iranian nuclear weapons represented an existential threat to Israel. However, whether it was the responsibility of the United States or Israel to do something about it was another matter. Clearly, U.S. public opinion had recoiled from attacking Iran. Although the polls did not survey the underlying psychology of the shift in opinion, our intuitive assumption is that intervention fatigue, intolerance for casualties, and a generalized distrust for the Bush II White House contributed to the public’s shift in attitude. The “cry wolf” syndrome would appear to have undermined Bush II’s credibility and constrained the administration’s ability to shape public opinion.

Overall, Congress was compliant on Bush II’s policy toward Iran and the issues of sponsoring terrorism, proliferating nuclear weapons, and assisting the insurgency in Iraq were virtually nonpartisan at this time. In 2004, the House of Representatives passed Resolution 398, urging the administration “to use all appropriate means to deter, dissuade and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons” by a vote of 376-3. As of 2006, Congress passed the Iran Freedom Support Act (IFSA), which reinforced previously imposed sanctions and expressed support for

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“independent human rights and peaceful pro-democracy forces in Iran.”\textsuperscript{953} Congress also passed the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act of 2006 (INKSA), a statute which prohibited the sale of equipment and technology that could be used for nuclear weaponry or missiles by penalizing foreign “individuals and entities” involved in such transactions.\textsuperscript{954} In September 2007, the Senate declared the Quds Force a terrorist organization and in a separate resolution called for a diplomatic approach to the Islamic Republic.\textsuperscript{955} These measures passed the Senate 75-22 and 75-23, respectively, wherein the opposition comprised a minority of dovish Democrats averse to Bush II’s interventionism.

In the 2004 presidential election campaign, George W. Bush stated, “On Iran, I hope we can … continue to work with the world to convince the Iranian mullahs to abandon their nuclear ambitions,” at the debate in Coral Gables, Florida. Democratic candidate John Kerry, for his part, agreed Iranian nuclear development was the most serious emergent threat.\textsuperscript{956} Four years later, the issue of Iran was not a point of partisan contention in the 2008 campaign, as both Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain said military action would remain an option if Iran’s uranium-enrichment program continued.\textsuperscript{957}

\textit{III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:}

\textsuperscript{953} Library of Congress, H.R. 6198: To hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran, September 30, 2006. \textit{http://thomas.loc.gov}.
In 2005, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran, George W. Bush said, “This guy could be nuts.” The chief executive set the tone for U.S. policy toward Iran in his “Axis of Evil” conceptualization. Five years later, President Bush charged that the Quds Force was interfering in Iraq. At a press conference in early 2007, he stated: “I can say with certainty that the Quds Force, a part of the Iranian government, has provided these sophisticated IEDs that have harmed our troops. And I’d like to repeat, I do not know whether or not the Quds Force was ordered from the top echelons of government. But my point is what’s worse – them [sic] ordering it and it happening, or them not ordering it and it happening? ... My job is to protect our troops. And when we find devices that are in that country that are hurting our troops, we’re going to do something about it, pure and simple ... [D]oes this mean you’re trying to have a pretext for war? No. It means I’m trying to protect our troops.”

There emerged a division of opinion in the Bush II administration over the correct approach to Iran. Vice-President Cheney and others called for a hardline policy, arguing that the Iranian regime could not reform and conditions would soon be primed for a democratic revolution. A more realistic assumption was that the Islamic Republic was stable and firmly in control, and the United States ultimately must deal with the existing regime. Nevertheless, Bush II proceeded on the assumption that the Ayatollah and mullahs could be toppled in Tehran. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice requested $75 million in “emergency funding” from Congress “to promote political change inside Iran,” in February 2006. Two-thirds of the

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funding ($50 million) was earmarked for radio and satellite television broadcasting of propaganda in Farsi into Iran.⁹６²

By spring 2007, Cheney was concerned about Iran’s reported joint venture with Syria in nuclear weaponry. The Vice-President recalled: “Much of our conversation focused on the bad intelligence about Iraq’s stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. That experience made some key policy makers very reluctant to consider robust options for dealing with the Syrian plant.” He lamented that such gun-shyness was “regrettable,” as there was “no question…in the Syrian desert was a clandestine reactor, built by two terrorist-sponsoring states.”⁹６³ Cheney insisted Iran “had a robust program underway based on uranium-enriched centrifuge technology…” (estimated to be 3,000 centrifuges, ³circa 2007). Also, Cheney could not discuss nuclear weapons without linkage to terrorism (that is, his “mushroom cloud” nightmare scenarios). Iran was providing money and weapons to foreign insurgents in Iraq, while Iran and Syria were supporting Hezbollah against Israel and Lebanon. “They constituted a major threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East.” Subsequently, Cheney became the “lone voice” calling for air strikes on Syria. At the National Security Council, the President asked: “Does anyone here agree with the Vice-President?” Cheney pointed out bitterly that nobody supported him, including a number of advisers who had enthusiastically promoted the intervention in Iraq a few years earlier.⁹６⁴ Nevertheless, Iran’s persistent nuclear development efforts sufficiently concerned the President to repeat: “all options were on the table.” This statement prompted the U.S. regional commander, Admiral Fox Fallon, to label Bush II’s rhetoric: “bellicose” and “unhelpful.” Not surprisingly, Fallon later quit, but other voices echoed a similar aversion to a tough line on Iran.

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⁹６³ Cheney, In My Life, pp. 468-469.
⁹６⁴ Ibid., pp. 470-471.
Robert Gates, who succeeded Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary, allegedly told the Saudi king that George W. Bush would be “impeached” if he hit Iran.\textsuperscript{965} Rice’s version of the comment is that Gates said Bush II “would face the wrath of the American people over such a decision.”\textsuperscript{966} Was Secretary Gates speaking for himself, or was he dramatically expressing the negative lessons learned from Iraq redux? Regardless, the cumulative effect of Bush II’s preceding interventions defined a clear set of limitations for the administration.

Vice President Cheney was not inclined to let the “alleged” mistakes in Iraq circumscribe what he saw as the right course in Iran. Cheney was critical of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that maintained Iran had halted its nuclear quest four years earlier. Cheney contended the NIE only referred to “covert” uranium-enrichment and weaponization, but not the production of nuclear (fissionable) material and reported “significant progress” in Iran’s “declared centrifuge enrichment activities.” According to Cheney, “As it was, the NIE clearly gave a false impression.” Also, Cheney asserted, the Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, “later testified that he would have presented the key findings differently if he had it to do over again.”\textsuperscript{967} Thus, the lone wolf howled solo.

Meanwhile, Condoleezza Rice was at first extremely skeptical with respect to the “troop surge” in Iraq in 2007. Rice changed her mind because of (1) David Petraeus’s counterinsurgency strategy; (2) U.S. pressure on Iraqis to end sectarian bickering; and “if we didn’t double down,” she believed, “[t]he US would be toast in the Middle East.”\textsuperscript{968} As discussed in Chapter 6, internecine strife began early in the Bush II era. Rice battled over

\textsuperscript{965} Ibid., p. 478.
\textsuperscript{966} Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, pp. 624-625.
policy and process with Defense chief Rumsfeld as well as with Dick Cheney. Rice and the vice president locked horns over Iran as early as August 2002 when she complained to the president about Cheney’s “declaration of war” speech on Iran.\textsuperscript{969} Rumsfeld, somewhat arrogantly, opined on Rice: “From 2001 to 2005, I sent Rice a series of memos suggesting ways I thought the [NSC] process might be strengthened … No one likes to have his or her style of management questioned. Rice was a person whose general performance over the years had undoubtedly been seen as above reproach. She seemed unaccustomed to constructive suggestions, and not much changed for the better.”\textsuperscript{970} Rumsfeld was more respectful and deferential after Rice became a cabinet member, which her biographer, Bumiller, suggested was due to the weak National Security Adviser having become a “forceful” Secretary of State.\textsuperscript{971} Rice also had become Bush II’s top adviser. Her personal bond with the president, always strong, deepened as she supplanted Cheney as Bush II’s “go-to” person during the second term.\textsuperscript{972}

When Donald Rumsfeld had served as Ronald Reagan’s emissary to Iraq in the 1980s, he saw promise in Saddam Hussein as the “bitter adversary” of Syria and Iran. In Rumsfeld’s view, U.S.-Iran relations were “poisoned” by Khomeini’s radical regime and the Tehran hostage crisis (1979-1981); to contain Syria and Iran was “our mutual interest” with Iraq; and “Iran’s leadership,” wrote Rumsfeld, “remained unapproachable.”\textsuperscript{973} At this time (\textit{circa} 1984), “I was troubled by the unreal expectations some in the region had of the United States, of the ways and how rapidly we could assist them if their neighbors took aggressive actions … [in

\textsuperscript{969} \textit{Ibid.}, p. xxii. \\
\textsuperscript{970} Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, pp. 328-329. \\
\textsuperscript{971} Bumiller, \textit{Condoleezza Rice}, pp. xxiii-xxiv. \\
\textsuperscript{972} Baker, Peter, \textit{op. cit.}, \textit{Days of Fire}. \\
\textsuperscript{973} Rumsfeld, \textit{Known and Unknown}, pp. 4-6.
response to) looming dangers posed by Iran and Syria and potentially Iraq … to undertake planning to deter aggression … Many leaders seemed to believe that American forces would be able to appear magically from over the hill and deliver them from Iran’s or Iraq’s clutches.”

Rumsfeld’s dour assessment of the post-Cold War era was that the United States took a “holiday from strategic thought” and “overconfidence had spurred complacency. U.S. intelligence capabilities had atrophied, and abortive U.S. operations from Somalia to Haiti had communicated uncertain American resolve. The problems of Islamist extremism, the nuclear weapons programs of North Korea and Iran … had been exacerbated.”

Like Cheney, the Pentagon czar was skeptical of a diplomatic approach to Iran. “Beginning with Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad [Afghanistan-born American diplomat] in December 2001, the Bush [II] administration also authorized American diplomats to hold discussions of one type or another with representatives from Iran …” Nothing came of this idea. Of the proposed U.S.-Iranian talks, April 2006, Rumsfeld said: “I think they are a disaster. We’re stepping on a rake.”

Again, Rumsfeld emphasized, nothing came of this initiative. “To the contrary, Tehran seemed to have accelerated its illegal weapons programs, continued to fund Hezbollah in Lebanon, crushed its domestic dissidents, threatened to erase Israel from the map in another Holocaust, and escalated their attacks against American service [men and women] in Iraq.”

We may assume that Rumsfeld would certainly have been a hawkish voice during the crucial 2006-2008 period had he still been at the table. Thus, Gates represents a change in policy and viewpoint as well as personnel.

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974 Ibid., p. 31.
975 Ibid., p. 286.
977 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 692.
According to Rice’s biographer: “Well into 2007, Rice and Cheney were on opposite ends of the administration’s attitude to stop the nuclear threat from Iran. Rice was the chief advocate of diplomacy and Cheney the chief skeptic and by June [2007] a furious debate had broken out between Rice and her deputies and Cheney’s staff. Dick’s staff warned of air strikes … Rice was dismissive of the saber rattling.” However, Rice tried to gloss over their disagreement, saying, “we’re probably a lot closer than people think on this issue … I am skeptical one day and optimistic the next.”978 Did Rice’s worldview differ greatly from Cheney’s? Her biographer writes: “Rice would say ‘transformational diplomacy,’ her Bush-inspired vision of spreading democracy around the world. But in reality—and by instinct, training, and experience—she is a pragmatist who for four overwhelming years got swept away by her devotion to the president and to the hawks who held power.”979 By 2008, the Secretary of State was working on the chronically crisis-ridden Lebanon and supported Israel’s renewed talks with Syria, a move that Cheney and his staff opposed because Bashar al-Assad was allied with Iran and Hezbollah. Secretary Rice also made overtures to Ahmadinejad. In July 2008, Rice refused to meet unless Iran stopped uranium-enrichment and she dispatched Undersecretary of State William J. Burns to Geneva to conduct fruitless discussions with the Iranians.980 The metaphorical window of opportunity had closed.

