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The Warriors' Views  
Mid-Level Officers on American Interventions, Foreign Policy, and the Road to 9/11, 1993-2001

By

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B.A., Boston University, 1992  
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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire  
In Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
History

May, 2023

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Michael A. Anderson

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	xii
ABSTRACT.....	xiii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
<i>A New Era and New Perspectives</i> .....	2
<i>Different Cold Wars</i> .....	17
<i>Interventions of the 1990s</i> .....	23
<i>Moving Forward while Looking Back</i> .....	29
I. THE THORN: IRAQ.....	35
<i>Introduction</i> .....	38
<i>Background</i> .....	49
<i>Status Quo</i> .....	58
<i>Perpetual Frustration</i> .....	69
<i>Weapons of Mass Destruction</i> .....	77
<i>The Limits on Being Limited</i> .....	84
<i>Transcending Cold War Thinking</i> .....	90
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	98
II. CRISIS INHERITED, CRISIS CREATED: SOMALIA.....	105
<i>Introduction</i> .....	107
<i>Background</i> .....	117

<i>Foreign Policy Direction and Effects</i> .....	126
<i>The Vietnam Effect and the Myth or Reality of Casualty Aversion</i> .....	140
<i>Win, Loss, or Draw?</i> .....	155
<i>Beyond the Cold War</i> .....	165
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	176
III. A LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS: THE BALKANS.....	181
<i>Introduction</i> .....	184
<i>Background</i> .....	192
<i>Engaging and Enlarging in the Balkans</i> .....	200
<i>The O’Grady Factor and the Impact of Somalia</i> .....	216
<i>To Air is American</i> .....	227
<i>Different Ghosts of Vietnam: Blessings and Curses of Gradualism</i> .....	234
<i>Yugoslavia as the Metaphor for Transition</i> .....	247
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	254
IV. ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORISM: AN EMERGING AND ELUSIVE THREAT .....	263
<i>Introduction</i> .....	266
<i>Background</i> .....	272
<i>New Enemies Emerging</i> .....	285
<i>The Impact of Suspected Weapons Proliferation</i> .....	295
<i>Enemy Combatants, Criminals, or Something In-Between?</i> .....	302
<i>Other Policy Concerns</i> .....	312
<i>Conclusion: Predicting 9/11?</i> .....	320
CONCLUSION: A NEW ERA IN FOREIGN POLICY AND MILITARY INTERVENTION	325

<i>Global Changes</i> .....	327
<i>Cold War Lessons</i> .....	334
<i>Engagements</i> .....	338
<i>End of an Era</i> .....	348
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	355

## DEDICATION

*For Lieutenant Colonel Mark E. Stratton II*

*Killed in Action, Afghanistan, 26 May 2009*

*One of the best officers, and one of the best people, I have ever known*



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Despite there being only one name on the cover, I could never have completed such a project by myself. First of all, I would like to thank my dissertation committee for their guidance and mentorship. My committee chair, Kurk Dorsey, was there from the start of my doctoral program, helping me through the application process all the way through completing my dissertation. Molly Dorsey set high standards for all work and shared her expertise at every opportunity. Fred Meiton's sage counsel ensured my dissertation remained focused and attainable. Retired Army Colonel Lionel Ingram brought his combination of military experience and academic expertise in many areas, especially national policy. Greg McMahon, a scholar whose expertise was outside of the topic, brought a fresh perspective and provided excellent writing critiques.

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If the students are the backbone, then the administrators are the brains. Lara Demerest and Laura Simard provided first class assistance for all my needs for many years. Sto Austin

was instrumental in taking care of all the processes necessary for turning a paper into a university-accepted dissertation. Without them, nothing would have been possible.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. Without them, none of this would have been possible. They made a seemingly impossible task achievable. My lovely wife Sara gave me not only the encouragement, but the physical and emotional assistance to enable me to pursue this project. My children, Marcus and Erin (both of whom were published before me!), inspired me more than they can know. To them I say: *we* did it!

## TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAA – Anti-Aircraft Artillery

CAPT – Captain, United States Navy

Capt – Captain, United States Air Force or United States Marine Corps

CDR – Commander, United States Navy

CNN – Cable News Network

CPT – Captain, United States Army

COL – Colonel, United States Army

Col – Colonel, United States Air Force

CONUS – Contiguous United States

DTIC – Defense Technical Information Center

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HMMWV – High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle (pronounced “Humvee”)

HUMRO – Humanitarian Relief Operation

JFACC – Joint Forces Air Component Commander

KLA – Kosovar Liberation Army

LCDR – Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy

Lt Col – Lieutenant Colonel, United States Air Force

LTC – Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army

LtCol – Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps

MAJ – Major, United States Army

Maj – Major, United States Air Force or United States Marine Corps

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCA – National Command Authority (President, Secretary of Defense, and the most senior military leaders in the chain of command)

NBCR – Nuclear, Biological, Chemical, Radiological

RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade

SAM – Surface-to-Air Missile

UN – United Nations

UNOSOM – United Nations Operations in Somalia

USS – United States Ship

WMD – Weapon of Mass Destruction

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Officer Papers by Service of Author	Page 8
Map of Iraq and Surrounding Countries	35
Map of Somalia	105
Map of the Former Yugoslavia with Provinces	181
Map of the Middle East and East Africa	263

## ABSTRACT

When President William Jefferson Clinton took office, the United States had entered into a new era, though it was heavily influenced by almost a half-century of Cold War. Foreign policy staples had been embedded into United States foreign policy habits, influencing American decisions even as it tried to transition to a new global environment. The Cold War had left America, but America had a hard time leaving the Cold War.

The nation had difficulty transitioning away from applying containment, relying on mutually assured destruction in preventing weapons of mass destruction attacks, and focusing on major conventional warfare when small-scale contingencies dominated American use of the military. Vietnam's institutional and cultural memory was especially a major influence, affecting America's entire approach to employing military force. In particular was its impact on leadership's the hyper-sensitivity to casualties affecting public opinion.

In addition, there were too many competing priorities and not enough resources, especially given the military downsizing after America's Cold War victory, which adversely affected those in the armed forces. Without the Soviet Union as a consistent and stable enemy, America had to come to grips with a very different world full of chaos, disorder, and possibilities. The solution the Clinton Administration put forth was the strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, which drove increased military involvements in multiple small-scale military contingencies.

Mid-level American military officers, the majors, commanders, and lieutenant colonels, had a front row seat to how this strategy unfolded. They implemented the military arm of national policy at the lower levels, while still maintaining a more strategic outlook on events.

They saw and felt the impacts of foreign policy decisions to use military force. Their writings while attending their advanced military service schools illuminate many aspects of America's foreign policy during the Clinton Administration that other scholarship could not capture. Their opinions regarding American involvement in Iraq after Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, as well as its response to the rise in anti-American Terrorism, reveal many aspects of this new era. In spite of increased global engagement spreading the military thin, increasing stress on the force, mid-level officers demonstrated that they did not have the disdain towards President Clinton that scholarship attributes to the military. They came to accept, and even support, the president's overall approach.

For these officers, Engagement and Enlargement was a policy that was a better strategic fit for the new era than relying on Cold War approaches. However, they consistently felt that American leadership did not implement it well tactically. A significant shortfall of increased American engagement, especially during military budget cuts and downsizing, was that it drew America's attention towards a multitude of overseas interests and allowed a direct threat, terrorism, to assail the homeland. Mid-level officers plotted the trajectory of American foreign policy from the aftermath of Desert Storm and the intervention in Somalia to these 9/11 attacks, and like their superiors, only a few understood the magnitude of the rising tide of terrorism.

## INTRODUCTION

A newly promoted captain was on duty in the Eighth Air Force operations center in the fall of 1997. He was the telecommunications officer responsible for all network, radio, and telephone communications capability to support monitoring a planned B-52 bomber strike against Saddam Hussein. “The Mighty Eighth,” as it had been known since World War II, had responsibility for America’s bomber force. When the call came down from the Pentagon that America was planning to punish Iraq for noncompliance with United Nations resolutions by launching heavy bombers from their home station, the headquarters stood up the command and control center to actively monitor the situation. It relied heavily on telecommunications and computer networks, which meant a very big job for the personnel working in communications and cyber. The new captain was busy.

One of the tasks that came down from the Clinton Administration was to create an interface that would allow a CNN reporter to talk to the lead B-52 pilot from the studio in Atlanta while the warplanes were *en route* to the target area. Due to federal laws and military regulations that strictly governed secret and top-secret communications, which included all radio traffic to these aircraft during an active mission, this was not a simple matter of patching a telephone call into a radio. It required a significant engineering solution to ensure safeguarding mission integrity and preventing potential bleed-over of classified information onto an open communications network. Any compromise could have given America’s enemies a distinctive advantage. The young captain did not understand why he and his fellow telecommunications personnel needed to jump through so many hoops to create what came to be called the Bobbie Battista phone (after a prominent CNN anchor at the time), when their focus should have been on



supporting a mission that all hoped would finally bring the Iraqi dictator in line. While his immediate superiors, the majors and lieutenant colonels in his unit, empathized, they also had more experience. They could mentally bridge the gap between the tactical importance of the mission and the value of strategic communications to the Commander-in-Chief that could bolster public support for an endeavor that was an important national interest, yet was losing popularity. These mid-level officers helped the young captain understand the bigger picture.

Indeed, mid-level officers have always had a unique perspective. They were the commanders and leaders who implemented the strategies that America's most senior leadership and policy makers developed. They supervised and interacted with not only junior officers, but enlisted personnel of all ranks to manage implementation of plans, motivate the people who executed operations, and direct activities to accomplish various missions. They not only had to appreciate circumstances at the ground level, but also needed an understanding of the overarching strategies and political considerations in order to carry out American policy most effectively in ways that could adapt to changing conditions while simultaneously meeting broad objectives. They were the key bridge between Washington, D.C. intentions and execution in the field. They had a lot to teach this young captain, and others, about policy implementation during the Clinton Administration.

### *A New Era and New Perspectives*

After the fall of the Soviet Union the United States faced, for the first time in over forty years, an international environment without a definitive enemy upon which to focus its attentions. Political Scientist John Mueller argues that this absence put America in a state of

limbo. Foreign policy makers and military leaders actively searched for a threat that could become the focus of American national defense strategy. As a result, America was, in his words, “Questing for Monsters to Destroy.”<sup>1</sup> Those so-called monsters included enemy leaders like Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, and even Mohammad Farrah Aidid in Somalia. These monsters did not have to be human, but also included ideas such as international instability, weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and genocide. A characteristic of the international environment that contained these new enemies was the plethora of low-level, indirect threats. Former Central Intelligence Agency Director R. James Woolsey in 1993 suggested that, with the Soviet Union gone, “...we have slain a large dragon. But we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.”<sup>2</sup> These lesser, but numerous and still dangerous threats, roamed the jungle that encompassed global trouble spots.

During the 1990s, the United States engaged military power in more places since World War II to address these potential threats to its interests, which included fostering what seemed to be the wholesale spread of democratic ideals. However, it still searched for a larger enemy against whom to prepare in order to defend its global interests and protect its citizenry. Even while America twice engaged in Eastern Europe, the Middle East seemed a major focal point. Nations like Iraq and Iran engaged in anti-American actions and rhetoric. Also, radical Islamic terrorism began to increase direct violent acts against the United States. A many-headed hydra-like enemy seemed to be surfacing from the swamp of post-Cold War chaos. It was lashing out

---

<sup>1</sup> John Mueller, “Questing for Monsters to Destroy” in *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11*, ed. by Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (Cornell University Press, 2011). This references President John Quincy Adams’ 1821 speech stating how the United States “goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy.” (*July 4, 1821: Speech to the U.S. House of Representatives on Foreign Policy Transcript*, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/july-4-1821-speech-us-house-representatives-foreign-policy>, accessed 17 Jan 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Jehl, “C.I.A. Nominee Wary of Budget Cuts” in *New York Times* (3 February 1993, Section A), p. 18.

with fury and vigor. It sometimes did so in concert with its other heads, sometimes one or two heads striking independently, but always in the general vicinity of where the body took it, which was within range of United States resources, capabilities, and people. Its main goal was to devour American influence in the Middle East. As the United States eventually came to assess it, this type of monster required a Heracles to fight it.

The problem with this analogy is that the hydra was a myth of the west and therefore is a symbol of America's lack of understanding of the actual enemy. Throughout the 1990s, United States foreign policy demonstrated a difficulty in adjusting to a world without a Cold War which included embedded habits, a western-centric view, and resistance to change. The many American interventions throughout the Clinton Administration focused on preventing smaller local troubles from becoming larger regional problems. In doing so, America seemed to condition itself that the security issues were in remote corners of the globe, far away from the American homeland. While proactively addressing problems of instability, regional security, weapons proliferation, and maintaining alliances, it did not appear to adequately assess a larger, more direct threat.

A more apt analogy comes from the same part of the world from which radical Islamic terrorism originated. Tiamat, the many-headed dragon of Mesopotamian mythology, looked to destroy the world. It stayed underground until it was ready to attack. Its many heads acted independently, each with different weapons, skills, and dangers. When the Tiamat of legend did fully emerge and reveal itself through aggressive destruction, it changed the course of the world, just as al Qaeda did in 2001. While America was prepared to send its Heracles to battle the monster it had once thought was fairly contained to the Middle East, it did not yet realize it needed a Gilgamesh instead. Mid-level officers writing in their service schools from 1993-2001

help highlight understanding of America's trials in attempting to discern among the snakes, hydras, and Tiamats in this new period of foreign policy during the Clinton Administration.

When President William Jefferson Clinton took office, the United States had truly entered into a new era which, though influenced by the Cold War, had many unique characteristics. It was an era of conflicted, uncertain, and mixed feelings, where America was attempting to come to grips with a very different world full of chaos, disorder, and possibilities. The solution the Clinton Administration put forth was its strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, which called for engaging national instruments of power, including diplomatic, economic, and military, for the goal of:

...enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies, and our interests. The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of geostrategic importance to us, the safer our nation is likely to be...<sup>3</sup>

Mid-level American military officers, the majors, commanders, and lieutenant colonels, had a front row seat to how this strategy unfolded. While skeptical at first, by Clinton's second term, overall, they realized that it was a policy that better fit the new era, especially if the alternative relied on using Cold War approaches. While they came to accept, and in many cases approve of, the approach strategically, they consistently felt that American leadership did not implement it well tactically. A significant shortfall of increasing American engagement and enlarging its scope of supporting stability operations to foster democracy, especially during military budget cuts and downsizing, was that it spread America's attentions thin and allowed a direct threat,

---

<sup>3</sup> "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" (1994), p. 2, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/> (accessed 28 Oct 2022). This was the foundation for military involvement during his presidency. The 1994, 1995, and 1996 National Security Strategy documents each had the same title. Even after the title shifted in 1997 to "A National Security Strategy for a New Century," the 1998, 1999 and 2000 documents still discussed the importance of global engagement.

terrorism, to assail the homeland. Mid-level officers recorded and responded to the trajectory of American foreign policy from the aftermath of Desert Storm and the intervention in Somalia to these 9/11 attacks.

The men and women tasked to implement the military arm of America's execution of international power provide an important perspective previously missing in the scholarship surrounding American foreign policy from the early 1990s through the antecedent events of the 9/11 attacks. Instead of concentrating only on the upper echelons of government and military leadership, the focus on them involves a different level of American foreign policy management. Compared to policy makers in Washington, D.C., these individuals were close to the ground level. However, while directly interacting with enlisted personnel, absorbing and reacting to their perceptions and viewpoints which certainly influenced them, these officers do not directly constitute a true bottom-up assessment, though their position and approach demonstrates many similar characteristics. Nevertheless, the middle-out view of mid-level military officers provides an important perspective without which a complete understanding of America's international relations history during the Clinton Administration cannot be fully achieved. These military professionals wrote about American policy, the decisions to implement military force, and the ways in which the nation chose to tailor that implementation. Their writings capture their opinions, perceptions, perspectives, and observations on the United States' attempt to traverse a new geopolitical environment.

The source of information on mid-level officer thinking is the collection of publicly available papers written by officers who attended United States Professional Military Education schools from 1993-2001 that discuss American involvement in post-Desert Storm Iraq, Somalia, and the Balkans, as well as actions against Islamic terrorism. The vast majority of authors range

in rank from major/lieutenant commander to lieutenant colonel/commander. There are a small number of senior Army captains, junior Air Force colonels and junior Navy captains. The former likely went to their service school just prior to promoting, and the latter two either promoted while at school, or wrote their papers soon after leaving, perhaps as new faculty for these schools.

These papers have value for the perspectives they hold because they come from an elite group. Their respective services specially selected the officers who wrote them to attend Professional Military Education in-residence, specifically the services' Command and Staff colleges, War Colleges, joint national equivalents, and some specialty schools commensurate with the aforementioned ranks.<sup>4</sup> There were even some officers who attended the schools of their sister services. In-residence school selection is a highly competitive process that chooses only those who show the greatest potential to become future flag officers. It involves a board of senior officers who scrutinize the candidates' records and commander recommendations. As each service school can accept only a certain number of attendees due to space limitations, only those who show the greatest promise get to attend. For example, in 1995 there were 1,050 military officers enrolled in in-residence schools, for majors/lieutenant commanders & lieutenant colonels/commanders, as compared to the approximately 73,000 active-duty members serving in those grades.<sup>5</sup> After attending these schools, officers are expected to take on unit command positions, which are responsible for meeting all aspects of the peacetime and combat missions of a large, cohesive unit or group of units, with emphasis on the training, discipline and well-being

---

<sup>4</sup> Some military professions, such as lawyers and chaplains, have their own schools. Also, there are other specialty schools such as the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies for the study of air, space, and cyberspace warfare.

<sup>5</sup> *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1996 and the Future Years Defense Program* report to the US Senate Armed Services Committee. The total officer numbers are based on military reports and public law governing ceilings on active duty commissioned officers.

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Department\\_of\\_Defense\\_Authorization\\_for/3mfogBtMu60C?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=military+officer+PME+enrollment+1995&pg=PA115&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Department_of_Defense_Authorization_for/3mfogBtMu60C?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=military+officer+PME+enrollment+1995&pg=PA115&printsec=frontcover) (accessed 20 Feb 2023).

**Table 1: Officer Papers by Service of Author<sup>6</sup>**

	Post-war Iraq		Somalia	Bosnia	Kosovo	Terrorism
Army	28		87	65	19	41
Navy	8		7	6	1	9
Air Force	67		48	54	27	56
Marines	6		12	4	3	9
US Coast Guard						1

of all unit members. Also, they are expected to be capable of holding senior staff positions, which author military policy, create wartime plans, and enable forces in the field to ensure maximum combat effectiveness. There are many types of command and levels of staff. The elect positions are reserved for the officers with the greatest chances of becoming top leaders in their services, and a major step is attendance in these schools.

In addition, all of these officers served at the tactical and operational levels and supply the primary context for analyzing American responses to the various crises and world events during the Clinton Administration. Their papers also allow a lens by which to see these events through the eyes of contemporaries, an important role of the historian who can be influenced by current events and present points of view.<sup>7</sup> Many of their writings, especially by the majors and lieutenant commanders, have strong foundations in their experiences as lieutenants and ensigns. In essence, they were at the bottom level of the implementation of foreign policy by other means.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In the rare cases where there are multiple authors for any one given paper, each author is counted separately. Also, the one Coast Guard representative here attended the Naval War College.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen Fitzpatrick discussed this in *History's Memory: Writing America's Past 1880-1980* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002). She asserts that a historian must understand the context of the events in order to provide effective analysis.

<sup>8</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1976), book 1, chapter 1, section 24. He also dedicates Book 8, Chapter 6 to war as part of politics and policy, breaking it up into two parts entitled, "Influence of the Political Objective on the Military Objective," and, "War as an Instrument of Policy."

These papers were either a major mid-course assignment after a semester-equivalent of course work, or the culminating projects for courses that generally lasted approximately nine months, with some focused specialty schools such as Judge Advocate General schools, the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, or advanced Chaplain Professional Military Education that last as little as three months. Students did not normally arrive at school knowing the topic of their papers. After attending some initial classes, they choose one with their instructor's approval, usually an officer who had previously graduated the course or a civilian who was either a prior military officer or a professional civilian instructor with government experience. In rare cases senior leaders assigned the subject matter. Most of the papers cover topics relating to applicable contemporary military issues. They range from long essays of thirty pages, to short monographs of well over one hundred.

After the instructors graded the papers and the student graduated, the papers were scrutinized for possible sensitive material, and then either filed or discarded. Those determined to contain classified information are made available only on a need-to-know basis. The Army and Air Force kept the majority of papers from their schools, most of which are publicly accessible in the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) site.<sup>9</sup> The Navy and Marine Corps, however, only kept papers graded as an "A" in their files, therefore, only these papers made it into DTIC. All saved papers are obtainable for military command and staff research, though it is unknown how many have been used to inform decisions or policy.

Of the over six hundred publicly available officer writings relating to the topics for this dissertation, over half are specialized papers that are not applicable, such as logistics challenges

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<sup>9</sup> Those papers with classified or sensitive information are not available to the public. Those declassified more recently are not yet digitized and part of this database, but are available through a Freedom of Information Act request, or by visiting the school. There were only five such applicable papers.



during operations in Somalia, or maintenance issues involving the F-117 stealth fighter during the intervention in Kosovo. Two-hundred ninety-nine papers do provide perspectives on the application of American power in the implementation of policy using various degrees of military activity. These papers provide a robust basis for historical analyses of the period from respectable sources – the handpicked service school attendees. These relatively unknown and untapped works of scholarship from contemporary witnesses to the events of the period show the evolution of American foreign policy development and implementation from after the Cold War until 9/11.

These papers change over time in perspective and foci as world events and personal experiences continued to influence the authors attending these schools. Those writing during President Clinton's first term were children during Vietnam and spent the start of their military careers during the Reagan buildup, which became a baseline for how they viewed government support of the military. The 1990s budget cuts turned their world upside down. As time progressed, the officers were further from the Cold War. These authors, especially those writing during Clinton's second term, were less affected by older habits than their superiors and the senior policy makers in Washington or senior implementers across the Potomac River in the Pentagon since they had not served as long, if at all, during the Cold War. That does not mean they were immune to Cold War influences, but as a group, these officers were more products of a reorientation of thinking about the world after the fall of communism. Their evolving analyses represent changed perspectives that meshed well with new world conditions.

These writings of the witnesses to the events of the 1990s through the turn of the century augment, refute, and help complete the existing political, military, and diplomatic scholarship. One influential work was David Halberstam's *War in a Time of Peace*. Halberstam discusses the

Clinton Administration's coming to grips with a new era in foreign policy, diplomacy, and use of the military. He has many astute conclusions about this time. However, his top-down look, without having access to sources such as the service school attendees, inhibits a more complete perspective, especially with regards to the military. Studying Generals Colin Powell, Wesley Clark, and Michael Short does not provide a complete representation of the feelings of all the armed forces. For example, Halberstam states that the military had an overall negative opinion of President Bill Clinton that created institutional issues between the Commander-in-Chief and the services, including diminished trust and confidence in the president that adversely affected military implementation of foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> Discussions within officer papers from the beginning of Clinton's first term confirm this overall feeling. The president directing the broad use of military force for less than vital interests especially magnified servicemembers' wariness of a political leadership that lacked experience in military matters, yet appeared too willing to send Americans into harm's way. "Yesterday's peace marchers are today's Marines," was how Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Lindner expressed his concern about leaders like Clinton who refused military service during Vietnam, yet had become hawkish in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>11</sup>

However, as time progressed, especially during Clinton's second term, these mid-level officers seemed less biased against the president and focused more on evaluating foreign policy

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<sup>10</sup> David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals* (Scribner, 2001), pp. 205, 211, 241-244, 256.

<sup>11</sup> LTC Phillip R. Lindner, "U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?" (1993), p. 12. MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p.11. He also commented on Clinton's anti-war stance in his youth, yet was "more inclined to deploy forces for [humanitarian] causes." Eight years later, Maj Stockton echoed his sentiment regarding Kosovo, discussing how hawkish Democrats, whose ideals during the Vietnam era were rooted in peace movements, became hawks stating that "the Cold War deck has been reshuffled." (Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), pp. 19-20.)

issues and actions on their own merits based more on results than personality conflicts with the uppermost levels of the chain of command. They did not resemble Lieutenant General Short's vitriol against Clinton's alleged misuse of military force. Nor did they communicate the political correctness of General Clark's support of the president while still advocating for older strategies that may not have been applicable in this new era. In some ways, these mid-level officers seemed more enlightened in accepting what the Clinton Administration was attempting to accomplish. As a group, they still critiqued America's foreign policy, especially the employment of military force, but they were more open-minded in ways that demonstrated how their experiences shaped a broader perspective on issues of policy implementation that differed from the most senior officers. In many ways, they reveal that senior civilian leaders adapted to changing international conditions faster than those in the upper echelons of the military chain of command.

Mid-level officer writings also augment and challenge the diplomatic history of Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, who provide an excellent account and analysis from the end of the Cold War through the 9/11 attacks. Mid-level officer writings support their claims that the Clinton Administration was unable to develop a consistent and coherent foreign policy in the complex world of the 1990s, despite making progress in many areas.<sup>12</sup> While Chollet and Goldgeier assert that the shift from a predominant, single-minded Cold War focus on the Soviet Union to a virtual kaleidoscope of global issues was the primary reason for America's inability to adjust to the new international situation rapidly and effectively, mid-level officers have a different perspective. These unique sources saw, through the implementation of national policy by the military arm, that old habits were as much, if not more of, a factor. It was less the number

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<sup>12</sup> Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars: The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs, 2009), pp. xxii-xxiii.

of foci, which were still considerable even in a bipolar world, and more the conditioned behavior resulting from over four decades of working atop the same overall geostrategic foundation.

Chollet and Goldgeier are adept at sourcing the diplomatic implementers of national foreign policy during American interventions, but without the military implementers, whose actions have a symbiotic relationship with those executing the other elements of national power, the history is not as well-rounded. Like Halberstam, they discuss the military's negative opinion of President Bill Clinton, stating how the "military did not accept their new CINC," and as such do not recognize the transformation of opinion at the lower levels.<sup>13</sup> Also, by focusing primarily on the diplomatic issues, particularly with post-conflict peacekeeping in both Bosnia and Kosovo, they do not fully recognize the Army forces as primary, ground-level diplomats who had a significant impact on individual Bosnians and Kosovars, which was critical to the success of the diplomatic mission of maintaining peace and stability. Mid-level officer papers help fill this gap characteristic of focused diplomatic histories.

Richard Haass, the author of *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War*, wrote from his unique perspective as a senior American diplomat as well as a scholar. Like the mid-level officers that are the primary sources for this paper, he was a contemporary writer to events of the 1990s. He asserts that the United States needed to respond to global issues in the way a sheriff used posses. He points to Desert Storm as the quintessential example of what a successful posse was because it was a coalition made up of individual nations committed to a specific purpose. Using existing alliances such as NATO, he argues, involved nations with different agendas who were not necessarily of like mind when addressing an emerging crisis. This created too many problems that prevented effective execution of military operations in

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<sup>13</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 61.

support of foreign policy initiatives, as seen in the Balkans.<sup>14</sup> Having vast experience in foreign policy without accessing mid-level officers who worked at implementing foreign policy results in an incomplete view, affecting his otherwise sage conclusions.

Many officers expressed frustration with the United States being a world policeman, or global sheriff, especially when it came to working with reluctant allies, particularly those part of the Desert Storm posse. They agree that NATO inefficiencies prevented the most efficacious execution in Bosnia. Looking to Desert Storm, though, meant going backwards, not forwards. Mid-level military officer thinking at the time Haass published this work was shifting towards a broader strategic understanding of how the United States used its military arm to affect policy. The Balkans was not just about local stability, but maintaining the NATO alliance for broader regional and even global security benefits. Also, Desert Storm was not as applicable in that new era as its success led many senior leaders to believe. Officer-scholars understood that, though the United States should have been more successful in its execution, the goal was not merely triumph in any one intervention, but that each intervention fit into a broader continuum of America's development in preparing to face emerging threats. One area that many officers did agree with Haass was that terrorism should have been first on the list of security priorities.

Scholarship on the rise of anti-American terrorism discusses the elements of Islamic history, religion, culture, and law on radicalization and anti-western behavior, as well as issues with the United States' western-centric views that inhibited an accurate understanding of this issue.<sup>15</sup> Mid-level officers reinforce some of these elements, displaying many of the ethnocentric

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<sup>14</sup> Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), pp. 4-6, 93-96, 138.

<sup>15</sup> Authors and their work include John Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1983); Thomas Hegghammer, *The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of Global Jihad* (University Press, 2020); Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (Routledge, 2007); *The Blind Spot: America's Response to Radicalism in the Middle East*, ed. By Nicholas Burns and Jonathon Price (The Aspen Institute, 2015); and Mahmood Mamdani,

characteristics that these authors lament. However, the officer writings that address Islamic terrorism also demonstrate a trajectory, as slight as it may be compared to what the scholarship petitions, towards a more enlightened point of view. That was an advantage for being near the tip of the spear for policy implementation. For most of the major military interventions during the Clinton Administration, these officers simultaneously engaged in or supported operations for, with, and against Muslims. The only exception was in the Balkans where they only fought in support of them, even though post-conflict peacekeeping did result in working with and engaging the Muslim populace and leadership. These intellectuals who wrote about the influence of Islam on anti-American sentiment and terrorism, all of whom wrote during the years after 9/11, can take some solace in the fact that many of these officers who would go on to serve during the Global War on Terror achieved some level of enlightenment on the issues their scholarship addresses. However, the larger contribution these officers provide is their capability of seeing a glimpse of Tiamat even while their nation prepared for a hydra. It is a small, but significant factor when discussing the divide between the Middle East and the United States as it applied to American foreign and security policies in the lead up to the 9/11 attacks and the Global War on Terror.

Was America during the 1990s questing for monsters to destroy, as John Mueller argues? Mid-level officer writings suggest that America was more questing for monsters to contain as it tried to identify the next threat. The world was in a state of flux, and there were actual threats to United States' interests and security. America was not merely inflating small concerns in order to find a replacement for the Soviet Union as Mueller suggests.<sup>16</sup>

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“Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Origins of Terror” in *India International Centre Quarterly* (vol. 32, no. 1, Summer 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Mueller, “Questing for Monsters to Destroy,” p. 118.

Subsequently, it was not looking to actively destroy threats, actual or perceived, as they appeared. Otherwise, intervention policy would not have been to restrict greater destruction or more aggressive action. Nor was it “the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all” who “commend[ed] the general cause by the countenance of her voice and the benignant sympathy of her example” as John Quincy Adams stated, though United States policy and actions indicate this was the global reputation it hoped to have.<sup>17</sup> America was the sole superpower in a globalized world, and needed to act in order to ensure those interests, which sometimes meant risking its advertised idealism.

After the Cold War, America took on Adams’ principles of freedom and independence as stabilizing forces to enhance United States goals, while expanding involvement that countered his warnings of restraint, which Mueller discusses. American leadership did not always get it right, but mid-level officers show that there was a more positive policy trajectory over time. Officer writings also show that Cold War ideas permeated security policy, but that limited yet proactive global engagement was an attempt to both modernize American strategy, and help foster stability so democracy could spread in order to best contain threats. Mid-level officer increased acceptance and flexibility were related to their further distance, temporally and experientially, from the Cold War than the senior military and civilian leaders had. This characteristic also provided them with a means to help identify emerging security threats, which was critical for a military in the midst of a major transition and without cogent knowledge of whom to prepare itself to face in a time of uncertainty.

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<sup>17</sup> John Quincy Adams, *July 4, 1821: Speech to the U.S. House of Representatives on Foreign Policy Transcript*, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/july-4-1821-speech-us-house-representatives-foreign-policy>, accessed 20 Feb 2023.

Beginning with the aftermath of the Gulf War and involvement in Somalia, the United States had to adjust to a new world situation by attempting to navigate an environment where the nation had much more freedom of action to confront growing global disorder. In order to maintain that leeway, the Clinton Administration imposed limits on military action. In traversing the new environment, it needed to adapt the right lessons from the past, and determine which long-standing habits to discard. It was a difficult task, especially considering recent contemporary history.

### *Different Cold Wars*

The lengthy Cold War, which spanned nine presidential administrations, had conditioned America's leaders to react in certain ways. Containment was the main overall strategy with nuclear deterrence being the direct method of preventative defense of the American homeland. Due to their longevity as prime elements of America's foreign policy foundation, these ideas became firmly embedded into policy development and impacted strategy even beyond the demise of the Soviet Union, and senior military leaders serving in the aftermath knew nothing else. There were several overarching concerns, such as preventing nuclear attack, minimizing direct confrontations, recognizing existing spheres of influence, and attempting to win over the developing world. Despite these general characteristics, there were variations. Containment was different in Europe than it was in Asia, as events in the Far East yielded different Cold War lessons. Europe was characterized by tension and preparation for major conventional war. Asia became hot and produced the quintessential event that influenced the United States well into the future, including during the Clinton Administration: the failure in Vietnam. Many factors



associated with the loss of that war, including misapplications of lessons on limiting war learned from the Korean Conflict, political miscalculations, and failed application of military force, drove many in the United States military to question any approach that resembled American actions in Southeast Asia, particularly those during the Johnson Administration. Overall, the Cold War had a major impact on the United States during the Clinton Administration due to its lengthy influence that began following World War II.

From George Kennan's Long Telegram in 1946, the United States embarked on a policy of containing the Soviet Union to prevent further expansion.<sup>18</sup> In Europe, America accepted the Soviet sphere of influence on its side of the Iron Curtain and sought to prevent its expansion to the democratic West. To this end, the United States created an alliance of Western nations to prevent Soviet expansion. The Soviet Union countered the American-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with its own Warsaw Pact of Eastern Bloc nations. With the Soviet Union having a significant military force still in place after World War II, America prepared for a major conventional war in which it would lead the NATO allies to defend against a large-scale communist invasion through West Germany. The United States military continued to train and practice for this possibility throughout its rivalry with the Soviet Union.

In addition to defending Europe, a major objective of American Cold War strategy was to defend the United States from nuclear attack. Once America lost its monopoly on atomic weapons in 1949, foreign policy and military preparedness included both avoiding actions that the Soviets could interpret as provocation significant enough for them to employ nuclear

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<sup>18</sup> "George Kennan's 'Long Telegram,'" February 22, 1946. See also X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" in *Foreign Affairs* (Jul 1947, Vol. 25, No. 4), pp. 566-582. For more information on the Cold War see Walter LaFeber's *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006*; John Lewis Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security* and *We now Know: Rethinking the Cold War*; and James Wilson's *The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War*.

weapons, and thwarting the Soviet Union from considering their offensive use to achieve its interests. Once each side perfected high-yield nuclear warheads with the ability to strike long distances, including intercontinental ballistic missiles that could destroy the cities on each side from half-a-world away, the United States built up its nuclear arsenal to levels that enabled an overwhelming capability to wage a counterattack that would result in the total destruction of the Soviet Union many times over. The goal of this strategy was to make initiating a nuclear attack on America or its allies an insane endeavor. Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) became a staple of American security policy to prevent a weapons of mass destruction attack against the United States.

The Cold War took on different characteristics when applied to containment in Asia, even though avoiding a nuclear exchange remained an integral element. The victory of communist forces in China under Mao Zedong in 1949 was a major blow to the United States' fledgling containment policy. The invasion of South Korea by communist forces in the north led to the first shooting war of the Cold War. With the threat of nuclear weapons and the recent memory of the most destructive war in world history, World War II, being two major considerations, the United States looked to limit the war to prevent further expansion. A major lesson it learned was that because it did not limit actions in Korea enough as the American-led United Nations counterattack through the peninsula towards the Chinese border drew the Communist Chinese Army to engage *en masse*. As a result, the United States limited the war further to simply defending South Korea from communist expansion, reverting to containment as its primary guide. America applied this limited warfare to greater extremes during its next conflict in Asia.

The war in Vietnam, in particular the Americanization portion from 1964-1973, had tremendous influence on the United States for generations to come.<sup>19</sup> Similar to, but not exactly like Korea, the nation was divided into a communist north and non-communist south. Also, the northern section shared a border with China. For several reasons, including an attempt to prevent a repeat of drawing the Chinese into the conflict, the Johnson Administration limited the war and put heavy restrictions on the military. The United States kept its land forces in the south to defend against North Vietnamese invasion and communist insurgents. It relied on airpower in the north, but put many restrictions on its execution. The initial air campaign, Operation Rolling Thunder, was designed to gradually increase bombing pressure in an attempt to coerce the north into a negotiated settlement. It involved many bombing pauses, restrictions on targets, and limited flight paths into the north. Lyndon Johnson's strategy failed to achieve its goals as he left office. As the number of dead Americans continued to grow under the Nixon Administration without obvious progress, and American citizens became both skeptical of government reporting of the war and disenchanted with risking the lives of their friends and family in a far-off corner of the world, the United States would eventually end its involvement there.

The United States withdrew in 1973. As the South fell to the North two years later, it clearly demonstrated that the United States lost the war. America came away with many lessons from that conflict. One belief was that micromanaging the military was not conducive to achieving victory. Another was that gradual use of airpower was a failed strategy. A third was that American casualties significantly influence public opinion regarding support for a military

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on Vietnam, see H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam*; Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*; Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Wars*; Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* and "A War Is a War Is a War Is a War" in *Low-Intensity Conflict: The Pattern of Warfare in the Modern World*; and Allan Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*.

involvement. These seemed to be three factors to consider if the nation wanted to avoid another loss. Vietnam, as the root of these lessons, significantly influenced future politicians and military professionals alike well into the future.<sup>20</sup>

One result that came out of Vietnam was the development of the Weinberger Doctrine, later modified to become the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. Under President Ronald Reagan, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger established a set of guidelines for the commitment of military power. The number one rule was that combat forces should be committed only when vital American interests were at stake. Other criteria for using military force included: a full commitment to winning; providing the military with clearly defined objectives and the ability to fulfill them; continually reassessing the strength of forces needed to fulfill the mission and readjust accordingly; having a reasonable assurance of public and congressional support; and using combat forces only as a last resort.<sup>21</sup> This was the template for American military intervention in the Middle East when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

American achievements during Operation Desert Storm in January and February of 1991, the American-led coalition military operation that drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait after he annexed it by military force six months earlier, seemed to validate many Cold War lessons. The first was to correct the failure of Vietnam. During the buildup to Desert Storm, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell modified Weinberger's doctrine to include risk assessments, exit strategy development, international support considerations, and use of overwhelming force as conditions for military commitment.<sup>22</sup> This latter point would especially influence military thinking for years to come. He also emphasized that vital American interests should always be

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<sup>20</sup> 90 of the 299 papers discuss many lessons from Vietnam, but these were the three the most common.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Record, "Back to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine?" in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 81.

<sup>22</sup> Record, "Back to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine?" pp. 82-83.

the primary consideration. He based these criteria in part from his career in the Cold War that included hard lessons from Vietnam.<sup>23</sup> The result was the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, which became the point of reference through the majority of the George H. W. Bush Administration that policy makers used and to which senior military personnel pointed in determining if and when to involve American military forces.

The United States applied these criteria when forming its coalition, exercising diplomatic engagements with Iraq, and building up its forces in Saudi Arabia and the surrounding area. When the United States entered into combat action, first with the air war on 17 January 1991, and culminating with the 100-hour ground attack starting on 24 February, it applied years of conventional warfare training predominantly focused on defending Europe by leading an alliance in driving back a large army that used Soviet equipment and employed Warsaw Pact tactics. In Kuwait and southern Iraq, American-led forces used overwhelming force in this manner, but with limited aims. It did not look for a total defeat of Iraq, only to drive Hussein's forces out of Kuwait and reestablish the latter's sovereignty. In doing so, it eschewed gradualism in favor of an overpowering and persistent air campaign. Finally, the Commander-in-Chief provided his generals overall guidance on the mission and allowed them to execute. Even though these actions took place after the fall of the Berlin Wall against an enemy that was not the Soviet Union, the First Gulf War was certainly a product of this past era. As such, validation of Cold War-type preparation during this conflict was, in some ways, a detriment as America pressed forward into a new era. American interventions in the years to come, starting with Iraq after Desert Storm and continuing with Somalia, the Balkans, and its approach towards terrorism, demonstrated that a new era required new interpretations of lessons of the Cold War.

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on Colin Powell's military career see Colin Powell and Joseph E. Perisco, *My American Journey* (Ballentine Books, 2003).

Over four decades of Cold War lessons, practices, habits, and policy orientation did not disappear when the Berlin Wall came down. American success in the overall struggle against communism reinforced positivity towards the foreign policy strategies and military practices that helped America prevail in this confrontation. In many ways, failures, especially Vietnam, carried more weight than successes when American leaders faced foreign policy dilemmas during the Clinton Administration. The cost for following any practices that failed during the Cold War had the potential to reduce national prestige, fail to achieve foreign policy goals, and, perhaps most important to senior leaders, result in the loss of American lives. Desert Storm created a belief that the United States finally put proper practices into action as this intervention became a template for military success. However, like so many lessons of the past, much of the knowledge America gained was most effective for the previous war, and less so for future ones. As the United States entered a new era, international conditions changed that would make this template ineffective.