IV. Criteria for the use of force:

The foregoing criteria apply to Iran if and only if plausible military contingencies could be determined and evaluated. Was Iran a “no-go” because the Bush II administration

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978 Ibid., p. xxiii.
979 Ibid., p. xxvi.
980 Ibid., pp. 316-318.
determined the United States could not win? Were U.S. resources spread too thin and the military overextended? Were the limits of military intervention realized under Bush II, brought on by imperial overreach?\textsuperscript{981} Intuitively, we suspect military factors must have been decisive in keeping direct intervention against Iran off the table: although there was an established operational base in the region, it is not clear whether a surgical strike against Iranian nuclear facilities would have been effective by itself; the scope and scale of an Iranian intervention would be far greater than the Iraq and Afghan operations; the possibility of counteraction by other states, particularly Russia; and the ongoing campaigns, including troop surges, in Iraq and Afghanistan precluded opening up a third theatre in the war-ravaged Middle East. Additionally, the difficulty of targeting Iranian nuclear facilities, whether singularly or as part of a larger scale operation, had to have been a major question, such that “surgical air strikes” were probably a fiction. This case echoes Allison’s analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis in which the Air Force could not guarantee 100\% effectiveness.\textsuperscript{982} Hence, the potential blowback would comprise everything from counterattacks against U.S. forces or allies in the region or retaliation against “soft targets” elsewhere. A computer simulation mapping of the fallout from a Trident D-5 warhead, the largest U.S. nuclear weapon (455 kilotons), showed that a detonation in the middle of the desert would bring radiation to within 100 kilometers of major Iranian cities.\textsuperscript{983}

The Israelis previously had hit Iraqi and Syrian facilities, but these were much smaller. Admiral William Fallon, former CENTCOM commander, judged that the Iranian installations were hardened and eliminating them would not be “a one-time job.” According to U.S.M.C. General


\textsuperscript{982} Allison, Graham T., Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

James Cartwright, former JCS vice-chairman: “Not even a 30 thousand pound ‘bunker buster’
could knock out the Iranian uranium-enrichment unit, such as Fordow, built 250 feet under a
mountain.” As General Michael Hayden, Bush II’s CIA and NSA Director, related: “When
we talked about this in the government, the consensus was that [attacking Iran] would
guarantee that which we are trying to prevent — an Iran that will spare nothing to build a
nuclear weapon and that would build it in secret.” Former CIA official John McLaughlin had
also been quoted as saying that an attack on Iran “would be a very bad option.”

#1—Have all other options been explored, such as diplomacy, sanctions, or negotiation?

The United States developed a military posture through cooperative security arrangements in
the Persian Gulf region directed at containing Iran. In 2000, the United States organized the
Cooperation Defense Initiative (CDI) with Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi
Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates to facilitate active defense, passive defense, early
warning systems, crisis management, and medical countermeasures. By June 2004, the
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Iran had developed the “front-end of
a nuclear fuel cycle,” leading to speculation that the Iranians could acquire a nuclear weapon as
soon as 2007 or 2008. In May 2006, Condoleezza Rice initiated her overture to Tehran and
subsequently the United States pushed sanctions through United Nations Security Council in a
series of resolutions. In 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates participated in the Gulf

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984 Scott Pelley, CBS Evening News, March 5, 2012.
985 Hayden, Michael, Speech, Center for the National Interest, January 19, 2012; quoted by Josh Rogn in Foreign
Affairs, January-February 2012; cited by Eli Clifton in “George W. Bush’s CIA Director Cautions Against Iran
986 Garamone, Jim, “Cooperative Defense Initiative Seeks to Save Lives,” American Forces Press Services, April 10,
2000.
Security Dialogue (GSD) to cooperate on conventional, unconventional, asymmetric, terrorist threats, and regional stability related to Iran.\textsuperscript{988} Previously, Rice hoped the GSD would bolster the defense of regional allies to stabilize the region.\textsuperscript{989} In June 2009, Secretary Gates stated that regional cooperation and intelligence sharing would contain Iran and aid “the interdiction of illegal shipments of weapons or [nuclear] material.”\textsuperscript{990} In the end, Bush II “kicked the can down the road” to the Obama administration.

#2—Are the political, diplomatic, or military objectives clearly understood? A report by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), titled \textit{Iran: Time for a New Approach} (July 2004), advocated limited dialogue with Iran because the regime was firmly entrenched and U.S. military intervention to bring about regime change would be ill advised. Iran had triple the population of Iraq and promised a fierce response to a U.S. invasion and occupation. The CFR study acknowledged the U.S. military was overextended by its commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, and called on Bush II officials to devote their energy to winning Iranian cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The study urged the administration to open a dialogue with Iran that could lead to normalizing diplomatic relations.\textsuperscript{991} According to Soeren Kern of RIE (Madrid): “the massive projection of U.S. power on Iran’s periphery has led a critical segment of Iran’s power brokers…to reconsider the value of a rational relationship with Washington.” Reformers and pragmatists, led by former Iranian president, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, were convinced the regime must revise its foreign policy to end Iran’s isolation and exclusion from the world’s

\textsuperscript{988} Gates, Robert, Remarks at the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain, December 8, 2007.
\textsuperscript{989} Rice, Condoleezza, Statement on Assistance Agreements with Gulf States, Israel and Egypt, Washington, D.C., July 30, 2007.
economy. Therefore, a rapprochement with Washington was in Tehran’s interests, but could only occur if the Iranians addressed the issues of nuclear weapons, terrorism, and aiding the Iraqi insurgency.  

After a period of stasis, a new, more moderate Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, responded positively to overtures from the Obama administration.

#3—Is the battle plan realistic and can the military objectives be effectively maintained?

Let us ask whether the strategy and tactics were “doable” and “winnable.” A one-dimensional strategy of precision air strikes against Iran’s nuclear development program held limited promise. Even if the air strikes destroyed Iran’s uranium-enrichment and weaponization capacity, they could be reconstituted elsewhere and would do little to change the regime’s behavior. As George W. Bush himself acknowledged, “a foreign military intervention would stir up Iranian nationalism and unite the people against us.”  

A more robust air and naval assault on Iran would have four major targets: Iran’s economic infrastructure, including oil refineries; Iran’s military infrastructure, including defense electronics; the regime’s political leadership; and enforcing an external blockade and sanctions.  

An air and sea campaign could eliminate Iran’s nuclear weapons program, or at the very least set it back by years. If the Bush II administration’s objective was regime change or long-term transformation of Iranian political culture, the United States would need to follow up the “shock and awe” bombardment with an invasion by combat forces.  

A conservative estimate of troop levels might be 450,000 to 750,000, based on the deployment in the two Iraq wars, adjusted for Iran’s proportionally larger population.

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994 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 417.
996 Ibid.
population. Those troops would have had to come from Afghanistan, Iraq, and the “backdoor draft” of the National Guard and Reserves.

The United States Strategic Command carried out an exercise in November 2004 to test a global strike plan code-named “Global Lightening.” The simulated attack used both conventional and nuclear weapons against a fictitious enemy, a thinly disguised Iran. According to Hans Kristensen, of the Nuclear Information Project, Global Lightening is “an actual plan that the Navy and the Air Force translate into strike package for their submarines and bombers.” The Strategic Command declared an advanced state of readiness following the Global Lightening exercise. CONPLAN was the operational global strike plan and CONPLAN 8022 was “the overall umbrella plan for sort of the pre-planned strategic scenarios involving nuclear weapons.” CONPLAN 8022 was designed for the “new” threats from proliferators Iran and North Korea as well as sub-state terrorists. 997 In May 2004, National Security Presidential Directive #35 (NSPD-35), on Nuclear Weapons Deployment Authorization, landed on the President’s desk. 998 The classified report covered the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the Middle East as part of CONPLAN 8022. 999 The use of both nuclear and conventional weapons was assumed by CONPLAN 8022 under the Bush II administration’s pre-emptive war policy. This assumption predated the Iraq War. An earlier directive, NSPD-17, dated December 2002, explicitly states, in the event of an attack on U.S. forces: “The United States will

999 Chossudovsky, Michel, Nuclear War against Iran, Global Research, January 2006; The Dangers of a Middle East Nuclear War, Global Research, February 2006; Is the Bush Administration Planning a Nuclear Holocaust, Global Research, February 2006. http://www.globalresearch.ca.
continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force—including potentially nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{1000}

By 2008, Bush II announced plans to construct ten long-range interceptors and a fixed-site radar in Eastern Europe to defend against Iranian long-range missile threats.\textsuperscript{1001} The Bush II administration appeared to be dramatizing its linkage of WMDs with terrorism. Additionally, Bush II authorized the deployment of an aircraft carrier, Patriot missiles, and intelligence sharing with Gulf allies.\textsuperscript{1002} The missile defense sites in Eastern Europe were later canceled by the successor Obama administration. Ultimately, it was not clear whether the anti-ballistic missile program ever served legitimate counterterrorism purposes.

#4—Are there sufficient resources to accomplish the mission, in effect, going in with “overwhelming force”? A study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) recommended an initial strike against nuclear research facilities, missile bases, mobile missile launchers, and missile production facilities. The CSIS study determined that only the United States had the firepower and logistics to launch a campaign of such a scale and scope.\textsuperscript{1003} As early as 2003, the Pentagon was conducting an analysis of a war scenario with Iran, called \textit{Theatre Iran Near Term} (TIRANNT). The President asked the Strategic Command for a global strike plan for an attack against Iranian nuclear facilities in conjunction

with CONPLAN 8022. According to William Arkin, a U.S. Army intelligence expert, TIRANNT commissioned Pentagon planners to examine all aspects of a major combat operation in a war with Iran, including mobilization and deployment of forces for invasion, occupation, and postwar political operations. Arkin wrote in the *Washington Post* that TIRANNT called for a land invasion by Marines, targeting the Iranian missile force, and a global strike plan against Iranian weapons of mass destruction. An additional study, titled *Ballistic Missile Defense—Iran* (BMD-I) examined scenarios involving Iranian missile capacity. In June 2004, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld alerted the Strategic Command to be prepared to implement CONPLAN 8022. “The new task force,” Arkin said, “mostly worries that if it were called upon to deliver ‘prompt’ global strikes against certain targets in Iran under some emergency circumstances, the president might have to be told that the only option is a nuclear one.”

Because the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had dragged on interminably, U.S. intervention in Iran by ground troops was a nonstarter by 2007. Apart from limited Special Operations, the United States did not have the ground force numbers to invade and occupy Iran. As a result, the only feasible operation would be the limited use of air and naval forces.

#5—Is there an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of personnel once the mission’s goals have been achieved? Would an invasion and occupation of Iran have devolved into a protracted guerrilla insurgency as had been the case in Afghanistan and Iraq? General Yahya Rahim Safavi, commander of the Revolutionary Guards, threatened the United Nations

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States not to attack Iran, warning that U.S. troops in the region were “vulnerable” in 2006. “You can start a war but it won’t be you who finishes it,” Safavi said.\(^{1007}\) The Iranian Quds Force or surrogates, such as Hezbollah, were definitely capable of diversionary attacks on American, British, Israeli, or Saudi targets. The Sunday Times (London) reported the Iranians had formed squads of suicide bombers to retaliate against American and British targets if Iran’s nuclear installations were attacked. Members of the Martyr Seekers of the Revolutionary Guards marched in a military parade in Tehran in March 2006.\(^{1008}\) The special unit appeared to be wearing explosive packs and holding detonators. The director of the Centre for Doctrinal Strategic Studies of the Revolutionary Guards, Hassan Abbasi, gave a public speech, promising that: “We are ready to attack American and British sensitive points if they attack Iran’s nuclear facilities.”\(^{1009}\) Therefore, it is very unlikely that an Iranian intervention could have been resolved in a brokered diplomatic and political settlement on the order of Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Bush II hawks postulated that an attack on Iran would create a political upheaval, presenting the opportunity for regime change, but it was equally likely to bolster hardliners and enflame a nationalistic backlash, leading to an extended occupation and insurgency, as had been the result in Afghanistan and Iraq.\(^{1010}\)

CONCLUSION

\(^{1007}\) Staff Writers, Top Iranian Commander Warns U.S. Against Military Attack, Agence France-Presse, April 14, 2006.
\(^{1008}\) Staff Writers, Iranian Suicide Squads Ready to Hit U.S. British Targets, Agence France-Presse, April 16, 2006.
\(^{1009}\) Ibid.
An array of compelling reasons inhibited the Bush II administration from military intervention against Iran. The United States was overextended in Afghanistan and Iraq and continued involvement eroded public support for military action as well as respect for the administration in general. The issues of WMDs and support for terrorism resonated negatively for the Bush II White House, whose credibility was seriously undermined by the history of manipulated intelligence data in the prelude to the second Iraq War. In addition to weak support in public opinion, key members of the administration were chastened as a result of the intelligence failures in the case of Iraq, as Cheney complained in his memoirs. Military assets were stretched thin owing to the strains of the ongoing Afghan and Iraqi interventions, as Rice’s reflections had revealed, thus limiting the credibility of the threat of force. Most importantly, the scope of the Presidential Directives NSPD-17 and NSPD-35, TIRANNT, and CONPLAN 8022, particularly the presumptive involvement of nuclear weapons, made the war plans for Iran more daunting than any intervention since the Persian Gulf War. Until 2006, there might have been the momentum for a “go” decision, reinforced by perceived positive outcomes in the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, but by 2007-2008 both the momentum and perception of success had reversed and become negatives. Therefore, Bush II ruled out intervention and pursued a combination of diplomatic pressure and sanctions because U.S. resources were stretched too thin to make a credible threat of military force.

As suggested late in Bush II’s reign, a nuclear Iran was a problem left to the next administration. As journalist Fareed Zakaria wrote in early 2013: “President Obama will face a crisis on Iran. He has categorically ruled out living with a nuclear-armed Iran under a Cold War-style policy of containment. That means either Iran will capitulate to U.S. demands or the
U.S. will go to war with Iran.”\textsuperscript{1011} Political scientist Robert Jervis has pointed out that coercive diplomacy had not worked in several recent cases. The United States used sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and the threat of force in Panama, Kuwait, Serbia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but each time had to make its threat real and went to war. Jervis argues that coercive diplomacy requires a mixture of threats and promises.\textsuperscript{1012} Although all issues of contention between the United States and Iran were still unresolved, diplomatic overtures emerged at the United Nations General Assembly gathering in September 2013. The recent discussions leading to a tentative agreement might suggest that diplomacy works best if detached from threat or crisis scenarios, where U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry credit the value of international sanctions while Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hailed the agreement as a victory that had forced the “collapse of the sanctions regime.”\textsuperscript{1013} At the time of this writing, we leave the subject as an ongoing dilemma.

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{1011} Zakaria, Fareed, “The Year We Reckon with Iran,” \textit{Time}, January 21, 2013.
ANATOMY & TYPOLOGY OF PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter reviews the selected case studies (Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Iraq, and Iran) and a range of additional cases of U.S. military intervention since the end of the Cold War, including Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Afghanistan, as well as the recent cases of Libya and Syria, in order to build an anatomy and typology of presidential decision making. We will refer to our focused, structured comparison, using the same four categories (systemic, national, individual, and strategic) and the same four questions in applying conclusions from our “go” and “no-go” case studies.

The original impetus for this study was the observed increased frequency of U.S. military intervention since the end of the Cold War. This trend could be shown empirically (see Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4) and merely accelerated and increased in scope after 9/11, as it was demonstratively evident well before that unprecedented event. In Table 1, during the Cold War era, the United States intervened militarily ten times in forty-five years, from 1945 to 1990. Thus, the frequency with which the U.S. administrations decided to use force was an intervention every 4.5 years. (Intervention = 10/45 years; frequency = 4.5) By comparison, in Table 2, the United States intervened militarily eleven times in twenty-three years, from 1990 to 2013. Thus, the Post-Cold War frequency was an intervention every 2.1 years. (Intervention = 11/23 years; frequency = 2.1). Alternatively, if we do not count the Iraqi and Afghan troop surges as discrete decisions, nine interventions in twenty-three years equals a frequency of 2.55 years. Of significance is the cumulative number of years in wars (if not “at war”) during the Cold War period was 21/45 years = 42% of the time. Even if we use the extended dates of 1960-1975 for the Vietnam War, the United States armed forces were in wars 62% of the time. By contrast, the cumulative number of years in wars during the Post-Cold War period equals 30/23 = 130% of the time. Note
that we have rounded off the beginning and ending dates of the interventions, counting a day as one year (for example, the Mayaguez engagement consisted of three days of action, but we count it as one year).

**TABLE 1—COLD WAR ERA INTERVENTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Truman-Eisenhower</td>
<td>1950-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon I</td>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba (Bay of Pigs)**</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam***</td>
<td>Johnson-Nixon</td>
<td>1965-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (Mayaguez)</td>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran I (Desert One)</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon II</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excluded events (by definition) are Greece 1948, Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Chile 1973, as well as El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan in the 1980s, since these actions did not involve “boots on the ground.”

** Some may question the Bay of Pigs as example, since U.S. troops were not directly involved on the ground.

***The beginning of U.S. intervention in the Vietnam War arguably could be dated as early as 1960 (Eisenhower) or 1961 (Kennedy) and the end point as late as 1975 with the fall of Saigon.

**TABLE 2—POST-COLD WAR INTERVENTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Bush I</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Bush I-Clinton</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia (Phase II)</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2001-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq Redux</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2003-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq (Troop Surge)*</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan (Troop Surge)*</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The decision-making for the “troop surges” in Iraq by Bush II and Afghanistan by Obama involved similar considerations as the original intervention decisions, although
there is a fundamental difference between initiating an intervention and expanding or contracting the operation.

If we consider a subcategory of “fail” apart from “go” and “no-go,” three of the listed cases would fit that designation: Cuba (Bay of Pigs), Iran I (Desert One), and Lebanon II. Table 3 presents a subjective listing of non-interventions in the Cold War era. It is important to note that Berlin Crisis I (1949), Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), and Arab-Israeli War IV (1973) involved proactive actions akin to intervention short of the use of force and led to acceptable outcomes. These actions were the Berlin airlift, Cuban “quarantine,” and Soviet-American mutual deterrence and “shuttle diplomacy.”

### TABLE 3—COLD WAR ERA NON-INTERVENTIONS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berlin Crisis I</td>
<td>Truman</td>
<td>1948-1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suez Crisis</td>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin Crisis II</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban Missile Crisis</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli War IV</td>
<td>Nixon</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Ford-Carter</td>
<td>1976-1978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presents a list of “no-go” decisions in the Post-Cold War period. As in the preceding era, the list of non-interventions could be expanded indefinitely, but the abovementioned events would seem to be the most prominent cases.

### TABLE 4—POST-COLD WAR NON-INTERVENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia (Phase I)</td>
<td>Bush I-Clinton</td>
<td>1992-1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan (al-Qaeda)</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2004-2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Bush II</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Darfur (South Sudan)  Bush II    2007
Georgia (South Ossetia War) Bush II    2008
Syria*    Obama    2013
*The case of Syria went from “no-go” to “go” and back to “no-go” for the Obama administration in September 2013.

We selected the case studies in the preceding chapters on the basis of the following criteria: to have a “go” and “no-go” decisions from each of the three consecutive—Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II—in order to compare different decisions made by an administration and to compare decisions across administrations. The Persian Gulf War was selected because the intervention to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait was the most traditional intervention of the post-Cold War period and the largest U.S. military undertaking since the Vietnam War. The non-intervention in Bosnia was significant because the successor administration decided differently. The non-intervention in Rwanda was important because it was colored by previous intervention experiences and influenced subsequent decisions. The intervention in Kosovo was notable in comparison to the previous decisions for Bosnia and in contrast to the case of Rwanda. Bush II’s Iraq decision making was selected for its obvious comparison with Bush I’s decision making in the Persian Gulf War. Lastly, Bush II’s policy toward Iran illustrates how the gap between capabilities and desire imposed realistic limitations on action.

TABLE 5–SELECTED CASE STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>DECISION</th>
<th>FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persian Gulf War</td>
<td>Go</td>
<td>I. International, IV. Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>No-Go</td>
<td>III. Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>No-Go</td>
<td>I. International, III. Individual, IV. Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>Go</td>
<td>I. International, III. Individual, IV. Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Go</td>
<td>I. International, III. Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>No-Go</td>
<td>IV. Military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illustrates the selected case studies and prioritizes the variables that factored into the intervention or non-intervention. Each “go” decision entailed international or systemic factors (category I), while two of three “no-go” decisions involved individual or ideological
factors (category III) and two of three “no-go” decisions were influenced by military uncertainty (category IV). Two “go” decisions were facilitated by a realistically optimistic military strategy, whereas two of the three “no-go” cases (Bush I, Bosnia and Clinton, Rwanda) were determined by individual factors in which the commander-in-chief and his key aides saw little to gain and much to lose by intervening (category III). Importantly, no case of intervention was found to be driven by the force of public opinion, political constituencies, or domestic interest groups (category II).

An anatomy of presidential decision making will emerge from a review of our focused, structured comparison by reviewing our four questions and four categories of factors.

1. Why had some intrastate or regional conflicts become international crises (by definition), where decision-makers came to believe they were compelled to act?

Given the absence of a countervailing force or major power to serve as deterrent, such as the Soviet enemy in the Cold War period, there are potentially two types of military interventions: (1) humanitarian intervention designed to stop potential genocide and other atrocities and (2) the pre-emptive reaction to terrorism or other threats, regionally or globally, such as under the Bush doctrine. Note that Antizzo categorizes three types of interventions: active, reactive, and restorative/humanitarian.\(^\text{1014}\) The “go” decisions of the post-Cold War period, including the detailed case studies considered herein, all involved a U.S. leadership or hegemonic role, triggered by alliance pressure, coordinated response with IGO (i.e., NATO or UN) member states, or a policy paradigm, such as the Bush doctrine or War on Terrorism. The Persian Gulf War (Bush I) entailed the strangest of bedfellows, the Saudis and Israelis, as allies; Bosnia and Kosovo (Clinton) interventions and diplomatic efforts had been urged on by NATO

partners; and the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars (Bush II) fit under the umbrella of the Bush doctrine and War on Terrorism. The interventions in Panama (Bush I) and Haiti (Clinton) did not represent international crises on the order of the Persian Gulf War, nor did they entail pressure from alliance partners or international organizations, such as the UN or NATO, but both cases were located in the backyard of the United States. Geography counts!