### *Interventions of the 1990s*

Throughout the Clinton years, the United States became involved in many global conflicts. There were four areas in particular that drew enough attention to result in significant diplomatic and military involvement. Upon taking office in 1993, President Clinton inherited a United Nations sanctions enforcement mission in Iraq that saw reduced popularity and effectiveness throughout his tenure. He also inherited a humanitarian operation in Somalia that morphed into nation building with dire consequences that would influence American policy for the rest of the century. In addition, Clinton steered the United States towards greater

involvement in the Balkans, first in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995, and again in Kosovo in 1999, each of which highlighted America's reliance on airpower as the hallmark of military intervention in this new era. Finally, United States response to the rise of anti-American terrorism at the hands of radical Islamists throughout the Clinton tenure, especially al Qaeda and other organizations it inspired, revealed a significant shortfall in America's focus on engaging global instability. While Engagement and Enlargement helped to head off potential major foreign policy problems, it also distracted America from a direct threat to the homeland.

There were other areas in which the United States had significant interests and exercised national power in various forms and to different degrees, including rogue nations like Iran and North Korea who, like Iraq and Serbia, thwarted international conventions and agreements to engage in aggressive regional activity and the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. Also, the United States used military peacekeeping forces in non-kinetic ways in Haiti and, to a lesser extent, Rwanda. The former was in support of hemispheric interests that resulted in a diplomatic diffusion of tensions and follow-on military involvement to secure the peace. The latter was the result of a genocide which the United Nations could not prevent, and the United States did little more than serve in a support role. However, it was when America applied its broad capabilities that included the use of offensive military power that most demonstrates how the nation was attempting to adapt to a world without a Cold War and consequently developing a new way of war during the 1990s.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For more information on other foreign interventions and foci see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Richard Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to Clinton* (M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2000); Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff*; In *Uncertain Times*, ed. by Leffler and Legro; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; Robert DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians: US Interventions from Northern Iraq to Kosovo* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*.

American involvement in Iraq after the First Gulf War was its first major intervention of this new era.<sup>25</sup> It began as a demonstrative finale of American Cold War-type involvement, albeit in a type of reverse order. First, the United States formed and led a military coalition in a military campaign against an Iraqi army that was, in many ways, a copy of the Soviet military. After the United States confined Iraq to within its own borders, American policy was to contain it to prevent further aggression. Part of that containment was to rid Saddam Hussein's arsenal of any chemical or biological weapons, and to ensure that its nascent nuclear weapons program was defunct. Unfortunately, the American approach in the immediate aftermath of the conflict could not coerce Hussein into compliance, and President Clinton inherited this foreign policy problem that would plague the United States throughout, and beyond, his tenure.

Continuation of his predecessor's policy yielded few positive results as angst over weapons of mass destruction not only in the Iraqi arsenal, but potentially getting into the hands of anti-American terrorists, drove the Clinton Administration to continue a significant military presence in the region. Modified containment did not provide a resolution, and an adjusted approach to Mutually Assured Destruction in the form of a threatened overwhelming response to a chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological attack did not seem to be an effective policy of prevention. The United States would eventually evolve its policy into a low-grade war of attrition against the Iraqi dictator that still did not resolve the Iraqi quandary. Over the skies of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, the United States' modest attempts to refine its foreign policy met with limited success.

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on American involvement with Iraq after the Gulf War see Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Mueller, "Questing for Monsters to Destroy;" William J. Burns, *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for its Renewal* (Random House, 2020); John Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom: America's Long War with Iraq* (Naval Institute Press, 2010); Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein* (HarperPerennial, 2000); and Laurie Mylroie, *The War Against America: Saddam Hussein and the World Trade Center Attacks: A Study in Revenge*, (Regan Books, 2001).



Another intervention that the Clinton Administration inherited was American involvement in Somalia. This was a significant departure in American foreign policy, at least in the criteria for intervention. In December of 1992, George H. W. Bush made the decision to send United States military forces to protect United Nations food distribution to a starving population. Drought and civil war had created a major humanitarian crisis.<sup>26</sup> Warlords used armed clansmen to steal relief supplies, leaving the people to suffer. The United States committed military forces not to achieve a vital national interest, but to exercise its lone superpower status to battle starvation and instability. It was the first intervention of the new era characterized by the application of foreign policy criteria that eschewed long-standing conventions.

After President Clinton took office, he presided over the shift from a successful humanitarian endeavor to a precarious nation building mission. American forces transitioned from feeding Somali citizens to enforcing United Nations policies in an attempt to bring order to the nation. This included hunting Somali warlords who defied United Nations aims. This change ended in disaster. A battle in the streets of Mogadishu from 3-4 October 1993 resulted in eighteen dead Americans. The devastating event, including the images of Somali clansmen desecrating soldiers' bodies, had a profound impact on the Clinton Administration. The ghosts of Vietnam returned as a limited American military undertaking resulted in retreat and failure. It had the effect of driving American intervention policy towards casualty and risk aversion as the top considerations for military strategy.

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<sup>26</sup> For more information on the intervention in Somalia, Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Sean Edwards, *Mars Unmasked: The Changing Face of Urban Operations*, (Rand Corp, 2000); Lidwein Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); James Dobbins, et al, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (RAND Corp, 2003); and Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (Penguin Books, 2000).

These effects directly influenced the Clinton Administration policies regarding the Balkans. Critical of Bush's policy of minimal involvement in the growing crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton pledged to have the United States take a more assertive leadership role to help resolve the growing conflict. Yet, once Clinton took office in 1993, convoluted American policy combined with diplomatic obstacles from NATO allies to stymie crisis resolution. Action and inaction regarding Bosnia demonstrated many issues early within the administration's first term.

In August of 1995, circumstances changed. The United States was able to take the initiative and lead aggressive action against Bosnian Serbs.<sup>27</sup> Fearful that American casualties would cause negative public opinion and force American withdrawal, as it seemed to have done in Somalia, the Clinton Administration ruled out any American ground forces and opted for an air-only military campaign. Equally trepidatious that collateral damage would undermine international support, the United States executed a limited strategy as to scope and the types of targets pilots could bomb. Despite military protests, especially from senior Air Force leaders who saw Desert Storm as the proper template, and feared a repeat of Vietnam-like micromanagement, the air campaign was successful in bringing all sides to a negotiated settlement.

Four years later, the Clinton Administration applied a similar formula to again combat Serb atrocities, this time in Kosovo. Serb president Slobodan Milosevic had ordered the removal of all Muslim Albanian Kosovars from that province, even if it meant by extermination. This

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<sup>27</sup> For more information on the crisis in Bosnia, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff*; Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars: The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs, 2009); DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Derek Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study in American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Anthony Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots: The Limits of Airpower* (Brookings Institute Press, 2019); and Wesley Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the future of Combat* (Public Affairs, 2001).

time the United States immediately took the lead in order to protect the Muslim population.<sup>28</sup>

Again, the Clinton Administration ruled out ground forces, and had strict rules of engagement to both prevent friendly casualties and minimize collateral damage. It also implemented a Vietnam-like strategy of gradualism in its air campaign. This drew even greater ire from senior military leaders, especially in the Air Force, who, based upon lessons from Vietnam, believed this strategy was one of failure.<sup>29</sup> However, the new era in which they found themselves had very different rules. While this strategy may not have been the most efficient or effective, it worked. In the aftermath, American peacekeepers would remain actively involved into the next century.

The United States was dynamically engaged in many parts of the world during the 1990s, but while its focus was abroad, a new and direct threat was emerging. Anti-western terrorism was rising out of the ashes of the Cold War.<sup>30</sup> Led by radical Islamists like Osama bin Laden, a loose network of terror organizations began to appear. They would come to strike the United States at New York's World Trade Center in 1993; Khobar Towers, an American military dormitory in Saudi Arabia, in 1996; American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998; and

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the crisis in Kosovo, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*; Dag Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble: Combining Diplomacy and Airpower in the Kosovo Crisis, 1998-1999* (First Naval Institute Press, 2007); Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*; and Clark, *Waging Modern War*.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on tensions between American policy and military leadership, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*; Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*; and Clark, *Waging Modern War*.

<sup>30</sup> For more information on the rise of terrorism see Hegghammer, *The Caravan*; Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Columbia University Press, 2004); Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; *Low Intensity Conflict: The Pattern of Warfare in the Modern World*, edited by Loren B. Thompson (Lexington Books, 1989); *In Uncertain Times*, edited by Leffler and Legro; Thomas M. Nichols, *Winning the World: Lessons for America's Future from the Cold War* (Preager, 2002); *The Blind Spot*, edited by N. Burns and Price; W. Burns, *The Back Channel*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Mark Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime from Oklahoma City to al Qaeda and Beyond* (New York University Press, 2007); Perry D. Jamieson, *Khobar Towers: Tragedy and Response* (Air Force History and Museum Program, 2008); Mitchell D. Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor: Plots Against the West* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); and Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Random House, 2007).

the American warship *USS Cole* in 2000. The potential proliferation of nuclear devices and other weapons of mass destruction made this up-and-coming threat even more serious. Mutually Assured Destruction was not a viable strategy to deter non-state actors from employing these weapons against American cities. The United States attempted to leverage its instruments of national power in different ways and develop modern strategies to stave off this new enemy and protect the homeland. Its policy evolution was cut short as this era promptly ended in 2001 when terrorists used three civilian jetliners to attack the World Trade Center and Pentagon, demonstrating that the United States was unable to prevent a mass casualty event.

President Clinton and his administration were the architects of American national security strategies and international policy during this new era. His administration had to develop its approaches on the fly to resolve issues and address global conditions in ways that required tremendous adaptation from long-established practices. How the United States executed America's involvement in Iraq, Somalia, and the Balkans, as well as how it addressed rising terrorist threats, shows how the nation did make adjustments throughout Clinton's time in office. Those in the military who were at the tip of the spear of foreign policy implementation traced these changes over time and provide an excellent lens through which to analyze American actions and establish the characteristics of United States foreign policy in this new and chaotic time.

### *Moving Forward while Looking Back*

The Gulf War in 1991 was a shock to the international system as great as the fall of the Berlin Wall. The United States was forced to transition from primarily focusing on

consolidating gains after the end of the Cold War to a new reality of redefining its place in the world as the lone superpower. Afterwards, with a nation wanting to concentrate on domestic issues, the people elected a president who promised to do just that. But William Jefferson Clinton came to discover that international crises did not abate when the United States changed priorities. Instead, the world experienced more volatility and complexity, forcing America to respond by directing its attentions internationally.

The nation expanded its influence and increased global military involvement while reducing force structures as it no longer had a major identifiable nemesis. The National Command Authority (NCA), which consisted primarily of the president and secretary of defense, and many times included the most senior military officers in the chain of command, implemented these military actions in ways that included many limitations that were more often self-imposed than driven by external entities. Concerns that collateral damage or excessive use of force would undermine international support, and that friendly casualties would erode domestic public opinion, led the Clinton Administration to implement seemingly excessive constraints on the use of force. One major effect was that the resultant wariness over casualties and an aversion to risk that seemed extreme given the inherent dangerous nature of combat actions redefined the American way of war during the 1990s. This led to decisions to use limited air power as the military means of foreign policy implementation. The events in Somalia during Clinton's first year in office that culminated in the loss of eighteen soldiers during the Battle of Mogadishu was particularly influential, especially when combined with the long shadow of Vietnam's influence and other impacts of the Cold War on senior policy makers.

Forty-four years of fighting communism had conditioned America to develop foreign policy using several well engrained and foundational criteria, strategies, and focus areas. In this

new era, the Clinton Administration found itself in the unique position of developing a national strategy for a lone superpower by attempting to overcome defunct habits, reapply new lessons from the past, predict an unpredictable future, and properly defend vital national interests in very different ways. It had to do all this while dealing with increasing international chaos resulting from the end of global stability that the bi-polar Cold War world provided. It was a difficult task that, unsurprisingly, yielded dichotomies and inconsistencies that policy implementers had to navigate as America attempted to find its way in this new era. This challenge began with Clinton's seminal strategy development.

In order to address the chaos and protect American interests, President Clinton enacted his policy of Engagement and Enlargement, which created several issues. Primary was the seeming contradiction of expanding military involvement while significantly downsizing the armed forces. In consolidating Cold War gains, the United States began significantly cutting the military budget under President George H. W. Bush. Even with a fifty-billion-dollar spike in spending for Desert Storm, the overall military budget shrank considerably during his tenure, and continued to decrease almost every year throughout the decade under President Clinton.<sup>31</sup> In 1989, the military budget was just under three-hundred twenty-two billion dollars and represented 5.87 percent of the United States Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By 1999, it was at 298 billion dollars and only 3.09 percent GDP.<sup>32</sup> Despite these significant decreases, Clinton implemented his Engagement and Enlargement strategy that required a substantial increase in military interventions throughout his tenure. The associated deployments stretched the military

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<sup>31</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 606.

<sup>32</sup> "U.S. Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2022" in macrotrends <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/military-spending-defense-budget> accessed 20 Feb 2023.

thin, increased stress on the force, and negatively impacted mission execution and the individual servicemembers themselves.<sup>33</sup>

Another major issue was the contradiction of increased participation in what came to be known as Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). This included humanitarian missions, small-scale contingencies, and significant military operations outside of declared war. This was not a new concept as the United States has participated in this level of intervention throughout its history including against the Barbary Pirates under Thomas Jefferson, the invasion of Haiti under Woodrow Wilson, and the attack on Panama under George H. W. Bush.<sup>34</sup> What was new was the increased frequency of these operations with reduced resources all while also operating under directives from those same National Security Strategies to prepare to fight two simultaneous major regional contingencies similar in scope to the First Gulf War in 1991.<sup>35</sup> Resolving this seeming paradox became a primary effort of the armed services as military personnel who were continually engaged in these small-scale operations, but were forced to focus on preparing for major conventional war.

These were some of the challenges that American foreign policy execution seemed to demonstrate as the United States attempted to shift away from a world without a Cold War. For those who implemented American foreign policy at the lower levels, specifically mid-level officers executing operations that the United States, despite the accompanying combat

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<sup>33</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 317. They discuss how Clinton's global engagement caused military overreach and budget issues. In addition, mid-level officers attending their service schools wrote 299 papers between 1993 and 2001 that address policy aspects of the military interventions during the Clinton Administration. 91 of these discuss negative impacts of downsizing, budget cuts, force reductions, and increased operational tempo on the armed forces.

<sup>34</sup> For more examples, see Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*.

<sup>35</sup> "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" (July 1994), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, pp. 7, 10, accessed 20 Feb 2023. There is similar language that communicates identical directives in the February 1995 document, pp. 9 and 12, and the February 1996 document, pp. 14 and 18.

operations, deemed to be other than war, American adaptation to the new era brought with it the expected proverbial growing pains as policy makers dealt with major global changes. It also included physical and mental pains for all those at the lower levels whom their superiors directed to implement their best suppositions as to the proper ways to execute American global leadership as the United States entered uncharted geopolitical waters with recent past experience as its primary sextant.

By the time President Clinton took office, the Cold War had left the United States, but the United States had not easily left the Cold War. Without a Soviet rival, foreign policy makers lost their true north and had to develop new strategies and approaches.<sup>36</sup> They needed to determine where America should use its power and influence and against whom the military should prepare to fight. This required redefining national interests and the criteria that would initiate diplomatic involvement and justify the use of force. There were as many opinions on the role of America in the world as there were questions. Various interpretations of Cold War experiences, calls for international humanitarianism, diverse visionary ideas, emerging threats, searches for rivals, and isolationist sentiments were some of the vast arrays of influences on American international policy direction. While the legacy of the Cold War continued to influence America's responses to global events, the geopolitical landscape had altered to the point where foreign policy experience gleaned from the struggle between communism and western democracy was as hurtful as it was helpful.

1993-2001 fully demonstrated neither an interwar period nor a postwar period, but rather an Era of Mixed Feelings on United States foreign policy and intervention. It was a period of redefining the very essence of American foreign policy and its way of war. The major American

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<sup>36</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp 74.



military involvements during the Clinton Administration, in particular the confrontations with Iraq, involvement in Somalia, actions in both Bosnia and Kosovo, and the United States responses to the rise of terrorism exemplify the diversity, uncertainty, and often inconsistent trajectory of foreign policy thought and action during this time. While United States foreign and security policy represented strategic progression with Engagement and Enlargement being an appropriate approach to the new era, there were many tactical shortfalls in its implementation as well as an inability to fully transition to an international relations mindset absent of the Cold War. Various embedded Cold War paradigms, especially the baggage of Vietnam, permeated foreign policy thought. Early failures in places like Somalia, Iraq, and Bosnia before 1995 led to reservations about definitively defining America's role in the world. As a result, conditions and standards for deciding on use of American power were continuously retooled, and the application of military power was ad hoc. This affected the effectiveness of American foreign affairs, especially how those at the lower levels were able to implement these policy decisions in order to achieve positive results for the United States. While America made many improvements as the new century dawned, not until the terror attacks of 9/11 rebooted the national security mindset did the United States fully settle on a concrete and focused international policy direction and, perhaps, move past the Cold War.

## I. THE THORN: IRAQ



Map of Iraq and Surrounding Countries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PBS Learning Media, “Map of the Middle East,” <https://nhpbs.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ed0d1221-978e-4845-a441-4cbb33ff43da/map-of-the-middle-east/> accessed 19 Feb 2023. Cropped and edited for size, and added Dharan to the map.

On a bright November day in 2000, an Air Force lieutenant colonel led a flight of four F-15 Eagle jet fighters into the Northern No-Fly Zone of Iraq. He was all too familiar with this mission, as were the majors and captains under him. Fighter pilots just like them had been patrolling the skies over Iraq for years, and the United States Air Force had flown the preponderance of missions, especially in the north. Naval and marine aviators of equivalent ranks had performed their share of combat patrols with their Air Force and coalition counterparts, mostly in the southern no-fly zone. In recent weeks, these flights had come to take on growing importance. Saddam Hussein had been more aggressive against coalition aircraft, continuing a pattern of increased hostility towards the end of the calendar year. As a result, the missions had become less routine and more dangerous.

To the pilots, it seemed these operations had been going on forever.<sup>2</sup> Nearly ten years since the end of Operation Desert Storm, combat missions looked to be continuing in perpetuity. They had stressed the American military, and not just the pilots. Many key support functions also felt the strain of continual operations over and around Iraq. Leaders of base security forces units especially faced challenges. The majors and lieutenant colonels who commanded the Air Force units that protected military installations were some of the most frequently deployed in the military. The constant turmoil resulted in many declining to re-enlist. This left fewer trained professionals to guard bases at home and abroad, adding increased pressure on personnel serving in the Middle East who experienced more than their fair share of overseas contingency postings already. This was a scary proposition given the increase in terrorism. The attack on Khobar Towers in 1996 was a sobering reminder that these patrolling pilots could have been more vulnerable at their base than over the skies of a hostile nation. However, while at base they did

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<sup>2</sup> Lt Col Peter P. Bartos, "A Day on Northern Watch: November 2, 2000," *Air Power History*, Spring 2007, p. 18.

not have to contend with an enemy continually shooting at them, as they did when flying their missions.

Though to date no plane had been hit by Iraqi Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) or a Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM), no one wanted to become the unlucky victim of what they called “the golden B-B,” especially given the increase in attacks against the patrols.<sup>3</sup> Since the creation of the no-fly zones, the Iraqis had been hesitant to fire at coalition aircraft. Once they did, they exposed their position and became susceptible to return fire, which was accurate and deadly. However, Saddam Hussein had started to threaten the men manning the air defense systems by telling them to either shoot at the Americans or be shot themselves.<sup>4</sup> This increased the risk to those flying into the Northern No-Fly Zone that day.

The pattern pilots had come to expect was an initial attack from Iraqi defenses followed by an event-free patrol. However, the experiences of negotiating the skies over Iraq demonstrated that anticipating predictability led to complacency, and that increased risk. After the F-15s weathered their initial attack from AAA, which failed to come anywhere near the swift craft, the pilots began to settle into their routine. At this point, Iraqi soldiers launched a SAM. This weapon was more accurate. The fighter pilots immediately took evasive action, causing them to lose sight of the missile. Luckily it detonated above and behind them, near where they had been prior to executing their maneuvers. As they continued the rest of their patrol, they could not help but wonder how a politically isolated Iraq was able to replenish their missiles, which were manufactured in Russia and France.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bartos, “A Day on Northern Watch: November 2, 2000,” p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Bartos, “A Day on Northern Watch: November 2, 2000,” p. 21. He discovered that, after interacting with an Iraqi general after Iraqi Freedom four years later, the increased SAM and AAA activity during that period was a result of, “The orders from Hussein...to shoot or be shot.”

<sup>5</sup> Bartos, “A Day on Northern Watch: November 2, 2000,” p. 21.

This episode demonstrated that, despite years of sanctions, continual air occupation, and American-led strikes that slowly whittled down Iraq's military capabilities, Saddam Hussein continually escalated his defiance from the latter half of the 1990s into the new century. The pilots overhead and the plethora of support personnel deployed to the surrounding nations, whose populaces were becoming less friendly towards them with each passing year, experienced increased stress over time. These military professionals experienced firsthand the issues with American foreign policy implementation in Iraq, giving them a unique and valuable perspective. They had a front-row seat to the effects of American policy. Their writings over the course of the decade following the First Gulf War illuminated various issues with the strategy stagnation affected by the United States' struggle to adapt to a new era as the lone superpower while dealing with limitations imposed both by itself and the geopolitical situation. These issues thwarted resolution of the seemingly never-ending problem of what to do about Saddam Hussein.

### *Introduction*

The United States spent the last decade of the twentieth century, and even into the twenty-first, addressing the foreign policy dilemmas in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. What began as an overwhelming and successful American-led international effort to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty from the aggressions of the dictator Saddam Hussein rapidly deteriorated into a foreign policy quagmire under George H. W. Bush that the Clinton Administration failed to resolve. Tracing American policy in Iraq provides a window from which to view how the United States was transitioning from the Cold War to a new era. Its strategies show the juxtaposition of American power and restraint as the sole superpower. Without a Soviet counterweight, the United States

could more freely leverage power to meet its foreign policy goals, which included regional stability through containing Iraq. Conversely, limits came with its commitment to maintain positive relations with the international community. The mid-level officers specially selected to attend their various service schools between 1993 and 2001 provide a unique lens from which to view American policy progression in Iraq within a broader context of these new conventions.

Their views at given points along this timeline illustrate the deteriorating geopolitical conditions that, over time, diluted American effectiveness and allowed Saddam Hussein to rebuild his power. Through their writings, these officers demonstrate how the application of an adapted containment strategy may have kept Iraq from invading its neighbors again, but failed to achieve vital American interests with any permanence. They analyze the effects of maintaining the *status quo* for an extended period and how it contributed to the failure to coerce Iraqi compliance, which frustrated policy makers and implementers alike. Part of this vexation was the continuing belief that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capabilities existed and were a potentially significant threat. This concern prevented the United States from abandoning its focus on Iraq. However, due to self-imposed limitations stemming from domestic and international political considerations, America was unable to levee enough pressure to provide a permanent solution. Military officers pushed to transcend Cold War containment thinking to develop more applicable and creative answers. Unfortunately for the United States, by the time the Clinton Administration began to open the aperture of policy solutions well into its second term, America's long conflict with Iraq had created too many fissures in the coalition that made the implementation of significant change politically untenable.

The observations from the middle-out perspective of these officers indicate that the initial American policy in Iraq was more akin to recycling old policies influenced by years of fighting

the Cold War, rather than adapting to changes in the global political landscape. Operation Desert Storm was a primary driver for American policy tendencies to stay in the past. It was the type of conventional war for which American forces had been preparing since the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It reinforced Cold War strategies that focused on an identifiable enemy threat, built alliances to counter the threat, and prepared a military force to execute a major conventional battle.<sup>6</sup> In Iraq, the United States acted against a Soviet-style force similar to those against which the American military had been preparing for decades. Iraq had the fourth largest army in the world, supplied mostly with Eastern European armaments that it employed in Warsaw Pact fashion. For the decade prior to 1978, Iraq had almost exclusively imported arms from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>7</sup> After Saddam Hussein took power, he looked to diversify, but the majority of Iraq's military equipment remained Warsaw Pact, including two-thirds of its tanks.<sup>8</sup> He employed this weaponry during the Iran-Iraq war, mimicking Soviet practices. His forces became well-versed in employing these tactics. While the coalition victory over Iraq may not have been an American-led NATO defense of the Fulda Gap or a counteroffensive to expel Soviet forces from Western Europe, it was a direct parallel.

Though the Berlin Wall had fallen just over fourteen months earlier and the Soviet Union was in the process of breaking apart, Desert Storm was a war of the Cold War past. The overwhelming American triumph put an exclamation point on its Cold War victory. The United States and the Soviet Union never directly fought a major conventional battle, but the Gulf War

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<sup>6</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, "Strategy in a Murky World" in *In Uncertain Times*, p. 182. In this, their conclusion to the book, they paraphrase Mary Sarotte's essay, "The Wall Comes Down: A Punctual Moment" where she discusses how the United States preserved Cold War institutions after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Robert B. Zoellick's article "An Architecture of U.S. Strategy after the Cold War" that discusses how Desert Storm reinforced an old strategy that predated the Cold War, but was a staple of the United States' Cold War approach. Also, Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 212, marked the Iraqi army as a Soviet copy and its resounding defeat confirmed United States sole superpower status and accentuated its Cold War victory over the Soviet Union.

<sup>7</sup> Rachel Schmidt, "Global Arms Exports to Iraq, 1960-1990," pp. vi, 19.

<sup>8</sup> Schmidt, "Global Arms Exports to Iraq, 1960-1990," RAND Study N-3248-USDP (RAND Corp, 1991), p. vi, 20.

was the closest demonstration of how Soviet and American military forces may have fared against each other. This is not to say that, had it been a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact force, the American victory would have been so one-sided. However, the absolute decisiveness of the American coalition's military prowess made a profound statement. They destroyed up to 75 percent of Iraq's military forces, killed ten thousand enemy combatants, and took over eighty-six thousand prisoners as compared to ninety-two coalition combat deaths.<sup>9</sup> This sent a message of American military superiority to the world that went far beyond any counterfactual arguments about a United States-versus-Soviet Union conventional confrontation. The United States demonstrated that it could decisively, even overwhelmingly, win a direct fight between armies. Desert Storm, as the last Cold War battle, set a new baseline that would carry well into the future. One short term effect was to reinforce America's Cold War victory to policy makers which, undoubtedly, affected the penchant to reuse proven strategies to the problems of the new era.

Another effect was to establish a standard for how wars were supposed to have been fought that contrasted with America's loss in Vietnam, which still held great influence over United States policy makers and military professionals. The American-led forces accomplished their task against the Iraqi military with such astonishing results that it inspired President George H. W. Bush to declare, "By God, we've kicked Vietnam Syndrome once and for all."<sup>10</sup> However, mid-level officer writings demonstrate that Vietnam still cast a shadow over American

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<sup>9</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 601. Mylroie, *The War Against America*, p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> George H. W. Bush, Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council, 1 March 1991, <http://vandvreader.org/george-h-w-bush-proclaims-a-cure-for-the-vietnam-syndrome-01-march-1991/> (accessed 20 Feb 2023). Iraq, Somalia, and the Balkans, however, would demonstrate in various ways that Vietnam would heavily influence foreign policy development and execution throughout the 1990s.



policy development and execution, even in United States foreign policy successes. Post-war Iraq would not become one of those success stories.

When the United States formally accepted Iraq's acquiescence and declared victory on 3 March 1991, the true diplomatic and military difficulties began. After the liberation of Kuwait, the primary national objective was to ensure Iraq would not threaten the stability in the Middle East, particularly with weapons of mass destruction. To this end, the United States continued wartime economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation of Iraq, and also kept military forces in the region to enforce United Nations resolutions and the cease fire accords. Over time, the United States led efforts to establish no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. In effect, America led an air occupation of a significant portion of the desert nation, conducting coercive and punitive strikes whenever Saddam Hussein violated United Nations resolutions in an attempt to drive him into compliance and chasten him for significant transgressions. Unfortunately, the application of American and coalition power failed in this effort.

President Clinton inherited the problem of Iraq, and it affected the entirety of his administration. In an effort to contain Iraq from further aggression, including preventing its use of chemical and biological weapons, the United States traversed a path of indefinite involvement. This course took its toll on coalition congruity, American will, and the men and women of the United States armed forces who continually rotated through the region to execute what they came to view as a fight the United States could not afford to lose, but was unable to win.

Mid-level officer papers from President Clinton's first term focus on the United States' continued execution of the *status quo* in Iraq that President George H. W. Bush established in order to keep a weakened Saddam Hussein in check. Though the authors predominantly looked internally to how the military could improve its execution of missions, these leaders began to see

that a new application of containment, however modified, was becoming less viable for achieving American national goals. The United States recognized Saddam Hussein as the ruler of Iraq, and directly fomenting his overthrow was not an objective following the First Gulf War. Instead, the American aim was to keep him from expanding outside of his borders again, not dissimilar to the guiding principles behind the United States' attempts to keep the Soviet Union from expanding beyond its existing sphere of influence during the Cold War. Instead of America looking to prevent proliferation of a communist ideology, it focused on stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to other nations or non-state actors that would use them against the United States. A primary tactic was to use coercive and punitive strikes against an Iraq with little ability to effectively defend against them. While generally successful in keeping Saddam Hussein within his own borders, by the end of Clinton's first term, events signaled that American policy was not achieving all the desired effects.

1996 became a turning point that invigorated Saddam Hussein towards increased defiance to the detriment of America's mission and affected how the United States dealt with Iraq. The catalyst was an Iraqi military coup plot that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) discovered and attempted to support. American agents working out of Jordan were in contact with disaffected Iraqi officers in late 1995 and worked to support an attempt to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Iraqi security intercepted messages and American communications technology in late January or early February of 1996 that led to the unravelling of the plot.<sup>11</sup> By June, Saddam Hussein's security forces neutralized those Iraqis involved and declared victory over America. That CIA cell left Jordan soon after and Saddam Hussein looked to northern Iraq.

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<sup>11</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 224-257.

Ever since Operation Provide Comfort, the American effort that began in 1991 to support the Kurds in the north with military protection and humanitarian aid after their failed rebellion, the United States had a friendly stronghold in Northern Iraq.<sup>12</sup> The American military presence helped allow Kurdish leadership to establish the Iraqi National Congress which provided them with a government structure. This allowed the Kurds to create partial autonomy and political separation from Saddam Hussein. As the original humanitarian effort morphed into Operation Northern Watch, it continued to provide protection for the Kurds. The United States used this safe haven and the Kurdish freedom of action that came from its semi-independence to gather intelligence on Iraq, affording more informed choices for American actions.

In 1996, that intelligence source vanished in a Saddam sandstorm. Emboldened by the failed coup and retreat of the involved American operatives from Jordanian soil, Hussein sent his forces north on 31 August. He attacked Irbil, the seat of the Iraqi National Congress, and eliminated the political entity by the beginning of September.<sup>13</sup> Despite the strategic importance of the Kurdish stronghold, United States Secretary of Defense William Perry stated that America “should not be involved in the civil war in the north.”<sup>14</sup> However, when Iraqi forces increased SAM activity against coalition air patrols, America responded with Operation Desert Strike on 3 and 4 September.<sup>15</sup> It was a coordinated, but limited, cruise missile-only response with the long-range weapons launched from B-52 bombers flying out of Guam and Navy vessels in the Persian

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<sup>12</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 231.

<sup>13</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 243. Ballard p. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 243.

<sup>15</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 88.

Gulf.<sup>16</sup> Neither Turkey nor Saudi Arabia would allow offensive strikes against Iraq to be launched from their soil.<sup>17</sup> Overt fissures had developed within the coalition.<sup>18</sup>

After Desert Strike, the United States then expanded the southern no-fly zone and increased offensive capability in the region. Saddam Hussein withdrew his military units from Kurdish territory, but he left a significant security force in place. Their intimidating, intrusive, and brutal Gestapo-like tactics ensured that the Kurds would not enjoy similar political leverage and freedom of action as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power. According to CIA Director John Deutch, the dictator was politically stronger after sending his troops north, despite the withdrawal.<sup>19</sup> Hussein emerged the clear winner of the Iraqi civil war, militarily and politically.<sup>20</sup> It became increasingly apparent to the contemporary American officers that the United States' actions were not having the desired effects against the Iraqi strongman.

In general, contemporary officer writings demonstrate that they saw American involvement in Iraq as a long-term proposition, especially since the United States continued to recycle the same approach despite a lack of progress. Using the established *status quo* from the previous administration was the safest action for Clinton to continue to contain Hussein, but it was not the most effective. It temporarily stopped incidents of Iraqi defiance, but it also helped allow Saddam Hussein to re-solidify his power by 1996. From then on, the Iraqi dictator conducted a continual cat-and-mouse game with the United Nations weapons inspectors, and used military deployments and aggressive actions to test the limits of American and coalition

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<sup>16</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 243. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 89.

<sup>17</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 243. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 189. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>19</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 244. They refer to a *Washington Post* article, "Iraq Stronger Since August, Deutch Says" (September 20, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 244-245.

resolve. The modified containment strategy enabled the Iraqi dictator to dictate timing and tempo of United States actions because it was, by the nature of its use in Iraq, reactive.

By the start of President Clinton's second term, mid-level military officers demonstrate in their writings a growing dissatisfaction with continual deployments into the Middle East to execute missions that did not yield more than temporary positive effects. They lamented how Saddam Hussein, who was supposedly beaten into submission at the start of the decade, appeared to have stymied the greatest power on earth by the end of it. Despite exasperation over what was becoming an indefinite temporary operation, these officer-scholars agreed that Iraq continued to be a direct threat to United States' interests, and potentially the homeland. Most fused information regarding Hussein's lack of cooperation with other evidence to conclude that Iraqi weapons programs, especially biological and chemical agent weaponization, were alive and well. As a group, these officers demonstrate how Saddam Hussein created the conditions that convinced many United States leaders into believing that Iraq had an active weapons of mass destruction program. Because they felt this made Iraq a vital national interest, they were most frustrated by what they assessed to be United States policy failure. Limited strikes did not provide enough teeth to coerce Saddam Hussein into long term compliance with the Gulf War cease fire accords and United Nations resolutions.

America's self-imposition of military restraints resulted from two main factors. First was the assessed need to prevent actions that the world might perceive as too harsh. Saddam Hussein was defeated, the Iraqi people were suffering, and having the world perceive America as a bully could have adversely affected the coalition against Iraq, especially its Arab members. This partnership was vital to maintain legitimacy as well as ensure military basing surrounding Iraq. As time continued, the suffering of Iraqis intensified, bringing world sympathy to bear.

Ironically, the increased duration of sanctions enforcement, the suffering of fellow Muslims, and a reorientation away from western leadership sowed the very discontent within the neighboring states that America hoped to avoid by limiting its use of military force against Iraq.<sup>21</sup> The aforementioned refusal of coalition partners to allow offensive strikes from their territories was a physical manifestation of the growing discontent with American activity against Iraq. As such, any strong American military response became less tenable as Clinton's second term progressed.

The other factor was perceived domestic oversensitivity to casualties. The end of the Cold War and resultant budget cuts begun under the Bush Administration were indicative of an America that wanted to focus on domestic issues. The lack of a global Soviet threat made international relations a secondary concern for the American people. There was a very real possibility that public support would wane significantly if the United States overemployed military force, especially if it resulted in significant casualties fighting in a place, Iraq, where America had already claimed military victory. Politically, it was a tough sell. Other events throughout his administration, especially Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo magnified these concerns (see chapters 2 and 3).

Military officers who attended intermediate and advanced military education courses over the course of the Clinton Administration demonstrated that the United States was mired in a backwards-looking approach towards foreign policy in Iraq. Though most of these writers did not define it as such, their descriptions and assessments of American policy showed a methodology that resembled an adapted Cold War containment model. America's approach was also hampered by an international strategy that continued to prepare for conflict with a near-peer rather than adapting to the new geopolitical environment. As a result of their experiences, mid-

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<sup>21</sup> W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, pp. 136-138. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 243, 275-276, 284. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 96.

level officers identified that low intensity conflicts and humanitarian operations were the future, and should have had more emphasis in national strategy. They wanted a more coordinated diplomatic, political, and economic strategy with assertive, efficient, and most of all, effective employment of military force conducive to the new global situation. In short, they believed America had to fight a new war, not an old one. The way to do this was for the United States, from the top civilian and military leaders down to the most junior officers, to employ more creative and less dogmatic approaches. Though they did not have many robust solutions, the evolution of their assessments of Iraq within the context of the broader American policy that led to increased global engagement demonstrates how American stagnation in Iraq was significantly affected by its slow adjustment to a new era.

By the end of the Clinton Administration, mid-level officers showed how the United States had begun to deviate from the *status quo* in Iraq. In response to Saddam Hussein's increased aggression and defiance that became even more active after 1998, American no-fly zones became the means to execute a war of attrition against belligerent Iraqi military forces, mostly anti-aircraft sites. This, though, was more a manifestation of reaction to Hussein's increased active defiance than from significant American policy reorientation. Regardless, by that time the sole superpower had neither the domestic nor international political capital to resolve the conflict in a way that met American assessed foreign policy needs. Instead, involvement morphed into a two-way war of attrition. The United States wore down Iraq's defenses while American prolonged action wore down international support and domestic will. This dichotomy became the culminating effect of American foreign policy in Iraq, begun after the First Gulf War, and remained unresolved when Clinton left office.

Iraq became a representation of the United States' journey to adapt to a new era after years of Cold War foreign policy. President Clinton held the course in Iraq set by the Bush Administration. Also, he did not facilitate significant changes to international policy or national defense strategies. To be fair, radical change was risky in the still nascent post-Cold War geopolitical environment. The United States was hampered by military budget cuts, low popular will from a nation looking to consolidate Cold War gains, self-imposed limits on employment of military forces, and an adversary in Saddam Hussein who cared almost exclusively about power and regional military reputation at the expense of his own people. The *status quo* produced temporary gains and ensured reduced risk, but created long-term losses. It also prevented adaptation to the new global environment, negated progress in achieving national goals in Iraq, and stymied America's ability to effectively consolidate its post-Cold War gains, especially in the Middle East. Iraq had devolved into its own type of quagmire and stayed a thorn in the side of the United States until such time as policy-shattering events would unfold in the new century.

### *Background*

The geography of the Tigris-Euphrates region makes Iraq difficult to protect from military attack.<sup>22</sup> The fertile plain with Turkey's highlands to the north and Iran's to the east provides little advantage for defenders. The two rivers provide some protection, but overall Iraq's cities, most of which sit on these two slender bodies of water, have been vulnerable to

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<sup>22</sup> For an overview of the history of the region and creation of Iraq as it relates to Iraq during the first Gulf War and its aftermath, see Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp 58-67, and Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, pp 16-21. The Cockburns were journalists who provide a detailed account of events after the Gulf War, focusing on Hussein's political comeback after coming close to losing power. Rear Admiral Ballard, a historian and current provost of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, provides a detailed history and context for America's interaction with Saddam Hussein from the Gulf War to Operation Iraqi Freedom.



invasion for centuries. From Alexander's armies to the Ottomans, this area has seen many foreign invaders.

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Acting under mandates from the League of Nations, the British took over the three Turkish provinces surrounding this ancient area. For political expedience in governance, the United Kingdom merged these culturally diverse areas into one territory, creating Iraq. This meant melding Shia, Sunni, and Kurd populations. Animosity among the three groups ran deep. Only their mutual disdain towards the British, who executed semi-colonial rule through a dependent, puppet government, drew their ire away from each other. In 1958, a coup ended the British sponsored monarchy of King Faisal II, setting off a chain of countercoups that lasted ten years. It was during this period that Saddam Hussein came of age and rose to political power.

After a bloodbath, Hussein took power in 1979. He was part of the minority elite Sunnis. He immediately set the tone for totalitarian rule and intolerance for opposition. He used violence and intimidation to entrench and fortify Sunni hegemony over the more populous Shias in the south and the Kurds in the north. Almost immediately after consolidating power, he went to war against Iran. During this conflict, Hussein began a nuclear weapons research and development program in an effort to enhance his power in the region and better defend Iraq.<sup>23</sup> He also demonstrated a willingness to use chemical and biological weapons. In order to counter Iranian population advantages and tactical issues with invading his mountainous neighbor, he unleashed weapons of mass destruction on enemy soldiers and civilians alike. He also used them against rebellious Iraqi Kurds.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 86. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 626.

<sup>24</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp 91-93.

During the war, Iraq gained an ally in the United States, albeit a temporary one. The Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979 resulted in the removal of the Shah, a stalwart American friend, and the capture of the American embassy in Tehran that included a 444-day American hostage standoff. As a result, America provided support to Saddam Hussein as an enemy of its enemy. After the Iran-Iraq War ended in a stalemate in 1988, Hussein declared victory and began to break ties with the United States.<sup>25</sup> He looked to foster Arab support and cultivate Arab power. An American alliance was a liability to this end. He wanted not only to be a regional leader, but also to garner financial assistance from his neighbors as the war with Iran drained his coffers, resulting in significant financial issues for the dictator and his nation.