Furthermore, to some extent, all intervention decisions involved a moral argument (at least, for propaganda or “spin”). Nonetheless, we distinguish between morality and legality; in the Panama scenario, the legality of invading and apprehending the titular head of government of a sovereign state was dubious—however odious that individual might be. Corruption was widespread during Manuel Noriega's rule, and he was able to use his power to imprison and sometimes kill any who opposed him. In 1987, a former officer of the Panamanian defense force publicly accused Noriega of cooperating with Colombian drug producers. The United States responded by imposing strict sanctions that took an extensive toll on the country. On December 15, 1989, the Panamanian legislature declared Noriega president (he had previously ruled informally without such a title) and that the United States and Panama were in a state of war. Following the shooting of a U.S. Marine, President George Bush I ordered Operation Just Cause, December 20, 1989, an invasion consisting of more than 25,000 soldiers. The mission was controversial due to the resulting loss of hundreds of Panamanian lives and the subsequent damage to Panama City and El Chorillo. The military was quickly able to achieve its goals as Noriega surrendered on January 3, 1990. He was taken to the United States, tried, convicted, and jailed on drug trafficking charges and subsequently served a 40-year sentence in Miami.

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1015 Noriega was actually taken into custody by U.S. Marshalls, insofar as he was being brought back for trial in the United States under federal charges. Source: Darrell Washington, Intern, United States Marshall Service, circa 1990, private communication.
The foremost outcome of the Panamanian adventure was demonstration of U.S. resolve to use force. As a quintessential realist, it is doubtful that National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had much faith in the United States being able to install democracy and demolish the drug trade in Panama. For President Bush I, the primary importance of Panama was diminishing, though not quite “kicking,” the Vietnam syndrome.

In Haiti, a coup d’état overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, September 1991. Subsequently, Aristide fled into exile and supporters of his party, Lavalas, were subjected to repression at the hands of the police and military. The Clinton administration moved covertly and publicly against the military junta, October 4, 1993. U.S. task force commander and staff, numbering six people, secreted into Port-au-Prince and joined Special Forces “trainers” already there. Defense Secretary Les Aspin had delayed deployment of Psy Ops teams “on the ground.” Attachés (right-wing paramilitary militia) carried out small “probes,” while Haitian military junta leader, Joseph Raoul Cédras, called the dispatch of the USS Harlan County, under UN authorization, an “invasion.” The warship attempted to dock in Port-au-Prince with U.S. Special Forces and Canadian troops onboard, November 11, 1993. Pro-junta operatives chanted: “Somalia! Dead American soldiers.” Unprepared for a hostile landing, the USS Harlan County withdrew. Given long-term cooperation and short-term verbal support from the United States for the Haitian army, “Cedras found it impossible to believe that the U.S. would actually

1021 Ibid., pp. 30-31.
1022 Ibid., p. 32.
Diplomatically, the Clinton administration had “brokered” the failed Governors Island Agreement, July 1993. According to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the agreement “floundered on the cynicism and brutality of the Haitian regime.” National Security Adviser Anthony Lake advocated a “force-based strategy,” but Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili had “doubts.” Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr. supported intervention on the basis of a moral argument, saying that returning Haitian refugees would be like “throwing crabs back into a barrel.” The Clinton White House benefitted from successful diplomacy at the last minute, and the Haitian operation proceeded with a bloodless intervention. The case of Haiti involved no clear and present danger to the United States and was largely motivated by humanitarianism (refugees) and political concern for democracy in the region. Moreover, sending troops to Haiti in 1994 was reminiscent of U.S. interventionism under the Roosevelt Corollary of the Monroe Doctrine a hundred years ago.

The non-intervention in Rwanda was a stillborn humanitarian operation that may or may not have prevented or minimized bloodshed if it had occurred. The most profound result of the “no-go” in Rwanda was that decision makers hence thought twice about hesitating in humanitarian crises to follow.

The non-intervention in Iran was determined by a confluence of domestic and external factors that proscribed the Bush II administration from fully engaging the issue of Iranian nuclear weapons development as a threat to international stability. One could imagine few issues being so crucial, but Bush II was unable to act effectively due to declining support at home, decreased

1023 Ibid., p. 33.
1026 The latter day variant of “gunboat diplomacy” was admittedly different. In 1915, U.S. troops stayed to occupy Haiti for twenty years, expressing Woodrow Wilson’s “missionary diplomacy” to coerce Latin and Caribbean countries “to elect good men.”
prestige abroad, and overstretched military resources. Thus, the gap between capabilities and desire imposed realistic limitations on action. Once again, we are reminded of Lincoln’s dictum: one war at a time! 

The South Ossetia War could be characterized as a “near-miss” or “no-go” in the Bush II administration. Geography cuts both ways! Russian regional hegemony deterred overt deployment of U.S. forces in the South Ossetia-Georgia War. The Bush II White House accused Russia of “bullying and intimidation” and described the conflict as an “incursion by one of the world’s strongest powers to destroy the democratically elected government of a smaller neighbor.” Bush II decided against military action to defend Georgia because it would inevitably lead to a confrontation with Russia and therefore limited U.S. interference to lending Georgia humanitarian aid. Although the Cold War was no longer the operative context, Russia’s regional presence was sufficient to limit U.S. involvement in the South Ossetia-Georgia conflict.

The case of Barack Obama’s approval of the Afghan troop surge is an example of the difference between initiating an intervention and modifying, indeed escalating, an ongoing operation. A premature withdrawal or perpetual stalemate would likely have contributed to further regional instability. Obama’s “go” decision for Libya in 2011 and “no-go” decision for Syria in 2013 derived from U.S. hegemonic leadership and continuing military presence in Western Asia (a.k.a. Middle East) since 2001. The positive outcome of the “lift and strike” and

1027 There is a Cold War analogy to the case of Iran in abortive plans to “pre-empt” China’s bomb facilities in the 1960s under both Kennedy and Nixon.
“lead from behind” strategy in Libya proved cost-free in terms of U.S. casualties. The Libyan action became a model for the abortive “go” in Syria, September 9, 2013. This case emerged from the ongoing political instability in the Arab Middle East since the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2011. United States hegemonic leadership would compel action. Otherwise, U.S. credibility and President Obama’s competence would be called into question. Nevertheless, Obama initially resisted going into Syria for more than two years. Unspoken was the impediment of considerable Russian investment and property (including port facilities) in Syria. The humanitarian component came to the fore because of Bashir Assad’s regime reportedly using chemical weapons against unarmed civilians. The commander-in-chief then framed the need to respond in international terms: “I didn’t set a red line. The world set a red line.”

Hence, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power explained that a limited strike (“no boots on the ground” became a mantra) “to degrade Assad’s capacity” to use chemical or biological weapons again. Failure to act would mean “our will to lead is compromised.” Ambassador Power invoked lessons of the past (i.e., Holocaust) and founding principles of the United Nations that dictated U.S. responsibility to stop such crimes against humanity. Power explained, since Russia would veto any UN Security Council action, the United States had to lead an ad-hoc coalition.

The Syrian case illustrated the tension between rivalry and cooperation with Russia. Hence, acknowledgment by the United States (Obama) that Russia (Putin) had a role to play, as well as allowing the Russians to protect their stake in Syria, gave the Obama administration “wiggle room.” (That is, if a “red line” could have wiggle room.) However, the bottom line was that Obama’s “go” decision in Syria ran aground on the rocks of unexpected domestic opposition and lack of international support, most crucially the British failure to back the plan. Regardless, an

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1031 Power, Samantha, Address, Center for American Progress, C-Span, September 6, 2013.
intervention in Syria in 2013 could have been justified for reasons of hegemony, humanitarianism, and regional stability. As casualties mount and negotiations falter, the current presidential administration (or the next) might well be faced with a similar decision-making scenario in the near future.

2. Why did a president decide to intervene where his predecessor or successor may have weighed largely identical considerations in the same scenarios at a different stage?

“Since the 1990s and the end of the Cold War, decisions on whether or not to intervene militarily have become, in many ways, more complex,” one scholar has observed. “Yet, paradoxically, it is easier for the U.S. to intervene.”\textsuperscript{1032} Thus, a consistent and truly predictive theory of presidential decision making in terms of military intervention eludes us.\textsuperscript{1033} Decision making is pushed or pulled to change direction by new perceptions and a convergence of contributing factors; i.e., no single factor is imperative. The protracted length of a crisis (such as Bosnia or Iraq) or recurrence in a troublesome region (Kosovo) seem to have been attractive for intervention. Military action appears more likely if it had occurred before and if troops were already in the region or nearby. Therefore, continuity and momentum are important keys.

The Bush I administration’s intervention in the Persian Gulf War represented a reversal of the “tilt” toward Iraq, as illustrated by the Reagan administration’s Nimble Archer and Praying Mantis operations, 1987-1988. Nevertheless, a precedent of involvement had been established. Hence, Clinton followed continuity and momentum with four major retaliatory raids on Iraqi targets, 1993, 1996, and 1998, ultimately setting the stage for Bush II’s second Iraq War in 2003.

\textsuperscript{1033} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
Somalia represented continuity, initiated as one of Bush I’s final acts and carried on by Clinton with generally agreed-upon unsatisfactory results. The operation went badly when the mission changed from humanitarian aid and rescue to an offensive operation (“Get Aideed!”). In the case of Somalia, beginning in August 1993, U.S. Army Rangers attempted to capture Mohammed Farah Aideed for attacking UN peacekeepers; Aideed eluded capture for months, set a trap for the U.S. peacekeepers, and ultimately killed eighteen troops in the well-known “Black Hawk Down” incident at Mogadishu (October 3-4, 1993).1034

Rwanda was not on Bush I’s radar, but Clinton’s reluctance to intervene became a critical aspect of the story. The president himself believed his reputation had been damaged by the Mogadishu debacle and hence was resistant to the idea of going into Haiti or Rwanda. To avoid repeating one kind of mistake, Clinton made another, ineffectually standing by as thousands were slaughtered. Afterward, the Clinton administration reversed course and moved diplomatically and militarily in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Haiti was characterized by initial hesitation as a direct consequence of the failed operation in Somalia. Bush I had initially opted for a diplomatic track (circa 1993), whereas Clinton attempted a show of force (USS Harlan County), but pulled back in the face of orchestrated opposition. Clinton soon declared: “I’m never going to wimp out like I did in Haiti again.”1035 Hence, concerns for regional (hemispheric) stability, moral or humanitarian concern for refugees, and domestic political pressure combined to convince Clinton to intervene. Nevertheless, the macho factor persists in questions of the use of force. Bush I shed his “wimp” image with his actions in Panama and Kuwait.1036 Clinton was accused of employing a “Wag the Dog” strategy by a few conservative voices when he launched the tomahawk missile attacks in

1034 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 199.
Sudan and Afghanistan (August 1998) and air strikes against Iraqi targets (December 1998) allegedly in order to divert attention from his impeachment proceedings.  