The combination of huge military debt and high inflation led to an economic crisis. The multitude of former soldiers transitioning out of the military flooded an already saturated job market, overwhelming Iraq's economy.<sup>26</sup> Saddam Hussein looked to his neighbors for help. He purported to be the defender of the Arab world from Persian aggression and expected his fellow Arabs to compensate him monetarily. When they would not meet his expectations, he reverted to military force to resolve his problems. He rebuilt his army, and on 2 August 1990, just two hours after midnight, Iraqi forces rolled across the Kuwaiti border, overwhelmed the defense forces, and took the small, oil-rich nation by the end of the day. Saddam Hussein planned and executed the invasion perfectly, but he failed to anticipate America's and the world's response.

The United States immediately sprang into action. Within five days, Operation Desert Shield began as American forces mobilized in defense of Saudi Arabia.<sup>27</sup> President George H. W. Bush rallied America and the world against Saddam Hussein by continually employing

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<sup>25</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 596.

rhetoric that demonized him, going so far as comparing him to Adolf Hitler.<sup>28</sup> This helped solidify domestic support and enable diplomatic efforts to form a global coalition against Iraq that included many of the aggressor's Arab neighbors. By November, the United Nations passed a resolution demanding that Iraq vacate Kuwait by 15 January 1991; otherwise Hussein's forces would be forcibly removed by the United States-led coalition. Despite facing a force of over a quarter of a million troops and the most state-of-the-art military hardware ever assembled, Saddam Hussein refused. Operation Desert Storm began on 16 January 1991 with a devastating air campaign. After six weeks of around-the-clock bombing, the ground offensive kicked off, needing just 100 hours to evict Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait and set the conditions to declare victory.<sup>29</sup> Despite President Bush's rhetoric villainizing the Iraqi leader, the goal of the war was never to oust Saddam Hussein from power, but to liberate Kuwait and keep Iraq from sowing instability in the region again.

In the wake of this tremendous victory, the international community levied requirements on Iraq. On 3 March 1991, the Iraqis accepted the American-led Safwan Cease Fire Accords. Conditions included ending all hostile provocations, returning Kuwait to independent status, and paying for war damages.<sup>30</sup> In April, the United Nations passed resolutions 687 and 688 that reinforced the cease fire agreement and directed Iraq to undergo major disarmament.<sup>31</sup> They also added the requirement that Iraq end its weapons of mass destruction program, including cessation of their development and the destruction of all existing chemical, biological, and

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<sup>28</sup> "Bush Says Saddam Even Worse Than Hitler," *AP News*, Nov 1, 1990, <https://apnews.com/article/c456d72625fba6c742d17f1699b18a16> accessed 20 Feb 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 601.

<sup>30</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>31</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 604.

nuclear arms. Iraq agreed to “unrestricted freedom of entry and exit without delay or hindrance” of any international weapons inspectors.<sup>32</sup> Compliance would prove to be short-lived.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein seemed on the verge of losing power. In the past, he had ruled through a fierce combination of brute strength and political savvy. He employed these skills again. Seeking to exploit Hussein’s weakness, the Kurds in the north and the Shia in the south rose up against him and his oppressive minority Sunni regime in 1991. The dictator’s brutal suppression of the Kurdish uprising created a humanitarian crisis. The United States worked to provide relief to the beleaguered Kurds by launching Operation Provide Comfort. Soon after, the United Nations Security Council established the Northern No-Fly Zone by passing Resolution 688 in April. The following year, the United States-led coalition established the Southern No-Fly zone as Hussein’s forces mercilessly attacked the Shia rebels. This prohibited Iraq from flying aircraft or putting in anti-aircraft defenses north of the thirty-sixth parallel or south of the thirty-second parallel. Despite these measures, by 1992 Saddam Hussein survived two major uprisings by crushing both revolts to resecure his hold on absolute power.

This emboldened the Iraqi dictator. Though he had agreed to all of the aforementioned terms following his defeat during the First Gulf War, he never provided unequivocal cooperation with the United Nations weapons inspection program before the revolts. After, he became more defiant. When Bill Clinton defeated George H. W. Bush in the presidential election, Saddam Hussein began aggressively challenging the no-fly zones and the weapons inspectors.<sup>33</sup> In December of 1992, as the Bush administration was coming to an end, Hussein aggressively violated the Southern No-Fly Zone for the first time. Iraqi aircraft probed the area, which

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<sup>32</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 86.

<sup>33</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 88.

resulted in American fighter craft shooting down an Iraqi plane. Next, Saddam Hussein deployed a Surface to Air Missile battery into that restricted region. The United States issued an ultimatum to withdraw the defense system, but Hussein did nothing. Neither did the United States.

On 7 January 1993, Saddam Hussein started his game of selective noncooperation with the United Nations weapons inspectors in earnest. Iraqi officials began blocking the inspectors' travel by restricting their flights. Three days later, Iraqi forces conducted a raid into Kuwait. President Bush responded by bombing anti-aircraft missile sites, including those in the no-fly zones.<sup>34</sup> Hussein did not relent. Then, on 17 January, an American cruise missile strike hit the Zaafaraniya manufacturing facility near Baghdad, a suspected nuclear weapons fabrication plant.<sup>35</sup> The era of Tomahawk Diplomacy, named for the United States Navy version of the high explosive precision cruise missile, had begun. The United States would continue to use long range missiles as low-risk coercive and punitive responses in Iraq and elsewhere for the rest of the decade. Two days after this attack, Hussein called for a cease fire. It was the day before Bill Clinton's inauguration. Though the attack yielded the desired outcome by forcing Saddam Hussein into compliance, the measure would prove to be only temporary. The politically shrewd strongman set in motion a long series of "cheat and retreat" tactics that would plague the entirety of the Clinton administration.<sup>36</sup>

While Bill Clinton touted a willingness for a new start in Iraq when he took office in 1993, offering "a different relationship with me...by observing the U.N. requirements,"<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Mylroie, *The War Against America*, pp. 122-123. Confirmed in *New York Times* article 14 Jan 1993 "Raid on Iraq; U.S. and Allied Planes Hit Iraq, Bombing Missile Sites in South in Reply to Hussein's Defiance."

<sup>35</sup> Mylroie, *The War Against America*, pp. 123.

<sup>36</sup> W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, p. 136.

<sup>37</sup> "Clinton Backs Raid but Muses About a New Start," *New York Times*, 14 January 1993.

Saddam Hussein had other plans. Over time, the dictator's actions revealed that his goal was to work towards increasing his political position in the region through anti-American defiance and rhetoric. This came at a price to his own country, and it was a price he was willing to pay. Though economic sanctions were taking their toll, transforming Iraq into a third world country, the regime kept itself relatively insulated. Saddam Hussein did not use what little funds came through to repair vital infrastructure such as water treatment and sewage systems that remained damaged and in disrepair from the war. Neither did he spend significant sums on his people to prevent disease and starvation. Instead, he siphoned off the money to pay his Republican Guard and enjoy the luxuries of leadership.<sup>38</sup> One of those indulgences was the exercise of dictatorial power. He used this to up the ante.

During former President Bush's visit to Kuwait in April of 1993, Saddam Hussein planned an assassination of his rival wartime leader. President Clinton responded by ordering the launch of twenty-three cruise missiles against the Iraqi Intelligence and police headquarters.<sup>39</sup> It was done at night, to ensure minimal collateral damage and casualties. This particular use of Tomahawk Diplomacy was supposed to be a strong message to Saddam Hussein. For a man who lived a life where brutish strength and homicidal conviction demonstrated resolve and led to power, it was not. He came of age in Tikrit where he participated in ongoing violence between communists and nationalists, killing the former as a vicious supporter of the latter. He orchestrated violent coups, participated in assassination attempts of senior political rivals (successful and unsuccessful), and, once he attained power, consolidated it through orchestrating

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<sup>38</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p 22.

<sup>39</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp 183-184. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 627. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p 16. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p 88.

the murder of anyone he saw as a threat.<sup>40</sup> His experiences demonstrated a respect for strength through merciless violence. The missile attacks and how the United States conducted them showed America's penchant for minimizing both risk and casualties, which equated to weakness to someone like Hussein.

However, because the Iraqi leader backed down again, the attack appeared to be a successful motivator. In actuality, this coercive use of low-risk, minimalistic, and targeted military power did not produce the desired long-term effects. Saddam Hussein continued to purposefully provoke America into action in an effort to undermine the coalition.<sup>41</sup> Because he avoided any significant military responses, he continued to claim the upper hand. For example, his massing of troops at the Kuwaiti border in 1994 drew a six-million-dollar buildup of American forces to the region. Hussein backed down and the Americans redeployed without incident, allowing Iraq to proclaim how they not only flexed their muscles with impunity, but forced the United States to waste a considerable amount of time, effort, and treasure.<sup>42</sup>

American actions against Iraq were beginning to demonstrate a new exercise of containment. Unlike the Soviet Union, which possessed the capability to massively retaliate against any direct American action, Iraq had no such means. Therefore, the United States used direct strikes as part of its strategy to keep Iraq from expanding beyond its borders and its military forces pinned between the thirty-sixth and thirty-second parallels. American actions, however, were constrained politically and diplomatically in ways different from the Cold War, but because this was self-imposed, the limitations were perhaps more restrictive to achieving national goals. As the only remaining superpower, the United States needed to maintain a strong

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<sup>40</sup> For more information, see Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 67-78, and Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>41</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p 627.

<sup>42</sup> Mylroie, *The War Against America*, p. 159.

posture, yet one that was as benevolent as possible to ensure continued international support. American leaders relied on their allies and coalition partners, especially in light of significant military downsizing in the aftermath of the Cold War. The United States could not afford to use only its own forces to achieve global stability and security interests. Coalitions, future and present, were vital. Because of these factors, political expediency and judicious use of force became primary United States policy implementation characteristics when enforcing the cease fire accords and United Nations resolutions in Iraq. In addition, policy-maker assessments of American public opinion drove actions as well, which included the belief that the people would not tolerate unnecessary risk to military servicemembers for a war that they had already won, especially against a “militarily pathetic” Iraq.<sup>43</sup> Limited military action combined with sanctions to contain Iraq and coerce compliance was the course of action the United States continued.

Saddam Hussein took advantage of the American approach. With his power base in the process of becoming reestablished as Bill Clinton took office, Hussein pushed the United States continuously throughout the Clinton presidency. The Iraqi strongman purposely provoked American strikes, sacrificing Iraqi lives and materiel to force the United States to react to him. He constantly probed for weaknesses that he could use to his advantage in an attempt to break American resolve. A modified version of containment would prove to be ineffective on the Iraqi dictator, leading to what would become a seemingly unsolvable problem for the Clinton Administration. The American military spent the end of the millennium attempting to implement foreign policy regarding the rogue nation with limited effect and growing frustration. Saddam Hussein continuously tested United States’ mettle, defied the United Nations, undermined the

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<sup>43</sup> Mueller, “Questing for Monsters to Destroy,” p. 118.



coalition that fought against him in the First Gulf War, and created a major dilemma for the American foreign policy team.

### *Status Quo*

While President Bill Clinton was executing a strategy of modified containment through the *status quo* in Iraq during his first term in office, mid-level military officers attending their service schools did not write much about it. They produced thirty-nine papers that touched on the subject in any significant way, with only a dozen having post-war Iraq as a major focus. By comparison, in 1993 alone there were sixteen papers devoted to Desert Storm, with another twelve providing significant references to the First Gulf War. The great victory in the desert garnered more attention from officers who were closer to the Cold War than those who came afterwards. In addition, American involvement in Somalia (see chapter 2) was a greater topic of interest for military professionals as nearly three times as many papers focused on events in the Horn of Africa during Clinton's first four years in office. However, the officer papers from 1993 through 1996 did introduce many key perspectives on American foreign policy upon which later students would focus. Their ideas help illuminate many of the factors regarding the direction, evolution, and effects of American foreign policy that manifested in the skies above a large part of the fertile crescent.

President Clinton inherited the previous administration's inability to successfully resolve conflict with Iraq after Desert Storm, and he continued this ineffectiveness by persisting with the same overall strategy.<sup>44</sup> Because the American public did not focus much on Iraq, it helped

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<sup>44</sup> CDR Timothy M. Thomas, "Conflict Termination and Military Strategy" (1994), p. 20. Maj Susan E. Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), pp. 2-3. MAJ Richard E.

enable the administration to initially keep its attention on other affairs and allow inertia to govern Iraqi policy during his first term. Contemporary officers writing about the American-led enforcement of United Nations sanctions and the Safwan Accords echoed this idea. For example, Major David Peterson writing in 1996 commented on the overall lack of public interest in American military action in Iraq since the friendly fire helicopter shootdown on 14 April 1994.<sup>45</sup> This was when two American F-15 fighter pilots mistook two American Black Hawk helicopters for Soviet-made Iraqi Hind helicopters violating the northern no-fly zone. The American jets shot them down, killing their crews along with British, French, Turkish, and Kurdish representatives escorted by an American political advisor.<sup>46</sup> This incident resulted in a temporary burst of negative media coverage for the United States military before returning to lower levels of overall attention.

The absence of American casualties both before and after this incident helped minimize public opposition to United States actions in Iraq. This aspect also had the effect of lessening both media and public scrutiny, keeping interest low. The decreased volume of military papers from 1993 through 1996 mirrors this overall apathy. While officers who did write about Iraq during this period indicate that sanctions enforcement appeared to be more of a nuisance for the American people than a significant interest, they also discuss some key characteristics of American foreign policy.

One point of emphasis these early papers introduced was the potential for weapons of mass destruction development in that nation. These officers reflected American concerns that

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Matthews, "Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm" (1996), pp. 1-3, 28. MAJ Melissa A. Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), pp. 11-13. She believes both Bush and Clinton presented confusing guidance, leading to inconsistency and confusion.

<sup>45</sup> Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), p. 70.

<sup>46</sup> United States General Accounting Office, *Operation Provide Comfort: Review of U.S. Air Force Investigation of Black Hawk Fratricide Incident* (Report to Congressional Requesters, 1997), pp. 2-4.

Iraq could use these chemical, biological, or even nuclear weapons against surrounding countries, or even the United States itself, either through conventional military means, such as rockets or artillery, against fielded forces, or by sponsoring terrorist activities against both civilian and military targets. This is one reason that made Iraq more than a superficial policy concern. Compounding the complexity of the issue, the absence of the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction to maintain a balance that inhibited use of these weapons against the United States, as there was during the Cold War, was a double-edged sword. Without it, there was greater freedom of action for American military and diplomatic efforts. Harsh diplomatic and economic pressure, or especially the employment of offensive military force, would not generate a cataclysmic event as an air strike against Cuba in October of 1962 may have provoked. However, post-Cold War global conditions that included potential weapons proliferation during the chaos that followed the fall of the Soviet Union, and the rise of non-state actors or rogue states not tempered by Soviet hegemony, increased the possibility of a singular strike potentially wiping out a city. The history of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programs, and demonstrated will to use them, made a mass casualty attack against America or one of its allies a very real possibility for contemporary officers assessing the situation.<sup>47</sup> In many ways, this new

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<sup>47</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), pp iv, 1 & 6. He writes that Iraq still had a "robust nuclear program" based on weapons inspector reports. Lt Col Thomas D. Shearer, "A Three-Pronged Strategy to Solve the Problems of Long-Range Missile Proliferation" (1994), p. 6. Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, "Biological Weapons—The Poor Man's Nuke" (1995), p. 14-15. Maj James M. Collins, et al, "Safety, Security, and Stability: The Role of Nuclear Control Regimes in a Proliferated World" (1995), pp. 1-2, 19. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1995), pp. 36-37. Maj Dale A. Blackburn, et al, "A National Policy for Detering the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1996), pp. 33-34, 54. Lt Col Paul Necas, et al, "NATO and Nuclear Proliferation" (1996), p. 2. Maj Michael G. Archuleta, et al, "Proliferation Profile Assessment of Emerging Biological Weapons Threats" (1996), pp. 3, 15. MAJ Matthew P. McGuinness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), pp 42-43, 51-52, 78. He stated that Iraq could quietly reestablish significant WMD program. MAJ Vance J. Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), pp. 38 & 41. He believes, as Mylorie does, that there was an active connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

threat was more maddening. Later papers would expand on these ideas as belief in this threat would increase over time.

Another main characteristic of American foreign policy the early papers introduce was the question as to what extent the United States' approach was, or rather was not, transitioning from a world without a Cold War. The Middle East was a priority for American foreign policy makers, and Iraq seemed to be a replacement for the Soviet Union as a primary enemy of the United States.<sup>48</sup> Containing the aggression of rogue states, especially in the Middle East, became a major American focus.<sup>49</sup> Readymade for applying these tendencies, Iraq was the place to hold the line against anti-American aggression and regional destabilization. As a result, a new form of containment was firmly rooting itself into America's Iraqi policy by the middle of the decade.

Similar in foundational principles behind containment and economic pressure that had recently achieved success against the Soviet Union, American action towards Iraq revolved around preventing that nation from extending its influence, which had already proven to create destabilization within a strategically important region. Because of the disparity of power between the United States and a defeated Iraq, America was able to employ more aggressive action against Saddam Hussein that it ever could against the Soviet Union. The United States, for example, would do nothing to stop Soviet tanks from crushing Hungarian protests in Budapest during the Cold War, but did conduct strikes against Saddam Hussein when he sent forces against the Kurds. When Khrushchev threatened a move against West Berlin, Kennedy could not have set up a no-fly zone over East Germany without possibly provoking World War

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<sup>48</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 327-328. Confirmed directly by MAJ Matthew P. McGuinness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), pp 15-16. Nine others discuss the national focus on the middle east as the new primary threat, implying it was a replacement for the old Soviet threat.

<sup>49</sup> Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 262. Leffler and Legro, "Introduction: Navigating the Unknown" in *In Uncertain Times*, p. 11. Mueller "Question for Monsters to Destroy," p. 118. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 195-196, 321. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 610.

III, but Bush did set up no-fly zones over Iraq to limit Hussein's military capabilities to within his sphere of influence.

However, just as during the Cold War, the United States had constraints on its actions. It used a strong military presence to attempt to enforce economic sanctions and limit Iraqi military capabilities, but international and domestic political considerations resulted in limited actions. As such, American strikes were not proactive. They were always in response to Iraqi defiance of international agreements. While they were specifically executed to punish noncompliant behavior and to coerce Saddam Hussein to return to, and remain within, compliance with accepted international mandates, they were also designed to be of limited force. This included reducing Iraqi military casualties. However, they did have some effect in reversing Iraqi obstinance. Like the nature of the attacks, the results were always limited.

Saddam Hussein continued his calculated defiance, in turn lengthening the duration of sanctions and American military presence. This greatly affected the Iraqi people. Sanctions combined with Hussein's siphoning off the limited money that came into Iraq prevented the ability to repair vital infrastructure like electrical and sewer, reduced access to medicine, and thwarted any semblance of prosperity except for government leaders and Republican Guard members. Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein cared less about his nation's prosperity and more about maintaining his power. Since the extent of this was not yet fully obvious to the United States during the first half of the 1990s, modified containment in the form of international pressure combined with limited, retaliatory strikes seemed a viable course.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p 33. Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 41. Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), pp. 3-7.

This approach did have the advantage of avoiding the penultimate Cold War trap of a Vietnam-like failure. However, many mid-level officers believed that the United States was already exhibiting signs that it was developing a 1990s version of this 1960s foreign policy fiasco. Over half of the thirty-nine mid-level officer papers discuss the applicability of Vietnam to American policy and execution in Iraq.<sup>51</sup> A primary reason was that the United States' actions exhibited characteristics of a policy of open-ended military commitment via execution of Operations Northern and Southern Watch.<sup>52</sup> For them, American actions in Vietnam during the years following the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that included limits on military actions, especially in use of air power over North Vietnam, demonstrated a similar characteristic. This manifested particularly in senior policy decisions that led to the more conservative approach of Tomahawk Diplomacy. Later scholarship echoed their criticism of America's continual reliance on cruise missiles as having limited effect due to their employment, which they believe emphasized political considerations such as reducing collateral damage over achieving the intended effects.<sup>53</sup> However, as long as the United States relied on low-risk air power and kept casualties down, these comparisons remained mostly academic. Officers writing papers for their service schools could not point to contemporary conditions that demonstrated a definitive trajectory towards another Vietnam. They did, however, critique American progress.

These contemporary professional officers had differing opinions over the level of success American policy had against Saddam Hussein. Of the fifteen papers that directly address the issue, seven argue that the strategy of employing measured military strikes to coerce compliance

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<sup>51</sup> 19 of the 39 papers written between 1993 and 1996 discuss Vietnam.

<sup>52</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. 5. MAJ Melissa A. Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 20. MAJ Richard E. Matthews, "Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm" (1996), p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 627, 631. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 292.

was effective.<sup>54</sup> They evidence how each time Saddam Hussein violated the cease fire accords or United Nations resolutions, American limited strikes drove him back to compliance. The attack on Zaafaraniya in 1993 and shows of force including the military buildup in response to Iraqi forces massing on the Kuwaiti and Saudi borders in 1994 and 1995 respectively support this idea.<sup>55</sup> Saddam Hussein would cheat on the United Nations sanctions, draw a response, and then retreat. Despite their overall support, over half of those who touted the success of American military action put a caveat on their advocacy due to concerns over repeatedly imposing significant limitations on military execution.

Their primary concern was that American policy and accompanying actions had the effect of prolonging military operations in the region, which would hamper the ability to achieve regional aims, leading to negative long-term consequences.<sup>56</sup> Later papers would confirm their prognostications. Operations Northern and Southern Watch were successful in stopping aggressive military action against neighboring states, and in protecting humanitarian aid distribution to the Kurds, but not in preventing regular Iraqi defiance. Saddam Hussein was showing no consistent signs of adhering to international post-Gulf War stipulations. Another

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<sup>54</sup> Maj James O. Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy Forceful Application of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), pp. 29-34. Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), pp. 36,38, 41-42. Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. 33. Maj Michael O. Beal, "Bombs Over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 30. He points to the success of airpower in Iraq as the reason the United States chose an air-only Bosnia option. Capt James O. Poss, "Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?" (1994), p. 12. He discusses this aspect specific to the success of Operation Southern Watch. MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 6. He points out how Kurdish safe-haven success was the reason Europeans used safe-havens in Bosnia. Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), p. 46, 58-60. He believes in success of U.S. strategy so far, but sees issues arising with long-term commitment.

<sup>55</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 183-185.

<sup>56</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. iv. Maj James O. Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy Forceful Application of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), pp. 1, 29, 33-34. Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 42. Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), p. 87. MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 6.

consequence of the prolonged intervention these officers began to see was that America's Arab coalition allies, already wary of the United States, were growing weary of its continued presence in their lands and martial actions against fellow Muslims.<sup>57</sup> These officers understood that without this coalition, America's difficulties in achieving long term regional goals would have expanded exponentially. The United States needed to adjust.

While they appreciated that there were legitimate concerns that aggressive actions could have been interpreted on the world stage as abuse of America's position as sole remaining superpower, mid-level officers began to argue that more preventive and aggressive military action was becoming necessary to achieve its goals. They advocated for stronger responses or larger scale preemptive activity, but still surgical in nature.<sup>58</sup> This argument reflects an understanding of America's political limitations. The global situation made the United States cautious of conducting overly aggressive actions that could alienate allies, create new enemies, and lessen the will of the American people due to perceived abuse of military power. Excess collateral damage and casualties that could have accompanied larger attacks were also primary policy concerns. However, despite advocating for neither another Gulf War-type air campaign nor an invasion, these officers were becoming more critical of the reactionary, politicized, and overly conservative military tactics. These actions allowed Saddam Hussein to maintain the initiative, therefore keeping a political advantage. Officer writings during Clinton's first term

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<sup>57</sup> W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, pp. 136-138. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 243, 275-276, 284. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 96.

<sup>58</sup> MAJ William C. Flynt III, "Brilliant Stiletto: Tactical Strikes and Preemption" (1994), pp. 2-3. Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), pp. 37, 42. Maj James O. Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy Forceful Application of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), p.1.



present a general consensus that, based on Saddam Hussein's constant return to belligerence and uncooperative behavior, the United States was not properly adapting policy.<sup>59</sup>

Another factor that mid-level officers before 1997 discussed that later officers built upon was America's false belief that technology could compensate for limited warfare to effectively resolve its Iraqi problems. The policy-implementers observed how American leadership became infatuated with hi-tech during the First Gulf War, and leaders under the Clinton Administration carried that fascination with them when directing military policy in Iraq. In addition, these officers argue that the tremendous victory at the expense of relatively few American lives during Desert Storm created a high level of expectation by the American people of rapid and nearly bloodless victories.<sup>60</sup> As a result, American policy makers relied on state-of-the-art weapons to achieve similar results in post-war Iraq. Leaders also employed them as part of a strategy to both compensate for shortfalls in people and materiel due to military downsizing, and try to enable effective limited strikes. The tactic did neither. Mid-level officers advocated the need for America to redefine how it used its military power and technology as the coercive element of diplomacy. Based on their observations, how American leaders applied technology seemed to be a hinderance that contributed to the prevention of long-term results.

Even though the American public had not yet grown weary of the intervention in Iraq, operational fatigue was beginning to take a toll on the military, particularly Air Force, Navy, and

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<sup>59</sup> Col Ernest W. Fischer, "The Yugoslav Civil War" (1993), p. 36. CDR Timothy M. Thomas, "Conflict Termination and Military Strategy" (1994), p. 20. MAJ Melissa A. Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 20. MAJ William C. Flynt III, "Brilliant Stiletto: Tactical Strikes and Preemption" (1994), p. 2. Maj Susan E. Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), pp. 17-18. CDR Karl A. Rader, "Blockades and Cyberblocks: In Search of Doctrinal Purity Will Maritime Interdiction Work in Information Age Warfare?" (1995), pp. 5, 31. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1996), p. 38-39.

<sup>60</sup> MAJ William C. Flynt III, "Brilliant Stiletto: Tactical Strikes and Preemption" (1994), pp 6. Maj Carol D. Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p 43. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), p. 17. CDR Karl A. Rader, "Blockades and Cyberblocks: In Search of Doctrinal Purity Will Maritime Interdiction Work in Information Age Warfare?" (1995), p. 5.

Marine aviation, and the large support system that accompanied it.<sup>61</sup> One contributing factor was how policy inertia was turning a temporary air occupation into an unacknowledged permanent presence that created conditions for continual *ad hoc* execution of military operations.<sup>62</sup> There were few permanent units assigned to the region, and almost none designated for duties specific to Iraq. Most were temporary organizations continually filled on a rotational basis by combat units and a multitude of individual augmentees and support personnel from various disparate home-station units in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Added to the strain was the significant effect, oft understated in scholarship, but that contemporary mid-level officers emphasized, of the heavy price prolonged conflict with Iraq levied on a downsized and an underfunded military force's personnel and equipment, especially the very weapons platforms needed for national defense. The Bush-Clinton military budget cuts continued, leaving home units, already short on personnel due to force reductions, to do even more with less as America embarked on a policy of Engagement and Enlargement.<sup>63</sup>

This burden magnified because of a mismatch in how national policy drove preparation, which was to focus on major theater war. Iraq during the Clinton Administration was very different from Desert Storm where the United States sent military units to conduct conventional warfare consistent with doctrine and long-term training. Because patrolling no-fly zones was not

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<sup>61</sup> Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> Capt James O. Poss, "Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?" (1994), p. 2 & 27. Maj James O. Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy Forceful Application of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), p. 4. CDR Karl A. Rader, "Blockades and Cyberblocks: In Search of Doctrinal Purity Will Maritime Interdiction Work in Information Age Warfare?" (1995), p. 2, 36-37. He redefined the use of blockade vis-à-vis Iraq to include information and telecommunications blockade. Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996). Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996).

<sup>63</sup> 23 papers written before 1997 discuss issues with downsizing on military units. For other information on budget reductions related to the military see Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 173, 317; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 612; Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, p. 72; and Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 212-223.

a designated military mission, preparation was neither codified nor formalized. Combat units did readiness training for this task just prior to deployment to the region based on past experiences from other squadrons that flew over Iraq. Support leaders, too, had to adapt to conditions different from those for which their units prepared. All had to learn on the job and coalesce as a larger unit within the few months they had in a combat zone. This meant exerting greater effort to implement national policy than for formalized missions. Later officers would see this problem exacerbated with the releases of National Security Strategies that formalized this emphasis.

By 1996, the general consensus among top mid-level military professional officers during Clinton's first term was that the United States strategy and application for enforcing sanctions was not fully effective, but America needed to continue the effort to coerce Iraq into complying with United Nations sanctions. Their experiences and observations of America's various employments of military pressure and force in Iraq led to a collective identification of a growing dichotomy between growing futility of action and the importance of continuing force-based enforcement. Limiting weapons of mass destruction proliferation and ensuring regional stability were vital American national interests. They saw a compliant Iraq as being crucial to meeting these objectives.

These officers introduced ideas that their successors would expand upon and prove through experience and analyses of events that began with the United States' continuing support of the *status quo* in Iraq. The strategy of limited air power did provide a politically safe option to back diplomatic efforts with force, including the belief that limits helped to prevent coalition fracture during Clinton's first term.<sup>64</sup> The American public, too, supported less risk and

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<sup>64</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. 33. Capt James O. Poss, "Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?" (1994), p. 11 and Maj James O. Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy Forceful Application of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), p. 1. Both contended that airpower could provide necessary restraint to compensate for diplomatic limitations. CDR Karl A. Rader, "Blockades and

minimizing damage. However, though this approach may have been politically sound, it pushed the United States towards an indefinite foreign policy dilemma. Geopolitical and diplomatic limitations on application of military power combined with Saddam Hussein's defiance contributed to the United States' inability to achieve closure. As Major Melissa Applegate noted, the United States may have been approaching the point of diminishing returns in Iraq.<sup>65</sup> This proved increasingly problematic as the decade progressed, especially after 1996 when Saddam Hussein fully solidified his grip on power. He significantly increased his exploitation of these limitations through greater and more timely defiance in an attempt to push the American public and the coalition towards political exhaustion. That same year, Major David Peterson warned of the human cost of this approach on the men and women continually deploying to the region of an indefinite air occupation that appeared to yield little positive return.<sup>66</sup> Based on the writings of his successor service school attendees who expanded on this and other ideas, he was right.

### *Perpetual Frustration*

Military officer writings on post-war Iraq increased considerably beginning in 1997. The next three years alone yielded forty-three papers that had significant references to the United States' ongoing conflict with Saddam Hussein with just over half having it as a primary subject. The seemingly endless nature of the air occupation and military deployments in support of

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Cyberblocks: In Search of Doctrinal Purity Will Maritime Interdiction Work in Information Age Warfare?" (1995), p. 31. He asserts that blockades or equivalents need international support to succeed. George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 35. He discussed how U.S. reprisal actions were limited by political concerns of how allies viewed strong military actions.

<sup>65</sup> MAJ Melissa A. Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), pp. iii, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Maj David E. Petersen, "The No-Fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation" (1996), p. 69.

United Nations sanction enforcement dominated these writings. Officers expanded on how the failure to bring timely closure continually accumulated negative political and diplomatic impacts. They discussed how operations against Iraq, combined with continued decreases in military budgets and the cumulative effects of continued global deployments characteristic of Clinton's policies, drove service personnel fatigue towards a crescendo. Another element they expanded upon was how the decreasing international support of United States actions against Iraq, particularly from the Gulf War coalition, progressively reduced military flexibility and American international political capital leading to even greater limits for options against Iraqi defiance during Clinton's second term. The military appeared to be entering an infinite loop from which these officers were looking to emerge.

Timing was also a contributing factor to servicemember frustration and fatigue. Beginning in 1996, Iraqi defiance and American responses seemed to coincide with the end of the calendar year. This meant greater operational tempo and more deployments during the American holiday season. While it is uncertain if Saddam Hussein deliberately planned this confluence of events to further undermine United States military involvement in his country, it undoubtedly had an adverse effect on an already overworked and undermanned military force that, from the perspective of mid-level officers writing in the late 1990s, saw a nation unwilling or politically unable to exercise enough power to resolve the situation.

For three successive years from 1996 to 1998, Saddam Hussein repeated this tactic. After Operation Desert Strike in September of 1996, he increased attacks on coalition aircraft. This resulted in more patrols for American pilots already in place, plus the added deployment of more firepower. The *USS Enterprise* battle group steamed into the Arabian Gulf, and several B-52 long range bombers flew into the British island base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean along

with the accompanying surge in support personnel.<sup>67</sup> This lasted from late September through Christmas, increasing pressure on an already stressed military. In October of 1997, Iraq expelled weapons inspectors, resulting in the United States ramping up for a strike.<sup>68</sup> Hussein backed down on 20 November, but again suspended cooperation in January. Overall, American forces remained on increased alert starting before Thanksgiving and lasting into the new year. At the end of October 1998, Iraq again impeded United Nations weapons inspectors. After repeated attempts to gain peaceful resolution failed, the United States executed Operation Desert Fox on 16 December.<sup>69</sup> The planning, execution, recovery, and increased alert spanned from Halloween through Christmas. Some in the military began scornfully referring to the regular end-of-year Iraqi defiance as Operation Deny Holiday.<sup>70</sup>

Under these circumstances, mid-level officers continued to assess America's primary strategy of executing limited coercive and punitive strikes when dealing with Iraq. In one respect, this tactic was prudent. It helped protect coalition aircrew and limit collateral damage.<sup>71</sup> Mid-level officers writing after 1996 understood the benefits of a cheap, low risk way to exercise military force in support of foreign policy, especially in a time of military reductions. They acknowledged similar benefits their predecessors identified: by lessening damage and

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<sup>67</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 89.

<sup>68</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 267-268. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>69</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 283. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 264. W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, p. 136. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 200-202. Alan Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (Free Press, 2012), p. 627.

<sup>70</sup> This running joke was prevalent at Headquarters Eighth Air Force, the Second Bomb Wing, and the Fifth Bomb Wing who continually ramped up for possible B-52 strikes during these periods.

<sup>71</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study" (1997), p. vii, 18. He discusses how air occupation was cheap and low risk, and the Iraqi environment was favorable to exercising airpower capabilities. Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), p. 2, 5. Maj David Uzzell, "Air-to-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), p. 2. He advocates how air occupation was a way to overcome shrinking mil budgets, but was done ad hoc. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 188. They reference Brent Scowcroft in reporting that the United State used limits for these reasons.

maintaining an appearance of only executing minimal and necessary force, this approach helped maintain coalition integrity, America's international standing, and American public support.<sup>72</sup>

After more time to observe the effects, these later officers noted how these tactics unfortunately had less of an effect on Iraq.

By the time Desert Strike concluded, Saddam Hussein's continual defiance of United Nations resolutions, and actions to provoke the American-led coalition indicated that he perceived these minimalistic attacks as demonstrative of lessening American will and a fractured coalition.<sup>73</sup> As such, mid-level military officers writing after 1996, even those who agreed that certain limitations were necessary, began to question this approach more assertively. The consensus among contemporary military officers was to confirm the predictions of some of their predecessors: despite any short-term gains, the United States approach had proven unable to achieve long term goals in Iraq.<sup>74</sup> They saw American action as a misapplication of airpower,

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<sup>72</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study" (1997), p. 2, 6. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 3. Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), p. v. Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), p. 30. Maj Michael W. Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001), p. 32. Maj Thomas S. Szvetcz, "Global Strategic Task Force: A Strategic Renaissance" (2001), p. 7. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), p. 70.

<sup>73</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 626. They discuss Hussein's gamble that the US did not have the will to continue long-term enforcement. W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, p. 138. He revealed that Jordan saw western policy as self-defeating, a trend among America's regional allies. A Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 244-245. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 10, 62-63. He states that Saddam Hussein knew that US self-imposed limits would lead to short/limited punishment, and without a threat of invasion Hussein also knows he could last indefinitely.

<sup>74</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study" (1997), p. 19, 32. Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), pp. 6-7. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), pp. v, 24-26. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), pp. 42-43, 70. Maj Philip M. Senna, "The JFACC and Small Scale Contingency Operations" (1998), pp. 20-23, 32. MAJ Henry A. Arnold, "The Pegasus, the Dragon, and Air Power: Winged Myths?" (1998), pp. 46-47. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 10, 15, 19. Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), pp.22-23. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 15, 19. Maj David Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 1. He saw Desert Fox as "either a great success, or multi-million dollar wasted effort." Maj Troy E. Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. 53. She views Desert Strike as a success because it achieved limited goal with zero casualties. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), pp. 9-10, 17.

especially how the United States focused on its limited, tactical use in an attempt to achieve strategic goals.<sup>75</sup> This employment diminished its effectiveness as a coercive tool. Major David

Angle summed up the frustration of his peers when he said:

There was no sense of urgency conveyed...in the ongoing test of nerves in the no-fly zones. The US seems willing to wait for long-term results in the crisis, hoping that the constant pressure of occupying Iraq from the air and the economic sanctions will create internal dissension that will lead to the ouster of Hussein. Hussein feels no sense of urgency as long as he is controlling events in Iraq while the US simply reacts to his initiatives.<sup>76</sup>

By 1998 and Operation Desert Fox, the United States was devolving into a strategy of hope that its limited military actions would induce a change in leadership.<sup>77</sup> Mid-level officers began to see their predecessors' predicted issues with limitations coming to fruition in real time.

Through their observations and unique experiences closer to the ground level, contemporary officers also showed how American national policy allowed air power in Iraq to facilitate an accepted policy of open-ended commitment.<sup>78</sup> After 1996, the United States

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He argues the US pushed Iraq into compliance, but was not effective to achieve fundamental national interests or all stated goals. Maj Jason Quinton Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), pp. 5, 17. He argues that Iraq could be kept in check, but the U.S. could not force change only from the air. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 18, 75. He says Saddam was contained within his borders and his military weakened, but overall failures in deterrence and compellence have been problematic for the United States.

<sup>75</sup> Maj Philip M. Senna, "The JFACC and Small Scale Contingency Operations" (1998), p. 28. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), p. 35. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), pp. 20, 33-35. He discusses how limited attacks did not have enough force to back up diplomatic efforts, therefore they ceded the advantage to Hussein. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), pp. 41-42. He argues Tomahawk diplomacy and limited air strike policy indecisive because they tried to gain strategic goals through tactical means. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 39. He asserts that Northern Watch execution sent mixed signals that emboldened Iraq to see what they could get away with.

<sup>76</sup> Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 264-265.

<sup>78</sup> Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), p. 2. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), pp. vii, 15. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 6. Lt Col Stanley T. Kresge, "Gulf War Termination Revisited" (1999), p. 1. Lt Col Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future" (1999), p. 5. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), pp. 1, 20. LtCol Robert L. Creamer and Lt Col James C. Seat, "Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders" (1998), p. 88. They discuss how the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (Provisional) in Saudi Arabia became a permanent unit in all but name. MAJ Emmet M. Schail, "Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?" (1998),



implemented actions that seemed to confirm the officers' perception of the mission's permanence. In addition to deploying more offensive military capability to the region, the United States extended the Southern No-Fly Zone seventy miles to the north to the thirty-third parallel in an attempt to better protect the Shia and further choke Saddam Hussein.<sup>79</sup> For them, this was a clear sign that the United States was becoming even more entrenched physically in its military involvement, and strategically in adherence to policies that were not producing long-term solutions. The officers writing at the end of the decade were trying to come to terms with a very real possibility that the cycle of deployments and ramp-ups responding to Iraqi defiance was a permanent state within the downsized military.

Senior military officials, sworn to support the President, implored servicemembers to continue to do more with less.<sup>80</sup> However, they did manage to affect limited change to help alleviate some of the military's problems. Between 1998 and 2000, military spending cuts reversed as the Department of Defense budget increased from \$291 billion to \$320 billion.<sup>81</sup> This modest increase, though helpful, did not significantly improve the issues these officers expressed, primarily because it did not increase the overall number of military personnel.

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p. 49. He states that the military was not prepared to properly define the end state from Desert Storm, therefore it was too hard to reach U.S. goals by executing the *status quo*. Maj David R. Hinson, "U.S. Military Interaction with Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies" (1998), p. 25. He argues that Operation Provide Comfort happened so fast that there was no time to develop strategy, which contributed to the indefinite nature of operations in Iraq. Lt Col Duncan H. Showers, "An Air Force at Peace: Are We Ready to Fight and Win our Nations Wars?" (1999), p. 5. He questions why the Pentagon says that the era of long wars of attrition are over, yet forces had been attriting Iraq for over 7 years. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. 39. He states that open ended commitments "are exhausting forces."

<sup>79</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 243-244.

<sup>80</sup> General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, outwardly supported post-Cold War cuts and 25% total size reductions to a "base force" to maintain military readiness. His successor, General John Shalikashvili, supported Clinton's continued cuts to help realize the "peace dividend," but also saw the strain on troop morale amongst all the deployments. The next Chairman, General Henry "Hugh" Shelton, looked to support the cuts by creating a more flexible and efficient fighting force, which called for servicemembers to adapt to new conditions. (From Chairman bios on [www.jcs.mil](http://www.jcs.mil), accessed 20 Feb 2023.)

<sup>81</sup> Dinah Walker, "Trends in U.S. Military Spending," *Council on Foreign Relations* (15 July 2014), <https://www.cfr.org/report/trends-us-military-spending>, accessed 20 Feb 2023. "U.S. Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2022," *macrotrends*, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/military-spending-defense-budget>, accessed 20 Feb 2023.