Bosnia represented continuity from Bush I to Clinton, with both presidents preferring diplomacy and a European solution during what we refer to as Phase I (1992-1995), but changed course in the face of alliance pressure and humanitarian concerns. Initially, the Bush I administration did not consider the intra-state conflict in Bosnia to be a destabilizing international event, nor one that threatened U.S. alliance partners. Alliance pressure (through NATO and UN) and worldwide outcry over ethnic cleansing and atrocities approaching genocide prompted the Clinton White House’s reaction in Phase II. The U.S.-led NATO bombing raids and the negotiated Dayton peace accords exemplified Clinton’s successful diplomacy backed by force.

Kosovo followed the perceived success of Bosnia, facilitated by continued presence in the former Yugoslavia, continuity of alliance and organizational obligations, and humanitarian concerns. In this case, momentum and continuity derived from success in Bosnia seem to have driven the Clinton White House, led by Madeline Albright, toward pro-active intervention in Kosovo.

A more militant Clinton not only struck al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan (and Sudan), but also had the Pentagon draw up the Afghan war plan later implemented by Bush II. Two U.S. embassies were bombed in Kenya and Tanzania, August 7, 1998. Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet (who served as DCI from 1996 to 2004) informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff about Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, August 14, 1998. The decision made by Clinton was to hit targets in Afghanistan and Sudan with tomahawk missiles. The Congressional leadership (i.e., Newt Gingrich, Dick Gephardt, Trent Lott, and Tom Daschle) was briefed regarding the

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strikes on al-Qaeda. One explanation for a higher level of consultation was because Clinton’s argument for retaliating against al-Qaeda was stronger than the reasons for the actions against Iraq in 1993 and 1996 due to the terroristic attack on property, loss of lives, and two “fatwahs” on the United States.\(^{1038}\) This action served as a precedent for Bush II’s 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, establishing momentum from one administration to the next.

Richard Haass, adviser for both the Bush I and Bush II administrations, contrasted the two wars against Iraq. Bush I’s Persian Gulf War was a “traditional war” to oppose aggression and restore equilibrium to the regional order. (See Chapter 2.) Bush II’s Operation Iraqi Freedom was a “radical” pre-emptive war designed to overthrow Saddam Hussein’s government and invent a new democratic Iraq to serve as a model to transform the Arab Middle East. (See Chapter 6.)

Continuity of policy constrained the Obama administration’s decision making in setting a terminal date for Iraqi operations (2009) and the Afghan troop surge (2010) and timetable for withdrawal (2014).\(^{1039}\) Conversely, momentum can operate in reverse as well, as witnessed by Obama’s “no-go” decisions for Iran and Syria, influenced by the specter of flawed if not quite failed interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq under Bush II’s watch. (See Question #4 on lessons learned.)

Bush II pursued a policy based on “two ticking clocks” in Iran: one counted down to an Iranian nuclear weapon; the other marked time for the strengthening of domestic opposition to the Iranian regime. Both clocks ticked away as Bush II’s attempts failed to engage Iran diplomatically while squeezing the regime with sanctions. The military option ruled itself out by the time Bush II passed the baton to Obama. On Iran, former CIA Director and Defense


Secretary Leon Panetta ominously prophesied: “They are not likely to give up nuclear enrichment … We will have to use military force.”\(^{1040}\) Therefore, the Obama administration had nothing to lose and everything to gain by opening up a dialogue with the Islamic Republic in 2013. As Secretary of State John Kerry put it: “When you’re dealing with nuclear weapons, it’s not an issue of trust. Verification is the key.”\(^{1041}\) In the final analysis, the Iranian government perceives its nuclear development in the context of sovereign rights and security.\(^{1042}\) The United States and the United Nations can identify steps to be taken to resolve the nuclear issue, but the United States should not be solely responsible for resolving the crisis. As long as the Obama administration avoids the military option, the United States can continue a more constructive dialogue.

3. **How much do individual human factors (psychology, ideology, worldview, or management style) have a determinative effect?**

Are decisions determined by the leadership (or management) style of the commander-in-chief, or mostly shaped by the self-motivated players participating in the decision-making process (i.e., what Condoleezza Rice called the “rarified staff“\(^{1043}\))? If the style and personality of the chief executive are the drivers, should we seek answers in personal ideology (e.g., “nontraditional” and “altruistic” goals;\(^ {1044}\) “rhetoric of justice“;\(^ {1045}\) and “legality” versus “morality”\(^ {1046}\)), generational experience (e.g., World War II and Vietnam War analogues in the


\(^{1041}\) Secretary of State John Kerry, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, December 10, 2013, Washington, DC. See also “John Kerry Defends Iran Deal, Calling it an Important ‘First Step,’” *Huffington Post*, November 24, 2013.


Persian Gulf War, as noted by Woodward\(^{1047}\), and reasoning by historical analogies,\(^{1048}\) or, as Greenstein\(^{1049}\) puts it, the President’s “vision of public policy” and “cognitive style”? To this we might add the environment and perception of threat as context for presidential decisions. Insider extraordinaire Condoleezza Rice has engaged the discussion: “Early in his administration, President Barack Obama would say that in the days after the attacks on New York and Washington, the Bush [II] administration ‘made decisions based on fear.’ Well, yes, we did, but not from irrational fear or paranoia.”\(^{1050}\) According to Greenstein, “the matter of who occupies the nation’s highest office can have profound repercussions.”\(^{1051}\) Greenstein further asserts: “the president’s latitude for independent action is even greater in the unstructured post-Cold War world than it was during the Cold War when the threat of mutual destruction concentrated minds and constrained actions.”\(^{1052}\)

Therefore, the absence of “mutually assured destruction” as a constraint might explain the general trend toward increasingly frequent military intervention since the Cold War ended. However, each of the Oval Office’s occupants in the current era (Bush I, Clinton, Bush II, and Obama) have encountered the limitations of projected power. For example, Bush I cut off Desert Storm without continuing on to Baghdad; Clinton shied away from Bosnia, Haiti, and Rwanda in the aftermath of Somalia; Bush II lacked the wherewithal (though perhaps not the will) to intervene militarily against Iran; and Obama agonizingly labored over the decisions on Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria.

Historical analogies invariably come into play, whether or not the lessons are applied rationally. Bill Clinton’s historical reference point in the Haitian crisis was Ronald Reagan’s

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\(^{1048}\) Kessler, Military Intervention.


\(^{1050}\) Rice, No Higher Honor, p. 184.

\(^{1051}\) Greenstein, The Presidential Difference, p. 2.

\(^{1052}\) Ibid., 2004, p. 4.
invasion of Grenada following his “cut and run” from Lebanon. Clinton wanted his people to
give him a “win” after fumbling Somalia. 1053 Clinton was “furious” and thought the NSC had put
him in a “lose-lose” situation and decried the “lack of positive spin his White House was putting
on events.” White House Chief of Staff George Stephanopoulos met with Lake and Sandy Berger
after Clinton’s “tongue lashing.” Stephanopoulos was aghast: “Grenada? That’s how we should
handle things? Like Reagan?” 1054

The management style unavoidably influences the quality of decision making. The
collegial style of the Bush I decision makers supported a successful small-scale intervention in
Panama and another successful intervention on a massive scale in the Persian Gulf War, whereby
the institutional (Baker, Cheney), military (Powell, Schwarzkopf), and personal advisers
(Scowcroft) all “owned” the decisions made by the President. The improvisational or ad-hoc
approach of Clinton’s key players led to “messiness” and a chaotic process so that the decisions
to act militarily or not were reversed in the cases of Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. The “no-go”
decision in Rwanda, to some extent, was the result of the fact that middle managers such as
Prudence Bushnell and Susan Rice lacked direct access to the Secretary of State and President,
and the Canadian field commander, Romeo Dallaire, stood outside the normal chain of command
and communication. The “go” decision in Kosovo was affected by change of personnel, as
cautious Warren Christopher was replaced by Madeline Albright, an outspoken advocate of the
“indispensable nation.” The influence of prominent advisers permeated the Clinton ad-hocracy,
where the Secretaries of State Christopher and Albright and National Security Advisers Lake and
Berger strongly influenced the President’s thinking.

The Bush II administration was dominated by strong-willed politicos—Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and Perle—with a coherent agenda and a penchant for “office politics.” Important players, including Powell, Rice, O’Neill, and others carried out policies with which they had serious reservations and suffered in the midst of a conflict-ridden environment. Whereas, early on, the Vice President emerged as a dominant personality, Cheney was later superseded by Condi Rice. Yet, throughout the Bush II years, decisions were made privately, behind the scenes, and rubber-stamped at formal meetings. This practice led to narrow input and flawed decisions.

Paradoxically, the very different profiles of the Clinton administration, dominated by the chief executive’s personality, and the Bush II administration, where the boss was often overshadowed by some of his own key players, yielded outcomes heavily influenced by the President’s team.

In the case of Rwanda, more than one key player, including the Secretary of State and the ambassador in country, seem to have been blinded by their policy preference for a political settlement and a belief that the situation was no worse than normal for an African civil war, while those in a position to see how drastic the Rwanda case would become, such as Prudence Bushnell, operated in the shadows of the policy-making structure, without access to, or influence on, the POTUS. Just as an intervention in Haiti, like Rwanda, was initially feared as a potential reprise of the Mogadishu disaster (circa 1993), the later “go” decision on Haiti (circa 1994) was heavily influenced by remorse over not acting in Rwanda.

Iraq redux was the result of a policy process that was a backformation, whereby the decision was predetermined in search of an acceptable rationale. As has been well documented, key figures, including Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, among others, had Iraq in their crosshairs a
matter of days after 9/11 and sought justification for their preferred course in any intelligence that suited their predetermined narrative. They saw decapitating Saddam’s regime as a perfect fit for their “long war” on terrorism.

On the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, initiated by Bush II and inherited by Obama, the crossover player was Robert Gates. The Defense Secretary considered Bush II “a mature leader who had walked a supremely difficult path,” and called Obama “the most deliberative president I worked for.” Gates was critical of Bush II’s adversarial attitude toward traditional allies that were skeptical of the Iraqi venture, such as Germany and France, and lamented that Obama had no “passion” for the Iraqi and Afghan wars. The other transitional figure was David Petraeus, even though his tenure as CIA chief was aborted by personal scandal. Anomalously, Obama initially relied on a National Security Adviser with a military background, Jim Jones, a retired Marine Corps General. Jones was succeeded by a Beltway insider, Thomas E. Donillon, who had “no credibility with the military” and no rapport with NSC staff. Therefore, not until Susan Rice became National Security Adviser in June 2013 would the job be filled by someone with a strong personal or political relationship with the POTUS, which should be a prerequisite for that most sensitive position.

Momentum from the success of the “lead from behind” strategy in Libya was countered by Obama’s aversion to over-commitment in the manner of Bush II. Thus did Obama deploy naval and air forces against Khaddafi’s regime instead of ground combat troops. The views and influence of key players—Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Samantha Power, Bob

Gates, Leon Panetta, Admiral Mullin, and General Petreus would be fruitful ground for further study. Hence, a similar approach was proposed in the case of Syria—*military offshoring* with limited objectives (i.e., punishment of Assad for use of chemical weapons and the eventual ouster of Assad, or “slow motion” regime change).

On the question of Iran, if there had been a division between hawks and doves in Bush II, an array of factors reinforced the latter, most prominently the rise of Condoleezza Rice’s influence versus the decline of Cheney’s. Subsequently, an inclination toward personal diplomacy and summitry was evident in Barack Obama’s enlisting of Putin’s intercession in the case of Syria and reaching out telephonically to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in 2013 to open discussions. A great investment of moral suasion on the part of Obama or Kerry in conflict resolution on Syria, Iran, or, more recently, Ukraine, would inevitably exact a high cost in personal credibility and run the risk of floundering under the riptides of domestic politics.

4. *How did lessons learned, positive or negative, from previous intervention or nonintervention scenarios tend to have a cumulative effect within the life span of an administration and from one presidency to the next?*

“The highly personalized nature of the modern presidency makes the strengths and weaknesses of the White House incumbent of the utmost importance,” as Greenstein puts it. More specifically, he posits, “presidents who steep themselves in the record of their predecessors will be better equipped for their responsibilities if they are able to do so. Members of the public are likely to make wiser electoral choices if they are able to place presidential contenders in a historical context.”

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The cumulative effects of interventions are apparent in Panama serving as a test case for the Persian Gulf War for Bush I. Unlike Panama and the first Iraq War, Bush I saw no vital interests at stake in the former Yugoslavia, but agreed to join a multilateral humanitarian operation in Somalia. The dramatic events in Rwanda followed a parallel timeline as the political crises in Somalia and Haiti. For Clinton, a bad outcome in Somalia poisoned the well in the cases of Haiti and Rwanda, leading to an aversion to involvement, until each of those crises continued and worsened. Henceforth, Rwanda suffered from bad karma due to Haiti and Somalia. The failure of the non-intervention in Rwanda prompted the Clinton White House to move on Haiti, with a more than credible threat of force in the form of a massive invasion flotilla that entered the country peacefully after a negotiated settlement. Hence, the Clinton administration demonstrated its hesitance after Somalia and the emptiness of its resolve to intervene. Not without irony is the fact of the U.S. intervention in Haiti by way of a diplomatic initiative and bloodless invasion in September 1994, following the seeming “mistake” of non-intervention in Rwanda. The “win” in Haiti made a change of course in Bosnia (Phase II) in 1994-1995 seem less out of the question. The fruitful sanctions, military action, and negotiation in the Bosnian conflict cleared the pathway for a more resolute determination to make a commitment to Kosovo by 1999, even as that commitment ruled out “boots on the ground.”

Bush II’s comparatively easy toppling of the Taliban regime and casting its al-Qaeda allies into disarray in Afghanistan, 2001, provided a promising precursor for the Iraq War, launched in 2003. The expected trajectory of Iraq redux was reasonably assumed to reprise the experience of Desert Shield and Desert Storm, 1990-1991. Notwithstanding the order of

1060 Von Hippel, Democracy by Force, pp. 55ff.
magnitude greater difficulty of regime change and besieging Baghdad, the active combat of the second war was expected to take merely three weeks, just as the first war had.\textsuperscript{1062} Subsequently, the prolonged insurgency, difficult nation-building, and accumulating numbers of casualties overwhelmed the initial popularity of both the Bush II presidency and its wars, in the end scuttling hypothetical plans for military action against Iran, North Korea, Syria, or anywhere else. The cumulative effect of Bush II’s preceding interventions defined a clear set of limitations for the administration. In addition to intervention fatigue and tolerance for casualties, U.S. military resources were overstretched by 2006-2008. As Condoleezza Rice stated most succinctly: “It was well understood that we didn’t have the bandwidth for unilateral confrontation with Iran and North Korea, given the situation in Iraq.”\textsuperscript{1063}

\textit{I. International, systemic, or structural factors:}

The Persian Gulf War of 1991-1992, as a prototypical case, was precipitated by an action most readily defined as a destabilizing event in the international system, at least regionally, threatening the equilibrium of order and power. Additionally, Desert Storm was the most traditional and conventional war for control of territory of the post-Cold War era; other military operations in which the United States had engaged would be classified as wars of attrition, counterinsurgency, and peacekeeping.

The origin of the war in Afghanistan, 2001, traced back to Osama bin Laden’s formation of al-Qaeda (translated as \textit{the base} in Arabic) in 1990.\textsuperscript{1064} Taliban rose to power in Afghanistan in 1994, capitalizing on the \textit{mujahideen}’s factional conflicts after defeating the Soviets and a

\textsuperscript{1063} Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, p. 537.
\textsuperscript{1064} Anderson, \textit{Bush’s Wars}, p. 77.
The systemic objectives of the United States in Afghanistan were twofold: to root out a terrorist enemy and overthrow a rouge state’s regime. However, Bush II’s identification of a “new kind of enemy” in a “different kind of war” was contradicted by the deployment of conventional combat forces and what could be described as a minimalist approach. As historian Terry Anderson points out, “To catch bin Laden at Tora Bora, therefore, General [Tommy] Franks sent only about 40 Special Operations troops and a dozen Special Forces soldiers by early December, aided by about 110 CIA officers,” followed by 4,000 Marines for a total of “less than 5,000 ground troops.” Given the Afghan population of 26 million, Anderson notes, fewer troops were sent to Tora Bora than the number of police officers on the force in a major U.S. city.

The Bush II administration’s second Iraq War, launched in 2003, was conceived as a repeat of the Persian Gulf War and a sequel to the Afghan campaign still underway. Operation Iraqi Freedom was advertised to the world community and U.S. public as vital to international stability—alluding to Saddam Hussein’s noncompliance with twelve years of UN directives and intransigence in the face of international sanctions plus the twin perils of WMDs and state complicity with Islamist terrorists. The assumption that pressure or support from allies should act as a crucial factor in military intervention decisions would be disproved by the case of Iraq redux, as the United States went ahead despite the unexpected and unfavorable reaction of alliance partners, such as Germany, France, and Canada, which had supported the Afghan campaign.

Also noteworthy during Bush II’s tenure were the limited humanitarian mission in the South Ossetia-Georgia conflict and positive diplomatic pressure, including acknowledgement of

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1065 Ibid., p. 80.
1066 Ibid., p. 87.
1067 Ibid.
“genocide,” in the Darfur-Sudan scenario, leading to the independence of South Sudan. In these two cases, the Bush II team was either constrained from more overt military action, or simply avoided the perception of crisis that pervaded their decision making regarding Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Perhaps acting in scenarios that did not present a direct threat to U.S. interests could produce more favorable and less costly outcomes.

II. National, domestic, or internal political:

At the national or domestic political level, in each of our case studies, we tried to weigh the scope and quality of information available to decision makers, the role of institutional players (for example, perceived pressure from Congress) and bureaucratic politics, as well as the impact of public opinion, interest groups, and other constituencies.

How much did institutions factor into their decisions after 9/11? Unilateralism and interventionism may go hand in hand with executive decision making without recourse to Congress and the legal mechanism of the War Powers Resolution. To illustrate, members of Congress may at one point in time be calling for intervention in a particular case, but later may join the chorus of opposition. Therefore, while the institution of Congress tries to exercise influence over the chief executive, the legislative branch probably acts mainly as a loose or intermittent brake rather than a significant or truly influential player. When the House and Senate

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take a vote on a president’s military initiative, it might be close, but there has never been a vote
to halt an ongoing operation. A no vote on Obama’s planned action in Syria would have been
unprecedented, despite the opposition of a collection of liberal and conservative doves.\textsuperscript{1073}

Bureaucratic politics could also subvert effective policy if different governmental players
act at cross purposes. In the case of Haiti, for example, President Clinton had negotiated a deal at
Governors Island (July 3, 1993), but he would not act to enforce the agreement.\textsuperscript{1074} Meanwhile,
the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency had organized and trained
militias (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, FRAPH) to attack Aristide supporters
as well as engaging in drug trafficking and other illegal activities in support of the Armed Forces
of Haiti (FADH).\textsuperscript{1075} This subverted Clinton’s policy toward Haiti, not only by enabling the
junta’s foot soldiers, but also by subtly implying that the U.S. administration’s public opposition
to the regime masked support behind the scenes.

The so-called “CNN effect” played a crucial role in the way the Bosnian drama played
out.\textsuperscript{1076} According to the CNN effect: the news media set the agenda; impede achieving policy
goals; and accelerate decision making. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the worldwide media
framed the issue as genocide, a moral imperative.\textsuperscript{1077} Although the idea that media had driven
foreign policy in cases such as Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo had been exaggerated,\textsuperscript{1078}
worldwide news coverage might have a significant effect.\textsuperscript{1079} Hanson has determined that the
global media largely respond to issues raised by other actors rather than setting the agenda for

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{1075} Sarcochis, pp. 29-30.
\bibitem{1076} Livingston, Steven. \textit{Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military
\bibitem{1078} Robinson, Piers, \textit{The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention} (London: Routledge,
2002).
\bibitem{1079} Hanson, Elizabeth C., \textit{The Information Revolution and World Politics} (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).
\end{thebibliography}
Moreover, Strobel has contended that policy makers are unlikely to be dissuaded by alternative courses proposed in the media.

The weight of public opinion varies between short-term and long-term effects. In the first Iraq war, Bush I kept his finger on the country’s pulse, making sure the people were with him. As the venture against Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was quickly victorious, the public’s support remained high. Conversely, in the second Iraq war, initial support waned and ultimately cast a shadow over the Bush II’s administration as the conflict wore on for eight years. The rally effect also revealed itself in more than one case. Clinton’s intervention in Kosovo should be instructive as public opinion opposed sending American troops into the former Yugoslavia by a slight margin when it was a hypothetical possibility, but, within a matter of days, when the decision to do so became a reality, the scales were tipped in support of intervening (see Chapter 5).

Perhaps, the cumulative effects of intervention fatigue contributed to the Obama administration’s “no-go” in Syria following action in Libya two years earlier. A Pew survey found only 27% of the public believed the United States had a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Libya in March 2011 with 63% disagreeing. In the same survey, while 51% supported increasing sanctions against Libya, only 16% supported bombing raids and 13% supported sending troops. A majority of those opposed to intervening in Libya stated the reason was that U.S. armed forces were already overcommitted. This shift in opinion is clearly a long-term trend. A Quinnipiac survey showed disapproval of Obama’s foreign policy,

1080 Ibid., pp. 105-108.
1082 In April 1999, a Pew poll found 47% of Americans in favor of U.S. and NATO military action in Kosovo and 48% opposed. However, when military action was specifically designated “to end [the] conflict,” 51% approved and 42% disapproved. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, Poll Data, April, June, July 1999.
1083 Pew Research Center, March 10-13, 2011.
1084 Ibid.
52% to 40%. Majorities of 61% percent said that involvement in Syria was not in U.S. national interest and 59% opposed aiding Syrian rebels. A recent USA Today/Pew Institute poll showed a majority (52%) thought the United States failed to achieve its goals in Iraq. By contrast, 56% said the United States had largely succeeded when most troops were pulled out in November 2011. On Afghanistan, 52% of Americans believed the United States had mostly failed to achieve its goals. A majority considered the war in Afghanistan successful, according to a similar survey in 2011. In general, public support for military intervention has shown a steep decline since 9/11, if not throughout the entire post-Cold War period, precisely because of the increased frequency of these wars.

Tolerance for casualties is unquestionably a factor, but a difficult one to quantify. For example, the Persian Gulf War’s toll of 150 killed in action was considered minimal, whereas 18 Army Rangers lost at Mogadishu was received as a large number. Over time, the impact of casualties could become decisive, as the Bush II administration well understood, barring media coverage of caskets bearing Afghanistan and Iraq war dead deplaning at Dover Air Force Base.