Without any manpower relief, mid-level officers continued to link together ineffectiveness in Iraq, increased global operational tempo, and adverse impacts on the military's overall capability to implement national policy at the lowest levels.

Another element that led to the officers' frustration over seeming permanence of the Iraqi mission was the deteriorating coalition cooperation that undermined maintaining a united international front against Saddam Hussein.<sup>82</sup> Officers continued to illuminate the significant fissures within the American coalition, especially Iraq's Muslim neighbors, that their predecessors identified. They continued to widen. When the United States moved B-52s to Diego Garcia in 1996 and 1997, it communicated a dual meaning to Iraq. It was as much a show of force to Saddam Hussein as it was an admittance of diplomatic defeat since America could not rely on America's Arab and Turkish partners to allow offensive strikes from their territories. In 2001, as Major Paul Willie points out, even the Saudis supported their former nemesis by criticizing an American punitive attack as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty.<sup>83</sup> He went on to expound upon how America's Iraqi policy contributed to undermining its own efforts to ensure international cooperation towards achieving other United States global interests. Also, allies that bordered Iraq allowed smuggling into that nation, countering American efforts by providing Hussein with armaments to use against coalition pilots, demonstrating how these coalition

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<sup>82</sup> Lt Col Max D. Shaevitz, "Airpower in the Next Millennium" (1997), pp. 50-51. Maj David Uzzell, "Air-to-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), p. 7. LCDR Paul D. Hugill, "The Continuing Utility of Naval Blockades in the Twenty-First Century" (1998), p. 134. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 9. MAJ John W. Allen, "The Victory Disease and the US Army After the Cold War" (1999), p. 16. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), p. 33. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p.38. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 26, 32-34. LCDR Glen P. Kuffel, Jr., "The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force" (2000), pp. 19-20. Maj Michael W. Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001), p. 32. Maj Thomas S. Szvetecz, "Global Strategic Task Force: A Strategic Renaissance" (2001), p. 7. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), p. 4. Referenced "Saudis Condemn Airstrikes," *Washington Post* (February 22, 2001), p. 16.

fissures had both geopolitical and personal impacts. These officers expressed concerns that the longer the American air occupation lasted, the greater the likelihood that diminished international support would force an end to enforcement of United Nations sanctions. Maj William Tart summed up the issue when he said, “[E]very day that the US continues Southern Watch is another day of expended political capital.”<sup>84</sup> He, like other officers, worried that this capital would run out.

The events of 1996 seemed to provide military officers writing during Clinton’s second term with a dark epiphany. While others before them saw the potential for indefinite conflict with Iraq, it was not until after Desert Strike that the general consensus was that American policy and actions towards Saddam Hussein would not provide any acceptable resolution. The coalition had become too weak and Saddam Hussein was politically stronger after sending his troops north against the Kurds. This was not a combination that promised success. As the service school attendees came to realize, the international will for, and effectiveness of, America’s Iraqi containment strategy eroded with each passing day.<sup>85</sup> However, despite their frustration with how Iraqi military involvement was proceeding, they also had the collective opinion that America could not abandon attempts to coerce Saddam Hussein into complying with international mandates. Their biggest concern, and most illuminating commentary, was how it seemed impossible for America to achieve its strategic goals of stopping Iraq from reviving its role as a threat to its neighbors and preventing a reinvigorated weapons of mass destruction program.<sup>86</sup> For them, the latter represented a very real and direct threat.

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<sup>84</sup> Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 78. He discusses the need to continually reevaluate the cost-benefit of no-fly zones. While he does not advocate for a specific solution, he provides a calculus for leadership to use to determine continued feasibility or whether to increase/decrease pressure (chapter 4: “Up the Ante: Southern Iraq”).

<sup>85</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>86</sup> Maj Marc K. Dippold, “Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions” (1997), p. 5. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, “Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives” (1997), p. v.

## *Weapons of Mass Destruction*

A critical reason that Iraqi containment remained a vital American interest for mid-level officers during Clinton's second term was the belief that Saddam Hussein had a hidden arsenal of chemical and biological weapons as well as the ability to rapidly restart various weapons of mass destruction programs, possibly including nuclear weapons development. This fear drove the President to support continued sanction enforcement in Iraq through military means.

Building on themes their predecessors introduced during Clinton's first term, the experiences of these later officers help illuminate why the United States was so adamant in focusing its efforts on counterproliferation based on the belief that Saddam Hussein was hiding this destructive capability.

In building their case for painting Iraq as a significant security threat, mid-level officers of Clinton's second term began by pointing to the history of Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons and pursuit of nuclear capability. Though the Iraqis did not use chemical or biological weapons during the First Gulf War as they did during the Iran-Iraq War, ostensibly because Hussein feared overwhelming reprisal, the international community was concerned over Iraq's stockpiles of weaponized chemical and biological agents after the war. That concern prompted

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Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), pp. 41-42, 60. Maj Al J. Keeler, "Third World Computer Systems: A Threat to the Security of the United States?" (1997), p. 37. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), p. vii, 15, 25, 43. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 38. MAJ Emmet M. Schail, "Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?" (1998), p. 49. Lt Col Michael Mueller, p. 73. Maj Jason Quinton Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 17. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Condition," (2001), p. 18. Maj David R. Hinson, "U.S. Military Interaction with Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies" (1998), p. 25. He argues that Operation Provide Comfort happened so fast, that America developed no long-term strategy, but that was still the case. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), p. 33. He asserts that cruise missile use was part of "malfunctioning foreign policy." Maj Timothy S. Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. 37. He argues cruise missiles do not go far enough to resolve issues in Iraq.

the United Nations to pass resolutions to ensure the elimination of these weapons and the capability to create them.<sup>87</sup> Also, though there was no evidence Iraq had achieved full success in developing a nuclear capability, recent history and Hussein's actions indicated that Iraq had a foundation for developing a nuclear weapon in the future. Combined with his anti-American rhetoric and continued defiance, these factors greatly affected not only the officers who wrote about Iraq, but American policy longevity there.

By the end of 1996, United Nations inspectors could not verify the destruction of all of Iraq's pre-war chemical and biological weapons, and they had reason to believe that Iraq had either an existing program, or the tools to immediately reinvigorate one once sanctions ended.<sup>88</sup> Saddam Hussein's continued interference with weapons inspectors provided strong circumstantial evidence that he was hiding these weapons, but it was the defection of Hussein Kamel in late 1995 that provided what the United States believed was a smoking gun.<sup>89</sup> Related to Saddam Hussein by marriage and once a top general inside the dictator's inner circle, he had fallen out of favor and fled the country. While in exile, he gave testimony as to the existence of active chemical and biological weapons programs. This influenced the United States'

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<sup>87</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991 called for a permanent cease fire, required Iraq to destroy its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons capabilities, and directed Iraq to allow verification by UN inspectors. It also affirms thirteen previous resolutions ranging from international agreements on these weapons to specific resolutions regarding Kuwaiti sovereignty. Subsequent resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction capabilities included UNSCR 707, 715, 1060, and 1115.

<sup>88</sup> Mylroie, *The War Against America*, p. 130. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 626. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 112. Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), p. 14. Maj Al J. Keeler, "Third World Computer Systems: A Threat to the Security of the United States?" (1997), p. 37. Maj Brian K. Anderson, "A Profile of WMD Proliferants: Are There Commonalities?" (1999), p. 21.

<sup>89</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 198-200. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), p. 23. Lt Col Paul R. Ziaya, "Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Challenge for Air Force Medical Readiness" (1998), p. 31. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. 12. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 62.

steadfastness in weapons inspection enforcement. It subsequently provided an impetus for the greater volume of mid-level officer writings on the danger of these weapons.

Beginning in 1997, officer-student writings on the need to prevent weapons of mass destruction proliferation from Iraq notably increased. That year, twenty-one papers directly addressed the issue of Iraq as a threat to use or distribute weapons of mass destruction, which is over double the number from the previous four years. In the five years leading up to 9/11, two thirds of all papers written about Iraq were concerned about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>90</sup>

Besides Kamel’s testimony, there were other factors involved in students putting greater emphasis on this subject. In November of 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12938, which states that the “proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons...and the means of delivering such weapons constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to national security....”<sup>91</sup> Based on the processes in curriculum development, this information would have been substantially incorporated into the service schools by 1996, therefore significantly affecting students writing their capstone papers starting in 1997.<sup>92</sup> In addition, students at that time were exposed to contemporary news reporting and government speculation about possible hidden weapons in Iraq.<sup>93</sup> This included administration emphases on weapons of mass destruction, such as a 1996 quotation from President Clinton who stated that the United States “must redouble our

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<sup>90</sup> Between 1997 and 2001, 38 out of 57 papers that examined Iraq in any way discussed weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>91</sup> Clinton, William Jefferson, “Executive Order 12938— Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction November 14, 1994,” <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1994-11-21/pdf/WCPD-1994-11-21-Pg2386.pdf> (accessed 20 Feb 2023).

<sup>92</sup> This rough timeline is based on informal discussions with personnel in Curriculum Development at Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL.

<sup>93</sup> As a sample, in 1996, the New York Times published 28 articles that significantly discussed the possibility of an Iraqi weapons program, and an additional dozen articles discussing possible linkages of Gulf War Syndrome to exposure to Iraqi chemical and biological weapons use or production facilities. Current events were part of their curriculum, and most papers reference the *New York Times* and other news sources.

efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons such as those that Iraq and other rogue nations have developed.”<sup>94</sup> Finally, in 1997, the Clinton Administration began a focused public relations campaign to “raise awareness about the dangers of Iraq’s WMD program.”<sup>95</sup> All these elements motivated the military to focus more on the issue.

In addition to concerns over Saddam Hussein hiding chemical weapons, officers attending their service schools demonstrated a lack of confidence in the United Nations inspectors’ ability to accurately assess Iraq’s capabilities, especially in their bio-weapons program.<sup>96</sup> For example, Major Donald Hickman pointed out that it was virtually impossible to determine if a biological production facility was for legitimate medical research or development of biological agents, as it was fairly easy to pivot from one application to the other.<sup>97</sup> It was no secret that weapons inspectors understood that this was part of the difficulty in enforcing sanctions.

When combined with the circumstantial evidence, extrapolated intelligence that pointed to potential chemical and biological weapons capability, and reports like those from Hussein Kamel, many mid-level officers interpreted Saddam Hussein’s continual defiance and obstruction of United Nations weapons inspectors as an indicator that the Iraqi chemical and

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<sup>94</sup> “In His Own Words: Bill Clinton In his weekly radio address yesterday,” *New York Times* (8 September 1996), p. 28.

<sup>95</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 190.

<sup>96</sup> Maj Philip M. Senna, “The JFACC and Small Scale Contingency Operations” (1998), pp. 27-28. Maj Donald C. Hickman, “Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk” (2000), p. 40. Maj Brian K. Anderson, “A Profile of WMD Proliferants: Are There Commonalities?” (1999), p. 21-22. He believes UN inspectors had a good handle on chemical weapons, but not on biological, particularly their failure to verify Iraqi claims of destroying all botulism and anthrax.

<sup>97</sup> Maj Donald C. Hickman, “Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk” (2000), p. 40. He also quoted scientists Robert A. Kadlec, Allan P. Zelicoff, and Ann M. Vrtis, “Biological Weapons Control: Prospects and Implications for the Future,” in *Biological Weapons: Limiting the Threat*, ed. Joshua Lederberg (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 100, who said, “[I]t is essentially impossible to separate the dual-use nature of biological processes and equipment used in legitimate and prohibited activities.”

biological threat to the United States was real.<sup>98</sup> Only two papers written between 1997 and 2001 refute that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program was a significant threat.<sup>99</sup> While they seem prophetic now, the overwhelming majority provide a baseline for why the United States remained dogged in its Iraqi containment policy. Subsequently, these officer writings help advance several reasons for American policy in Iraq descending into indefinite military action in lieu of resolution. When Saddam Hussein's behavior towards United Nations weapons inspectors was put into the greater context of other contemporary world events, any Iraqi capability looked to be a significant threat which the United States needed to engage.

The increase in terrorism, especially after the decade's midpoint, created a climate that made any Iraqi mass-casualty weapons capability an even greater danger (see chapter 4). This belief also drove policy for continued military, economic, and diplomatic pressure in response to Iraqi defiance. Based on the increased magnitude of terrorist attacks, they saw the threat of these weapons as steadily increasing, as was the need for preventing Iraq from arming terrorists. The first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 demonstrated a vulnerability to the American Homeland. Also, the 1996 Khobar Towers attack

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<sup>98</sup> Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), p. 35. Maj Francis V. Xavier, "Iran and Iraq: A Prediction for Future Conflict" (1997), pp. 24-25, 37-38. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), p. 44. Lt Col Paul R. Ziaya, "Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Challenge for Air Force Medical Readiness" (1998), pp. 33-34. Maj Al J. Keeler, "Third World Computer Systems: A Threat to the Security of the United States?" (1997), p. 37. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 11. Maj Charles K. Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2000), p. 11. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), p. 26. Maj Brian K. Anderson, "A Profile of WMD Proliferants: Are There Commonalities?" (1999), p. 20. He points to 1996 reported efforts of Dr. Rihab Rashida Taha, aka "Dr Germ." Maj Alan C. Bridges, "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990's" (1999), p. 38. He argues Desert Strike only temporarily set back WMD program. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 78. He states concern over Iraq's ability to hide program "under a strict inspection regime." Lt Col Max D. Shaevitz, "Airpower in the Next Millennium" (1997), pp. 50-51. He believes Iraq had WMD and advocated long range strike capability to keep military forces out of range.

<sup>99</sup> Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), p. 20. He calls WMD a boogeyman. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), p. 58. He stated the Weapons of Mass Destruction threat should be respected, but not exaggerated.



that killed nineteen American Airmen and injured hundreds of others tasked with enforcing the no-fly zone from Saudi Arabia was fresh on the minds of military professionals writing in and after 1997.<sup>100</sup> A major theme in their papers is how much greater the devastation would have been for any of these attacks if terrorists employed chemical agents, biological substances, or dirty bombs containing radiological material instead of conventional explosives.<sup>101</sup> An Iraq with the possession of such high-yield weapons meant the increased possibility for their use against fielded forces, or worse, American civilian populations. The prospect of a weapons of mass destruction-capable Iraq interfacing with non-state actors who sought to do America harm and were already conducting attacks magnified concerns.<sup>102</sup>

Many writing during Clinton's second term speculated on the connections between Iraq and terrorists.<sup>103</sup> They did not just focus on the possible intrigue involving bad actors sneaking across the Iranian border to train in secret desert camps that Saddam Hussein may have created. They also looked at the more realistic scenario of independent actors sympathetic to the Iraqi cause. These individuals were part of larger groups that blamed the west as the sole progenitor

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<sup>100</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 1. Lt Col Paul R. Ziaya, "Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Challenge for Air Force Medical Readiness" (1998), pp. 24-25. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations" (1998), p. 8. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. vi. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 62. Maj Thomas S. Szvetcz, "Global Strategic Task Force: A Strategic Renaissance," 2001, p. 17. LCDR Pietro D. Marghella, "The Role of the Plans, Operations and Medical Intelligence (POMI) Officer on the Component and Unified Staff" (1998), p.4. He argues chem-bio weapons may be more effective for terrorists than nuclear weapons.

<sup>102</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 97.

<sup>103</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy: Problems in Definitions and Response" (1997), p. 4. Maj Mark A. McAlpine, "Future Roles of Air and Space Power in Combatting Terrorism" (1997), p. 10. He views the cruise missile strike on Iraqi HQ in June 1993 as a preventive terror strike. Maj Timothy E. Spaeth, "Terrorist Vulnerability: Failure of Policy?" (1997), pp. 7-8. He sees a different link: forces were vulnerable to terrorists in Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations because of enforcing Iraqi sanctions on fellow Muslims, not direct Iraqi terror ties. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. 12. He argues terror attacks by those sympathetic to Iraq were not necessarily tied to Iraq. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), pp. 18-23. His view is terrorists used deaths of Iraqis from sanctions as justification for attacking US, but did not necessarily supporting the Iraqi cause.

of the suffering of fellow Muslims in Iraq. A terrorist organization named al Qaeda was making headlines with its anti-American oratory and acts of terror against American targets. They took great exception to what they viewed as an American-led occupation of one of their holiest of nations, Saudi Arabia, as a direct result of sanctions enforcement. Even with neither direct proof of the weapons' existence, nor verified links to active terrorist organizations, reports of possible hidden weapons of mass destruction taken in conjunction with Iraq's rhetoric supporting anti-American terrorism increased suspicions and enhanced the perception that Iraq represented an increased risk for terror attacks against the United States.<sup>104</sup>

Service school officer attendees writing in the years leading up to 9/11 recognized terrorism as a significant threat and feared Iraq as an enabler of anti-American terror activities in direct and indirect ways. Major Brian Anderson went so far as to say that the resultant increased dangers were what made the 1990s its own era of American international policy.<sup>105</sup> Issues with a seemingly likely Iraqi weapons programs due to the inability of United Nations weapons inspectors to provide definitive answers, and Saddam Hussein's continual obstruction of their efforts, sowed grave concerns within America's military.<sup>106</sup> The rise of terrorism and the incredibly destructive potential thought to be within reach of anti-western groups like al Qaeda made preventing Iraq from developing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capability a

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<sup>104</sup> Later scholarship debunked the contemporary theories that there were direct links between Iraq and terrorists, though there were indirect connections. Many works discuss al Qaeda as a network of networks that may have received indirect support from Saddam Hussein, but were mostly independent operators trained and funded by Osama bin Laden, his associates, and other loosely linked radicals. For more information, see Jason Burke, "Al Qaeda" in *Foreign Policy* (May-June 2004, no. 142), pp. 18-26; Wright, *The Looming Tower*; Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*; Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*. Chapter 4 of this dissertation looks at terrorism in more detail.

<sup>105</sup> Maj Brian K. Anderson, "A Profile of WMD Proliferants: Are There Commonalities?" (1999), p. 24.

<sup>106</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 625-626. They discuss Saddam Hussein's defiance and resulting trickery caused the United States to focus efforts on deterring weapons proliferation, which became a military concern. Service school papers support this perception.

top priority. To counter this possibility, mid-level officers first needed to tackle the obstacles that resulted in the United States policy and action that yielded less than decisive effects.

### *The Limits on Being Limited*

Extrapolating the views of mid-level officers, especially after 1996, reveals an overarching opinion that senior American leadership's oversensitivity towards collateral damage and casualties potentially affecting domestic and international support was a significant influence that limited the success of the no-fly zones in Iraq.<sup>107</sup> Military professionals writing at their service schools impressed upon their readers that senior American officials, civilian and military, did not incorporate what they felt to be an axiom when deciding to commit military forces: risk to service members and collateral damage were unfortunate consequences when committing military force, and if this was not acceptable, military force should be avoided. These officers understood that there were domestic concerns over how these terrible characteristics of war could erode public support, and that there were international political sensitivities regarding how the United States employed force that the administration needed to work within. However, in general, their writings demonstrate a belief that the Clinton administration and senior military leaders had become too sensitive to these issues, mostly because of the events of American action during the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993 that saw eighteen soldiers killed, including televised images of dead Americans dragged through the streets during what was supposed to be

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<sup>107</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study" (1997), p. 35. He directly states that military leadership's responses to American's desire to limit casualties reduced the United States' effectiveness in executing air occupation missions. Additionally, Maj Troy Devine dedicated her entire paper, "The influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997) to the impact of casualty aversion on American interventions since Somalia, including in Iraq. In total, 27 of 49 papers written from 1996 through 2001 that discuss Iraq include the impact of casualty aversion and collateral damage.

a humanitarian mission (see chapter 2).<sup>108</sup> Iraq, however, was not Somalia, and for them, policy needed to properly fit the scenario.

One argument these officers presented to support their assertion that American public support was not as fragile as policy makers believed was that, even by the late 1990s, casualties had not yet driven the United States away from Iraq. Major William Tart specifically points to the history of casualties associated with no-fly zone enforcement. A combined forty-five deaths between the fratricide involving the accidental shootdown of two American Blackhawk helicopters in northern Iraq in 1994 and the Khobar Towers bombing in 1996 did not elicit massive calls from Congress or the public for retreat from enforcing Iraqi sanctions.<sup>109</sup> Iraq was a proven threat to regional stability and, based on aforementioned information regarding weapons of mass destruction, appeared to be a potential threat to Americans. By advocating that the American people were more tolerant of risk than the Clinton Administration gave them credit, mid-level officers underscored that the foundation of American leadership's self-imposed limitations vis-à-vis casualties retarded success in Iraq as policy execution continued on a path of decreased risk.

Military officers' critique that the United States allowed its focus on minimizing damage to interfere with the overall goal of enforcing Iraqi compliance followed similar logic.<sup>110</sup> This policy limitation resulted in an execution that emphasized the political aspects of American international reputation and coalition integrity as having primacy over attaining the military

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<sup>108</sup> Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 10. He states directly what seven other papers from 1997-2001 addressed.

<sup>109</sup> Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 16.

<sup>110</sup> Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 19, 26. Maj Patrick M. Shaw, "Collateral Damage and the United States Air Force" (1997). Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy: Problems in Definitions and Response" (1997), p. vi. Maj Troy E. Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. 53. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), p. 27.

effects necessary to meet the aim of lasting Iraqi compliance.<sup>111</sup> While these officers agreed that minimizing collateral damage was a priority and should be a goal within the mission, the American leadership's directed execution made it seem like limiting damage was the primary objective of the mission itself, rather than holding its proper place as a mission consideration. Officer writings demonstrate that this subordination of national goals to political considerations was a major detriment. America's overreliance on technology, especially cruise missiles, exacerbated this issue.

Mid-level officers pointed out that civilian and even military leaders had fallen into the trap of overconfidence in technology. There were several examples. One was the 1993 targeting of the suspected nuclear facility in Zaafaraniya where America employed cruise missiles to minimize damage to surrounding civilian structures. Another was the cruise missile attack on the Iraqi intelligence headquarters that same year, executed late at night to reduce Iraqi loss of life. A third was the 1996 two-day coordinated sea and air launched cruise missile offensive of Desert Strike designed to minimize collateral damage and reduce pilot risk. There were also incidents of Tomahawk Diplomacy elsewhere in the world, such as cruise missile strikes against terrorist targets (see chapter 4) and later against Serbian forces (see chapter 3). Officers such as Major Timothy Mundy assess that the reliance on state-of-the-art weaponry for these reasons led to American inability to execute decisive military operations, normally key to achieving major

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<sup>111</sup> Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 19. Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy: Problems in Definitions and Response" (1997), p. vi. Maj Troy E. Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. 53. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. 41. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), p. 27. Maj Timothy S. Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. ii. Maj Charles K. Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2000), p. 14. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 16. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), p. 61.

objectives.<sup>112</sup> Instead, American leaders came to believe that rapid strikes using standoff, high-tech precision weapons could deliver decisive results while protecting American lives. As these officers conclude, overconfidence in technology lessened risk to both servicemembers and long-term success.

Policy makers and senior officers were allowing the kinetic risks, inextricably linked to military action, to interfere with success. The policy implementers at the lower levels, including the service school attendees and their peers, had to overcome the obstacles associated with this line of thinking that, from their perspective, made it nearly impossible to prosecute effective actions against a Hussein-led Iraq. Major Michael McKelvey summed up the position of many of his colleagues when he argued that this mindset weakened America's ability to enact coercive diplomacy by driving boldness out of military action, reducing the power behind diplomatic efforts, and inviting brash action from Iraq and other potential enemies.<sup>113</sup> As the United States approached the new millennium, the overall perspective of the officers at the operational level of war was that their efforts to permanently meet foreign policy goals in Iraq seemed to be in vain.

America's policy implementation in Iraq had another effect on military personnel. While they criticize how the United States employed military force, officer papers also illuminate a general perception that the United States was relying too heavily on the military and failing to utilize other instruments of power, creating limits within limits. In response, they advocated for the United States to create a choreographed synergy of diplomatic, focused economic, and effective military action.<sup>114</sup> To them, the seemingly separate and independent efforts led to

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<sup>112</sup> Maj Timothy S. Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. 38.

<sup>113</sup> Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 19.

<sup>114</sup> MAJ Craig A. Osborne, "Preparing for the Inevitable: NGO-Military Interactions in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations" (2001), p. 18. Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), pp. 32-34. Lt Col Paul R. Ziaya, "Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Challenge for Air Force Medical Readiness" (1998), p. 25. LCDR Paul D. Hugill, "The Continuing Utility of Naval

regression of the American mission in Iraq. For example, they assessed that the United States' discordant efforts led to a lack of progress which failed to justify the negative effects on the Iraqi people and the economies of Iraq's neighbors, many of whom were coalition partners.<sup>115</sup>

The officers' idea that America relied solely on the military was not an entirely accurate representation. The United States and the international community had diplomatically isolated Iraq since after the First Gulf War. Though not absolute, Iraq's isolation was at the highest practical level given the political issues with the coalition. In addition, economic sanctions were in play and were wreaking havoc on the Iraqi economy. There were holes that allowed weapons and other goods to get through to Iraq from Iran and other neighboring countries, but the United States could not forcibly close all of those gaps without conflict with regional rivals or disrupting an already fragile coalition. Also, further economic pressure would have had worse consequences on the Iraqi people and most likely have undermined the American effort even further. However, the lack of effectiveness of American action was clear, and American servicemen and -women seemed to take on the brunt of the workload as a result. They had their personal lives continually uprooted and physical lives put at risk without achieving much

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Blockades in the Twenty-First Century" (1998), pp. 154-155. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 43. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions," 2001, p. 20. His critique is that policy makers needed to consider short- and long-term capabilities to develop right solutions. Since Iraq was supposed to be short, they did not consider long term impacts to the detriment of the mission. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), p. 52. He discusses how a successful coercive campaign depends on full war preparation, clear verbal and nonverbal communication to adversary of thresholds for use of force, and full commitment. Otherwise, the U.S. should walk away.

<sup>115</sup> Maj Al J. Keeler, "Third World Computer Systems: A Threat to the Security of the United States?" (1997), p. 37. He saw the effect of embargo on civilians eroding coalition will. Lt Col Randy T. Odle, "UN Sanctions Against Iraq: Their Effects and Their Future" (1997), p. vii. He argues sanctions not doing much vs Iraq, but were affecting coalition partners who were losing money. LCDR Paul D. Hugill, "The Continuing Utility of Naval Blockades in the Twenty-First Century" (1998), pp. 132-133. He states that sanctions were affecting Iraqi middle- and lower-class citizens most without coercing compliance. Later scholarship echoed similar ideas. John Mueller, "Questing for Monsters to Destroy" in *In Uncertain Times*, ed by Leffler and Legro, p. 121. W. Burns, *The Back Channel*, p. 138. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 113, 290-292. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 81.

progress. It is understandable how they perceived that the military was the primary instrument of American policy execution towards Iraq.

Despite their flaw in this area, mid-level officers did reveal that American policy in Iraq demonstrated an approach geared towards addressing a temporary problem that faltered as the intervention continued. Each military action the Clinton Administration enacted was of short duration, lacked the strategy of a sustained effort, and seemed to reveal a hope that each strike could be the last coercive act to force compliance rather than an incremental approach to resolve a persistent problem. Iraq had transformed into a long-term foreign policy issue for America and required a broad and holistic strategy. Because neither the George H. W. Bush nor William J. Clinton Administration approached it in this manner, by the end of Clinton's second term it was becoming apparent to these officers that the United States would either need to cut its losses and leave, which the fear of chemical and biological weapons made unpalatable, or implement drastic military action, which America did not have the political capital to implement. Instead, the United States was committed to protracted, stagnant involvement in Iraq. Major Roger Pretsch encapsulated the discontent of his peers when he described the American approach towards Iraq as becoming a physical manifestation of America's limitations in the wake of failed diplomatic efforts.<sup>116</sup>

Mid-level military officer analyses reveal underlying reasons for how the United States allowed Iraq to become a seemingly permanent thorn in the side of its post-Cold War foreign policy. Because Iraq was an apparent vital interest, both because of the alleged existence of an Iraqi weapons of mass destruction program and the policy obligation to ensure stability in the oil rich Middle East, the United States would not abandon its goal of maintaining a neutered Iraq.

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<sup>116</sup> MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), pp. 32-33.



Officers pointed to self-imposed limitations based on exaggerated concerns over friendly casualties, and prioritization of minimizing collateral damage ahead of achieving military goals to further national priorities as the primary culprits for allowing Iraqi involvement to morph from a temporary obligation to an open-ended commitment. While their perspective at the lower levels of foreign policy did not always allow them to see the bigger picture as to the actual concerted applications of national power, or accept the valid reasons for erring on the side of caution when applying military power as the sole remaining superpower, these officers illustrate how America, in avoiding one set of geopolitical pitfalls, fell into a quagmire of its own making.

Colin Powell, who was a subject in many service school curricula and therefore influenced many officers, said, “As soon as you tell me it is limited, it means that [those in charge] do not care whether they achieve the result or not.”<sup>117</sup> This summed up many of these officers’ views on the subject. To those closer to the tip of the spear, it seemed America exhibited a partial policy paralysis and was unable to overcome the limits of its own limitations in order to implement policies to win the peace in Iraq without a different mindset.

### *Transcending Cold War Thinking*

By Bill Clinton’s second term, mid-level officers forecasted that America’s Cold War-reminiscent containment approach to this major post-Cold War foreign policy problem in the Middle East would not be able to deliver the results of an Iraq free of weapons of mass destruction and a Saddam Hussein willing to comply with the Safwan Cease Fire Accords. Their critiques reflected a need for a broader perspective than the United States’ foreign policy

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<sup>117</sup> Lawrence Kaplan, “Yesterday’s Man” from *The New Republic*, 21 December 2000, referenced by Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 16.

implementation demonstrated. Their recommendations, while reflective of a more tactical and operational perspective, and therefore limited in scope, did represent the need for modern solutions that better fit a new era. As such, their papers help illuminate the aggregate effects of America's approach towards Iraq as the sole superpower progressed through the turn of the century.

One consequence that the prolonged American involvement in Iraq produced was the temptation to second-guess the United States' decision to stop the ground war during Desert Storm after just one-hundred hours and leave Saddam Hussein in power. Military officers writing between 1997 and 2001 acknowledge there was a growing sentiment among their peers regretting that the United States did not go all the way to Baghdad and preempt the endless cycle of ineffective air strikes and deployments to places Americans were not welcome. However, none of the twenty-six papers that discuss the topic go so far as to state that it was a mistake to end the war without capturing the Iraqi capital.

Many papers instead communicate that the United States ended the war at the right time, but was unprepared for the peace that came so rapidly.<sup>118</sup> Overwhelmingly, mid-level officer-scholars believed the United States was short-sighted in how it first used, and then continued to employ, military action against Iraq after the war, with thirty-two papers addressing this issue. They show that America defaulted to familiar strategies in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War. These strategies, aimed at containing Saddam Hussein through self-limitation of military action, represented the permeation of old habits learned through years of Cold War that

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<sup>118</sup> Lt Col Stanley T. Kresge, "Gulf War Termination Revisited" (1999), pp. v, 30. He states this point directly. Others discuss significant effects from leaving Hussein in power, even if they felt it was the right decision at the time. Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future," 1997, p. 2. He argues that post-Gulf War failures were due to Hussein remaining in power. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 2-3. He discusses the trend in the military for lamenting stopping Desert Storm too short. However, this thinking was indicative of old mindset for determining victory versus what was needed at the time he was writing.

American leaders tried in vain to morph into post-Cold War foreign policy solutions. While none of the officer papers state it directly, their assessments indicate that the United States' approach was not a suitable adaptation to the changing global situation. Instead, it was attempting to push a square foreign policy peg into a round geopolitical hole. Service school attendees illustrated that America would not be able to achieve its desired effects against Saddam Hussein by looking to the past. Cold War-like techniques may have worked during Desert Storm, but that era had passed.

An American containment type of policy towards Iraq did seem to be a reasonable approach in the immediate aftermath of Desert Storm and into the beginning of the Clinton administration. However, as time allowed Saddam Hussein to solidify his power base, it became more of a liability. Defaulting to containing Hussein through a reactionary military policy led to actions that caused the United States to paint itself into a corner. Major David Angle summed up America's predicament when he wrote:

Clinton was highly motivated politically to continue a policy of containment... [H]e did not want to get the United States entangled in a full-scale war. However, he also could not afford to back down from the crisis since that would make him look impotent to the rest of the world community and could have a negative impact on US interests throughout the world.<sup>119</sup>

A new containment was the safe and comfortable default American strategy, but it did not have the necessary longevity to meet conditions which Saddam Hussein dictated.

Every one of the fifteen papers written between 1997 and 2001 that provided specific recommendations as to actions the United States should, and should not, take in order to resolve the policy dilemma in Iraq demonstrated a need for forward-thinking policy. They neither looked to improve on containment nor advocated conducting a second Desert Storm. They also

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<sup>119</sup> Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 37.

did not see the United States as being able to thwart an Iraqi weapons of mass destruction strike or a Hussein-equipped terrorist mass casualty event through the threat of nuclear retaliation. For them, there was a potentially imminent peril from Iraq that Cold War-like containment-thinking could not resolve. Major Jeremy Mraz encompassed the overall outlook of many of his peers when he said, “The United States waited almost 50 years before the powerful Soviet Union imploded, but at what cost? Thus, the same question is asked concerning...containment in the Persian Gulf.”<sup>120</sup> Overall, there were still Cold War ideas present in these papers, but the majority of those who focused on the enigma of Iraq presented viewpoints that better represented turn-of-the-century thinking.

The strategies these officers advocated included preemption, more applicable use of air power, and integration of ground forces to complement diplomatic and economic efforts. Accepting more risk and lifting some restraints in the use of air strikes in various and more robust ways as discussed earlier was a very popular assertion among the more air-minded authors. Another example that more ground-centric officers pointed to that represented a modern application of military force was to use Army and Marine units more creatively. The United States had deployed significant ground forces only as a reactive measure, such as the responses to Iraq massing troops at the Saudi and Kuwaiti borders during Clinton’s first term. Instead, service school attendees advocated that America could use proactive pressure through deployments or various shows of force along with active air occupation.<sup>121</sup> Invasion was not the only option. A full war preparation that signaled strong commitment of decisive military action

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<sup>120</sup> Maj Jeremy Mraz, “Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future” (1997), p. 18. He discussed it in the context of American policy towards Iran as well.

<sup>121</sup> Henry A. Arnold, “The Pegasus, the Dragon, and Air Power: Winged Myths?” 1998, p. 51. Maj Jason Quinton Bohm, “Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict” (2001), pp. 5, 17. MAJ Craig A. Osborne, “Preparing for the Inevitable: NGO-Military Interactions in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations” (2001), p. 18. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, “Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security” (1999), p. 18. Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 16.

combined with assertive diplomatic and targeted economic efforts may have given American military force the edge to be truly coercive. While it failed to sway Saddam Hussein to evacuate Kuwait in 1990, it did get him to stand down in 1994. Preemptive intimidation, these officers posited, could have been a leap away from the more passive containment approach.

Even though some of their predecessors argued that such buildups were a waste of time and money, officers writing near the turn of the century were advocating that, if used properly, this type of action would be a good investment. It would be proactive so that the United States could dictate the operational and diplomatic tempo, and preempt Hussein from effectively using propaganda by claiming victory through enticing the United States into actions that spent time and resources. Preemptively and threateningly massing United States Army and Marine units on the Czech border in July of 1968 most likely would have led to disaster. The same action on the Iraqi border in July of 1996 may have yielded more positive results, and would have represented an approach less bound by backwards-looking thinking. While the officers' recommendations may not provide diverse and overly creative options, nor do they represent full appreciation for the political and strategic consequences, they do embody how national policy implementation based on older mindsets was failing to achieve American interests in Iraq.

One overarching issue that kept the United States from strategic progression in Iraq and elsewhere was that national direction emphasized preparation for conventional war almost exclusively. From 1994 through the end of the decade, the American National Security Strategy was hyper-focused on two near-simultaneous Desert Storm-level conflicts.<sup>122</sup> This, too, represented thinking of the past. After several years of patrolling no-fly zones in Iraq and

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<sup>122</sup> <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (July 1994), p. 5 and "A National Security Strategy for a New Century" (Dec 1999), p.19. The National Security Strategies from 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 contain similar directives (each accessed 20 Feb 2023).

fighting other low-intensity conflicts in places like the horn of Africa and the former Yugoslavia, mid-level military officers saw the adverse effects of overemphasis on conventional warfare and pushed for greater preparation for small-scale contingencies, peace enforcement, and counterproliferation.<sup>123</sup> They did not argue that readying for major conventional war was no longer applicable. Rather, they realized that peace operations and other low intensity military actions should have been the primary focus, which the existing national guidance prevented.

Changing the priority would have allowed military forces to comprehensively train on the different skill sets required for these more likely actions rather than almost exclusively training for a major Cold War-style conflict that employed aggressive bombing campaigns followed by massive ground combat. The reality of Iraq and other interventions of the 1990s was that units deployed to environments where restraint and limited use of force were the standing orders. This compelled military personnel to overcome a significant learning curve in order to effectively carry out the president's intent. The officers who would later attend their service schools never had the ability to apply their leadership and creativity in order to develop more effective solutions that may have contributed to winning in the Iraq of 1999 because the focus at their home units was on the Iraq of 1990. Once in place to execute operations or otherwise engage in supporting functions, they spent their time playing catch-up on the job rather than employing leadership skills from a foundation of an applicable pre-learned and -practiced skill set. These officers clearly revealed that, after almost a decade of executing operations other than war, the

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<sup>123</sup> Maj David Uzzell, "Air-to-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), p. 3. Maj Michael P. MacIver, "Bombs, Then Bandages: Repairing the Warfighter for the Sojourn to Peacekeeping" (1997), pp. 1-4. MAJ John W. Allen, "The Victory Disease and the US Army After the Cold War" (1999), p. 22. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 42. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. 40. He argues two MRCs was a bluff, and the US needed focus more on counterproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Maj Thomas S. Szvetez, "Global Strategic Task Force: A Strategic Renaissance" (2001), pp. 1, 5-7. He states that it is a myopic view the causes the misapplication of military power because Desert Storm type warfare is over and two MRCs are not likely.

United States still had not adapted to the new global environment, especially when it came to how civilian leaders oriented military forces to achieve post-Cold War American interests.

In addition to critiquing policy makers, these military professionals also laid responsibility within their own military branches.<sup>124</sup> Senior officers who had long experiences within a Cold War garrison mentality had a difficult time adjusting to the new global environment, even after years of executing a different type of warfare against Iraq and elsewhere. On the other hand, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Nowak observes, mid-level officers had “grown up with the turmoil of frequent deployments” and had a different and potentially better perspective on optimizing military applications in the new environment, at least at the point of implementation.<sup>125</sup> One significant shortfall that represented this dichotomy was that the armed forces had been executing these missions for most of the decade, yet had not incorporated air occupation as an official military role with the requisite training needed to effectively perform that mission. According to the contemporary officer writings, the military failed to include this, or many of the other skills their predecessors identified that were associated with operations other than war, as part of their essential operational tasks.<sup>126</sup> They argued that, even with the

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<sup>124</sup> Maj Marc K. Dippold, “Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions” (1997), p. 5. He identifies the need to incorporate air occupation as official military role. Maj Michael P. MacIver, “Bombs, Then Bandages: Repairing the Warfighter for the Sojourn to Peacekeeping” (1997), p. 8. He advocates for the military to emphasize skills associated with operations other than war, not just conventional warfighting skills. Maj Patrick M. Shaw, “Collateral Damage and the United States Air Force” (1997), p. 46. He argues the United States needed to have a balanced Iraqi strategy and effective operations, even if it led to more collateral damage. MAJ Henry A. Arnold, “The Pegasus, the Dragon, and Air Power: Winged Myths?” (1998), p. 51. He advocates for a land component. Maj Alan C. Bridges, “Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990’s” (1999), pp 48-49. He argues for preemptive strikes based on established pattern of lawlessness or indications of future non-compliance. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, “Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security” (1999), p. 36. He implores military planners to embrace more creativity to develop low risk, but more effective options to achieve political objectives. Maj Timothy S. Mundy, “Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth” (2000), p. 38. He discusses how high tech/low risk eliminates doubts as to decision to strike, but resultant strikes are “rarely decisive.” Maj Douglas Kiely, ““The End of the Beginning”: On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty” (2001), p. 27. He advocates for mature airpower employment commensurate with the unsettled international system.

<sup>125</sup> Lt Col Michael J. Nowak, “The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future” (1999), p. 23.

<sup>126</sup> Maj Marc K. Dippold, “Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions” (1997), p. 5. Maj David Uzzell, “Air-to-Air Force’s Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation” (1997), pp. 2, 31. Maj Michael P. MacIver, “Bombs,

overarching direction to prepare for two major regional conflicts, senior military officers could have formally done this at some level. They did not because the new trend in military operations contrasted too much with accepted, tried-and-true military applications from the past.

After operation Desert Fox in December of 1998, the United States made its only substantial shift away from the *status quo* as it engaged in a war of attrition with Iraq.<sup>127</sup> While on the surface this seemed to indicate a deliberate shift in American policy away from older methods, in actuality it was a continuation of reactive employment of military force. Saddam Hussein's continued disruption of United Nations weapons inspectors combined with his military directives to engage coalition air patrols led the United States to methodically peck away at Iraqi missile sites, anti-aircraft batteries, and other military assets through repeated limited strikes. That became the culmination of the United States' adaptation of containment in Iraq. The "containment plus" approach may have been the first policy deviation of any significance from older strategies,<sup>128</sup> but it still relied primarily on a foundation devised during the Cold War. As the United States attrited Iraqi military capability, time wore down coalition integrity, international will, and the morale of American servicemembers. It had the primary effect of draining the United States' political capital, which reduced America's flexibility on how it could

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Then Bandages: Repairing the Warfighter for the Sojourn to Peacekeeping" (1997), p. 8. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations" (1998), p. 18. MAJ Emmet M. Schail, "Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?" (1998), p. 49. Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), pp. 59-60. Lt Col Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future" (1999), p. 15. MAJ John W. Allen, "The Victory Disease and the US Army After the Cold War" (1999), pp. 23-24. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 42. Maj Jason Quinton Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. ii. Maj Thomas S. Szvetecz, "Global Strategic Task Force: A Strategic Renaissance" (2001), p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 180, 203. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 190. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 92. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 36. Maj Alan C. Bridges, "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990's" (1999), p. 44.

<sup>128</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 202.



respond to Hussein's defiance. That was the result of a temporary mission becoming a seemingly indefinite military intervention.

By the dawn of the new millennium, containment, even in its adapted form, had definitively proven to be an ineffective long-term strategy in Iraq.<sup>129</sup> Unlike the American policies that helped pressure the Soviet Union into eventual collapse, the conventional, low-intensity force application that was the centerpiece of Iraqi containment did not produce enough pressure to effectively compel compliance. Iraq continued to be a regional threat and an assessed potential danger to the United States. Mid-level officers feared that America could rely neither on conventional power nor nuclear deterrence to prevent Iraq from providing third-party non-state actors with the ability to wield massive destructive force against American targets.<sup>130</sup> Based on observations of these warrior-academics of the half-decade prior to 9/11, containment in any form was a poor policy unable to meet American needs in a new era. Mid-level officers' writings demonstrate the inability of American leaders to exhibit more creativity and find modern ways to meet national strategy aims, which was a major contributing factor to the United States' inability to make significant progress in Iraq.

### *Conclusion*

When Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he held the course in Iraq set by the Bush Administration, and continued to do so for most of his presidency. American policy in Iraq during this timeframe was a microcosm of the overall tendency of a protracted approach towards

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<sup>129</sup> Maj Jeremy L. Mraz, "Dual Containment: US Policy in the Persian Gulf and a Recommendation for the Future" (1997), p. iv.

<sup>130</sup> Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), pp. 81-83.

international policy and national defense strategies in response to the significantly altered global environment. To be fair, radical change was risky in the still nascent post-Cold War geopolitical environment. In addition, the United States was hampered by military budget cuts, self-imposed limits on employment of military forces, and, in the specific case of Iraq, an adversary in Saddam Hussein whose responses to American actions demonstrated his priority on maintaining personal power at the expense of his own people. The *status quo* produced temporary gains and long-term losses, and also ensured reduced risk. It also prevented adaptation to the new global environment, undermined progress in achieving national goals in Iraq, and stymied America's ability to effectively consolidate its post-Cold War gains, especially in the Middle East.

The contemporary top-rated mid-grade military officers writing in their professional military education courses about these events present an important viewpoint through which to understand how America's adjustment to being the world's lone superpower played out in the aftermath of the Gulf War. Their perspectives, observations, and opinions about America's long struggle with Iraq illustrate how that conflict forced America to develop and execute specific foreign policy to fit into the new geopolitical environment. The influence of the Cold War on American leaders hindered this progress. It affected policy development that American military professionals had to implement at the ground level. Being on or near the front lines of this implementation, whether flying aircraft, supporting the no-fly zones from home-station, or deploying continually to the Middle East in other capacities, gave these more junior leaders a unique perspective.

Officers writing during Clinton's first term saw that Saddam Hussein, despite his recent defeat, still had significant military capability. It was important for the United States to achieve permanent Iraqi compliance with the Safwan Cease Fire Accords and United Nations resolutions

designed to end Iraqi aggression and their weapons of mass destruction programs. These early writings generally agreed with the necessity of military restraint and Iraqi containment.

American leaders adapted this modified containment strategy by using combat air patrols and limited strikes to complement economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. This was able to limit incidents of negative behavior from Iraq, but each time the results were only temporary. Time revealed a decreasing probability of coercing long-term compliance.

Air occupation vis-à-vis the Northern and Southern No-Fly Zones was not accomplishing the United States' goals with any permanency. By the end of Clinton's first term, officer writings began to reflect criticisms of American policy and how the military was allowed to execute it. A major piece of American containment of Iraq that these officers disparaged was Tomahawk Diplomacy. This was a primary tool of choice at the end of the first Bush administration which President Clinton embraced. This limited, low-risk approach amplified the pattern of temporary coalition wins without the ability to achieve overall victory. This allowed for an emboldened and politically entrenched Saddam Hussein to push back with greater vigor. The result was that America's post-Gulf War commitment to Iraq was becoming open-ended.

1996 was the year that solidified the characteristic of permanence to American military intervention. Saddam Hussein was more dangerous and gained ground on all fronts. Physically he survived a coup, crushed Kurdish semi-independence, reversed many of his losses in the north from Operation Provide Comfort, and weathered Operation Desert Strike. Politically, he used the suffering of his people to employ rhetoric that vilified international sanctions and painted Iraq as the victim of unfair attacks by the west in order to undermine America's alliances and domestic will. Simultaneously, he siphoned oil-for-food money into his own coffers and the military budget, used Iraqi security forces to impose firm control over Kurdish territory, and

stepped up violations of the no-fly zones, especially increased anti-aircraft activity. He had solid political control over Iraq, and took full advantage of his position to gain the diplomatic initiative over the United States, forcing the Clinton Administration to continually react to him. That year set the foundation for greater defiance that would last until the end of the Clinton presidency.

Military officers expressed frustration over the situation. Continuous deployments supporting missions in Iraq and other places around the world were taking their toll on military forces, especially in the midst of reductions in budgets and personnel.<sup>131</sup> Yet these professionals still believed that preventing a resurgent Iraq was a vital American interest. A major reason was the appearance of an active Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capability. Hussein's actions, past and contemporary, and circumstantial evidence solidified this belief. The military capability for him to launch missiles with these weapons demonstrated a threat to its neighbors, including American military bases in the region. As the decade progressed, this took on new meaning. Saddam Hussein's continual disruption of United Nations weapons inspections, intelligence that created linkages between Iraq and terror organizations, and the rise of anti-western terrorism, especially the attacks on American assets, formed an assumed trifecta of peril that mirrored national concerns and helped explain American policy direction in Iraq through the end of Clinton's term in office, and even beyond. This trifecta influenced these field-grade officers to overcome their weariness and advocate for continued action to resolve what they believed could become a significant and direct threat to the United States.

Saddam Hussein took even greater advantage of America's self-imposed limitations during Clinton's second term, which magnified these beliefs. He progressively pushed the

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<sup>131</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 606. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 317. 91 out of 299 total papers for this dissertation discussed negative impacts of downsizing, budget cuts, force reductions, and increased operational tempo on the armed forces.

United States through escalating defiance that coincided with his resurgent power. In some ways, he made the greatest military power in the world appear impotent. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Moeller epitomized the frustration among contemporary mid-level officers over what he called the “don’t win, but can’t lose” mentality America’s approach created.<sup>132</sup> Despite their vexation, these officers still understood that the United States did not necessarily have the capability in terms of domestic will and international support to enact any drastic measures, but their writings also indicate that America could do little more under the existing way of thinking. To this end, they asserted that the method of containment the United States employed in Iraq was not working.

Less encumbered by Cold War experience than either their student predecessors or their superiors, these officers pushed the United States to employ modern, not recycled, solutions to resolve the foreign policy quandary of Iraq. They looked to overcome America’s self-imposed limitations from what they saw as excessive concerns over casualty aversion and disproportionate fear of the effects of collateral damage. Sensitivity to these issues was necessary for maintaining both an increasingly fragile international coalition and American public support. However, oversensitivity led to a constant reuse of limited strikes, Tomahawk Diplomacy, and reactive coercion that proved ineffective in achieving desired long-term results. Through their critiques, they illustrated that the United States needed more creative and applicable approaches fit for the new international environment. They argued for more proactive and appropriate military applications that included aggressive actions that still remained within realistic political constraints. From the overall perspective of officers writing in the late 1990s through the turn of the century, United States leadership relied too heavily on a severely

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<sup>132</sup> Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, “Horizon’s Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century” (2000), p. 50-51.

inhibited military to achieve national goals. While this view is somewhat myopic and their recommendations were less than robust, their critiques illuminate issues with America's approach of using tactical means to meet strategic ends. While the United States did bring other instruments of power to bear, there was not an effective unity of effort, contributing to a lack of overall progress and lengthening American involvement. This created a paradox as the extended timelines accomplished what limitations sought to avoid: the withering of coalition will and congruity. Saddam Hussein took advantage to become more ensconced as the Iraqi people continued to suffer.

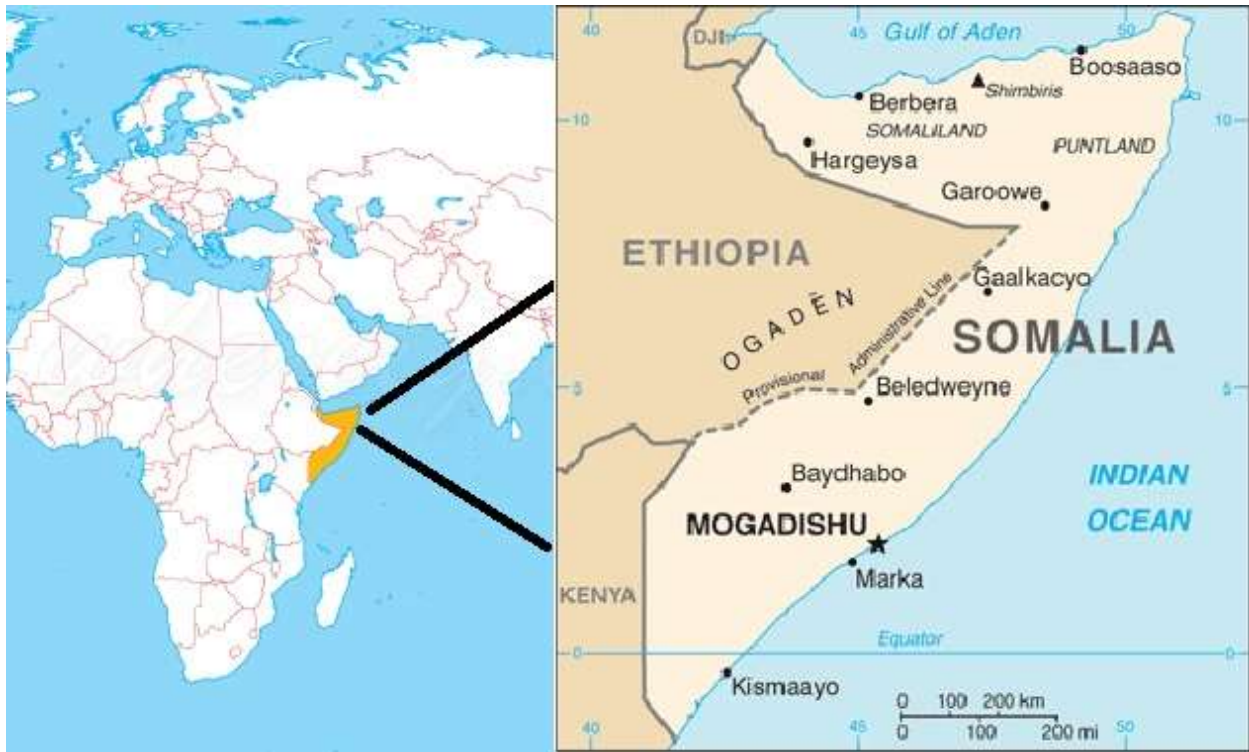
By the end of the Clinton presidency, policy considerations included a greater focus on a desire for leadership change in Iraq.<sup>133</sup> Success there became hinged on Saddam Hussein losing power as American strategy had settled into a combination of diplomatic hope that the dictator would be overthrown, and repeated restrained military reaction in order to preserve coalition and American public will in order to ensure continued military enforcement of sanctions. It was a partial policy shift away from modified containment, but by this time the United States was politically unable to implement more assertive and creative military actions. At no time from the First Gulf War until 9/11 did the United States have either the international or the domestic political capital to force Saddam Hussein out of power, at least not by invasion or direct intrigue, and that capital continued to diminish throughout this period. So, America stayed the course. This allowed Hussein to control the tempo of military operations through orchestrated defiance. Iraq remained a continual fight politically, diplomatically, and militarily when President Clinton left office.

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<sup>133</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 180, 203. Cockburn and Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 190. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, p. 92.

The American approach that tried to fight as they did in the previous war, even if it was a cold war, did not achieve national interests in Iraq regardless of how the United States tried to adapt it. Mid-level officers demonstrated that America's modified containment proved not to be the answer. It is possible that, by the end of the 1990s, Saddam Hussein was so secure in his leadership position and so entrenched in his path of defiance that he was beyond coercion. However, American policy stagnation in many ways kept the United States in a continual and unwinnable fight by the end of the decade against a nation that it so thoroughly defeated at the start. Because American policy and strategy evolution was too slow, it took a revolution in the form of a major attack on the homeland to jar the nation into employing updated means of applying national instruments of power. Armed with fresh and abundant political capital after 9/11, the United States was poised to take more aggressive action. Within two years, American and British forces invaded Iraq, deposed Saddam Hussein, and resolved that Iraqi enigma, only to create different foreign policy problems. The United States and the world are still navigating the fallout.

## II. CRISIS INHERITED, CRISIS CREATED: SOMALIA



Map of Somalia<sup>1</sup>

Due south of Iraq, approximately 2,000 miles as the B-52 flies, a major in the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division looked over the city of Mogadishu in January of 1993. His unit was part of the humanitarian effort in Somalia. There was very little about this deployment for which he or the soldiers of his battalion had been prepared.<sup>2</sup> Majors and captains were trained for conventional combat and leading infantry assaults against uniformed enemies. Not only was there little need for this in Somalia, but that type of focused preparation seemed to be detrimental in many ways. His Marine counterparts had similar experiences from the time they executed an

<sup>1</sup> This is a combination of two maps. *The Worldometer*, “Simple Map of Somalia,” <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/somalia-map/> accessed 19 Feb 2023, and *Wherig.com*, “Location Map of Somalia,” <https://www.wherig.com/somalia/> accessed 19 Feb 2023. The latter is cropped and cut to size.

<sup>2</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, “‘Quasi-War’: Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War” (1995), pp. 16-19, 36.



amphibious assault on the Somali shores a month earlier. Instead of fortified coastal defenses, they encountered reporters and camera-wielding journalists when they hit the beach. These mid-level officers had to adjust to unexpected conditions.

In Mogadishu, American officers at the ground level had to implement rules of engagement that ensured protecting themselves and aid workers while eliminating as much physical damage and civilian casualties as much as possible. The development of these procedures was vital, especially in a politically sensitive mission in such a chaotic environment as Somalia.<sup>3</sup> To meet national goals most effectively, they had to lead their troops in implementing graduated response techniques for which they were never trained using equipment ill-suited for nonlethal crowd control.<sup>4</sup>

One of the major's platoons was on patrol when they came across over two hundred Somalis looting store houses. With only their issued weapons, the platoon fixed bayonets onto their M-16 assault rifles and cleared the crowd by the points of their blades, using the butts of their rifles, and shooting over the heads of the civilians in an attempt to scare the mob into compliance.<sup>5</sup> When the crowd, desperate for food, saw the soldiers were not actually hurting anyone, they became more daring. The platoon leader called in reinforcements to try to deescalate the situation. It did not help. Without riot gear, tear gas, or preparation on how to

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<sup>3</sup> Maj Carol Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p. 35. Maj Maurice Todd, "Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations" (1993), pp. 27-29. LtCol Christian Cowdry, "Shoot? Don't Shoot? Rules of Engagement in Peacekeeping Operations" (1994), pp. 17-22. Maj Bullock, "Peace By Committee: Command and Control Issues in Multinational Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), pp. 27, 35-36.

<sup>4</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), p. 19. Maj Carol Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p. 35. The author discusses specifics including graduated response to crowd control that started with warnings and intensified up to firing over the heads of civilians, and other measures to prevent aggressive military action that could encourage anti-American violence.

<sup>5</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), pp. 19-20.

protect the stores of food and their soldiers without killing civilians, these junior leaders ran out of options. The major got word from the lieutenant colonel who commanded the battalion to turn their protection mission into one of distribution.<sup>6</sup> The officers on the scene led their soldiers in an orderly, and as much as possible, fair allocation of food to the mob. This subdued the crowd and ensured the critical supplies did not fall into the wrong hands, such as clan leaders who would use the resources as leverage to sustain their militias, bolster their power, and control the population. This outcome would have led to more violence between rival clans, with Somali citizens getting caught in the crossfire. Preventing this was the main reason the major and his unit were there in the first place.

Mid-level officers at the operational level of national policy implementation, whether in Somalia, in neighboring countries and on warships directly supporting missions there, or as part of the larger military apparatus that helped ensure prosecution of military activities, had a unique view of how national policy unraveled in the Horn of Africa. They were able to assess the consequences from a different perspective than the senior American leaders who were involved with foreign policy decisions. In some ways, they had a better outlook.

### *Introduction*

The American intervention in Somalia was a seminal event for the United States in the aftermath of the Cold War. Primarily, this was due to the results of the battle between American forces under Task Force Ranger and thousands of Somalis in early October of 1993. The American people understood the Somalia intervention as a humanitarian enterprise, not a war.

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<sup>6</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, “‘Quasi-War’: Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War” (1995), p. 20.

The consequences of eighteen dead Americans from a major military operation created a backlash against United States involvement there, and influenced United States foreign policy development and execution for the remainder of the Clinton administration. This issue stemmed from the initial decision to commit American military forces in support of a humanitarian mission that was not of a vital national interest. This commitment set an important precedent for how and where America would exercise influence for the next eight years. Though scholarship discusses Somalia and the impact on American actions in that impoverished nation, contemporary and near-contemporary mid-level military officers also provide insights that help explain the significance of American engagement in, and subsequent retreat from, Somalia. They came to see Somalia as a harbinger closer to the new rule rather than the old exception, which the progression of the decade confirmed. How they interpreted events that unfolded in Somalia provides an exceptional lens from which to view America's adjustment to a new world.

The first ten months of the United States' involvement in Somalia was a crucial stage in America's attempt to transition from the Cold War to a new era in international relations. It provides a snapshot of American foreign policy development and implementation in reaction to a crisis wherein the United States exercised new freedom of action in unconventional ways, including for less than vital interests. It was the first major event where America struggled with its new role as sole superpower to employ military forces within the changed geopolitical environment. Part of that struggle was how to ensure that military action demonstrated American benevolence while leveraging the proper use of force in order to achieve foreign policy goals. Freedom from Soviet interference did not provide a license to act *carte blanche*. Affected by a well ingrained Cold War mindset that included bifurcated thinking in terms of good guys (freedom loving, democratic West) and bad guys (communists, dictators, non-

democracies), conventional preparation against major attack by a peer force (Soviet invasion through the Fulda Gap reinforced by successes during the Gulf War), and the foreign policy event that had the most influence on the senior leaders (dogmatic rather than adaptable lessons from Vietnam), policy makers attempted to navigate what seemed like uncharted waters. Their failure in Somalia was a failure of adjustment as well as of execution and focus.

Top-tier military officers specially selected to attend professional military education schools in residence from 1993 to 2001 provided great insight from a unique perspective on America's involvement in Somalia. A major topic of discussion was the impact of President Clinton's policy and how it affected execution of actions in Somalia and beyond. Officers were critical of the lack of clarity, consistency and guidance that came from the Clinton Administration. Over time, they came to accept these shortfalls as characteristic of not just how this particular administration executed strategy, but of the overall American adjustment to new world conditions. By the end of the decade, these writers focused more on taking the lessons from America's earlier mistakes and looked to apply their unique perspectives towards adjusting to the new international conditions. Overall, there was trepidation at all levels as to the new geopolitical terrain the United States was exploring. Somalia confirmed the fears of contemporary officers as the impact of these changes contributed to cascading effects that led to failure there.

One of the most popular subjects in the diplomatic and foreign policy history of American involvement in Somalia was the effect of casualty aversion on United States policy that resulted from American withdrawal. Mid-level military officers predated historians by analyzing this issue immediately, and continued to do so through the turn of the century. They looked critically at the effects of casualty aversion on national policy and the ongoing influence

of Vietnam on senior leaders. They debated the degree to which it affected future policy, whether or not it was a myth, perception, or reality, and its true origins. They related their own experiences to the resultant adverse impacts on future interventions and posited solutions to help the United States overcome its detrimental effects and better adjust to the new global political and diplomatic climate. They looked to temper the overwhelming influence of Vietnam and use applicable rather than dogmatic historical lessons.

A significant indicator of how these officers-turned-scholars evolved in their thinking was in their assessment of the Battle of Mogadishu and how, as the decade progressed, they adjusted the criteria for evaluating this pivotal event that better fit into America's geopolitical situation. Early papers saw the fight in terms of tactical conventional measures of success. Over time, they shifted their view. They accepted that a new era meant new rules and that the United States had to operate under these standards. The number of enemies killed or targets destroyed was not the proper measure of military success, especially in humanitarian interventions and combat operations other than war. Rather, it was the balanced effects of military, diplomatic, and political action, and how the world interpreted each in conjunction with the other. The changed standards meant new criteria for military success. By the time Clinton left office, these professionals proved that they had come to terms with this new framework, and were trying to pull their services along with them.

What gave the American intervention in Somalia such longevity as a topic of interest was its lasting effects on American foreign policy. Contemporaries and scholars dubbed the resultant influence that adversely affected American diplomatic and international relations decisions that included military involvement for the rest of the decade as "the Somalia Effect."<sup>7</sup> This term

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<sup>7</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 264, 273, 359. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 78, 92-93. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, pp. 84, 91, 103. He is against the idea that casualty aversion and the

stemmed from how the intervention was a humanitarian mission intended to assist the Somalis that turned into an unpopular major combat engagement. The loss of American lives was continuously broadcast into American homes due to the 24/7 cable news cycle, resulting in the evaporation of public support for the overall endeavor and a general call for withdrawal, particularly from Congress. The possibility of shrinking public support created future hesitancy in United States leadership to apply military force. When they did use the armed forces, senior civilian leaders and military commanders became so casualty averse that any risk to Americans became unacceptable. Policy proceeded as if a single combat loss would likely terminate an intervention. Mid-level officers challenged this assumption. Though this characteristic is cited as the major legacy of Somalia, it was not the only effect. There are many areas that officer papers throughout the period discuss, beginning with assessing the initial humanitarian involvement.

Though officer service school attendees produced only eight available and applicable papers on Somalia prior to the Battle of Mogadishu, they introduce several topics from a viewpoint unencumbered by biases from knowing the calamity that befell Task Force Ranger and President Clinton's announcement of American withdrawal from the Horn of Africa. One area they addressed through their foresight was the effect the decision to intervene in Somalia would have on the future of American foreign policy engagement. The intervention itself set the precedent for future American humanitarian interventions and peace operations involving military forces executed under the new post-Cold War conditions, especially in the Balkans later in the decade (see chapter 3). The precedent to freely employ military forces for less than vital interests was the true primary effect of the Somalia intervention, and these officers identified this

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media affected policy decisions, but instead focuses on the internal political elements. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 615-624. Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 17.

concept as a significant influence on future American foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> However, they were very wary of the direction America was taking based on its decision to intervene in Somalia.

Their reasoning is what makes this effect so significant: the decision to send troops into Somalia contradicted the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine and established new norms which would supplant what they saw as the very prudent, judicial, and popular guidelines. The primary rules under this doctrine are to use combat forces only in support of vital American interests, provide the military with clear objectives, use military force as a last resort, ensure overwhelming force once committed to combat operations, have an exit strategy, and ensure reasonable support of the public. Somalia, however, signified a major change in the standards America would use in the new era as the United States became more globally engaged in small-scale military interventions.

The precedent for military involvement for less-than-vital interests was undoubtedly a significant influence on the American policy of Engagement and Enlargement that the Clinton Administration first codified in the 1994 National Security Strategy. The document lays out how and why the United States was to execute selective military engagement, including promoting democracy, resolving conflict, and humanitarian relief. President Clinton set the tone for willingness to employ military force for less than vital interests in this document by stating that “our forces must prepare to participate in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and other

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<sup>8</sup> LTC Philip Lindner, “U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?” (1993), p 13. He saw Somalia as setting the precedent for future HUMRO. Maj Carol Clair, “Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design” (1993), pp. 1, 45. Maj Matthew Duffy, “Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization” (1993), p. 5. LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), p. 5. LTC Michael Cooper, “Military Diplomacy in the New World Order” (1993), pp. 34-35. Maj Matthew McGuinness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), p. 77, Lt Col Jeffrey Kohler, “Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine”, 1993, p. 41. LTC Spara, “Peace-Enforcement and the United States Military for the Start of the 21st Century” (1993), p. 38. Lt Col Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), pp. 66-67. He does not agree with precedent being set.

operations....”<sup>9</sup> Specifically, in the section titled “Deciding When and How to Employ U.S. Forces,” Clinton lays out as part of his first priority that for “vital or survival interests...use of force will be decisive...” yet also uses specific language directing increased active military engagements for “other situations posing a less immediate threat.”<sup>10</sup> This new strategy articulated how the United States looked to prioritize military involvement in actions more akin to Somalia. Those mid-level officers writing in the midst of that mission saw that a main legacy of this intervention was that these types of operations short of war would become one of the chief paths the United States traversed in attempting to discover both its place and its limits in a world with more dangers, obstacles, and possibilities after the fall of the Soviet Union. As mentioned earlier, this created a contradiction as the same document emphasizes how the United States needed to prepare for a Desert Storm-like major contingency “in more than one region if necessary.”<sup>11</sup> These directives during a period of downsizing caused senior leaders and mid-level officers to take issue with President Clinton’s focus on increased small-scale contingencies.<sup>12</sup> This combination of factors created great challenges for their ability to implement national policy at their level.

One of those challenges that ongoing actions in Somalia highlighted to contemporaries was the effect of America committing military forces to execute missions for which they had not been properly prepared. The commander-in-chief asked a military trained for a conventional

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<sup>9</sup> “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement” (July 1994), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, accessed 20 Feb 2023, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement” (July 1994), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, accessed 20 Feb 2023, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement” (July 1994), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, accessed 20 Feb 2023, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> 22 of 38 papers written during Clinton’s first term and after the publication of the 1994 National Security Strategy discuss issues surrounding national policy and strategy, including trepidation over downsizing.



fight against a Soviet-style force to partake in humanitarian and peace operations.<sup>13</sup> Old Cold War training and experiences permeated the ability of the soldiers and Marines in Somalia to develop new plans and practices. This retarded their adaptation to new global conditions they first faced in Somalia, which adversely affected implementation of policy when it came to the use of force. Early writers, following the lead of their senior military officers, illuminated these and other issues with the United States' interventionalist approach under these conditions.

However, over time, mid-level officers who studied Somalia came to accept Clinton's approach. By Clinton's second term, there was general acceptance of the international reality, understanding of the importance of these interventions, and push for the military to adapt to the challenge. They understood that a proactive form of prevention could prevent larger, more costly issues later. For example, as Major Charles Hyde discusses, if left unchecked, smaller crises could expand, requiring large scale actions to combat threats that would reveal themselves to be vital, perhaps even survival-threatening, interests.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of the specific observations, all agreed that operations in Somalia had a tremendous effect on American policy for the rest of the decade. As Major Eric Buer concluded, "Restore Hope was one of the most controversial and precedent setting operations in United States foreign policy and military history."<sup>15</sup> This affected many aspects of the legacy of Somalia.

Another impact of actions in Somalia on the future of American military interventions was how mission creep became a phenomenon that was closely associated with interventions of the new era. One of the greatest demonstrations of foresight from true contemporary papers was

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<sup>13</sup> LTC Jeffrey Spara, "Peace-Enforcement and the United States Military for the Start of the 21st Century" (1993), p 44.

<sup>14</sup> Maj Charles Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2001), p. 13. He discusses America's ability to act proactively to prevent potential rise of pariah states like Germany post-World War I.

<sup>15</sup> Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p.2.

how some recognized this aspect as it was developing and predicted how its continuance would be detrimental to the intervention.<sup>16</sup> Major Steven Peterson provides an excellent definition for mission creep as “a subtle change in mission by circumstances without an explicit consideration of policy directing the change.”<sup>17</sup> There were several papers that demonstrate an awareness of this negative effect as it was happening, shortly after the United Nations took control of the mission in May of 1993 and shifted the focus, causing many changes.<sup>18</sup> Protecting humanitarian aid came to include policing of the population. Food distribution became subordinate to weapons confiscation. Ending starvation morphed into nation building. The use of lethal force only for self-defense altered to offensive warlord hunting. The issues resulting from this cycle of change culminated in the overall failure of the American mission when the gradualism of mission creep abruptly ended with an all-out firefight in downtown Mogadishu.

The influence of the media was another significant theme that runs through the various officer papers even before the Battle of Mogadishu, and continued throughout later writings. As the sole superpower, the freedom of action the United States had allowed employment of military force to places like Somalia, but also made policy makers vulnerable to media influence to exercise that power. Coincidentally, coverage expanded exponentially with the introduction of cable news. Live cameras seemed to capture any sensational story, and the recorded content

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<sup>16</sup> Maj Matthew Duffy, “Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization” (1993), p 51. LTC Jeffrey Spara, “Peace-Enforcement and the United States Military for the Start of the 21st Century” (1993), p. 38. He saw that there would be future confusion regarding peacekeeping missions that become hostile/escalate violence. LTC Michael Cooper, “Military Diplomacy in the New World Order” (1993), p. 15. LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Maj Steven Peterson “The Nature of War and Campaign Design” (1994), p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), p. 5. LTC Jeffrey Spara, “Peace-Enforcement and the United States Military for the Start of the 21st Century” (1993), p. 36-37. He expresses concern about peace-enforcement could be distorted by “changes in personalities involved” as Boutros-Ghali altered the mission.

appeared continually on channels like CNN. The coverage of depravity and atrocities in Somalia in 1992 led to public pressure creating a “do something syndrome” that appeared to drive action based on feelings instead of geopolitical valuation.<sup>19</sup> With the ability to deploy military forces to a contested region without invoking conflict with a peer rival, this new-found freedom of action incurred different pitfalls for national leaders as well as the individuals who would implement their decisions that the media then exploited. The result was that the media played an even greater role in influencing America’s withdrawal through its coverage of the Battle of Mogadishu. For Americans calling for the United States to leave Somalia, it was not just that America lost eighteen killed in combat, but how it happened, which was broadcast into American homes.

American failure in Somalia greatly affected the military officers who wrote about this national policy-shaping event. Amalgamating the opinions contained within most of these officer papers shows that they relay a perspective about the legacy of Somalia that differs from the traditional interpretation of American intervention there. Tracing the evolution of their assessments illuminates how emerging military leaders thought about a world after the Cold War. They saw Somalia in the context of how the United States was attempting to find its niche in the new world. This intervention became a proving ground for international policy development and emerging criteria for committing military forces from its new position as the world’s sole superpower. America experienced some of its worst post-Cold War growing pains in Somalia as it struggled with how and where to intervene and apply combat power in a world

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<sup>19</sup> LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations’ Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), p.5. Maj Carol Clair, “Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design” (1993), p. 43. Maj Matthew Duffy, “Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization” (1993), p 45.

free from the constraints the Soviet Union levied in the past. Global challenges no longer appeared monolithic, but polymorphic, with the variants stemming from diverse regional cultures, histories, and local responses to the end of the Cold War. The fallout of the Battle of Mogadishu accentuated these issues and revealed several others that evolved over time. Overall, America's warrior-intellectuals' writings represent their coming to grips with the new international environment during what was, in essence, the first true post-Cold War exercise of military power, not in the sense of the date of execution, but in its spirit. Tracing their perspectives over time demonstrates how they were able to transcend the influence of the Cold War on American foreign policy development and execution to get beyond fighting the previous war, and serves as a microcosm of America's journey to adapt to a new era in international relations.

### *Background*

Somalia is situated east of Ethiopia and Kenya and makes up the Horn of Africa. Its north shore forms the Gulf of Aden along with Yemen. After coming to a point, the coastline turns south-southwest where its eastern shore traverses along the Indian Ocean. Few Americans had heard of this troubled and impoverished land at the start of the 1990s. However, the coastal country began to make headlines in the aftermath of the Cold War. As American and Soviet competition for the hearts and minds of those in the so-called Third World came to an end, so did their respective support to these countries.<sup>20</sup> This change in status affected many nations in

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<sup>20</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 250.

Africa, especially Somalia where ancient clan rivalries resurfaced. Power struggles and political unrest combined with drought and famine to create a humanitarian disaster.

In 1988, Somalia was in the throes of civil war.<sup>21</sup> Siad Barre, Somalia's leader since he took power in a coup in 1969, had been a Soviet ally. As the Soviet Union was in the midst of its downward spiral in the 1980s, Barre cut ties with the waning superpower and attempted to throw in his lot with the presumptive Cold War winner, the United States. America, however, was not interested. Somalia's geopolitical importance was shrinking proportionally with the threat of communism. This decline in significance coupled with Barre's lackluster traits that included a poor record on human rights, totalitarianism, and excesses of leadership drove away western support. Soon there were rival challenges against his reign.<sup>22</sup> Led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid, many clans united against Barre, thrusting the nation into a violent civil war. The opposition forced Barre to flee to Nigeria in 1992. Tragically, the type of unity that evicted this tyrannical leadership was the exception in Somalia. Old clan rivalries were embedded into the culture; without a common enemy, Somalis again splintered into quarrelling factions, leading to rising tensions. When Aidid attempted to consolidate his power, he turned on the other clans. As a result, the civil war did not end with Barre's expulsion. Violence and political strife continued to tear apart the nation and its people.

At this point, the destructive power of nature looked to eclipse the conflagration man was already purporting on the poor country. Adding to the devastation and suffering wrought by war was a drought that caused a nation-wide famine. Hunger and disease took its toll on what had become a friable nation and fragile populace. The media covered the depravation, starvation, death, and resultant massive refugee crisis. These images provoked international sympathy

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<sup>21</sup> For more details see Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 249.

prompting the formation of the United Nations Operations in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) in April of 1992.

Humanitarian aid workers and relief supplies streamed into eastern Africa, but armed warlords used the global generosity as an opportunity to increase their individual standings. Food and medicine had become more precious than gold in this devastated land. They were the commodities of power in Somalia. Clans jockeyed to control the flow of these lifesaving goods, enhancing their leaders' influence and prestige. With caches of Soviet weapons left over from the Cold War, and groups of loyal militiamen at their disposal, warlords took advantage of unarmed, lightly protected foreign aid workers. They seized and hoarded these critical relief supplies at the expense of millions of their suffering countrymen, women, and children. The deteriorating situation captured by the media and broadcast on continual loops that fed the voracious appetite of the 24-hour-a-day news cycle inspired America to act.

President George H. W. Bush decided to commit American military power to help the Somali people and protect aid workers after losing his bid for reelection to William J. Clinton in 1992. With no apparent vital United States interest at stake, this was a significant deviation from the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine for committing military forces. Somalia did not seem to fit with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell's standards for putting American troops at risk. However, with Bush's assurances of a limited, clearly defined mission, General Powell concurred that the possibility of saving a half million lives warranted the risk of putting American troops into harm's way.<sup>23</sup> Operation Restore Hope, the first true post-Cold War major American military operation, went into action, replacing UNOSOM I. On 9 December 1992, American Marines landed on the beaches of Somalia, not to the withering

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<sup>23</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 251.

enemy fire that harkened back to the Normandy beaches of 1944, but to reporters brandishing cameras that would have been more akin to a Parisian fashion runway. This kind of shooting, unfortunately, would not remain the only type American servicemembers would experience.

President Bush intended for the American mission to last only until Bill Clinton's inauguration day, just forty-two days away. He did not want to leave his successor with this ongoing military operation.<sup>24</sup> Such a timetable, which included establishing lasting order in just a month-and-a-half, was wishful thinking at best. American forces had to overcome the effects of a natural disaster in a chaotic political environment replete with continual clan violence fed by a bounty of arms and ammunition. Despite the unrealistic timeline expectation, the American mission made significant progress. Almost immediately they succeeded in protecting relief workers and helped ensure that food and medicine ended up in the hands of the civilians who needed it. Within a few months, interclan hostilities were no longer imposing the same hardships on the populace as before American involvement. By May of 1993, the United States met its original primary goal of stopping the mass starvation.<sup>25</sup>

As the United States turned leadership over to the United Nations that same month, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali changed the nature of the military mission. With President Bill Clinton hyper-focused on domestic issues, he was not actively engaged in managing American involvement in Somalia, limiting the ability of Secretary of Defense Les Aspin to effectively respond to changing conditions there.<sup>26</sup> When United Nations Operations in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) took over operational control from the United States, Turkish Lieutenant General Cevic Bir took command of all United Nations military forces (though

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<sup>24</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 53. Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, p. 565.

<sup>25</sup> DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 47. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 614. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>26</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 248. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 74.

American forces reported to his deputy, American Major General Thomas Montgomery<sup>27</sup>), ready to implement new guidance from the Secretary-General. The UNOSOM II Commander shifted the focus from feeding Somalis to building a nation and setting the conditions to establish a stable, democratic government.<sup>28</sup> United States leadership allowed gradual and significant changes to occur, beginning with an intense campaign to disarm the clans, especially in and around Mogadishu. Over time, this mission creep overwhelmed the American effort and steadily created conditions for disaster.

Despite being a native of nearby Egypt, Boutros-Ghali did not appreciate the long history of tribal governance, clan affiliations, and the accompanying deep-rooted rivalries that existed in Somalia. Nor did he understand that recent history had demonstrated that inter-clan unity only came when there was a common enemy. UNOSOM II's actions were beginning to provide a reason for Somalis to unite, but not in a way the United Nations leadership wanted.

Mohamed Farrah Aidid again became the primary leader. He saw the United Nations' shift as a threat to clan power, especially his. He refused to cooperate and defied UNOSOM II's disarmament program. As the Secretary-General increased pressure on him, Aidid had anti-United Nations rhetoric broadcast for any Somali in earshot of a radio to hear. On 5 June 1993, UNOSOM II sent in a Pakistani unit to take over the Aidid-controlled radio station. Militiamen ambushed the soldiers, killing twenty-four.<sup>29</sup> Boutros-Ghali publicly singled out Aidid as the problem. This proclamation exemplified his lack of understanding about the nature of the Somali society. Aidid was more a symptom of the issues in that nation, not the main problem. Declaring Aidid an enemy further encouraged Somalis to rally to Aidid's leadership against

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<sup>27</sup> Dobbins, et al, *America's Role In Nation-Building*, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp 255-257.

<sup>29</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 257.



UNOSOM II. In the process, American military personnel, once a force for good, transformed into invaders.

As Boutros-Ghali pushed this new agenda, President Clinton preferred to let the United Nations lead the way and deferred to his staff for decisions regarding American involvement. As mission creep steadily altered the nature of the intervention and increased risk to United States forces in Somalia, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin had difficulty in getting control of a situation that was spinning out of control. Despite the worsening conditions in Somalia, he could not get the White House to show much interest.<sup>30</sup> Then, on 8 August, Somali militia ambushed an American convoy, killing four.<sup>31</sup> This prompted the United States to intensify the hunt for Aidid. Major General Montgomery requested special operations forces. He looked to use their specific skills to eliminate Aidid and stamp out a nascent insurgency. President Clinton approved the request, then returned to his domestic focus. Delta Force operators, America's elite Army special forces personnel; Rangers, the Army's top light infantry soldiers; and the Night Stalkers, the highly trained special operations helicopter pilots, mobilized and went to Somalia. Together, they comprised Task Force Ranger, with Major General William Garrison as their commander.

In order to maintain a lower profile and avoid collateral damage, Air Force special operations AC-130 gunships, capable of firing artillery and saturating machine gun fire with amazing accuracy and tremendous firepower out of the side of a circling aircraft, were ordered out of theater. Normally, they would accompany special operations forces into hostile situations as part of the overall deployment package. Despite their precision and ability to scare Somali militia out of acting against American forces in Mogadishu even when they did not fire, the explosive power of the airborne platform had caused unwanted damage to civilian structures

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<sup>30</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 259.

<sup>31</sup> Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 13.

during previous employment in and around Mogadishu. In addition, the Secretary of Defense denied requests for American armor units, wanting to maintain a lower profile and prevent increased hostile feelings among the populace. As a result, Task Force Ranger was, for all intents and purposes, on its own, reliant on small arms, thin-skinned vehicles, and lightly armored helicopters in the hunt for the elusive warlord in a dangerous and increasingly hostile city.