Our case studies did not reveal decisive influence by domestic constituencies, such as the Israel lobby pushing intervention against Iraq and Iran, the Congressional Black Caucus calling for intervention in Haiti and Rwanda, or conservative PACs and think tanks promoting a militarized idealistic agenda in the Middle East. Each of those interest groups made their opinions known, but none of them carried sufficient weight to drive policies or decisions of a Democratic or Republican White House.

III. Individual, personal, and ideological factors:

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Greenstein has posited that presidential job performance derives from six qualities: (1) public communication; (2) organizational capacity; (3) political skill; (4) vision of public policy; (5) cognitive style; and (6) emotional intelligence.\textsuperscript{1087} While Clinton excelled in knowing how to use Teddy Roosevelt’s “bully pulpit,” Bush I and Bush II were decidedly weak communicators. Bush I and Clinton were open to vigorous debate within the decision-making circle, but their approaches were worlds apart. However, Bush I’s formal organization and Clinton’s chaotic ad-hocracy both produced favorable outcomes in the Persian Gulf War and Kosovo, respectively. Clinton was the most skilled politico of the three presidential personalities studied in our selected cases. Whereas Bush I lacked “the vision thing,” mirroring the pragmatic realism of his top aides, Baker and Skowcroft, Bush II’s policy-making was infused with his neoconservative idealism, just as Clinton’s liberal idealism underscored his policies. Greenstein proposed that Clinton possessed considerable capacity to synthesize information, but lacked emotional intelligence.\textsuperscript{1088} Thus, according to Greenstein, Clinton took actions that were rationalizations rather than thoughtfully reasoned decisions.

Foreign policy decision makers are susceptible to “reasoning by historical analogies.”\textsuperscript{1089} Vietnam War and World War II analogies pervaded Persian Gulf War decision making.\textsuperscript{1090} The president, a former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, was “optimistic,” but uncertain about the prospects for decisiveness from the UN Security Council, where a Cold War “stalemate” persisted for years.\textsuperscript{1091} “We should not repeat the mistakes made at the beginning of World War II,” stated former naval aviator Bush, which he understood to mean “appeasement of

\textsuperscript{1087} Greenstein, \textit{The Presidential Difference}, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{1088} See \textit{ibid.}, pp. 195-200.
\textsuperscript{1091} Bush and Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, p. 303.
aggression.” Top decision makers in the Bush I administration used a “story model” mode of problem representation in “armed humanitarian intervention” in Bosnia, according to Peterson. The conventional wisdom is that the former Yugoslavia splintered because of age-old ethnic rivalries, after the long reign of Tito. Thus, they missed the impact of Slobodan Milosevic’s quest to consolidate his power by exploiting the force of Serbian nationalism. Brent Scowcroft, the President’s alter ego in foreign policy, practiced “conservative realism” in diplomacy, but his conservatism was less ideological than it was simply cautious. Scowcroft quoted John Quincy Adams: “We are the well-wishers of all who seek freedom. We are the guarantors only of our own.”

In the case of Rwanda, the Clinton administration was loathe to speak the word genocide. Clinton’s inaction fit Janis and Mann’s concept of unconflicted inertia leading to defensive avoidance. Romeo Dallaire claimed that “moral relativism” pervaded the Clinton administration’s thinking. “Risk-free warfare” was humanitarian aid and rescue, not peacekeeping or peace enforcement, and stressed avoidance of “mission creep” in Rwanda. In Kosovo, however, Clinton was not initially inclined to intervene directly with ground or combat forces. Advisers Lake and Berger were similarly dovish. Secretary of State Albright and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Shalikashvili saw the issue through the lens of culture, formative experiences, and ideology owing to their family, personal, and ethno-cultural histories. In league with General Wesley Clark, they pushed Clinton in a more active direction, toward direct intervention. Their motivations were humanitarian and out of concern for political stability.

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1092 Ibid., p. 326.
1093 Peterson, Stories and Past Lessons.
Mann has analyzed that the decision to invade Iraq derived from the ideology and worldview of the key Bush II foreign policy mavens, known as the Vulcans. The Bush II foreign policy makers envisioned something of a new world order well before 9/11 as a function of the new post-Cold War reality.\footnote{Mann, \textit{Rise of the Vulcans}, p. 313.} Unquestionably, the Bush II White House envisioned a “new” Arab-Muslim Middle East.\footnote{O’Sullivan, \textit{Colin Powell}, p. 161.} This vision resulted from “America’s historic missionary zeal to ‘enlighten’ other societies,” in short, “exceptionalism.”\footnote{Daniel Bell quoted in Von Hippel, \textit{Democracy by Force}, p. 19.} Unfortunately, Bush II’s crusade mentality invited acquiescence, if not instigation, of actions at variance with liberal democratic values.\footnote{Dyson, Stephen, \textit{Leaders in Conflict: Bush and Rumsfeld in Iraq} (U.K.: University of Manchester Press, 2014).}

The chief executive, George W. Bush, set the tone for U.S. policy toward Iran in his “Axis of Evil” conceptualization. Bush II proceeded on the assumption that the Ayatollah and mullahs could be toppled in Tehran. His two objectives for Iran—halting nuclear weapons development and strengthening internal democratic forces—failed. A credible threat of force was ultimately not an option, as the cumulative effect of Bush II’s preceding interventions defined a clear set of limitations for the administration.

IV. \textit{Criteria for the use of force:}

Antizzo categorizes three types of direct military interventions—active, reactive, and restorative (peacekeeping/humanitarian).\footnote{Antizzo, \textit{U.S. Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era}.} However, Antizzo’s conceptualization distinguishes conditional circumstances in the first two types and a policy distinction in the third case. This distinction would appear to be a logical inconsistency, insofar as peacekeeping or humanitarian operations may be called either active (for example, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti) or reactive (for example, Somalia, Rwanda, or Syria). Therefore, our typology differentiates two broad
categories: *humanitarian intervention* designed to stop potential genocide and other atrocities, including peacekeeping and peace enforcement, and the *pre-emptive reaction* to terrorism or other threats, which might also be called “wars of choice.” Either type of military intervention could be fought as counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, war of attrition, air and naval strikes (*offshoring* or *virtual war*), or conventional territorial combat. Thus, the two Iraq wars, Afghanistan, and the non-intervention against Iran fall under these categories as well as the regional “teacup wars” in Panama and Haiti. Regardless of the tactics employed, pre-emptive interventions implicitly derive from U.S. hegemony.

#1 – *Have all other options been explored, such as diplomacy, sanctions, or negotiation?*

United States intervention in the Persian Gulf War might be the sole case study where the criteria of the Powell-Weinberger Doctrine were fully engaged: diplomacy; clear-cut political objectives; sufficient resources, money, and personnel; doable strategy and tactics; and an activated exit plan.

In the case of Haiti, the Carter-Powell-Nunn diplomatic mission was not only successful, but also “reassuring” to Latin American nations in contrast to overt “gunboat diplomacy.”

Negotiations were drawn out in the case of Bosnia through phase I (Bush I’s non-intervention) and phase II (Clinton’s turnabout). In the end, Clinton brokered a settlement after NATO air strikes forced the Yugoslav-Serb regime to come to the table. This favorable outcome smoothed the path for a brokered peace in Kosovo, where the opinion of Ignatieff, Keegan, and Halberstam was that Russia’s *de facto* alliance with NATO, withdrawal of support for Milosevic’s regime, and collaboration with NATO peacekeepers comprised the “game changer.” (See Chapter 5.) Bush II’s interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq followed the barest minimum of diplomacy, if

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ultimata could be called diplomacy—demanding that Taliban leader Mullah Omar surrender Osama bin Laden and convincing the UN to give Saddam Hussein “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations” and to renew weapons inspections.\textsuperscript{1104} Indeed, Bush II did not even wait for the inspections and cast doubt on the efficacy of the UN inspectors.

\#2 – \textit{Are the political, diplomatic, or military objectives clearly understood?}

Colin Powell reflected the military’s institutional memory of Vietnam—a limited war spelled disaster.\textsuperscript{1105} Powell further recalled the ill-defined objectives in the Lebanon peacekeeping mission that climaxed in more than two hundred “shattered bodies” of U.S. Marines in 1983 whenever he heard the “well meaning” urgings to intervene in such bloody scenarios.\textsuperscript{1106}

In the cases of Somalia and Rwanda, the desired political outcomes were poorly understood, as was the situation in Bosnia for Bush I as well as for Clinton until the genocidal “ethnic cleansing” became compelling. Hence, in Bosnia and later Kosovo, stopping the fighting meant stopping the slaughter of innocents. In both instances, NATO intervention, led by Washington, ended the civil warfare.

The most profound miscalculation of the Bush II administration in Iraq was not their failure to predict the insurgency—because the architects of the War on Terrorism conspicuously invited it. Bush II’s war hawks should have expected infiltration, based on intelligence about Iraqi links to Islamist militants, even if they exaggerated the threat to “hype” or “sell” the war. Rather, the Bush II team failed to anticipate that the media and public would see the infiltration of \textit{Fedayeen} (Ba’ath guerrillas), foreign militants affiliated with al-Qaeda, and Iranian-backed Shi’ia and other Islamists as evidence of a “hopeless and unwinnable” quagmire like Vietnam.

\textsuperscript{1105} Powell, \textit{My American Journey}, p. 558.
\textsuperscript{1106} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 291.
Perhaps Bush II erred by prematurely shifting the focus of the War on Terrorism from Afghanistan before the Karzai government had sufficiently stabilized the country, not to mention the spillover of the Taliban’s guerrilla war into neighboring Pakistan. The 9/11 Commission stated, “the global conflict against Islamist terrorism became a different kind of struggle. The apparently successful model of Afghanistan, where the CIA employed intelligence, covert capabilities, and cash while the U.S. military supplied firepower and logistics against a counterinsurgency, was applied to Iraq” with deleterious effects.\footnote{\textit{The 9/11 Report}, p. 484.}

\#3 – \textit{Is the battle plan realistic and can the military objectives be effectively maintained?}

According to Van Evera, in the post-Cold War era, the most prominent condition that increases the risk of interstate war is false optimism with respect to the outcome.\footnote{Van Evera, Stephen: \textit{Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).} As discussed in Chapter 3, intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 would have satisfied none of the criteria of the Powell Doctrine. Von Hippel identified three critical issues pertinent to Bosnia in the early 1990s: first, military intervention and use of force; second, peace support operations; and third, nation-building.\footnote{Von Hippel, \textit{Democracy by Force}, p. 168.} If any one of these factors were to fail, the mission would fail. Additionally, Von Hippel suggests that inconsistent policy precedes intervention.\footnote{Ibid., p. 169.} Under Bush I, the United States initially supported Yugoslavia remaining intact, but, when all but two of the constituent republics acted (or made noises) toward independence, some of the European allies backed them, prompting the United States to follow suit.

Had the Clinton administration decided to intervene in Rwanda, how could the United States have effectively done so? An effective strategy would have emphasized nation-building...
and economic development, not only “fire-power intensive strategies.” An African task force investigating the Rwandan debacle found that the genocide could have been prevented, or, at least, significantly curtailed. The United States rejected the UN field commander’s “peace enforcing” proposal as “unworkable.” The Clinton White House touted an alternative “outside-in” plan to create “protected routes” for refugees on Rwanda’s borders without use of air cover. The problem with the plan, backed by Tony Lake and Dick Clarke, was that most refugees were not fleeing to the borders, but were trapped or hidden inside Rwanda. Clarke insisted the U.S. plan was “feasible, doable … in the short term,” but it was not, insofar as refugee camps remained vulnerable to attack, even after the Rwandan genocide and civil war were considered over.