From August through September, American special operations forces made six attempts to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.<sup>32</sup> These snatch-and-grab missions involved helicopter insertions of Rangers to form a defensive perimeter as Delta Force operators infiltrated the identified buildings to capture or kill the high-value targets. A convoy of High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), the Army's standard small transport combat vehicle, then met the assault force and transported the prisoners back to base. After the convoy departed, the helicopters would evacuate the remaining American combat forces. Task Force Ranger managed to capture some key militia leadership, but each attempt failed to find Aidid. Although there were signs that the Somalis were adjusting to the American tactics, such as targeting the helicopters with Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs),<sup>33</sup> all operations were relatively uneventful and lasted just a few hours. Their seventh mission, however, resulted in the most intense firefight since Vietnam.

The afternoon of 3 October 1993 changed the course of American involvement in Somalia and would affect American foreign policy throughout the rest of the decade. Having obtained intelligence on a meeting of Aidid's leadership that had the potential of capturing the

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<sup>32</sup> Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 92. Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> An RPG is a small rocket launcher fired from a tube resting on the shoulder. The rocket propels a small explosive that detonates on impact that has the power of a grenade.

clan leader himself, Major General Garrison sent his forces into downtown Mogadishu to secure the target building and capture anyone in attendance.<sup>34</sup> They repeated the same tactic that had been so successful in achieving surprise and security in all previous missions. However, this time when seventeen helicopters inserted seventy-five rangers and forty Delta operators, the city began to mobilize against them. Unaware of the impending attack, Rangers set up their positions around the building while Delta teams went inside. The latter captured two of Aidid's top lieutenants, among others, and prepared them for convoy transport back to base. The Rangers outside had to contend with some armed Somalis taking shots at them, but it was nothing they could not handle.<sup>35</sup> Unbeknownst to the Rangers, Mogadishu citizens, regardless of their clan affiliations, were rallying to Aidid. They set up roadblocks throughout the city and harassed the American convoy as it began making its way to the target building. Simultaneously, small arms fire aimed at the Americans around the building intensified. Then came the unthinkable. RPG fire shot down two Blackhawks.

The convoy made it to the target site and loaded up the prisoners and several wounded soldiers. As they convoy departed, the city erupted. The column of vehicles fought its way out of the city as the Rangers and Delta operators urgently moved towards the helicopter crash sites. They could reach only one. Militia forces overran the other. News cameras recorded images of dead American pilots being dragged through the streets, their bodies desecrated. One pilot, Warrant Officer Michael Durant, was captured. What was supposed to be a simple operation turned into a nightmare. "Neighborhood militia units...united in their hatred for Americans" joined together in an all-out assault against anyone wearing the uniform of the United States of

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<sup>34</sup> For a detailed account, see Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*.

<sup>35</sup> Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p. 263.

America.<sup>36</sup> Summoned from their homes by a combination of gunfire and calls from militia leaders, citizens rallied to anywhere they heard shooting. When a militiaman fell, a civilian picked up the AK-47 assault rifle and continued the fight. Helicopters could not extract the soldiers due to the heavy gunfire, and there was not a second convoy available to attempt a rescue.

The American soldiers were trapped. With few, brief respites, the fighting continued overnight and into the next morning. Little Bird attack helicopters provided cover for the besieged ground forces, strafing crowds of armed Somalis on rooftops and in the streets, killing the enemy by the hundreds. American soldiers moved with precision, focusing defensive fire, felling many gunmen and inflicting exponentially more casualties than they took. General Garrison's staff was able to coordinate with United Nations Forces and, the next morning, a Pakistani armored column was finally able to punch through. In all, eighteen American soldiers were dead and seventy-three had wounds of varying severity.<sup>37</sup> Estimates range from five hundred to over seven hundred Somalis killed, and at least one thousand wounded.<sup>38</sup>

The Battle of Mogadishu, in effect, ended United States involvement in Somalia. Images of Somalis desecrating the bodies of dead Americans dropped the bottom out of a public support that had been waning since the shift away from the purely humanitarian mission.<sup>39</sup> Just over two

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<sup>36</sup> Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 16. Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p. 333.

<sup>38</sup> Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. 16. Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p. 333. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp 248-249.

<sup>39</sup> Maj Carol Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p. 43. MAJ Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1993), p. 103. Maj Susan Kellet-Forsyth, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), pp. 1-4. Maj Vance Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), p. 130. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1996), pp. 33-36. Lt Col Douglas Goebel, "MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS: The Future Media Environment and its Influence on Military Operations" (1995), p. 13. Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. 2. MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997), p. 40. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: American's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp. 20-23. MAJ William James, "From Siege to Surgical: The Evolution of Urban Combat from World War II to the Present and its Effect on

weeks after the battle, President Clinton announced that the United States would withdraw from Somalia. After initially strengthening forces with such capability as armored units to prevent a repeat of the events that befell Task Force Ranger, America completed its withdrawal from Somalia in March of 1994. This set a precedent for allowing fear of American casualties to undermine public support for military actions. This trepidation, which was to become known as the Somalia Effect, was an albatross that hung around the neck of every future foreign policy decision that had the potential for using military force for the remainder of the Clinton Presidency.

### *Foreign Policy Direction and Effects*

Discussion about American foreign policy towards Somalia was a major subject of the writings of officers-turned-students from 1993 to 2001. Forty-three of the one-hundred forty-one papers discuss how a lack of foreign policy direction and shortfalls in clarity adversely affected actions in Somalia. Subsequently, the results of the American involvement influenced foreign policy development and execution throughout Bill Clinton's presidency. Papers authored during the second term of the Clinton Administration include Somalia as part of a trend that continued onto other interventions such as in the Balkans or responses to terrorism. However, they also placed policy evolution and specific decisions into context within the new geopolitical

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Current Doctrine" (1998), p. 23. MAJ Michael Scully, "The Media: An Influence on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy by Any Other Means" (1998), pp. 1, 30, 39. MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), pp. 12, 16, 19, 44. MAJ David Are, "Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress" (1999), p. 21. Maj Michael O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 29. MAJ Michael Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), pp. 4-5. Lt Col Thomas O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), p. 32. MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4.

environment in ways earlier writings could not. As time progressed, military officers demonstrated how they were able to adjust to the vagaries of the foreign policy dictates that accompanied American humanitarian and peace interventions. These new missions were the future, and the United States was still working through how to execute them in a post-Cold War world. As such, mid-level officers writing in later years advocated that the military needed to actively adapt, not only to fulfill their constitutional duty in implementing presidential directives, but also to help ensure the United States remained relevant in a new era.

Those who wrote during President Clinton's first term about the overall effect of leadership decisions and actions regarding Somalia not only on American policy there, but on international relations as a whole, demonstrated wariness over a world without a definable adversarial threat. These authors express concerns over the direction the United States was taking early in its post-Cold War consolidation. During the first two years of the Clinton presidency in particular, there was anxiety over the lack of consistent and defined policy and direction while America took a more aggressive international posture that required greater military involvement due to many adverse effects. These issues affected everything from American international relations strategy to individual military unit effectiveness.<sup>40</sup> Their

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<sup>40</sup> Lt Col David Estep, "Air Mobility: The Strategic Use of Nonlethal Airpower" (1994), pp. 2 & 63. CDR Timothy Thomas, "Conflict Termination and Military Strategy" (1994), p. 10. LCDR David Gruber, "A Methodology for the Transition from National Strategy to Adaptive Force Packaging" (1994), p. 26. MAJ Mark Mazarella, "Adequacy of U.S. Army Attack Helicopter Doctrine to Support the Scope of Attack Helicopter Operations in a Multi-Polar World" (1994), p. 23. MAJ Jack Smith, "Clausewitzian Trinity: A Vague Concept or a Tool for the Attack" (1994), p. 4. Maj Robert Everson, "Light Infantry Vulnerabilities That Represent Strategic Vulnerability in Operations Other Than War" (1994), abstract. LtCol Christian Cowdrey, "Shoot? Don't Shoot? Rules of Engagement in Peacekeeping Operations" (1994), p. 2. Maj Thomas Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p. 7. Maj Maurice Todd, "Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations" (1993), pp. 35-36. Maj Steven Peterson "The Nature of War and Campaign Design" (1994), pp 11. Maj Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 211. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination" (1994), p. 40. Maj Brooks Bash, "The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping" (1994), p. v. MAJ Gregory Borden, "Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative" (1995), p. 7. CDR William McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1995), p. 1. MAJ Todd Buchs, "Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous 'Contemporary

writings demonstrate how America's foreign policy was in flux, and Somalia was a harsh reminder of the pitfalls of entering into a new and uncertain world unprepared.

A primary critique was how the Clinton Administration did not establish conditions for success due to its open-ended support of the new United Nations mission. Mid-level officer writings centered on how the new president and his administration should have been more focused on, insightful about, and prepared for acting on the inherited obligation. According to these officers, this was a major contributing factor to why the 3 October mission went forward with disastrous consequences. While this viewpoint was fairly narrow in its approach as compared to later papers, it was representative of how military officers in the mid-1990s attribute the failure in Somalia mostly to the uppermost levels of political leadership. They assert that the President was not actively involved, did not set the conditions to develop specific strategy for defining achievable goals, and created an environment where conflicting missions melded with poor communication and coordination. Inconsistencies and lack of clarity exacerbated issues and inhibited success.

This was not as much of a concern in their discourse over the original humanitarian mission. According to the vast majority of the officers who discussed President Bush's directives, they lauded the qualities of a clear mandate and the support needed to succeed in fending off starvation in Somalia.<sup>41</sup> By May of 1993, this approach allowed the United States to stem the crisis. However, there did not appear to be a noticeable change to the conditions in Somalia that initially caused the humanitarian disaster, namely the lack of a legitimate,

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Peacekeeping' Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)" (1996), pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> 15 papers that covered this topic supported this idea. Only two papers directly refuted it: MAJ Gregory Borden, "Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative" (1995), abstract, and CDR William McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1995), pp. 4, 8. None of the earlier papers offered direct opinions on this subject.

centralized government and the prevailing warlord rule. From this perspective, the situation did not display any obvious indicators of lasting success. That is one reason why the United Nations reoriented the focus to nation building. The United States' support of, or at least absence of objection to, the United Nations position to change the nature of the international involvement from humanitarian aid to nation building resulted in political inertia that overtook policy. This shift caused the military mission to continue past the culminating point of victory, at least how it was originally defined.<sup>42</sup>

Military officers writing in the early- to mid-1990s argued that the issues with the Clinton Administration's policies after the United Nations took control had turned an initially successful mission into a failure. They saw that these problems created uncertainty among its deployed forces and allowed mission creep to undermine American efforts that led to the disaster of the Battle of Mogadishu.<sup>43</sup> The transition to United Nations control itself contributed to that ambiguity. In some ways, it took away American autonomy. In others, it created confusing operational lines of control.<sup>44</sup> This undermined unity of effort and increased confusion for those

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<sup>42</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, "Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination" (1994), pp. 1-2, 9-10. He specifically discusses needing to recognize the "culminating point of victory." Lt Col Jeffrey Kohler, "Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine" (1993), pp. 38-39. Maj Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> Maj Jonathan Hunter, "The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?" (1993), p. 30. Maj Richard Dixon, "The Mind is the Key: Preparing Tactical Leaders for Operations Other Than War" (1993), p. 25. Maj Maurice Todd, "Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations" (1993), pp. 25-26. Maj Steven Peterson "The Nature of War and Campaign Design" (1994), p. 10. Maj Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 102. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination" (1994), p. 29. LtCol Christian Cowdrey, "Shoot? Don't Shoot? Rules of Engagement in Peacekeeping Operations" (1994), pp. 26-27.

<sup>44</sup> Maj Maurice Todd, "Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations" (1993), p 1 and LTC Russ Howard, "United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations" (1993), pp 66-67. They argue Somalia represented how the UN left the burden on the US, therefore the US should take the lead in all similar situations. Maj Jonathan Hunter, "The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?" (1993), p. 21. He reinforces that the major problems began after US transitioned to UNOSOM II. Maj Thomas Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p. 2. He states that the UN was unable to accomplish missions without US help.



tasked with executing operations. It also was an enabler for the adverse effects of mission creep, which steadily grew like a cancer, eroding the health of the American involvement in Somalia. Finally, mission creep amplified confusion over the inherent ambiguities that came with attempting to police a complex socio-political environment like Somalia.<sup>45</sup> American soldiers and Marines gradually began to take on emerging missions of disarmament, policing, national government stabilization, and warlord hunting to the eventual detriment of the American involvement. These new and more aggressive functions were outside of their original humanitarian charter and did not accompany an official change in United States policy.

The Clinton Administration did not proactively clarify policy nor work to counter these effects because it did not have Somalia as a high priority. Military forces met with a change of mission without any articulation of specific objectives or a long-term vision of the desired end state from the highest levels.<sup>46</sup> This “strategic ambivalence” begat reactive decision making by deployed military leaders in an increasingly hostile environment.<sup>47</sup> This made a complex operation even more so. There was no visible enemy against whom to defend, and when there were confrontations, those Somalis who could become hostile were the same people that military

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<sup>45</sup> Maj Jonathan Hunter, “The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?” (1993), p. 30. Maj Richard Dixon, “The Mind is the Key: Preparing Tactical Leaders for Operations Other Than War” (1993), p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> MAJ Todd Megill, “OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise” (1995), p. 23. MAJ Gregory Borden, “Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative” (1995), abstract. CDR William McIntire, “Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations” (1995), pp. 4, 8, 11, 26. Maj Susan Strednansky, “Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination” (1995), pp. v., 3-4, 8. Maj James Tubbs, “Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy: Forceful Applications of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations” (1995), p. 59. LCDR James Dixon, “United Nations Operation in Somalia II: United Nations Unity of Effort and United States Unity of Command” (1996), pp. 93-94. MAJ James Johnson, “Implications for the Ten Division Army: Selective Engagement or Managed Chaos” (1996), p. 26. MAJ Matthew Sorenson, “The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies” (1996), p. 12, 83. MAJ Michael Beech, “‘Mission Creep’: A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia” (1996), pp. 11-12, 18-21. LTC Christopher Baggott, “A Leap into the Dark: Crisis Action Planning for Operation Restore Hope” (1996), pp. 5-8, 35-36 – advocates that the military needs to adjust to NCA shortfalls. Maj Brian Lacey, et al, “Peace Operations and a New Use of Force” (1996), p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> MAJ Gregory Borden, “Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative” (1995), pp. 21-22.

forces were there to feed and protect. These and other issues played out mostly after UNOSOM II took over, but especially once Task Force Ranger arrived.

When the United Nations began implementing nation building in earnest, the United States was executing two non-compatible missions. Once special operations forces began aggressive attempts to capture Aidid, these two approaches began to conflict.<sup>48</sup> The first of these was peace keeping. This was a more benevolent operation whereby military personnel helped maintain a peace that the combatants supported, at least to some degree. In the case of Somalia, it included continuing to defend the distribution of food and other supplies, as well as providing protection for clan members and leaders whom the United Nations had disarmed. Previously warring clan leadership had come to accept the former as it did not threaten their power base. The latter gave cause for concern, but their overall cooperation was based on assurances of protection, collaboration, defensive-only action from United Nations troops, and assurances of a short-term duration. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and most of the international force under United Nations command continued to exercise this mission throughout their tenure in Somalia.

The other category was peace enforcement, which Task Force Ranger assumed. This was more intrusive. It involved aggressively imposing the United Nations' nation-building agenda and led to hunting down Aidid. It also reeked of western colonialism, especially when the exclusively American Task Force Ranger assumed this role from the multinational United Nations force. These two simultaneous, conflicting military operations sent mixed signals to the Somali people, providing them with a stronger reason to see United States soldiers as enemies and to unite against them. Without this unity, Aidid would not have been able to muster enough people and resources to effectively fight Task Force Ranger to such effect as the people likely

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<sup>48</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, "Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination" (1994), p. 37.

would have adhered to previous clan loyalties. The United Nations and the United States helped create the conditions for a catastrophe that spelled defeat for American forces and had ramifications that lasted into the next century. Unfortunately, this was, in part, a result of how the United States was attempting to find its way in a new era as Somalia unfolded.

Officer-scholars also identify how military leaders were unable to reconcile the complications with the addition of shifting priorities within vague policy in order to properly execute the employment of military force. Front line commanders were forced to lead combat troops in a cloud of uncertainty that prevented effective employment of non-lethal force. This perpetuated as the missions continued to shift. Task Force Ranger's aggressive and targeted applications of offensive power within these conditions exponentially exacerbated tensions and risk of failure. Without effective oversight and clear direction, each military engagement they executed yielded diminishing returns and reduced the ability to achieve victory. Absent direct policy to the contrary, the warlord hunting continued, regardless of the increasing futility.

America's strategic loss may have been a direct result of the Battle of Mogadishu, but the culminating effects of the mission changes skewed the criteria for achieving success, creating an environment that made it difficult to accomplish victory in Somalia, or even to recognize what it actually was. As Major Daniel Schuster observed, military commanders increasingly had difficulty in determining the specific military mission with respect to the political aim, and with unclear American policy, they could not see what the military position was in relation to other instruments of national power.<sup>49</sup> The result was deterioration of the situation and ultimately mission failure from a cumulative effect of strategic shortfalls and tactical setbacks.<sup>50</sup> All of

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<sup>49</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1995), p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1995), p. 9, 15. Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), pp 39-41, 47. She argues that poor policy led to mission creep and, ultimately, failure. MAJ Beech, "'Mission Creep': A Case Study in U.S.

these issues resulting from the transition to United Nations control combined to enable a vicious cycle that took the United States well past its original intended objectives in ways that ended in failure.

Critiques of the Clinton Administration's Somalia policy and its effect on military operations continued into its second term as twenty-three of the eighty-one papers that discuss Somalia from 1997 to 2001 directly criticize the president and his foreign policy team in this area. Lackluster communication was a particular point of emphasis.<sup>51</sup> Mid-level officers pointed to poor overall lines of communication that exacerbated issues associated with unclear mandates, absent specificity, and lack of candor. This was not just a result of shortfalls specific to the Clinton Administration. The end of the Cold War created shifts in Africa's geopolitical situation that called for the United States to reorient policy towards the continent. The previous administration did not adequately address this issue, which accentuated policy problems during

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Involvement in Somalia" MAJ Todd Megill, "OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise" (1995), p. 4. MAJ James Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy: Forceful Applications of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), pp. 55-56. He states that UNITAF was a success because did not allow mission creep. MAJ Thomas Greco, "Non-Military Agencies in Campaign Planning" (1996), p. 39 – was the first to identify mission creep as a natural element of post-Cold War humanitarian operations. MAJ James Ayers, "Military Operations Other Than War: An Analysis of Joint Doctrine for the Coming Era" (1996), p. 33. He discusses how mission creep affected unity of effort during change of mission. MAJ Brian Lacey, et al, "Peace Operations and a New Use of Force" (1996), p. 62-64. MAJ Michael Beech, "'Mission Creep': A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia" (1996).

<sup>51</sup> LCDR Dorian Jones, "The Viability of Large Scale Amphibious Operations on the Eve of the Twenty First Century in Light of Military Operations Other Than War, High and Low Technology Weapons, and Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1997), p. 25. MAJ Robert Young, "The Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Midgrade (O3/O4) Army Officer" (1997), p. 16. MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997), pp. 13-14. COL Michael Gilpin, "Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning" (1997), pp. 23-24. MAJ Clifford Day, "Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger" (1997), p. 14. MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998), p. 41. MAJ Anthony Crawford, "The Search for Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa--An American Perspective" (1998), p. 36. MAJ Todd Wood, "Can Operational Art Occur in Military Operations Other Than War?" (1998), p. 25. MAJ David Hinson, "U.S. Military Interaction With Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies" (1998), pp. 16-17. MAJ Gregory Borden, "Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative" (1995), pp. 3-4. MAJ Stuart Whitehead, "Rome's German Frontier: Peace Enforcement Precursor or Paradigm?" (1995), p. 1. MAJ Tim Quillin, "Force Protection In Support and Stability Operations (SASO)" (1999), pp. 40-41. MAJ Jody Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 43. MAJ Leslie Burns, "Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications" (2000), p. 29.

the shift towards United Nations control under Clinton. However, the overall issues with poor communication made policy makers appear shortsighted, allowing timelines rather than progress to drive strategy.<sup>52</sup> Officers writing at the end of the decade highlighted issues with both the perception and reality of American policy in Somalia.

Despite issues with policy clarity, most mid-level officers who had a few years to observe the new pattern of American use of military forces realized that expanding democracy and ensuring global stability were themselves significant American interests, or at least directly tied to greater national importance.<sup>53</sup> Those who spent at least four years executing the national policy of Engagement and Enlargement at a remarkably high operational tempo and were further removed from the Cold War continued to evolve their thinking on how Somalia fit into modern foreign policy. These military leaders more readily accepted the Clinton administration and sought to apply lessons from Somalia to future humanitarian and peace operations. To them, meeting national priorities, regardless of whether they appeared to be less than vital interests on

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<sup>52</sup> LTC Leonardo Flor, "Operations With NGOs, the "International Army of the Future"" (1997), p. 50. MAJ Michael Clidas, "The Role of Impartiality in Peace Operations" (1997), p. 29. Maj Hugh Bowman, "The Weakening of America: An Examination of National Resolve" (1997), p. 28.

<sup>53</sup> Starting in 1997, there was a general tone of acceptance in over 2/3 of the papers, with many directly articulating their support. COL Gary Phillips, "Information Operations - A New Tool for Peacekeeping" (1997), p. 16. MAJ Kevin Woods, "Limiting Casualties: Imperative or Constraint?" (1997), p. 16. MAJ Gary Sanders, "Seeing the New Enemy: Battle Command in the Failed State" (1998), p. iii. Lt Col Charles Hasskamp, "Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. 2. MAJ Mat Martins, "The "Small Change" of Soldiering? Peace Operations for Future Wars" (1998), pp. 11, 174. He specifically discusses the value of peace operations for preparing for larger wars. Maj Michael O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 4. MAJ Phillip Boggs, "Joint Task Force Commanders and the "Three Block War": Setting the Conditions for Tactical Success" (2000), abstract. Maj Charles Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2001), p. 1. MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), p. 5. MAJ Craig Osborne, "Preparing for the Inevitable: NGO-Military Interactions in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations" (2001), pp. 4-5. MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 48. He discusses the impacts of US political leaders' failure to build consensus about importance of operations. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 12. He implores the military to focus on small scale operations. Maj Douglas Kiely, "The End of the Beginning": On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty" (2001), p. vi. Maj Michael Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001), preface.

the surface, was more important than personal opinion or adhering to old standards. Perhaps they placed higher importance on their responsibility to adapt to their commander-in-chief rather than hoping for the reverse as their predecessors intimated. At the very least, they demonstrated how they were adjusting to the new international situation.

Though they detested the aforementioned issues surrounding mission creep demonstrated in Somalia, many of these later officers began to accept it as a characteristic associated with how the United States needed to execute small scale contingencies necessary to achieve more lofty goals of facilitating democratic expansion, rather than as an issue with presidential policy.<sup>54</sup> Beginning in 1997 and continuing through the end of the decade, they looked for system-wide improvements and for the military to better its use of organization and chain of command to overcome any issues with policy specificity or mission clarity.<sup>55</sup> Rather than pointing to the National Command Authority's communication ability, those who were more accepting of American humanitarian and peace operations implored senior military leaders to better articulate needs up the chain of command to prevent civilian leaders from pushing faulty requirements and damaging direction downwards.<sup>56</sup> Preventing senior civilian leadership shortfalls in situational

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<sup>54</sup> MAJ Philip Nethery, "Current MOUT Doctrine and its Adequacy for Today's Army" (1997), p. 51. LCDR Dorian Jones, "The Viability of Large Scale Amphibious Operations on the Eve of the Twenty First Century in Light of Military Operations Other Than War, High and Low Technology Weapons, and Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1997), pp 24-25. MAJ Robert Young, "The Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Midgrade (O3/O4) Army Officer" (1997), p. 16. LTC Leonardo Flor, "Operations With NGOs, the "International Army of the Future"" (1997), p. 59. COL Michael Gilpin, "Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning" (1997), p. 22. MAJ Clifford Day, "Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger" (1997), pp. 14, 18. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp 48-49. MAJ Gregory Reilly, "Peace Operations: A Mission Essential Task?" (1998), p. 4. Maj David Hinson, "U.S. Military Interaction With Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies" (1998), pp. 19-20.

<sup>55</sup> MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998), pp. 7-8, 29, 40. MAJ Roger Sangvic, "Battle of Mogadishu: Anatomy of a Failure" (1998), pp. 1, 9.

<sup>56</sup> MAJ Philip Nethery, "Current MOUT Doctrine and its Adequacy for Today's Army" (1997), p. 56. MAJ Eric Scheidemantel, "MOUT is not Moot" (1998), p. 15. MAJ Todd Wood, "Can Operational Art Occur in Military Operations Other Than War?" (1998), p. 22.

awareness was as much a military duty as a senior civilian decision maker responsibility, regardless of the policy.

These writers also advocated for other systematic changes in military perspectives to overcome policy issues rather than continuing to criticize the policy itself. They urged leadership to improve approaches, beginning with doctrinal adjustments that departed from Cold War practices, to make warfighters better prepared for the inevitable future operations more akin to Somalia. They argued that enhanced training tailored to respond to the new global environment would ensure better responses for both conventional and unconventional operations, noting that the level of focus on the latter needed to be greater than the former based on recent history.<sup>57</sup> Because they recognized the new trend in peace and humanitarian operations, they even criticized senior military leaders who doggedly held on to an idea that small scale contingencies like Somalia were the exception and were even detrimental to military preparedness. Having perspectives closer to the ground level, these more junior officers writing during the latter third of the 1990s accepted that the intervention tendency was towards operations like those in Somalia and Bosnia, and that executing them provided a full range of experiences necessary for the military of the new era.

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<sup>57</sup> MAJ Philip Nethery, "Current MOUT Doctrine and its Adequacy for Today's Army" (1997), p. iii, 58. MAJ Robert Young, "The Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Midgrade (O3/O4) Army Officer" (1997), pp. 98-99. MAJ Gary Sanders, "Seeing the New Enemy: Battle Command in the Failed State" (1998), pp. 1, 32, 39. MAJ Eric Scheidemantel, "MOUT is not Moot" (1998), pp. 33-34. MAJ Aidis Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), p. 112. MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998), p. 6. MAJ Gregory Reilly, "Peace Operations: A Mission Essential Task?" (1998), abstract. MAJ Emmett Schail, "Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?" (1998), p. 45. Maj Craig Stiles, "Joint Vision 2010: A Unilateral Vision for a Multilateral (sic) Future" (1998), abstract. MAJ Todd Wood, "Can Operational Art Occur in Military Operations Other Than War?" (1998), pp. 4-5, 20, 41. Lt Col Charles Hasskamp, "Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. 32. Maj Leon Elsarelli, "From Desert Storm to 2025: Close Air Support in the 21st Century" (1998), pp. vii, 4, 24. MAJ Mat Martins, "The "Small Change" of Soldiering? Peace Operations for Future Wars" (1998), p. 178.

By the turn of the century, even though criticisms over policy ambiguity continued, so too did the acceptance of this characteristic of the Clinton administration. These writers still acknowledged issues with national policy in Somalia.<sup>58</sup> They saw how the lack of clear guidance undermined the creation of adaptive rules of engagement that could allow military personnel to adjust to the changing situation and argued that the president and his administration continued to be vague throughout its tenure. However, those who discussed Clinton's international policies beginning with Somalia found that ambiguity seemed more a characteristic of American foreign policy adjustment to a new era and the nature of humanitarian and peace operations, and not necessarily a shortcoming unique to the administration itself. The officers writing during this time had spent all or the vast majority of their military careers executing the military portion of American foreign policy that included greater involvement in small-scale contingencies focusing on humanitarian and peace operations that began with the precedent-setting Somalia intervention.

After serving for seven or eight years with President Clinton as their commander-in-chief, they showed greater assent to the Clinton Doctrine of interventionism, and a growing understanding of, if not support for, these types of operations. They saw how sowing stability and early engagement prevented greater conflict, perhaps preempting expansion into something

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<sup>58</sup> MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p.3. He asserts that the evolution of redefining force protection as part of policy since Somalia created confusion over policies and implementation. MAJ Paul Wille, "Isolate Before an Urban Attack" (2001), p. 4 – asserts that US policy in Somalia was too fragile to survive 18 deaths. Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p. 12. MAJ Steven Leonar, "Inevitable Evolutions: Punctuated Equilibrium and the Revolution in Military Affairs" (2001), p. 42. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), pp. 16-17. Lt Col Robert Wright, "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001), p. 20. He believes the holes in defense policies during Somalia still existed in 2001. Col Jeffrey Stambagh, "Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance for the Deadline?" (2001), p. 7. Maj Michael Carrell, "Peering Over the Cliff: Guidelines for Statesmen Contemplating War" (2001), pp. 31-43. He argues that Clinton still had not fully specified national interests in his National Military Strategy releases even through 1999.



requiring a large scale response, thus fitting into the category of being significant American interests.<sup>59</sup> One officer, Major Michael Holl, even proclaimed in his introduction how he began his time at Air Command and Staff College believing that United States participation in these peace operations was wasted time because they were not tied to vital interests, but his research changed his mind.<sup>60</sup> Not every officer had such a dramatic conversion, but the overall body of papers demonstrates a general shift towards this belief.

This acceptance yielded a greater understanding that American military errands of altruism not directly linked to national survival were politically delicate by nature, and the military should focus on treating them as such. The Somalia intervention exemplified this new understanding. The United States was still adapting to new political challenges in developing foreign policy after the Cold War. That was true of military implementation as well. The issues surrounding the Somalia intervention exposed what Colonel Jeffrey Stambaugh and Major Eric Buer separately summed up as the main pitfall of humanitarian operations in the 1990s: they were easy to enter, but extremely difficult to successfully accomplish, with success being

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<sup>59</sup> MAJ Justice Stewart, "Sumo in a Ninja Fight: A Critical Study of Army Force Structure in the 21st Century Environment" (1999), p. 32. MAJ Joseph Birchmeier, "The Impact of MOOTW-based Unit Training on Leader Development" (2000), p. 38. MAJ Tori Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force--Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" 2000, pp. 2, 54. MAJ Craig Osborne, "Preparing for the Inevitable: NGO-Military Interactions in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations" (2001), pp. 5-7. MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), pp. 5, 67. He advocates that the military needs to support these missions, but does not specifically say he agrees with them. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 34. He recommends that the military must focus on political goals and "jettison the fallacy that political constraints prevent the armed forces from performing their missions." Maj Douglas Kiely, "'The End of the Beginning': On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty" (2001), p. 15. Maj Michael Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001), preface. Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p. 2. MAJ Steven Leonar, "Inevitable Evolutions: Punctuated Equilibrium and the Revolution in Military Affairs" (2001), p. 42. Maj William Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 34. The majority of the writings from 1999-2001 expressed this acceptance in various direct and indirect ways.

<sup>60</sup> Maj Michael Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001).

measured not only as mission completion, but the United States ensuring its standing as a benevolent superpower.<sup>61</sup>

American policy in Somalia, especially after the transition to United Nations control, adversely affected the military mission. It created confusion for the lower-level officers attempting to implement American policy. It led to conflicting missions of peacekeeping and peace enforcement. It allowed mission creep to slowly and steadily undermine the humanitarian mission in favor of intrusive nation building. Finally, it enabled conditions that allowed Task Force Ranger to continue to execute operations that yielded few positive effects until their entire mission ended in disaster. However, it was not as simple as a failure of the Clinton Administration. While there were shortfalls, not the least of which was the lack of prioritization of Somalia, there were many factors in play. The United States was attempting to adjust not only to new global conditions, but to its own role in a new era. Policy makers were redefining interests and developing adaptive policies on the fly in order to meet new needs and shape events by balancing freedom of action with political and military restraint. Military forces also were trying to adjust, making mistakes along the way that contributed just as much to the American failure. While officers heavily criticized the intervention as a failure, they also evolved in their thinking to understand the importance of such interventions to American interests. Proactive engagement was a positive policy, even if the United States greatly needed to improve its execution. Somalia was a microcosm of the complexities the United States faced in developing and executing policy in a world after the Cold War, and was its first critical step in adjusting to these new conditions.

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<sup>61</sup> Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p. 38-43. Col Jeffrey Stambagh, "Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance for the Deadline?" (2001), p. 1.

*The Vietnam Effect and the Myth or Reality of Casualty Aversion*

One of the most significant effects of America's involvement in Somalia was the impact of casualties on public opinion. It greatly influenced the United States' ability to execute foreign policy for the remainder of the Clinton presidency. As discussed earlier, scholarship has accepted this aspect as the main effect of the result of American involvement in Somalia, calling it the Somalia Effect. However, this influence actually had much earlier roots for policy makers and other senior leaders during the 1990s, including Vietnam. The Battle of Mogadishu exacerbated the impact of American casualties on foreign policy decisions regarding the employment of military forces. American reaction to events in Somalia was part of a continuum rather than an origin. Vietnam's impact was still formidable on the United States as it affected the decisions that led to America's ignominious conclusion to involvement in Somalia, held sway over decisions regarding later interventions, and helped shape contemporary interpretations of the continuing effects of the failure in the Horn of Africa.

One reason the Somalia Effect became so powerful was because of the impact of the media, which played a large role starting with its influence on the United States' initial involvement. Reports and images of starving Somalis pulled on the heartstrings of Americans, creating public pressure for the United States to get involved.<sup>62</sup> The media was also key to America's exit. When images of dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets replaced those of starving children, American will crumbled and policy changed.<sup>63</sup> With

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<sup>62</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 264, 359. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 250. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 92-93. Near-contemporary military writers also agreed: Maj Susan Kellet-Forsyth, "The Media and the Operational Commander: A Shotgun Marriage" (1994), p. 20. LtCol Christian Cowdrey, "Shoot? Don't Shoot? Rules of Engagement in Peacekeeping Operations" (1994), p. 2, 38-39

<sup>63</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 262. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 248-249. Nichols, p. 246. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 76. Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, pp. 16-17.

national support for continued involvement in Somalia plummeting, President Clinton, under congressional pressure, announced American withdrawal from the African nation by May of 1994.<sup>64</sup>

From the first images of the Battle of Mogadishu, many officers harkened back to America's quintessential Cold War failure, Vietnam, in analyzing the disaster that befell America in Somalia.<sup>65</sup> One aspect of the 1990s that magnified the negative similarities was the emergence of the twenty-four-hour news cycle. Mid-level officers argued that during Vietnam, images of the brutality of combat were piped into American living rooms on the six o'clock news every night, negatively affecting public opinion. In early October 1993, Americans could see even more disturbing imagery any time they turned on the television. These scenes played on a continuous loop. Many of these officers viewed the impact of continuously airing the carnage of the battle and the dragging of American bodies through the streets as having a great impact on American will. The events cast doubts as to the American government's sincerity of the humanitarian nature of United States involvement when it included a major offensive operation that caused many casualties on both sides. This presented an apparent contradiction to the previously touted mission of mercy. In addition, the repeated displays of dead Americans increased doubts as to the necessity of putting American lives at risk in a place with little

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<sup>64</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 264. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam* pp. 248-249. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 76. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 615-616

<sup>65</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 251-252, 261, and Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 308. They reported this impact on Americans. Early officer writings confirmed this, including Maj Kurtis Lohide, "Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia" (1993), p. 1; Maj Steven Peterson "The Nature of War and Campaign Design" (1994), pp. 9-10, 39; Maj Susan Kellet-Forsyth, "The Media and the Operational Commander: A Shotgun Marriage" (1994), pp. 1-2; and Maj Vance Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), p. 128.

strategic interest.<sup>66</sup> It was as if months' worth of coverage of the problems of Vietnam were condensed into two days.

While their perspective is not completely accurate, it does highlight their overall point of how Vietnam influenced American policy and actions in Somalia. Most broadcast media imagery during the Vietnam conflict, especially prior to the Tet Offensive, did not show American bodies or soldiers in a negative light. Newspapers actually had a greater impact on the public than television. It would take years for media influence to truly affect the mainstream.<sup>67</sup> However, these officers illuminate how the failures of Vietnam, which the media exacerbated, stayed with the American psyche and became an integral part of American leadership's perspective on foreign affairs, particularly when it came to employing military force. More powerful and immediately persuasive than the impact of the media on Vietnam, actual or perceived, was the major influence the cable news cycle had on foreign policy two decades after the United States negotiated the Paris Peace Accords with North Vietnam.

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<sup>66</sup> Multiple officers commented on the impact of the media coverage of the Battle of Mogadishu as influencing the American public to voice doubts about American involvement. Maj Carol Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p. 43. MAJ Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1993), p. 103. Maj Susan Kellet-Forsyth, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), pp. 1-4. Maj Vance Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), p. 130. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1996), pp. 33-36. Lt Col Douglas Goebel, "MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS: The Future Media Environment and its Influence on Military Operations" (1995), p. 13. Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. 2. MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997), p. 40. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: American's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp. 20-23. MAJ William James, "From Siege to Surgical: The Evolution of Urban Combat from World War II to the Present and its Effect on Current Doctrine" (1998), p. 23. MAJ Michael Scully, "The Media: An Influence on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy by Any Other Means" (1998), pp. 1, 30, 39. MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), pp. 12, 16, 19. 44. MAJ David Are, "Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress" (1999), p. 21. Maj Michael O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 29. MAJ Michael Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), pp. 4-5. Lt Col Thomas O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), p. 32. MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> For more information on the role of the media on public opinion regarding the Vietnam War see William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and the Military at War* (University Press of Kansas, 1998).

Military officers had strong opinions on the effects of the media. Thirty papers discussed the effects of the media at length with regards to Somalia, three of which were completely dedicated to the subject. While early papers focus more on the detrimental effects the media had on the ability of America, and the military in particular, to succeed in Somalia, by the second half of the decade most grew to accept the media's role and looked for ways to manage their effects. Opinions on the impact of the media, particularly on public support and its influence on American civilian and military leaders, are interwoven throughout the officers' discussions on casualty aversion. Mid-level officers underscored the contrast of how media influence helped drive involvement in Somalia and sowed doubt about the American mission there, especially after showcasing scenes of dead American soldiers. It was one aspect these officers link to a broad relationship between Vietnam and American casualty aversion as they applied to Somalia.

Early officer papers that focused on the linkage of Vietnam to American casualty aversion painted Somalia as a micro-repeat of American involvement in Southeast Asia. Beginning in the mid-1990s, military officers began exploring how casualty aversion based on media reporting rooted in television coverage of the Vietnam conflict may have led to misguided applications of lessons, misperceptions over the strength of the American public's casualty aversion, and overemphasis on force protection that was dangerously affecting the military's ability to successfully implement national policy in this new global environment.<sup>68</sup> Hyper-

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<sup>68</sup> Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. 44. MAJ James Johnson, "Implications for the Ten Division Army: Selective Engagement or Managed Chaos" (1996), p. 24. He was one of the first to identify that leadership failure to articulate US interests to public was more important than the casualties themselves for why the US left. MAJ Kevin Woods, "Limiting Casualties: Imperative or Constraint?" (1997), abstract, pp 30-32. Maj Hugh Bowman, "The Weakening of America: An Examination of National Resolve" (1997), p. 27. Maj Troy Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997). Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), "Shackled by Perceptions of American's [sic] Desire for Bloodless Intervention." Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), pp. 18, 27. MAJ Wayne Green, "Attacking Cell Phones with Sabots: Disintegration of an Asymmetrical Urban Threat in the Year 2025" (1998), pp 4-5. MAJ Scott Kimmell, "Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations" (1998),

sensitivities led to risk aversion based on the outcomes from Somalia that affected later American actions in Haiti, as well as Bosnia (see chapter 3).

After taking a couple of years to recover from the initial impact of the Battle of Mogadishu, colonels, commanders, and majors began orienting their perspectives towards gleanings proper, or at least more appropriate, lessons from Vietnam as they applied to Somalia. One area they addressed was that the United States, as the dominant global power, needed to ensure it could retain positive world opinion through better decisions on the application of military power. Repeating these types of mistakes from Vietnam could have cost America the international support necessary to form and lead coalitions to effectively tackle the crises of the new decade.<sup>69</sup> The United States did not want a recurrence of what happened in Mogadishu to influence allies to harken back to United States policies of “destroying the village in order to save it.”<sup>70</sup>

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pp. 27-28, 39. MAJ William James, “From Siege to Surgical: The Evolution of Urban Combat from World War II to the Present and its Effect on Current Doctrine” (1998), pp. 17, 23. MAJ Richard Cabrey, “Operational Art in Operations Other Than War” (1998), p. 34. MAJ Michael Scully, “The Media: An Influence on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy by Any Other Means” (1998), pp. 29-31. Lt Col Matthew Branigan, “Force Protection after Khobar Towers: A Case Study” (1998), p. 8. Lt Col Charles Hasskamp, “Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don’t Do Windows” (1998), p. 25. Maj David Hinson, “U.S. Military Interaction With Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies” (1998), pp. 17-19, 25. Maj Clifton Dickey, “Air Base Defense for the Air Expeditionary Force” (1998), p. 20. Maj Daniel Schuster, “Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art” (1995), p. 36. He argues that taking casualties was the last straw for Americans whose support had already waned due to a lack of return on investment in Somalia.

<sup>69</sup> Maj Susan Strednansky, “Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination” (1995), pp 13-14. MAJ Lindsay Arnold, “Cooperation or Conflict: The Interaction of U.S. Military Forces and Nongovernmental Organizations in Military Operations Other Than War” (1996), p. 54.

<sup>70</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, “Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art” (1995), p. 31. Foreign sources commented on the issue as well. A quick review of *The Times of London* from April through October of 1993 shows the publication’s articles presents an understanding of the potential necessity of collateral damage and risk to civilians, especially since it had been reduced since the United States got involved, but it also exhibits concerns. Articles show how ignoring events such as Pakistani peacekeepers fired into crowds of Somali citizens and uses of powerful American gunships that also killed civilians and caused collateral damage undermined American and United Nations efforts. (See Sam Kiley’s articles “Shooting of Women and Children Fuels Mogadishu” (*The Times of London*, 14 June 1993) and “Mogadishu Guerillas Expose Failure of ‘High-Tech Toy’ Tactics” (*The Times of London*, 15 July 1993). Also, an anonymous Israeli editorial, “Collateral Damage” (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 July 1993) warned about the United State hijacking the effort and how it could not “afford any more collateral Damage.”

The main concern from mid-level officers, especially those writing later during Clinton's first term, was that America needed to stop treating Vietnam, Somalia, and other operations short of major conventional war as anomalies. Military commitments less than major theater-level war that utilize skills including counterinsurgency, peace enforcement, and limited warfare were the new normal under the Clinton Administration. These officers implored American leaders to develop overarching policies that linked military and political objectives to national interests that created conditions for operational success.<sup>71</sup> In order to accomplish this, the lessons of Vietnam needed to be taken out of a Cold War context and applied within the current global dynamic.<sup>72</sup> Avoiding involvement in Rwanda or initially backing down from Haiti due to an overarching fear of replicating a Vietnam-like quagmire was not the way for the United States to move forward. World conditions in 1994 were much different than in 1964. For American foreign policy to be successful, these officers argued, the United States needed to focus on how to best use the military in the modern environment to fight new wars, not re-fight the old ones.

One critical area United States leadership needed to address in order to be effective in an engagement strategy in this new era was the impact of American casualties on public support. Military officers writing in the 1990s posited that Americans were not overly casualty averse *per se*, but when the public either did not understand or did not agree with the importance of an American military mission, casualties catalyzed existing low public opinion into demands for cessation of military involvement. Officer-scholars saw that the issue in Somalia was not that it only took eighteen deaths to drive America out, but that civilian leadership failed to properly

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<sup>71</sup> MAJ Michael Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 42. MAJ Matthew Sorenson, "The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies" (1996), pp 60, 96. Maj Brian Lacey, et al, "Peace Operations and a New Use of Force" (1996), p. 81.

<sup>72</sup> Lt Col Conrad Von Wald, "The War Powers Resolution: Its Impact on the American Public and Congressional Support Center of Gravity" (1995). He argues even the War Powers Act was a Cold War relic that interfered with policy appropriate for a new era. While an overly militaristic view, it does highlight how lower-level leaders were trying to look past Cold War conventions to meet future challenges.



keep the American people informed of why intervention was important prior to the battle, artificially exacerbating the impact of casualties. Effective articulation of the scope, direction, and importance of the mission could have bolstered public support and prevented those casualties from becoming the driving factor for forcing retreat. These military policy-implementers suggest that if a foreign intervention involving military force could not withstand the American public's displeasure with Americans being killed in action, then senior civilian leaders needed to reevaluate the decision to commit troops at all.

The start of Clinton's second term witnessed a slight reduction in papers that addressed Vietnam. For the first time, less than half of the authors discussed Vietnam in the context of Somalia, but they continued the trend of pulling out applicable lessons.<sup>73</sup> They demonstrated that finding similarities and amalgamating the two conflicts into a "Vietmalia"<sup>74</sup> assessment represented thinking in the past rather than using the past to help progress into the future. There were criticisms of the way senior leadership was influenced too much by Vietnam, personally and professionally, to the detriment of the Somalia mission.<sup>75</sup> They argued how too much focus on, and oversensitivity to, the history of American involvement in Vietnam that their predecessors discussed, was the catalyst for the misguided applications of lessons from that conflict. This approach dangerously affected the ability for military forces to properly

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<sup>73</sup> 15 out of 36 papers from 1996 to 1997 addressed Vietnam.

<sup>74</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p 83.

<sup>75</sup> MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997). MAJ Robert Young, "The Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Midgrade (O3/O4) Army Officer" (1997), p. 4. MAJ Kevin Woods, "Limiting Casualties: Imperative or Constraint?" (1997), pp. 12-13. Maj Troy Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. vi. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), p. 16. MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998), pp 4-5. MAJ Gregory Reilly, "Peace Operations: A Mission Essential Task?" (1998), p. 10. MAJ Michael Scully, "The Media: An Influence on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy by Any Other Means" (1998), p. 29. Maj Craig Stiles, "Joint Vision 2010: A Unilateral Vision for a Multilateral [sic] Future" (1998), p. 10. Maj Clifton Dickey, "Air Base Defense for the Air Expeditionary Force" (1998), p. 32.

implement national policy in this new global environment. These officers implied that Vietnam was the definitive Cold War event that kept leaders mired in their own mental quagmire that prevented meaningful progress towards developing new approaches in applying military power that the United States needed as the century marched towards its close.

By the end of the decade, the predominant belief of turn-of-the-century military officer-scholars was that American casualty aversion that created the Somalia Effect was a myth.<sup>76</sup> It was a false construct rooted in Cold War ideas about Vietnam combined with the proliferation of continuous, readily available, and often incomplete media coverage. This forced shorter decision cycles upon senior leaders leading to knee-jerk reactions that defaulted to casualty intolerance due to their past experiences.<sup>77</sup> Other influences, especially American experiences in the Balkans, helped shape these ideas. Somalia's legacy had become suffused into American foreign policy development, affecting almost every decision that involved deployment and use of military forces in the former Yugoslavia (see chapter 3). The fear that any American casualties could undermine United States military commitment drove senior leaders to implement directives that sometimes inhibited the military's junior commanders' ability to accomplish their missions. As a result, mid-level military professionals began questioning the validity of the association between casualties and public support in contemporary interventions, and applied

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<sup>76</sup> MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), pp. 5, 10-12. Maj Robert Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 6. Maj Timothy Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), pp. ii., 16-17, 20, 40-45. MAJ Michele Ritchie, "A Scalpel Instead of a Sledgehammer: A Comparative Cultural Study on Preparing for Future Conflict" (2000), p. 27. Maj Charles Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers."

<sup>77</sup> MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), pp. 12, 19-20, 44. LCDR Timothy Reynolds, "The Operational Commander, the Media, and MOOTW: A New Paradigm" (1999), pp 6-7. Lt Col Thomas O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), pp. 1, 32. MAJ David Are, "Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress" (1999), p. 21. Maj Michael O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 10. MAJ Micheal Current, "Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress" (1999), pp. 4-5. Maj Timothy Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. 43. He asserts that the media gets too much credit for their influence.

that experience to their assessment of Somalia. They conclude that an overall result from Somalia was that leadership falsely reasoned that Americans would not tolerate any casualties regardless of the circumstances.

To defend this idea, these writers argued that public support for American action in Somalia had already waned significantly after the shift away from humanitarian operations in May of 1993, and was steadily declining through the 3 October raid. This is what made the intervention vulnerable, not the casualties alone. By putting a direct correlation of American combat deaths to public support, American leadership was continuing to manage military involvement by applying personal biases and false lessons from past Cold War battles rather than adapting to the new international dynamics and actual domestic conditions. Major Charles Hayes elaborated by analyzing a government study from his curriculum on casualty rates in Korea and Vietnam that illustrated how public support decreased as casualties increased.<sup>78</sup> He noted that the report did not take other factors into account, such as the effects of the government withholding information or not providing reasonable justification for military engagement as contributing to public disillusionment with military action. He further argued that this was the overall approach by the Clinton administration during the Somalia intervention.<sup>79</sup>

The case that the American public did not withdraw support of the Somali intervention based only on friendly body counts, but on risk-reward assessments, has great merit. The most important issue for the American people was how the appearance of casualties during an intervention that already had low or waning support brought focused public attention that led to

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<sup>78</sup> Maj Charles Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2001), p. 3. He did this study for government officials who were part of the policy decisions during Clinton's first term.

<sup>79</sup> Maj Charles Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2001), pp. 4-7). He refers to the analyses of this report in another RAND study by Benjamin Schwarz in 1994.

demands for withdrawal of American forces.<sup>80</sup> The initial American Somali mission had public consent, therefore the American people tolerated casualties that came well prior to October of 1993, including eleven combat deaths. When the nature of the intervention changed, the risk that casualties adversely affected the military mission increased because American public consent over the new direction decreased.<sup>81</sup>

One element that made this public opinion more fragile in the 1990s than during Vietnam was the lack of a tangible and potentially pervasive threat. The monolithic menace the Soviet Union presented made the American public more ready to accept increased casualties due to the belief that American deaths were containing communism and keeping it from penetrating the United States.<sup>82</sup> Somalia in 1993 did not represent what Vietnam in 1965 represented. However, it did characterize how America could employ military power in a new era. Unfortunately, senior leadership could not effectively articulate why it was important that the United States should use force there. Madeline Albright's message that the United States needed to support Somalia as an emerging democracy to explain America backing the United Nations shift to nation-building, in addition to its inaccuracy, failed to resonate.<sup>83</sup> Major Hayes summed up what several of his colleagues argued by saying that "the public does not demand bloodless interventions as the starting point for securing national interests and exercising world

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<sup>80</sup> MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), pp. 24-25. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 33. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 11-12. Col Jeffrey Stambaugh, p. 21 – discusses how a lack of casualties keep operations off "the American public's radarscope" and that casualties create vocalization of previous lack of support.

<sup>81</sup> MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), pp. 24-25.

<sup>82</sup> MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 53. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 253, 257. He discusses how the CIA assessment showed there was little room to effectively build a better Somalia, yet Albright supported the endeavor to spread democracy. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 74. They discuss Albright using this rationale to justify the shift in policy.

leadership....The public has consistently operated within the realm of an ends and means evaluation....”<sup>84</sup> While casualties may have been the immediate cause of American retreat from Somalia, it was more a result of the American public not seeing the value of the increased risk. When 18 Americans died, it punctuated their already waning support.

Officers identified other effects of American withdrawal beyond the limits of the Somalia Effect. A major contention was that, by causing the United States to flee Somalia, Aidid and the Somali militia paralyzed American responses in Haiti and Rwanda in 1994.<sup>85</sup> They also affected the United States’ decisions to limit military action in Bosnia and Kosovo, especially in deferring to low-risk airpower.<sup>86</sup> By continuing to put casualty concerns at the foreground of policy implementation, mid-level officers argued that it exposed an American Achilles Heel, providing a roadmap for future enemies to use.<sup>87</sup> American oversensitivity to casualties communicated the message that even light losses could drive the United States away.

Continuing on ideas that began with their peers in the middle of the decade, turn-of-the-century military writers looked at how military leadership, also significantly influenced by

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<sup>84</sup> Maj Charles Hyde, “Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers” (2001), p. 10. Between 1997 and 2000, 15 other papers discuss similar findings.

<sup>85</sup> MAJ Micheal Current, “Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress” (1999), pp. 1, 4-5. MAJ Willard Burleson III, “Mission Analysis During Future Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain” (2000), p. 7. Maj Mark Duffield, “Into the Beehive--The Somali Habr Gidr Clan as an Adaptive Enemy” (2000), pp. 44-45. Maj Timothy Mundy, “Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth” (2000), p. 29. Maj Charles Hyde, “Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers” (2001), p. 2. Maj Leslie Burns, “Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications” (2000), p. 22.

<sup>86</sup> Maj William Francis II, “Coercive Air strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations” (1999), p. iv. Maj Michael O’Halloran, “A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower” (1999), pp. 2, 29, 58. Maj Robert Evans, “Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement” (2000), p. 2. Maj Jody Blanchfield, “Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict” (2000), p. 42. MAJ Gian Gentile, “Severing the Snake's Head: The Question of Air Power as a Political Instrument in the Post-Cold War Security Environment” (2000), p. ii. Maj William Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 59. He asserts that using only air forces creates a low-risk option, politically and to servicemembers, where congress can still get tough internationally and can criticize the president for any losses without forcing a pullout.

<sup>87</sup> Maj Mark Duffield, “Into the Beehive--The Somali Habr Gidr Clan as an Adaptive Enemy” (2000), p. 44. He argues that, after Somalia, inaction in Haiti and Rwanda the following year, as well as hesitancy to commit ground forces to Bosnia and Kosovo, were some of the events that continued to reinforce how the enemy could use minimal casualties to maximum effect against the United States.

Vietnam, was not blameless in overreacting to the Somalia Effect. Many admonished senior members of the chain of command who latched on to this oversensitivity to casualties and overcompensated by putting force protection over mission accomplishment. This made military forces less effective. Some mid-level officers also argued that the casualty aversion misinterpretation was present before the Battle of Mogadishu, resulting in an overemphasis on protecting military personnel at the expense of achieving national goals in Somalia.<sup>88</sup> While senior leaders would deny armor and gunships to Task Force Ranger later in the mission, putting them at greater risk, earlier they opted to prevent soldiers from interacting with the Somali people for fear of exposure to dangerous situations that could have led to casualties.

This decision may have influenced how the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division conducted business, preventing them from being more effective in nation building.<sup>89</sup> American troops were unable to effectively develop relationships that could have helped foster cooperation necessary to build stability. Military forces acting in the peacekeeping role could neither maintain the trust of the local population nor achieve a level of understanding about their concerns in order to make the necessary adjustments to activities that may have helped secure long-term change. While the overall consensus was that nation building in Somalia was doomed to failure given the deep-

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<sup>88</sup> MAJ Viet Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), pp. 50-51. MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), p. 22. Maj Timothy Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), pp. 3-4. Maj Leslie Burns, "Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications" (2000), pp. 32-33. MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), p. 5. MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4, 28. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001). Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001).

<sup>89</sup> MAJ Tim Quillin, "Force Protection In Support and Stability Operations (SASO)" (1999), pp. 26, 33-37. MAJ Viet Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), pp. 50-51.

seated clan culture combined with lack of American understanding of Somali society, mid-level officers assessed that casualty aversion directly affected any hope of success.

Writings further removed from the Cold War continued to decrease in discussions of Vietnam. From 1999-2001, less than a third of the papers discussed the topic in the context of Somalia, with some substituting American failure in Lebanon as a better comparison.<sup>90</sup> Those that did address Vietnam continued to look for applicable lessons for the modern world. One was that the moral ambiguity that surrounded Vietnam was also present in Somalia.<sup>91</sup> This weakened the justification for involvement, especially after the mission changed to nation building. It also increased the tenuousness of the intervention's popularity which accorded the aforementioned media imagery of American casualties an even greater effect on public opinion. A new answer to help better execute turn-of-the-century missions in a news-inundated world was to look within the armed forces for resolution. Ensuring that military leaders had media savvy was a way to help limit the negative impact news reporting may have on operations as it has from the Tet Offensive to the Battle of Mogadishu.<sup>92</sup>

In 2001 there was another shift in interpretation of casualty aversion, evolving away from labeling it a myth and instead viewing it as a misinterpretation that led to the misapplication of the actual lessons from Somalia for the remainder of the decade.<sup>93</sup> New-century mid-level officers often argued that Americans have always demanded low casualties, but it was the United

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<sup>90</sup> 12 out of 45 papers discuss Vietnam in direct comparison to Somalia during this time. Two papers, MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 28 and Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 7-9, argue that American involvement in Lebanon was a better comparison.

<sup>91</sup> MAJ Michael Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (1999), p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> Lt Col Thomas O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> None of the 17 papers that discuss Somalia during this time address the idea of casualty aversion being a myth.

States' approach since Desert Storm that helped make the Somalia Effect so powerful by magnifying the impact of this American characteristic.

During the First Gulf War, the military created an expectation of overwhelming victory with minimal casualties. This led to an American infatuation with military technology. Leaders promoted these ideas by touting the abilities of smart bombs and cruise missiles that minimized collateral damage and kept remote operators safe. As Major Robert Wendel concluded, this experience, in turn, created the real myth: that war can be nearly bloodless.<sup>94</sup> Media images demonstrating how modern arms could pinpoint an exact target to within inches reinforced this expectation of clean warfare. However, Somalia proved that technology was neither the answer for countering casualty aversion nor ensuring victory, especially in humanitarian or peace operation. To be fully successful, soldiers had to interact with the local population and get their hands dirty.<sup>95</sup> That meant that it became even more important that the public should understand and accept the risks of Americans being put into harm's way, and even dying, before committing military forces.<sup>96</sup> As in Vietnam, technology could not compensate for shortfalls in understanding.

A critical observation that Majors Ritchie and Stewart summed up was that the American defeat in Vietnam as well as Somalia came because the United States failed to accept the fact

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<sup>94</sup> Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 36.

<sup>95</sup> Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 32-33, 39-40.

<sup>96</sup> MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 48. He asserts that the public will accept casualties if they understand the importance of the intervention. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 42, 67. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 8. He argues that the US public was not casualty averse, but was continually analyzing cost-benefit of intervention and needed to be properly informed.



that they needed to fight a different type of war.<sup>97</sup> One area that had not changed was how the United States had difficulty in fighting an asymmetric enemy in Somalia who, like the Viet Cong, exploited America's technological superiority to undermine or even negate American advantages.<sup>98</sup> This was symptomatic of the larger problem of American application of military force: America wanted to avoid another Vietnam by forcing conditions to be different from those they had experienced in Southeast Asia. Instead, they needed to fight the war they had, not the war they wanted. These officers writing at the service schools knew, after nearly a decade of post-Cold War military actions, that Desert Storm was the anomaly and a Cold War relic, while Vietnam and Somalia were the types of conflict for which the military should prepare, as long as it applied the right lessons for the right times. Not realizing this reality as a major characteristic of the new global environment helped keep American leaders from adjusting to the future.<sup>99</sup> That was the critical lesson of Vietnam and its legacy as it applied to the intervention in Somalia.

Overall, Somalia was a watershed moment regarding American will in the post-Cold War world. It dredged up painful memories of Vietnam and significantly enhanced the effect of casualty aversion on American foreign policy. When President Clinton announced American withdrawal from the African nation, he set in motion what is commonly known as the Somalia Effect. In actuality, he resurrected the Vietnam Syndrome, something his predecessor

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<sup>97</sup> MAJ Michele Ritchie, "A Scalpel Instead of a Sledgehammer: A Comparative Cultural Study on Preparing for Future Conflict" (2000), p. 29. MAJ Justice Stewart, "Sumo in a Ninja Fight: A Critical Study of Army Force Structure in the 21st Century Environment" (1999), p. 22.

<sup>98</sup> Maj Timothy Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. 28.

<sup>99</sup> MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), pp. 5-6. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 28. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 17. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 7-8, 32.

mistakenly declared dead after Desert Storm.<sup>100</sup> This action solidified the perceived reality of American public hyper-sensitivity to casualties and the pervasive perception that technology can make war nearly bloodless. The precedent this established influenced American foreign policy decisions into the next century. Because American senior leaders, military and civilian, experienced the impact of Vietnam firsthand, whether in the jungles overseas or on the college campuses and in the city centers back in the United States, America's longest war until the twenty-first century influenced many aspects of American involvement in Somalia and beyond.

### *Win, Loss, or Draw?*

Over the course of the Clinton Administration, officers attending professional military education schools adjusted their determination of, and criteria for, evaluating the levels of success and failure of the United States mission in Somalia. While all agreed to varying degrees that it was a strategic failure for the United States, they debated how, why, and to what extent America did not succeed in the African nation. Opinions also changed over time. The area of greatest contention, and most pronounced analytical evolution, was whether the Battle of Mogadishu was an American victory, loss, or somewhere in between. Early assessments, immediately following the battle focused on it being a tactical success that overcame political restrictions and overwhelming odds. As time progressed, officers took a more critical view of military action in Somalia. By 1995, they began putting it in the broader context of American policy within changed international conditions, adjusting their assessments accordingly. By the

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<sup>100</sup> George H. W. Bush Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council, 1 March 1991, <http://vandvreader.org/george-h-w-bush-proclaims-a-cure-for-the-vietnam-syndrome-01-march-1991/> (accessed 20 Feb 2023).

turn of the century, as these writers became further removed from the Cold War and had greater experience in the new geopolitical environment, they did not see a separation of military and diplomatic success. By more accurately placing the battle within the bigger picture, they developed and applied analysis criteria that was more relevant. Overall, the evolution of the debate over the success of the battle in the context of the overall effort in Somalia illuminates the progression of thought by mid-level officers that demonstrated a new perspective for a new era.

The ability for these officers to evaluate American success or failure in Somalia was complicated by there being two separate, albeit interrelated, missions: the initial American-led humanitarian effort, and the American-supported United Nations nation-building endeavor.

Most officer-academics of the period agree that the initial humanitarian action was successful.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Maj Daniel Schuster, "Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination" (1994), pp. 1, 9-10. Lt Col Jeffrey Kohler, "Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine" (1993), pp. 38-39. Maj Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 15. She asserts that there was initial success, but conditions that led to issues were not resolved. Maj Robert Everson, "Light Infantry Vulnerabilities That Represent Strategic Vulnerability in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 32. LtCol Christian Cowdrey, "Shoot? Don't Shoot? Rules of Engagement in Peacekeeping Operations" (1994), p. 36. MAJ Robert Botters, "The Proliferation of Peace Operations and the U.S. Army Tactical Proficiency: Will The Army Remain a Combat Ready Force?" (1995), p. 40. MAJ Todd Buchs, "Peacekeeping Operations: Is There A Need for Mechanized Forces as Part of the Peacekeeping Team?" (1995), p. 35. MAJ Todd Megill, "OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise" (1995), p. 22. Maj James Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy: Forceful Applications of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), pp. 55-56. He states that UNITAF was a success because it did not allow mission creep. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1995), pp. 1, 11. Lt Col Conrad Von Wald, "The War Powers Resolution: Its Impact on the American Public and Congressional Support Center of Gravity" (1995), p. 27. Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. 42. MAJ Lindsay Arnold, "Cooperation or Conflict: The Interaction of U.S. Military Forces and Nongovernmental Organizations in Military Operations Other Than War" (1996), p. 70. LCDR James Dixon, "United Nations Operation in Somalia II: United Nations Unity of Effort and United States Unity of Command" (1996), p. iii. MAJ James Johnson, "Implications for the Ten Division Army: Selective Engagement or Managed Chaos" (1996), p. 42. MAJ Michael Beech, "'Mission Creep': A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia" (1996), p. 21. MAJ Lester Knotts, "A Change of Plans" (1996), p. 38. LTC Battott, p. 31. MAJ Michael Clidas, "The Role of Impartiality in Peace Operations" (1997), pp. 22-23. MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997), p. 32. Maj Hugh Bowman, "The Weakening of America: An Examination of National Resolve" (1997), p. 16. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp. 48-49. (1998) MAJ William James, p. 15. MAJ Viet Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), pp. 44-45. (2000). Maj Mark Duffield, "Into the Beehive--The Somali Habr Gidr Clan as an Adaptive Enemy" (2000), p. 4. Maj Timothy Mundy, "Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth" (2000), p. 30. (2001) Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), pp. 11-20. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 32. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-

Of the 35 papers that discuss the issue, 30 state that the United States achieved its original goal before the turnover to UNOSOM II on 5 May 1993. Not only did American forces enable distribution of relief supplies, but they kept clan leaders like Aidid from continuing a violent consolidation of power, at least for the duration of the immediate effects of the natural disaster. Most of those who disagree still concur that the United States stemmed the tide of starvation in Somalia, but judge it as not achieving success because neither they nor the United Nations established conditions for a long-term resolution.<sup>102</sup> However, both groups agree that the significant issues, and therefore the path to overall failure, began with the United Nations takeover in May of 1993.<sup>103</sup> This led to many political problems that created deteriorating conditions culminating in foreign policy disaster with the Battle of Mogadishu on 3 and 4 October of 1993.

Writings from true contemporaries were the first to engage in the discussion over whether the Battle of Mogadishu was a military success. All conclude that there were disastrous results,

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Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz” (2001), pp. 11-12. Col Jeffrey Stambagh, “Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance for the Deadline?” (2001), p. 1, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Maj Melissa Applegate, “Military Power in Operations Other Than War” (1994), p. 15. LTC Christopher Baggott, “A Leap into the Dark: Crisis Action Planning for Operation Restore Hope” (1996), 1996, p. 43. Maj Hugh Bowman, “The Weakening of America: An Examination of National Resolve” (1997), p. 18. Maj Mark Duffield, “Into the Beehive--The Somali Habr Gidr Clan as an Adaptive Enemy” (2000), p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> LTC Michael Cooper, “Military Diplomacy in the New World Order” (1993), p. 15. Maj Maurice Todd, “Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations” (1993), p. 1 and LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), pp. 66-67 both saw the UN leaving as leaving the burden of Somalia to the US as a trend, therefore US should take the lead in all conflicts. Maj Jonathan Hunter, “The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?” (1993), p. 21. Maj Thomas Pope, “From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping” (1993), p. 2. He asserts that the UN is unable to accomplish significant missions without US help. MAJ Todd Megill, “OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise” (1995), p. 28. Maj Daniel Schuster, “Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art” (1995), p. 20. MAJ Michael Beech, “‘Mission Creep’: A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia” (1996), p. 42. Maj James Hanley, “Force Protection of Strategic Airlift Forces in the Operations Other Than War Environment” (1996), p. 24. MAJ Michael Clidas, “The Role of Impartiality in Peace Operations” (1997), pp. 22-23. MAJ Clifford Day, “Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger” (1997), pp. 13-14. MAJ Richard Cabrey, “Operational Art in Operations Other Than War” (1998), p. 33. Maj Eric Buer, “United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support” (2001), p. iii.

including two helicopters shot down, one crash site overrun by Somalis, convoys unable to break through roadblocks, inability to evacuate American soldiers, and, of course, eighteen Americans dead. They saw many issues at multiple levels that led to these major setbacks.

Lack of support and equipment was a major concern.<sup>104</sup> Soldiers were put into a scenario where they were forced to fight in ways in which they were not trained to operate. Senior leaders denied standard supporting firepower such as artillery or AC-130 gunships. The airborne platforms provided protection by their mere presence as they intimidated Somali militia from attacking. This characteristic did not factor into the decision to remove them from the area, only the concerns over the collateral damage they inflicted when their tremendous firepower was used in an urban environment. Their departure meant that Task Force Ranger did not have access to this ability to prevent the Somalis from engaging them during raids.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the Secretary

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<sup>104</sup> Maj Richard Dixon, “The Mind is the Key: Preparing Tactical Leaders for Operations Other Than War” (1993), p. 13. He supports a limited mission in Somalia including reducing the American footprint. Maj Kurtis Lohide, “Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia” (1993), pp. 9-10. He believes ground forces were not capable of effectively prosecuting this type of mission. Lt Col David Estep, “Air Mobility: The Strategic Use of Nonlethal Airpower” (1994) – says that the US did not effectively use air mobility assets. Maj Melissa Applegate, “Military Power in Operations Other Than War” (1994), p. 80. She labels TF Ranger an “ad hoc” force. MAJ Mark Mazarella, “Adequacy of U.S. Army Attack Helicopter Doctrine to Support the Scope of Attack Helicopter Operations in a Multi-Polar World” (1994), p. 37. He argues that US deployed forces to conduct missions for which they were not equipped, e.g.: attack helicopter unit sent who were trained to destroy tanks when not a tank was in sight. Maj Daniel Schuster, “Achieving Victory in Peace Operations: An Application for Clausewitz’s Theory on Culmination” (1994), pp. 36-37. He points to how US soldiers were denied tanks, barrier breaking vehicles, and AC-130 gunships under pressure to draw down force. Capt James O. Poss, “Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?” (1994), pp. 26-27. He asserts that more use of air to avoid risk of casualties. Lt Col David Estep, “Air Mobility: The Strategic Use of Nonlethal Airpower” (1994), pp. 6-7. He is against how the administration publicly announced that the US would not use certain assets. Later scholarship reinforces many of their ideas. Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, p. xvi, 64-65. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 265. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 615.

<sup>105</sup> Capt James O. Poss, “Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?” (1994), p 27. Later papers came back to this theme. MAJ David Seigel, “Fighting Downtown: A Training Necessity for the Heavy Brigade” (2001), p. 13-14 – argues that denial of artillery to limit collateral damage increases risk to troops, resulting in failure in urban environment where maneuver is limited and targeting enemy almost impossible. MAJ Paul Wille, “Isolate Before an Urban Attack” (2001), p. 10. He asserts that the US will continue put insufficient forces into urban environs because of political constraints. Maj Eric Buer, “United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support” (2001), pp. 27-30, 39. He argues that the lack of robust air assets to shape operations and deter attacks; attack helicopters were not enough.

of Defense himself denied American armor and vehicles capable of driving through roadblocks that could have ensured a ground rescue almost immediately.

Task Force Ranger, however, was not blameless. Despite having a great amount of freedom of action in executing their missions, they repeatedly used the same tactics, allowing the Somali militia to anticipate American actions and set a trap. There was also a lack of intelligence not only on the military activities and capabilities of the Somalis, but cultural intelligence on the effects of American actions, especially how the mission change to hunting warlords affected Somali views of foreign soldiers.<sup>106</sup> The effects on the Somali people were magnified when put in the context of their history with western colonialism. Also, American reliance on technology created an overconfidence. Individual soldiers who participated in this operation did not properly equip themselves for an extended combat action, partly due to the belief that American technological superiority would continue to make these raids short and easy.

Early writings argue that, in spite of the shortfalls, Task Force Ranger did complete their assigned mission. Although it did not go as planned, which is the ultimate understatement, they succeeded in capturing and delivering the prisoners, adapting to deteriorating combat conditions, and fighting their way out of a nightmarish ambush, killing over thirty times more enemy than they lost. However, in war, as these officers noted, once the will to continue is gone, victory becomes improbable under even the best military conditions. Superficial metrics such as enemy body counts could do little to improve America's overall strategic position. Eighteen dead soldiers during a combat action gone awry during what was supposed to be a humanitarian effort

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<sup>106</sup> Maj Jonathan Hunter, "The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?" (1993), p. 22. Maj Thomas Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p. 29.

in a foreign land that held no vital interest for the United States evaporated what remained of the will of the American people and Congress. The overall consensus in the early writings was that Task Force Ranger won the day, but politics caused America's loss.

As time progressed, the writings took a broader perspective. In the mid-90s the primary focus shifted to determining what conditions set up Task Force Ranger for the hard fight it undertook that early October afternoon. Not only did the officer-scholars continue to discuss issues with support once American forces fell under the control of UNOSOM II,<sup>107</sup> but they also evaluated other American responsibilities. One area was how the forces were ill-prepared for their overall mission in Somalia.<sup>108</sup> It started with the initial deployment. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, for example, was not trained on how to employ non-lethal force.<sup>109</sup> America spent years of planning for conventional warfare against a potential Soviet incursion into Western Europe. Achieving exceptional results in the First Gulf War reinforced continuing this approach. This created a focus on military preparedness in support of national objectives that conflicted with the operations other than war that Somalia required. American soldiers were forced to adapt on the fly and in a hostile environment to conduct themselves in a post-Cold War world before policy makers could adjust to the new international conditions and provide adequate guidance.

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<sup>107</sup> MAJ Todd Megill, "OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise" (1995), p. 28-29, 37. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1995), p. 20. MAJ Michael Beech, "'Mission Creep': A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia" (1996), p. 42. Maj James Hanley, "Force Protection of Strategic Airlift Forces in the Operations Other Than War Environment" (1996), p. 24. He argues that, because Somalia was less a threat to US, the military forces received less support.

<sup>108</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), pp. 16-17, 19. LTC Christopher Baggott, "A Leap into the Dark: Crisis Action Planning for Operation Restore Hope" (1996), p. 2. He discusses how the military had little time to prepare prior to deployment, leading to a lack of understanding of the environment.

<sup>109</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), pp. 19, 36.

Task Force Ranger found itself in a similar situation, but in different ways. Unlike the conventional forces in Somalia, it was the only group which had applicable training for its assigned task. They were practiced in hunting down and capturing individuals whom the United States leadership identified as high-value targets. Unfortunately, they were still unable to achieve many significant positive results. They conducted missions under conditions, physically and politically, that made them less prepared and ill equipped, and also had them lacking the proper perspective on local conditions. The overall opinion at the middle of the decade was that American political leaders asked them to do too much.

During the latter half of the decade, mid-level officers began to display a view that Somalia was a military failure, not just a strategic loss blamed on political circumstances that drove American retreat. The general consensus was still that the battle itself may have been a tactical American victory, and that Task Force Ranger accomplished its specific mission, but that was less relevant because it led to a strategic loss. There were some, however, who assessed the battle itself as a tactical defeat.<sup>110</sup> They point to setbacks that were the result of military decisions and actions both before and during the Battle of Mogadishu. When these papers discuss the fight itself, any reference to success came with the caveat similar to Major Day's, "In the strictest military interpretation, the 3 October T[ask ]F[orce ]R[anger] raid had succeeded...."<sup>111</sup> These officers no longer judged the engagement strictly by old conventional criteria. They knew that there needed to be modern measures of success. American foreign

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<sup>110</sup> MAJ Clifford Day, "Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger" (1997). MAJ Philip Nethery, "Current MOUT Doctrine and its Adequacy for Today's Army" (1997), p. 53. Maj John Sims, "Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), p. 4. MAJ Wayne Green "Attacking Cell Phones with Sabots: Disintegration of an Asymmetrical Urban Threat in the Year 2025" (1998), pp. 22-32. MAJ Gary Sanders, "Seeing the New Enemy: Battle Command in the Failed State" (1998), p. 27. MAJ Eric Scheidemantel, "MOUT is not Moot" (1998), p. 15. MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998), pp. 7-8. MAJ Roger Sangvic, "Battle of Mogadishu: Anatomy of a Failure" (1998). MAJ Todd Megill, "OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise" (1995), p. 37.

<sup>111</sup> MAJ Clifford Day, "Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger" (1997), p. 11.



policy development and implementation strategy had changed, therefore the criteria to judge successful execution of national strategy needed to change as well. By calling the events of 3 and 4 October where American forces captured two of Aidid's top lieutenants along with several other militia members, then fought their way out of an urban ambush where they inflicted total casualties at a rate over ten to one a tactical failure, these military professionals understood that the rules had dramatically changed.

By the turn of the century, the vast majority of opinions more closely resembled this perspective than the belief that the Battle of Mogadishu and America's overall military performance was a caveated victory. Task Force Ranger won the firefight, but lost in its detrimental effects on the overall military mission. Of the fifteen papers written between 1999 and 2001 that explicitly expressed opinions on the subject, twelve state that the entire operation was a failure, and the nation-building and warlord hunting endeavor was a miscarriage of intent. The vast majority of the other thirty papers during this time at least intimated that the overall military mission was unsuccessful.<sup>112</sup> These officers continued to demonstrate their separation from old criteria for assessing success or failure. They understood that the complexities of the environment differed from how policy makers at the time appeared to view the added mission of warlord hunting as a straightforward matter of stopping bad guys.<sup>113</sup> Senior leadership did not

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<sup>112</sup> There were exceptions. MAJ Morris Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999). He calls the military missions successful, but had several questionable conclusions including stating Congress did not press Clinton into announcing a withdrawal. He also asserts that the reason the US withdrew was because of image, not casualties, because of the way it withdrew forces over time. MAJ Willard Burleson III, "Mission Analysis During Future Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain" (2000), pp. 49-51, 81. He calls the operation and battle a success, though does mention overall mission failure. The other 21 papers state directly, or indirectly through exploration of lessons and development of recommendations, the nature of the battle as a military failure.

<sup>113</sup> MAJ Linwood Ham, "The Failed State - Implications for Military Operations" (1999), pp 20-21. Maj Robert Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 24. MAJ Phillip Boggs, "Joint Task Force Commanders and the "Three Block War": Setting the Conditions for Tactical Success" (2000), p. 41 – his comments are specific to determining proper Rules Of Engagement. MAJ Micheal Current, "Provide for the Common Defense: The President Bypasses Congress" (1999), p. 1. MAJ Tori Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force-- Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), pp. 12, 81.

compensate for the changes in the global environment in either their policy or operational choices regarding Somalia. They were still constrained by some Cold War habits while trying to implement military power in different ways. On the one hand, they employed the forces that won Desert Storm, trained for older conflicts in new environments. On the other, they removed, limited, or denied support in an effort to adapt to changing conditions in simplistic ways rather than creatively developing appropriate solutions to fit new and complex problems.

Turn-of-the-century military officers also argued that the American senior civilian and military inability to adapt proved to be fatal, especially in an urban combat environment, which added another layer of complexity. The Somalis, however, were adaptive. The militia's adjustments to United States military actions before and during the 3 October raid undermined all American assumptions about the lack of capability of the clans and their leadership.<sup>114</sup> This new enemy, despite neither being part of a single organization, nor having a rigid command structure, was systematic in its analysis of United States forces and brutal in its exploitation of American vulnerabilities through dogged execution. This combined with other American failures not only helped lead to the battle, but allowed its prosecution to deteriorate into what Major David Segal called "a gunfight" in which the Somalis negated many American advantages and "were able to decisively engage American forces and cause enough casualties to gain a strategic victory."<sup>115</sup> Mid-level military officers recognized that there were different aspects that demonstrated crucial elements in determining American success or failure during interventions in the decade succeeding Desert Storm.

A new area some of the men and women working near the ground level of national policy implementation illuminated at the beginning of the millennium was how the Somalis fought as

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<sup>114</sup> Maj Mark Duffield, "Into the Beehive--The Somali Habr Gidr Clan as an Adaptive Enemy" (2000).

<sup>115</sup> MAJ David Seigel, "Fighting Downtown: A Training Necessity for the Heavy Brigade" (2001), p. 14.

opposed to the Americans. The Somali clans gathered together to wage total war against an American force that still anticipated a low intensity conflict.<sup>116</sup> They employed every asset at their disposal and committed all their combat power without restraint. Though American training, professionalism, and firepower allowed the force to break through overwhelming numbers of enemy, the total war mentality of the Somalis enabled them to absorb massive losses in order to defeat the Americans. The local population demonstrated how their aims and desires of ousting what they saw as foreign invaders were much more important to them than were the United Nations goals to Americans. In this new era where a multitude of small and diverse fires blazed, each flame may have been a matchstick from the American foreign policy perspective, but was a bonfire to the people in its midst. The United States would no longer fight Soviet proxies. Communist ideology was replaced by, in many cases, stronger socio-political forces.

The United States was able to stem the tide of starvation in Somalia, yet retreated from that war-torn nation as a direct result of the Battle of Mogadishu. American forces fought their way out of an intense and dangerous situation where they were engaged against what seemed to be an entire city. They killed hundreds and lost only eighteen dead and one captured in accomplishing what they set out to do that day, but those nineteen were immensely significant. Even what appeared, from a certain view, to be a tactical success, had tremendous strategic consequences.<sup>117</sup> In the strictest interpretation, and under different political conditions, Task Force Ranger, after multiple initial setbacks, successfully completed its assigned military task by staging a difficult yet lopsided comeback victory against overwhelmingly superior numbers of

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<sup>116</sup> MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), pp. 52-53.

<sup>117</sup> Maj Steven Peterson "The Nature of War and Campaign Design" (1994), p. 10. Maj Susan Kellet-Forsyth, "The Media and the Operational Commander: A Shotgun Marriage" (1994), p. 6. MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4. MAJ David Seigel, "Fighting Downtown: A Training Necessity for the Heavy Brigade" (2001), pp. 12-13. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 17.

Somali militiamen and armed citizens. Unfortunately, the old measures of success were no longer applicable to United States forces in a new era of military interventions. Mid-level officers evaluating American actions demonstrated that, over time, they were able to make adjustments that took them out of the old way of thinking and form opinions more commensurate with the changed geopolitical situation. They had started to get beyond the past.

### *Beyond the Cold War*

The evolution of how the top-rated mid-level military officers analyzed the Somalia intervention is a microcosm of their progression towards acceptance of the new era after the Cold War. While their views varied on the impact of specific actions, levels of responsibility for shortfalls, and the proper application of foreign policy, the majority of papers demonstrate a recognition that the United States was not moving fast enough to adapt to a world without the Soviet Union. It was free to readily engage in world affairs through intervention as part of an emerging strategy of Engagement and Enlargement to promote democracy through humanitarian intervention and peace operations that replaced the fight against Communism,<sup>118</sup> but was not sure how to apply this freedom properly and effectively. Most writers, in differing ways, were critical of the increase in military interventions starting with Somalia that coincided with reductions in military budgets and resources. This combination exacerbated issues, including how American leadership kept applying outdated strategies and schemas. Officer assessments of Clinton's

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<sup>118</sup> Maj Thomas Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p 2 & 5. Maj Richard Dixon, "The Mind is the Key: Preparing Tactical Leaders for Operations Other Than War" (1993), p 2. Maj Brooks Bash, "The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping" (1994), p. 12.

National Security Strategies in the context of this dynamic and lessons from Somalia demonstrate how the United States was adjusting to the new era.