According to Martel, NATO’s credible threat of combat troops on the ground after the protracted bombing campaign led to victory in Kosovo. Yet history does not repeat itself, as generals and civilian policy-makers continue to fight the last war! The NATO Commander in Libya (2011), Canadian General Charles Bouchard, observed that each scenario is unique: “Doctrine wasn’t written for Libya. It was written for Kosovo … You can’t try to adapt Libya to these other theatres. You have to adapt.”

In the case of Iraq redux, “shock and awe,” the post-modern reincarnation of blitzkrieg, aims at demolishing the enemy’s morale as much as its infrastructure. The variant directed by Tommy Franks missed both targets. “I had decided to leave Iraq’s electric power grid

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1114 Martel, *Victory in War*, p. 287.
untouched,” said Franks. In contrast to the top-to-bottom dismantling of the Iraqi
government, military, and police under Saddam Hussein, this would seem equivalent to leaving
the lights on to illuminate an empty house.

In the hypothetical case of Iran, a one-dimensional strategy of precision air strikes against
Iran’s nuclear development program held limited promise. Even if the air strikes destroyed Iran’s
uranium-enrichment and weaponization capacity, they could be reconstituted elsewhere and
would do little to change the regime’s behavior. As George W. Bush himself acknowledged, “a
foreign military intervention would stir up Iranian nationalism and unite the people against
us.” All of the military interventions of the post-Cold War era, with the possible exception of
the Persian Gulf War, targeted small, weak countries. Iran presented a considerably more
formidable enemy. Therefore, Iran’s capacity to withstand an assault and counterattack must
have been a factor in any hypothetical war planning.

#4—Are there sufficient resources to accomplish the mission, in effect, going in with
“overwhelming” force?

Bush I’s Panamanian intervention was one of the few “short but victorious” interventions
since Vietnam. Operation Just Cause was based on a new concept for the U.S. military: a single
commander using overwhelming force comprising conventional and special operations to full
capabilities and in total secrecy (insofar as possible with a free press and media). At the outset,
Colin Powell’s criteria would seem to have been met, but despite some complicating events (one
U.S. Marine killed, another wounded), the first “completely integrated” military strategy for the
U.S. turned out to be an “almost perfect operation.”

1116 Franks, American Soldier, p. 750.
1117 Bush, George W., Decision Points, p. 417.
1118 Huchthausen, America’s Splendid Little Wars, pp. 120-125.
In Bosnia, Clinton originally continued Bush I’s policy, which was based on the criterion that the turmoil in the former Yugoslavia was a European problem. In subsequent years, the Clinton administration, led by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright, argued that the United States should lift the UN arms embargo and initiate air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time, dismissed the “lift and strike” option, whereas Britain and France argued that their peacekeeping troops on the ground would be targets of Serb retaliation.1119 (“We do deserts, not mountains,” Powell allegedly said.1120) Thereafter, variants of “lift and strike” have been employed in Kosovo, Libya, and were proposed for Syria.

In Rwanda, Option 1 was immediately reinforcing the peacekeepers (UNAMIR), beefing up its manpower to 5,000 troops. Option 2 was downsizing the international force from 1,500 to 170 and trying to broker a ceasefire. Option 3 was total withdrawal.1121 UNAMIR Commander Romeo Dallaire’s plan called for an added 5,000 combat troops to secure the capital, then “fan out” to protect tens of thousands of refugees and displaced persons, and “create safe havens” for them. Only the United States had the capability to bring the air power and logistics called for by this plan. At the White House, Richard Clarke and Anthony Lake rejected Dallaire’s “inside-out” plan as unworkable.

By contrast, General Wesley Clark points out that NATO deployed 60,000 troops in Bosnia for a population of four million and 40,000 troops in Kosovo with a population of two million.1122 After six years of Balkan crisis management, Clinton sent in air power against Serbia and was ready, despite his oft stated reluctance, to follow up with a ground invasion of Kosovo.

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1119 Melanson, op. cit., A Post-Cold War Policy.
1120 The earliest attribution may be in the following article: Klein, Joe, “Can Colin Powell Save America,” Newsweek, October 9, 1994.
1121 Albright, Madam Secretary, p. 151.
1122 Clark, Winning Modern Wars, p. 166.
but he did not. Serb-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic believed the threat of U.S. combat troops was real. This outcome demonstrated that a credible threat of force could be as effective as the real thing.

Bush II conducted the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as two steps in a worldwide War on Terrorism by utilizing conventional military forces with the comprehensive objective of regime change, pacifying the country, and rebuilding it as a model for the future. Counterterrorism expert Kilcullen questioned the relevance of classical counterinsurgency theory to modern conflict, arguing that the strategy for the War on Terrorism should be best understood as a “global Islamic insurgency,” initiated by a diffuse group of Islamists with conflicting goals. The absence of such a culturally specific political track illustrated one of the major shortcomings of Bush II’s handling of Iraq redux: the wrong strategy in the wrong war at the wrong place.

The war plan for Iran, TIRANNT, called for a land invasion by Marines, targeting the Iranian missile force, and a global strike plan against Iranian weapons of mass destruction. In June 2004, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld alerted the Strategic Command to be prepared to implement CONPLAN 8022. The Pentagon task force considered global strikes against Iranian targets in Iran, “where the president’s only option might be a nuclear one.” Wisely, Bush II chose not to do so.

#5—Is there an exit strategy and timetable in place for the withdrawal of personnel once the mission’s goals have been achieved?

In the Persian Gulf War, the last criterion was satisfied by Bush I, but has often been criticized for leaving Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq as what some critics saw as “unfinished

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business.” Panama had been Bush I’s test run, apparently short and sweet. Somalia had ended in an embarrassing withdrawal. On the eve of the invasion of Haiti, presuming that the big-name peace mission would fail, Clinton met with key advisers to ask: What happens after U.S. troops enter and overthrow regime? Would there be “substantial resistance” by “small groups of people lightly armed”? How do we prepare for occupation? What would be the “rules of engagement” (ROE)—“military imperatives” versus “domestic police work”?1126 The “immaculate invasion” rendered these considerations moot. Unfortunately, such scrutiny was absent in 2003 in Iraq.

United States troops participated in NATO peacekeeping in Bosnia, starting in 1995. In response to pressure from members of Congress, President Bill Clinton announced U.S. forces would be there for only a year, but those troops were still in place during the 2000 presidential campaign, overlapping the Kosovo campaign.1127

Because the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had dragged on too long, U.S. intervention in Iran by ground troops was a nonstarter by 2007. Apart from limited Special Operations, the United States did not have the ground force numbers to invade and occupy Iran. As a result, the only feasible operation would be the limited use of air and naval forces.1128 In the eighth year of the War on Terrorism and Bush doctrine, the Bush II administration had no exit strategy in place for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan when it turned over power to the Obama administration. No timetable for withdrawal was set in either case till after Bush II’s troop surge in Iraq (2007-2008) and Obama’s uptick in Afghanistan (2011). Never overlook the obvious: U.S. military

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intervention has been hard-pressed to establish exit strategies and end-points. To paraphrase the theme of a play by Sartre, there is “no exit” from hell.\textsuperscript{1129}

CONCLUSION

The Strategic Landpower Task Force white paper, titled \textit{Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills}, proposes that warfare begins and ends in the “human domain.” Thus, “armed conflict is a clash of interests between or among organized groups, each attempting to impose their will on the opposition. In essence it is a fundamentally human endeavor in which the conflict is determined by both parties.”\textsuperscript{1130}

We can categorize two types of interventions: (1) humanitarian aid and rescue, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement; and (2) pre-emptive reaction, strategic, and hegemonic (regional or global). The predominance of alliance influences, continuity of policy, momentum, and lessons learned from prior interventions (categories I and III), weakly tempered by domestic factors (category II), influenced “go” and “no-go” decisions, while the criteria for the use of force were rarely applied, as plans of attack followed rather than led decision making. Presidential administrations tended to decide what they would do before figuring out how they would do it. No single factor dominated the decisions taken in our case studies. Moreover, as comparison of Bush II’s Iraq and Iran policies illustrated, even similar imperatives could lead to different outcomes. Decisions to intervene militarily, including what turned out to be “no-go” decisions, have been “perfect storm” scenarios, whereby a confluence of variables led to the outcome and no single factor was determinative.

All intervention decisions of the post-Cold War era involved a moral argument, at least in part, to sell the decision to the public.\textsuperscript{1131} Whereas ideological blinders and perceived policy imperatives accompanied the Iraq redux intervention, the gap between capabilities and desire imposed realistic limitations on action for not only Bush II on Iran, but for the Obama White House on Syria. Decision making is pushed or pulled to change direction by new perceptions and a convergence of contributing factors (i.e., no single factor is imperative). The protracted length of a crisis (such as Bosnia or Iraq) or recurrence in a troublesome region (Kosovo) seem to have been attractive for intervention. Military action appears more likely if it had occurred before and if troops were already in the region or nearby. Therefore, continuity and momentum are important keys. The decision-making for the “troop surges” in Iraq by Bush II and Afghanistan by Obama involved similar considerations as the original intervention decisions, although there is a fundamental difference between initiating an intervention and expanding or contracting the operation. In contrast to the initial decision, taking no action would not be an option. Syria could be seen as a test case on how to intervene and why or why not. All of the factors suggesting a “go” decision were in place: international crisis, threat to regional stability, coalition partners, momentum, continuity, humanitarian concern, and lessons learned from previous interventions as well as the dangers of doing nothing. Conversely, if ever the American public had been in a “no-go” mood, it was in 2014, whether the target country be Syria, Iran, North Korea, or Ukraine. Additionally, Russian interest and investment in Syria constituted a factor that was not present in the cases of Iraq (1990 and 2003), Afghanistan, or the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Kosovo). The case of the recent Russian intervention in the Crimean region of Ukraine, following the overthrow of the pro-Russian regime of Viktor Yanukovych, could be telling. The

action of Putin in Crimea may have been a “brazen act of aggression,” in the words of John
Kerry,\textsuperscript{1132} analogous to that of Saddam Hussein in Kuwait,\textsuperscript{1133} but there was no likelihood of the
United States (under Barack Obama or any U.S. president) resorting to military force to expel the
Russians from Ukrainian territory.\textsuperscript{1134} The potential reaction of a counterforce has thus emerged
as a factor. On the one hand, Russian regional hegemony deterred U.S. action in the South
Ossetia-Georgia conflict (2008). On the other hand, Russian cooperation with the United States
and NATO brought resolution to the conflict in Kosovo. Therefore, the absence of a counter
force is a prerequisite for U.S. military intervention. Hence, the presence of a counterforce is a
deterrent.

In the final analysis, the expectation of success, whether realistic or “false optimism,” is
the constant in “go” decisions. The military interventions adjudged successful—Panama, Persian
Gulf War, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, and Libya—were of limited duration and did not entail
extended commitment and presence (i.e., post-invasion occupation). Regardless of whether the
United States continues to be the sole global superpower or hegemon of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century,
American decision makers have never intervened expecting to fail.

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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1133} NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated Russia had violated the United Nations charter with its
military action in Ukraine, and urged Moscow to “de-escalate the tensions.” Bennett, Dalton, and David McHugh,
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