Military officers near the ground level who had initial experiences with implementing this strategy at the tip of the spear, and lived with the ramifications of a National Security Strategy that directed a seeming contradiction of preparing for two major regional contingencies, while emphasizing continued participation in peace operations for interests that were not necessarily vital,<sup>119</sup> came to see these directives as daunting, impractical, and backward-looking. They warned that approaches which looked to modify Cold War strategies rather than develop adaptive and creative methods would not provide optimal solutions in the new era.<sup>120</sup> Forty-four papers that respond to the National Security Strategies from 1994 through 1996 criticize America's inability to look to the future in favor of the recent past when it came to policy and military application to achieve it. Only two support the use of Cold War approaches to solve modern problems like Somalia.<sup>121</sup> Even when the National Security Strategy evolved in 1997 to put greater influence on peace, stability, and humanitarian operations, the constant remained for the military to prepare for two major regional conflicts at the expense of the ability to execute several simultaneous small-scale contingencies.<sup>122</sup> As such, mid-level officers continued to

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<sup>119</sup> "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" (July 1994), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, pp. 7, 10, accessed 20 Feb 2023. There is similar language that communicates identical directives in the February 1995 document, pp. 9 and 12, and the February 1996 document, pp. 14 and 18.

<sup>120</sup> MAJ Wayne Green "Attacking Cell Phones with Sabots: Disintegration of an Asymmetrical Urban Threat in the Year 2025" (1998), p. 32. MAJ Bradley Nelson, "Operations Other Than War--Albatross or Twenty-Four-Hour Flu on Force Readiness" (1998), pp. 5, 22-23, 44-45. MAJ Gregory Reilly, "Peace Operations: A Mission Essential Task?" (1998), pp. 1-2, 9. Lt Col Charles Hasskamp, "Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. 10.

<sup>121</sup> MAJ Timothy Jones, "Fighting with One Hand Tied: Constraints on Force in the Post Cold War Era" (1997), p. 43. He advocates looking to the Weinberger-Powell doctrine for guidance. MAJ Richard Cabrey, "Operational Art in Operations Other Than War" (1998). He focuses on lessons from Vietnam in ways more applicable to America of the 1960s than the 1990s.

<sup>122</sup> "A National Security Strategy for A New Century" (May 1997), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, pp. 9, 12. This document alters the language from the 1996 document and provides a broader focus on more relevant threats, but still directs preparation "to win two overlapping theater

critique this approach throughout the decade, discussing themes that demonstrate how American leadership, both civilian and military, was slow to adjust to the post-Cold War world. They assert that the conventional focus of the past had negative consequences on the future of military action in a changed national security environment, similar to how it contributed to failure in Somalia.

These officers argue that Desert Storm showed the world that to fight the United States in a toe-to-toe conventional manner was a fruitless endeavor. In addition, the emerging patterns of the recent past demonstrated that the likely scenarios for the future were low intensity conflict and operations other than war. Based on their critiques, this foresight was missing from senior leadership, undoubtedly because of the influence of their long struggle against the Soviet Union and constant preparation for conflict against a peer enemy. In contrast, the experiences and observations of mid-level officers showed that constant preparation for major conventional conflicts and not small-scale operations affected the execution of the more likely humanitarian and peace missions.<sup>123</sup> While officer-students acknowledged that it was prudent to be prepared for conventional battle, particularly in direct defense of the United States, overemphasis of large-scale conventional warfare represented old paradigms that risked American success in the post-Cold War world. The major lesson that Somalia demonstrated to those lower-level leaders was that American preparedness should more resemble the first ten months in Somalia rather than the last one hundred hours in Iraq and Kuwait. Policy makers were not prepared to make the leap to a more balanced approach of maintaining a conventional advantage over a potential near-peer

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wars,” and includes less than vital interests as foci of crises and humanitarian responses. The October 1998 document of the same name has similar language on pp. 7 and 5, as does the December 1999 document, pp. 19 and 1-2, and the December 2000 document, pp. 7 and 9.

<sup>123</sup> 39 of the 114 papers written between 1995 and 2001 directly discuss how the United States had not properly prepared for these more likely scenarios.

adversary while adjusting to the new dynamic for military applications of modern diplomacy. Because of this, mid-level officers lamented how Somalia and its aftermath demonstrated how American senior leaders treated peace operations as aberrations, which affected preparedness to meet new challenges, especially at the ground level.

This situation forced soldiers and Marines to rapidly acquire and apply new skills, and significantly alter tactics to fit a humanitarian mission in Somalia. They learned competencies in crowd control, use of non-lethal force, graduated response, and basic peacekeeping functions either by trial and error, or as part of just-in-time training immediately prior to deployment, which failed to provide adequate preparation. Even those who had dissenting opinions and felt that the military should focus on a major conventional war because it was still the most consequential threat to the United States, still understood the problems of adapting and channeling those warfighting skills to meet the new requirements of American foreign policy, specifically low-intensity operations short of war.<sup>124</sup> Senior civilian and military leaders implemented rules of engagement to help guide American forces in exercising appropriate force to achieve the humanitarian aims, but military personnel found that effectively executing non-combat tasks under these circumstances led to contradictions, making execution of national strategy in Somalia and beyond more complicated.

One key example was how military forces had to completely reorient their combat focus during execution to meet American national goals in this new environment. A quintessential military principal that guided American forces was that mission success depended upon isolating the enemy center of gravity, the point where an attack would have the greatest effect, and

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<sup>124</sup> MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), p. 30. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 55.

focusing military power there. That was the best way to ensure success.<sup>125</sup> In peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, there is no traditional enemy center of gravity. Combat soldiers were ordered to Somalia to employ their capabilities only to discover that the environment was not conducive to use their most effective tools and tactics learned during training and military education that had firm roots in the Cold War. In addition, the defensive nature of the humanitarian mission contradicted these conventions. Combat forces sent to Somalia at the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993 were not trained to wage a strictly defensive campaign that relied heavily on non-lethal force. They were not comfortable ceding the initiative to a potential enemy by waiting to be attacked. Most importantly, they could not readily identify the most critical points on which to focus because there was no identifiable enemy, much less a clear center of gravity to exploit in order to achieve success during that time.

The lack of preparedness for operations in Somalia was a key lesson that military professionals used to critique the Clinton Administration's directions that drove the military to overly concentrate on conventional preparation despite global changes. As stated earlier, professionalism combined with focused, limited objectives from policy makers allowed soldiers and Marines to adapt and succeed in their original mission in Somalia, despite shortfalls in training. However, their ad hoc adaptations were not enough as this intervention progressed. Mid-level officers saw this as a disturbing trend that would continue in future American operations. They identified the need for the military to wholistically adjust to prioritize contingencies associated with humanitarian and peace operations, not just major conventional wars.

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<sup>125</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 485. Reinforced directly by Maj Carol Clair, "Humanitarian Assistance and the Elements of Operational Design" (1993), p. 37. Clausewitz's teachings were required reading at all professional military education courses at this time.



This discussion drove a converse debate over the impact of executing these small-scale contingencies on military preparedness to conduct the military's primary mission of defending the nation's borders from a major attack. There were those who supported some senior-officer contentions that the plethora of military operations other than war from an Engagement and Enlargement mindset that began with Somalia detracted from the military's number one purpose.<sup>126</sup> Most mid-level officers instead looked at how the military should adapt to a changing global environment to meet both this worst case and the most likely scenarios.<sup>127</sup> This became an even more controversial topic during later operations, especially in the Balkans (see chapter 3). By contesting the thinking of senior military officers on this topic, mid-level officers challenged that senior leader perceptions were potentially detrimental to the United States because they retarded America's ability to effectively achieve national objectives under new conditions that intervention in the Horn of Africa exemplified.

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<sup>126</sup> MAJ Robert Botters, "The Proliferation of Peace Operations and the U.S. Army Tactical Proficiency: Will The Army Remain a Combat Ready Force?" (1995), pp. 1, 4. MAJ Todd Megill, "OOTW, Raids and Tactical Surprise" (1995), pp 36-37. MAJ Todd Buchs, "Peacekeeping Operations: Is There A Need for Mechanized Forces as Part of the Peacekeeping Team?" (1995), pp. 19-20, 35. Maj Brian Lacey, et al, "Peace Operations and a New Use of Force" (1996), pp 1-2.

<sup>127</sup> MAJ Michael Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), p 2. MAJ Todd Buchs, "Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous 'Contemporary Peacekeeping' Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)" (1996), p. 2, MAJ Harold Bullock, "Peace By Committee: Command and Control Issues in Multinational Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), p v. MAJ Rizzo, p. 44. LTC Christopher Baggott, "A Leap into the Dark: Crisis Action Planning for Operation Restore Hope" (1996), pp 33-34. Maj Brian Lacey, et al, "Peace Operations and a New Use of Force" (1996), p vi. MAJ Stuart Whitehead, "Rome's German Frontier: Peace Enforcement Precursor or Paradigm?" (1995), abstract. CDR William McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1995), p. 1. Maj Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. v. Maj James Tubbs, "Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy: Forceful Applications of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations" (1995), p. vi. MAJ Lindsay Arnold, "Cooperation or Conflict: The Interaction of U.S. Military Forces and Nongovernmental Organizations in Military Operations Other Than War" (1996), p 13. MAJ James Johnson, "Implications for the Ten Division Army: Selective Engagement or Managed Chaos" (1996), pp 22-23. MAJ Michael Flynn, "Battle Focused Training for Peacekeeping Operations: A METL Adjustment for Infantry Battalions" (1996), pp. i, 45. MAJ Thomas Greco, "Non-Military Agencies in Campaign Planning" (1996), pp. 35, 43. MAJ Gregory Borden, "Operational Decision to Execute Gaps in Operations Other Than War: Ceding the Information Initiative" (1995), pp. 3-4, 8. MAJ Robert Botters, "The Proliferation of Peace Operations and the U.S. Army Tactical Proficiency: Will The Army Remain a Combat Ready Force?" (1995), p. 40. MAJ Mat Martins, "The 'Small Change' of Soldiering? Peace Operations for Future Wars" (1998), p. 13.

Somalia was the foundational event for this era that introduced the effects of how, in these unconventional operations, tactical decisions would continue to have strategic consequences. Officers writing at the start of the next decade especially noted how, because of the rapidity of information flow and the fragility of support for humanitarian and peace operations, problems elevated at a rapid rate with more dire consequences as compared to the past.<sup>128</sup> During Vietnam for example, it took almost two years for the My Lai massacre to come to light. Even though it was a horrible event that reduced American credibility and undermined any remaining claims of righteousness in its endeavors in Southeast Asia, it did not drive the United States to leave Vietnam. However, as discussed earlier, military decisions before and during the Battle of Mogadishu had direct and strategic consequences in the Horn of Africa.

To combat this, mid-level officers, beginning in 1995, called for new preemptive actions and modern solutions. They included having separate units specially trained for humanitarian missions, changing the overall military structure to align with America's new global role, and incorporating more adaptive planning processes that better fit the new international conditions. These operational ideas accompanied strategic-level pushes for the military to change their doctrine, which was steeped in Cold War ideology, to reflect the changes in the global political environment.<sup>129</sup> Institutionally, they wanted to drive America forward.

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<sup>128</sup> MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), p. 18. MAJ Christopher Beckert, "Building a Better Trojan Horse: Emerging Army Roles in Joint Urban Environments" (2001), p. 4, 5. Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p. 39. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complicity Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> MAJ Lester Knotts, "A Change of Plans" (1996), p 1. MAJ Michael Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), abstract. LTC Christopher Baggott, "A Leap into the Dark: Crisis Action Planning for Operation Restore Hope" (1996), abstract. Maj Daniel Schuster, "Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the Operational Art" (1995), p. 38-39. MAJ Stuart Whitehead, "Rome's German Frontier: Peace Enforcement Precursor or Paradigm?" (1995), p. 38.

In an attempt to push America to progress, some of these officers were looking to better apply age-old principles. One example was that political leaders rejected the idea of using overwhelming force because the high possibility of collateral damage could have undermined the effort in Somalia.<sup>130</sup> Applying this principle in a pre-1992 way, such as trying to execute a Desert Storm II in Somalia, would have been militarily inappropriate, politically reckless, and would have caused a diplomatic catastrophe by alienating allies and inviting more enemies. However, shedding Cold War paradigms would have exposed the realization that the initial humanitarian mission used a form of overwhelming force that helped make it a success.

The force the United States used at the start of the intervention was a strong military presence backed up by enough firepower that overwhelmed the clans into submission. Clan leaders feared retribution because the risk-reward calculus for armed resistance against American and United Nations forces would not have yielded a desirable conclusion. Maintaining that threat along with more expeditious application of force could have applied traditional military principles in ways more applicable to this new scenario. Instead, America abandoned the idea altogether in a poor adaptation to changing circumstances. They removed assets like the AC-130 gunships and reduced military numbers so that the Somalis were no longer overwhelmed. Their actions, especially those under Aidid, became more bold in the face of the reduced threat to their activities. The addition of Task Force Ranger was not enough to make up for the departure of other assets and units. Though it is doubtful that a proper force mix would have brought long term success, these military professionals argue that a more appropriate mindset that may have stimulated creative solutions such as using weapon systems for psychological effect rather than

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<sup>130</sup> Maj Michael Carrell, "Peering Over the Cliff: Guidelines for Statesmen Contemplating War" (2001), p. 34. Maj Eric Buer, "United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II): A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Air Support" (2001), p. 16.

just seeing their kinetic value would have helped resolve many of the issues discussed earlier that led to the tragedy of 3 and 4 October 1993.

By the end of the decade, the legacy of fear over the colossal threat of communism began to depart from military thinking at the mid-grade officer level, replaced by concerns over death by a thousand cuts to which global instability could lead. In addition to embracing the new world state of affairs, these officers urged leadership to leverage technology associated with the information revolution. America had become enamored by its technological superiority to its own detriment in Somalia. Actions there proved that technology alone could never overcome enemy will. To excel in the new global environment, it was not enough to have more tech, but to use it effectively against modern adversaries to counter asymmetric approaches that worked to negate American advantages like what happened in Somalia.<sup>131</sup>

There was one other harbinger to emerge from these studies of American action in Somalia. Some identified a new, more resilient enemy that would come to threaten American vital national interests in the years to come – anti-American Islamic terrorism.<sup>132</sup> Al Qaeda emerged as a direct American enemy in Mogadishu. Researchers and scholars discounted their effect on the actual battle as negligible.<sup>133</sup> They did not flock to Somalia in significant numbers,

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<sup>131</sup> COL Gary Phillips, “Information Operations - A New Tool for Peacekeeping” (1997). Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), pp. vi, 1. MAJ Wayne Green “Attacking Cell Phones with Sabots: Disintegration of an Asymmetrical Urban Threat in the Year 2025” (1998), abstract. Maj David Coffman, “Operational Art and the Human Dimension of Warfare in the 21st Century” (1999), pp. 5-7, 10. Maj Edward McCleskey, “Urban Warfare at the Operational Level: Identifying Centers of Gravity and Key Nodes” (1999), pp. 2-3, 35-36. MAJ Michael Johnson, “Just-War Theory and Future Warfare” (1999), pp. 1-2. Maj Timothy Mundy, “Casualty Aversion: Dispelling the Myth” (2000), pp. 22, 28. MAJ Michele Ritchie, “A Scalpel Instead of a Sledgehammer: A Comparative Cultural Study on Preparing for Future Conflict” (2000), p. 19.

<sup>132</sup> Maj McGuinness, p. 77. Maj Vance Nannini, “Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia” (1994), pp. 89-90, 118, 125.

<sup>133</sup> Lt Col Robert Wright, “Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD” (2001), pp. 6, 215. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 71-72. Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 55.

nor did they participate in any meaningful way, if at all, in the Battle of Mogadishu. However, some officers were beginning to identify them as a principal, up-and-coming threat.

Major Vance Nannini's assessment in particular discusses this possibility. Clan affiliation was by far the most powerful socio-political force, and it thwarted attempts to focus Somalis towards *jihad*. However, the role the United States played in Somalia after the May turnover to UNOSOM II, including nation-building that evoked collective memories of colonialism, affected Muslims throughout the region and "played into the hands of the Islamic fundamentalists who were already enjoying some success with their anti-Western campaign."<sup>134</sup> Terrorists were, indeed, beginning to attack America in earnest, including an attempt to knock down the World Trade Center in 1993. The United States would, over the course of the decade, increasingly come to see the dangers of terrorism as a great national threat (see chapter 4).

Based on the observations of officers writing at their service schools between 1993 and 2001, it is clear that they believed national policy leaders and senior military decision makers had not yet adjusted to life after the Soviet Union. Though officers writing during Clinton's second term acknowledged progress, the pace from the top did not keep up with their needs. Lieutenant Colonel William Wimbish summed up his fellow officers' frustration over how American political leaders were only "gradually adjusting to the realities and challenges of a new strategic environment" as they themselves were sent into harm's way.<sup>135</sup> By the turn of the century, officers also continued to lament how the armed forces had not yet adapted to the altered international situation.<sup>136</sup> Those nearer the ground level whose experiences were steeped

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<sup>134</sup> Maj Vance Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), p. 118.

<sup>135</sup> LTC William Wimbish III, "Using Army National Guard Combat Battalions for Peace Operations" (1998), p. 32.

<sup>136</sup> MAJ John DeJarnette, "To Support and Defend: An Evaluation of the Requirement for a Specialized MOOTW Force" (2001), p. 5-6. MAJ Christopher Becket, p. 4. He laments how the Army was still shedding its Cold War perspective. MAJ Craig Osborne, "Preparing for the Inevitable: NGO-Military Interactions in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations" (2001), pp. 7, 50. MAJ David Seigel, "Fighting Downtown: A Training

in several instances of hot peace rather than cold war understood that these small scale contingencies in the new global environment were less about defeating fielded forces and more focused on creating the conditions where the local populations could achieve sustainable, positive change.

The mid-level officers of the period saw that the overall American tendency had been to not necessarily keep fighting the last war, but to employ the military as if circumstances were the same as the last war. The overwhelming success of Desert Storm drove many leaders to want to superimpose a known successful strategy onto every combat engagement without fully adjusting to the changes required by the shifting international landscape within a foreign policy of increased military engagement. Using Task Force Ranger to hunt Aidid exemplified this. The United States, overconfident in its military prowess and technical capability, used a conventional approach to an unconventional problem. The fact that America's elite military forces were unconventional by definition failed to overcome not only the cultural and political conditions in Somalia, but also its own inability to properly adapt. How America tried to change conditions by

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Necessity for the Heavy Brigade" (2001), p. 33. He asserts that the Army was stuck in open-plain warfare model like Iraq. MAJ John Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 59. MAJ Perry Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. 71. He states that, by the beginning of the new century, the military was in the business of preventing war more than winning a war. MAJ Steven Leonar, "Inevitable Evolutions: Punctuated Equilibrium and the Revolution in Military Affairs" (2001), p. 45. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), pp 12-15. He argues that those who won big in conventional wars like Desert Storm had failures in MOOTW like Vietnam & Somalia. Maj Robert Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 37-38. He insists the US could no longer adhere to Weinberger-Powell rule of rapidity – operations other than war take time; absent a Cold War nemesis, the US has the time to properly conduct interventions. Also, that the political and senior military leadership adopting casualty aversion as policy was more likely to reduce warrior ethos, not continual small-scale interventions. Maj Douglas Kiely, "'The End of the Beginning': On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty" (2001), pp. vi, 1, 27 – sees USAF at the end of the start of their transition in 2001. Lt Col Robert Wright, "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001). Maj Michael Carrell, "Peering Over the Cliff: Guidelines for Statesmen Contemplating War" (2001), p. 1. He states that, since the end of the Cold War, "America appears more willing to use its military without thinking through the consequences. This can be a dangerous proposition, as Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo demonstrate." Maj Michael Holl, "Aerospace Power's Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance Missions: Redefining Effects-Based Operations" (2001), p. 45. He argues that in small scale contingencies of the 1990s, the military does not win by conventional battle, but by creating conditions for sustainable change.

denying military resources, restricting actions, deferring to the United Nations, and using its influence to try and force democratic reform represented an attempt at a modern application of power that did not properly fit the new environment.

Major Jason Bohm writing in 2001 points out that this was not a new phenomenon. Powerful nations have had a track record of winning conventional battles and losing against asymmetric foes.<sup>137</sup> To prevent this from happening again, the officers during the Clinton Administration worked to learn from American involvements like Somalia and try to urge the United States to evolve. They did not realize that the new century would bring about a war that would force America to adapt in ways that would put many of their ideas to the test.

### *Conclusion*

America's experience in Somalia influenced policy development and implementation for the rest of the decade. The writings of top-rated mid-level officers illuminate how their changing analyses of the American intervention in the Horn of Africa represented a microcosm of the evolution of American foreign policy approach and perspective after the Cold War. The world had changed drastically after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the United States needed to adjust. America's senior leaders had their Cold War experiences deeply rooted, creating a stalwart foundation for their world views and in many ways retarding their adaptation to new world conditions.

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<sup>137</sup> Maj Douglas Kiely, "'The End of the Beginning': On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty" (2001), p. 13. Maj Jason Bohm, "Complacency Kills: The Need for Improvement in the way the Marine Corps Prepares for Future Conflict" (2001), p. 12. He sees parallels in how the British won in the Falklands, but could not quell the IRA; the USSR failed in Afghanistan; and how the United States was overwhelmingly victorious in Panama and Desert Storm, yet lost in Vietnam, Beirut, and Somalia.

Those ideas were powerfully embedded, especially lessons from Vietnam, an event that most senior military and civilian leaders during the Clinton Administration experienced whether through direct involvement at home or abroad, or as contemporary witnesses to its effects. This led to hyper-focus on preventing mistakes of the past rather than applying proper lessons to the present. In Somalia, there were many comparisons to Vietnam, from policy issues and support of the troops, to paralleling the overall losses against what was advertised to be an inferior enemy. But Vietnam was a different war in a different time. Unlike senior leadership with their Cold War baggage, these mid-level officers, especially by Clinton's second term, understood that a relevant military force cannot be immersed in the previous era, no matter how comfortable it was to do so.

An area that exemplifies this view was in the application of what scholars call the Somalia Effect. American citizens witnessed a major challenge to American military power by Somali militia and citizens. Live images and news broadcasts were beamed into their living rooms of American elite warriors engaged in a fight for their lives against people whom they were sent to help, not battle. The desecration of dead soldiers in the streets of Mogadishu played on loop 24/7, added to the horror. Combined with the public's perspective that these combat deaths occurred during military operations that were not directly or obviously tied to vital national interests, American leadership concluded that the people would neither tolerate casualties nor have the will to see the American military involvement continue.

It was not just the images and the eighteen deaths that created an outcry to leave Somalia. The results from the Battle of Mogadishu magnified the already waning public support after the change from an altruistic humanitarian mission to a more aggressive nation building agenda after UNOSOM II took over on 5 May 1993. Without actively engaging the American people on the



importance of the new mission in Somalia, senior government leaders allowed the public to establish their own criteria to form a risk-reward calculus. They determined that involvement was not worth the loss of American lives before the October raid. Eighteen dead soldiers drove them to actively call into question American actions. As a result, the United States retreated from Somalia. The perception that the American public was hyper-sensitive to friendly casualties caused the Clinton administration to proceed with extreme caution when it came to committing the combat power of the United States for the rest of the presidency.

The Somalia Effect, while certainly influential on American foreign policy decisions through 2001, is somewhat of a misnomer. It is more representative of traditional American desire to minimize casualties that came of age for American policy makers of the 1990s during the Vietnam War. Somalia reinforced this concept for them, making it more of a Vietnam Corollary<sup>138</sup> than its own entity and demonstrating that the United States had not cured its Vietnam Syndrome after Desert Storm.<sup>139</sup>

There was another effect of Somalia that had significant influence on America's post-Cold War foreign policy decisions as it sought to find its way in a new era. The initial decision to commit United States combat power for less than vital American interests set a precedent for post-Cold War American involvement and was the unique legacy of Somalia. This was the primary effect of the Somalia intervention. Whether George H. W. Bush directed American troops to land in Somalia in December of 1992 out of a moral obligation to help potentially save five hundred thousand starving Somalis,<sup>140</sup> a political reaction to then candidate Bill Clinton's

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<sup>138</sup> This term was neither in officer papers nor other scholarship, but I coined it as a result of interpreting the findings from each.

<sup>139</sup> George H. W. Bush Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council, 1 March 1991, <http://vandvreader.org/george-h-w-bush-proclaims-a-cure-for-the-vietnam-syndrome-01-march-1991/> (accessed 20 Feb 2023).

<sup>140</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 251.

campaign rhetoric attacking Bush on his lack of will to use American forces for good,<sup>141</sup> or to demonstrate American global leadership while avoiding the potential complexities involved in Bosnia,<sup>142</sup> this decision set in motion a shift for determining how and when to use American power.

In this way, actions in Somalia comprised the first true post-Cold War major military intervention for the United States. It differed from how, for example, America provided assistance in Northern Iraq after Saddam Hussein suppressed the Kurdish uprising. While still a humanitarian effort, the United States had a vital interest in keeping a counterweight to Hussein for as long as the dictator defied the cease fire accords and United Nations resolutions. In eastern Africa, there was no similar significance directly associated with military action. As a result, American freedom of action in Somalia, and in other interventions for the rest of the decade, subordinated the use of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine for determining military interventions. In its place was an affinity for more altruistic endeavors such as humanitarian and peace operations that tackled starvation, ethnic cleansing, and threats to freedom far from America's shores.

Somalia also reinforced perceptions within the National Command Authority. For the commander-in-chief who wanted to keep foreign policy on the backburner and focus on his domestic agenda, the Battle of Mogadishu buttressed his belief that foreign involvement meant great political risk with little potential political reward. This enhanced his administration's view towards foreign policy, especially when it included military involvement, as being a necessary

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<sup>141</sup> Maj Matthew Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), pp. 10, 45. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp 250-251. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p 619. Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*, (Rand Corp, 2000), p. xv.

<sup>142</sup> LTC Michael Cooper, "Military Diplomacy in the New World Order" (1993), p. 14. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 149.

evil that provided little political advantage, and therefore should be approached with as little risk as possible. For the military leadership, their skepticism of a commander-in-chief who never served in the armed forces and, from their perception, whose inattention to foreign policy decisions resulted in negative consequences for military personnel, had increased their disdain. This was not true for all in the military, however. While these factors may have influenced some of the mid-level officers to carry similar feelings towards their president, especially at the beginning of his tenure, their main focus was on the substance of the administration's policies as they factored into American failure in Somalia.

As the decade progressed, many mid-level officers would evolve in their thinking as well as their feelings towards the president. They understood the challenges of facing a completely different world order and how the United States, as the lone superpower, needed to wield its power responsibly and effectively. They also grew to accept the actions associated with the precedent which Somalia set. They saw this and future interventions as part of Engagement and Enlargement as important American interests. As a whole, they did not sing Clinton's praises, but generally they were not at odds with his decisions nearly as much as scholars report how the senior military corps was, especially as the United States marched into a new century.<sup>143</sup>

The Cold War was over. Mid-level military professionals wanted to prepare for future, not previous, battles. Their adaptation to the new global environment was ahead of their seniors, and would serve them well as, within months of the end of the Clinton Presidency, they would face a global, asymmetric enemy that not only directly threatened American interests, but would call upon all the skill sets that they accumulated during the new era, starting with Somalia.

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<sup>143</sup> For information on conflict between senior military leaders and President Clinton, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; and Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*.

### III. A LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS: THE BALKANS



Map of the Former Yugoslavia with Provinces<sup>1</sup>

On an overcast September morning in 1995, two Navy F/A-18 Superhornet attack fighters streaked over the Adriatic having just left Yugoslavian airspace. The commander and his wingman were headed back to the *USS Theodore Roosevelt* after their sortie into Bosnia as part of Operation Deliberate Force. They were participating along with their Air Force and NATO counterparts in a major air campaign designed to drive the Bosnian Serbs to the

<sup>1</sup> Wikimedia Commons, "Former Yugoslavia Map.png," [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former\\_Yugoslavia\\_Map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former_Yugoslavia_Map.png) accessed 23 Feb 2023.

negotiating table. That day, however, the Superhornets were not able to deliver any critical blows to Serbian forces as they had hoped.

In an effort to eliminate excessive casualties and collateral damage as much as possible, American and NATO senior leadership placed very stringent rules of engagement on their pilots.<sup>2</sup> These rules included multiple steps in target validation and adherence to several precautions to ensure the optimal conditions for dropping bombs. Preventing excessive damage, especially to civilian structures, was as important, if not more so, than eliminating Serbian military targets.<sup>3</sup> These safeguards were in addition to reliance on precision guided munitions, which produced such excellent results during Desert Storm. The flat desert of Iraq was easy to navigate, and that geography made it easier to apply precautionary measures without detracting from successful execution of the bombing missions. The wooded and hilly terrain in the Balkans was not so accommodating. To make matters worse, bad weather that included low clouds, rain, and fog made visual confirmation nearly impossible on days like the one on which these two Navy fighters were flying. The laser-guided bombs, when dropped, flew to the ground at the exact point where the weapons officer in the back seat placed the aircraft's laser. In bad weather, the weapons officer could not guarantee that he could see the target, and therefore did not have one-hundred percent assurance that he could mark the exact spot in order to meet NATO's criteria for releasing the weapons. That was what happened during this mission. The commander had no choice but to call off the attack and return to his aircraft carrier, which presented a problem that those flying from air bases did not have to face.

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<sup>2</sup> Maj George Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 67. He specifically discusses the issues with restrictions on Navy pilots flying off of the *USS Theodore Roosevelt*.

<sup>3</sup> 14 officer papers on the Bosnian air campaign discuss issues with an American-led NATO being overly cautious with regards to collateral damage. In addition, Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, pp. 28-29, 32, and Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, pp. 81-82, report issues of international sensitivities over the amount of force the United States employed during the air campaign.

Naval aviators, in the spirit of friendly rivalry, took jabs at Air Force pilots, jokingly accusing them of lackluster flying skills. One rationale was that Air Force pilots had thousands of feet of runway on which to land, while naval aircraft had to fly back to their carriers to what was, by comparison, a small speck in a large ocean. Because of the small landing space, the airplane had to hit the flight deck hard and catch their tailhook on an arresting wire in order to stop the aircraft from flying right off the end of the ship. However, on this day, Air Force pilots returning fully bomb-laden to NATO bases in Italy did not double their frustration as they could touch down back at their base with their munitions. The Navy commander knew that the two planes were too heavy to safely land back on the *Roosevelt*.<sup>4</sup> Aware that these precision bombs were not only expensive, but running in short supply, the commander reluctantly gave the order to drop all bombs safely to the bottom of the Adriatic before setting themselves up for final approach and landing back on their ship.<sup>5</sup>

Mid-level officers who flew missions into the Balkans, were part of Army deployments to support areas such as Macedonia, or came as peacekeepers in the aftermath of conflict, experienced the impacts of American policy where the rubber hit the road. They raised questions not only about the direct effects of national decisions on meeting international goals, but also of second- and third-order effects that affected broader efforts in the former Yugoslavia. Their revelations and assessments help to enrich the scholarly evaluations of how the United States conducted international relations in the region. Their unique perspectives provide important

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<sup>4</sup> Maj George Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Maj Mark Bucknam, "Lethal Airpower and Intervention" (1996), p. 47. He says, "Many missions refrained from expending ordnance, for example, Navy aviators, who flew fewer than half of the U.S. strike sorties, complained about the number of PGMs they were forced to jettison into the Adriatic Sea." Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 23. He references Navy rules of engagement to drop bombs into the Adriatic before returning to their carriers in an Arthur Brill article "Anatomy of an Air Strike," *Sea Power* (c. 39, n4, April 1996).

context for American foreign policy as the Clinton Administration evolved its Engagement and Enlargement policy with respect to the crises that accompanied the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

### *Introduction*

American engagement in the Balkans showcased a myriad of foreign policy changes, adjustments, setbacks, and accomplishments. The decade of American involvement in the region from 1992 through the end of the Clinton presidency illuminated how, and how effectively, the United States was transitioning to its new role in the world. What began as inconsistent and irresolute policy during the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina (shortened to simply Bosnia hereafter) became a more solidified and defined approach in response to the later crisis in Kosovo, yet still had its challenges. An overarching concern that affected American foreign policy implementation since the events in Somalia regarded the perceived impact of casualties. Any American deaths resulting from military involvement in a less-than-vital interest could have significantly impacted public support. Also, American use of force, if perceived as excessive, particularly if it led to significant civilian fatalities, would likely have swayed world opinion against the sole superpower. This led to the United States tempering the application of military power and defaulting to the use of air forces. In doing so, the Clinton Administration found both challenges and successes from lingering Cold War influences. This included a policy that recycled a Vietnam-era strategy that failed over the jungles in southeast Asia, yet found a niche at altitude over the forested hills of southeastern Europe. Overall, the policy path that the United States took that culminated in arguably President Clinton's most significant success on the international stage was fraught with challenges, missteps, demonstrated adaptability, surprising

successes, and political drama.<sup>6</sup> Mid-level officers who witnessed events as they unfolded discuss these and many other issues with the two air wars against the Serbs.

Service school writings about Bosnia and Kosovo provide insight into national policy from the view of the implementers. As Balkan policy evolved throughout the Clinton Administration, the debates over redefining American vital interests, the different impacts of casualty aversion on ongoing military operations, the utility of relying on air power, and the unique influence of Vietnam all illuminate various levels of success America had in adapting to a world absent a Cold War. Mid-level officer writings intertwine their evaluations of these occurrences in the Balkans with the broader global issues to create a unique lens through which to view American foreign policy changes over time and their effects.

Once Bill Clinton became president-elect, Bosnia became a real focus area for officer writings. This was due to several factors. There was the possibility that the instability resulting from Yugoslavia's collapse in the wake of the fall of communism could have caused the escalating violence to spill over to other nations, including NATO allies.<sup>7</sup> This threat had the potential to elevate its importance and drive America to greater action beyond George H. W. Bush's minimal commitment of air support to what was a NATO-led endeavor. Another significant factor was the effect Somalia had on America's foreign policy orientation as described in chapter 2. The United States demonstrated that it would become more involved in

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<sup>6</sup> For discussions on Clinton's poor Bosnia policy and significantly improved Kosovo policy, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; Paul Wolfowitz, "Shaping the Future: Planning at the Pentagon 1983-1993" in *In Uncertain Times*, ed by Leffler and Legro; and DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*.

<sup>7</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 166. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 255. Maj David M. Riester, "U.S. Forward Deployment Policy: An Assessment" (1993), p. 12. MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 8. LTC Phillip R. Lindner, "U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?" (1993), p. 1.



humanitarian operations and other interventions of less than vital national interest.<sup>8</sup> This was in part due to the same media phenomenon that created a “do something syndrome” in the Balkans as well.<sup>9</sup> As Major Duffy observed within months of Clinton’s inauguration, “In many circles, the question rises ‘if Somalia, then why not Bosnia-Herzegovina?’”<sup>10</sup>

Debates over this key question dovetailed into how the Balkans fit into broader issues of American policy development. While the Clinton Administration was forming new overall policy at the start of its tenure, it was slow to develop a specific Bosnian policy. As America shifted away from the necessity of vital interest as a definitive component for military involvement, mid-level officers debated the appropriateness of intervention in Yugoslavia and its impact on evolving national strategy. Undoubtedly influenced by similar issues during the Somalia intervention, one of the most significant factors involved in their discussions was how inconsistent policy and issues with communication adversely affected the military’s ability to effect policy implementation. Papers from 1993 to 1995, written during the national debates over whether to increase American military involvement in Bosnia, demonstrate concerns about being sent into a combat zone for political rather than practical reasons, and without clearly defined objectives. For many of these officers, they saw the president as using military force in a way that did not directly benefit United States security, even though it may have met an agenda

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<sup>8</sup> LTC Russ Howard, “United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations” (1993), p. 5. MAJ Jonathan B. Hunter, “The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?” (1993), p. 1. Maj Kurtis D. Lohide, “Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia” (1993), pp. iii, 1-2. COL Ernest W. Fischer, “The Yugoslav Civil War” (1993), p. 32. He expresses concerns over increase in humanitarian operations that rely too much on military force, especially in a country’s internal matters. LTC Phillip R. Lindner, “U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?” (1993), abstract. Maj Stephen E. Wright, “Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation” (1994), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, “What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?” (1993), pp. 15-17.

<sup>10</sup> MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, “Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization” (1993), p. 5. Note: he made this observation prior to the Battle of Mogadishu. Also, this was considered to be a proper way to spell this particular republic in the service school at the time.

item from the administration's campaign rhetoric regarding ideals and principles. Starting in 1996, officer writings reveal that they believed the Clinton Administration had improved in these areas by better defining and translating American interests into military action. However, there remained a fair amount of consistency with military officer writings throughout the period that senior policy makers did not provide an appropriate level of clarity to dissipate the fog of uncertainty present in combat operations.<sup>11</sup>

These officers focused in on several of these issues in relation to the different Balkan crises. They discussed redefining what a vital interest was to the United States in the new geopolitical dynamic. This new characterization included aspects such as how NATO fit into this new world order, and determining the appropriate implementation of peacekeeping or peace enforcement after hostilities. Also, as America became less bound by older preconditions for employing the military and therefore more willing to do so, it needed to determine how to best exercise its power in a world wary of a sole superpower. This aspect of policy development in a changing world drove the overarching political issue that directly affected these officers, and subsequently all aspects of foreign policy implementation for them: how could the United States effectively expand military involvement in places like Bosnia and many others while drastically downsizing its military? This approach seemed paradoxical. These were some of the key policy questions that officer-scholars discussed from their unique vantage point of implementing policy at the lowest levels while being expected to understand strategy at the highest due to their position as mid-level officers. Because of these characteristics, they were able to highlight many

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<sup>11</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 101. He states, "War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty."

of the national policy growing pains that, after two presidential terms under Bill Clinton, showed a nation coming to grips with political and diplomatic life after the Cold War.

As world events forced America to redefine its post-Cold War interests, the United States under President Clinton proceeded down a path of selective Engagement and Enlargement. At the start of Clinton's tenure, this was only a proto-policy, and many officers debated how to apply it to Bosnia. Those debates continued later in the decade. As this strategy became more defined, officers shifted from concerns over lack of clarity over what it meant to the determining the practicality of executing multiple small-scale contingencies without adequate resources and training. Even at the start of operations in Kosovo in 1999, the United States was still adapting its application of this strategy. By this time, most service-school attendees agreed that American leadership was necessary in order to improve conditions in Bosnia, and that the Clinton Administration effectively carried that lesson forth into Kosovo.

There were, however, also arguments about how the United States could not resolve centuries of ethnic hatred and therefore should not get involved in another nation's civil wars. For these professionals, Engagement and Enlargement seemed very military-centric, and many lamented how military force could not resolve issues in the Balkans without a major diplomatic and political effort. What they did not see was that there were other ongoing political, diplomatic, and economic efforts.<sup>12</sup> The high operational tempo drove them to a narrow focus. Their interpretations, despite issues with accuracy, still indicated that there were difficulties with America's policy effectiveness and the evolution of post-Cold War international strategy.

Mid-level officers also worried that the perceived American public's penchant for casualty aversion would undermine American combat efforts. The 1993 Battle of Mogadishu

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<sup>12</sup> For details, see Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*.

and its aftermath (see Chapter 2) had a profound effect on how the United States proceeded in Bosnia. Those writing from 1993 to early 1995, before the United States committed to more aggressive military force, argued that foreign policy should not depend on the moral outrage of the American public whose will could easily erode at the sight of returning American coffins, as they saw happened in Somalia.<sup>13</sup> For many officers, the shutdown and intense media coverage of the nearly week-long rescue attempt of Captain Scott O’Grady during the end of Operation Deny Flight in 1995 punctuated this point. The focus on his rescue seemed to indicate the political fragility of military involvement in the Balkans resulting from concerns over casualties. This caused many officers to question whether or not committing military force was appropriate under these circumstances. Many of their successors would continue to debate this and other related points.

One area these officers did agree upon was American leadership’s tendency towards restraint and low risk which caused the United States to default to airpower as its choice for offensive military intervention. Officer-scholars debated the merits of the air-only responses in both Bosnia and Kosovo as to military effectiveness, ability to achieve national goals, and the broader strategic implications. Some, mostly Army officers, advocate in their writings for the necessity of using ground forces. Others, not surprisingly mostly Air Force officers, state that using only air power had the potential to minimize casualties and help stop the atrocities against the Muslim population. Both camps also discussed whether either Bosnia or Kosovo was truly an air-only military endeavor as there were ground forces involved in each intervention. These

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<sup>13</sup> LTC Phillip R. Lindner, “U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?” (1993), p. 26. Maj Kurtis D. Lohide, “Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia” (1993), p. 3. LTC Phillip R. Lindner, “U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest...At what cost?” (1993), p. 15. LCDR David W. Gruber, “A Methodology for the Transition from National Strategy to Adaptive Force Packaging” (1994), p 77. Maj Brooks L. Bash, “The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping” (1994), p. 11. Capt James O. Poss, “Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?” (1994), p. 8.

discussions led to one commonality that affected many opinions, which was the influence of Vietnam.

America's war in Southeast Asia continued to hold sway over prosecution of both air wars in the Balkans. Desert Storm, because so many regarded it as the anti-Vietnam War, had great influence as well. Numerous senior military leaders and mid-level officers set it as the new standard for conducting air operations. For those individuals, anything less than an equivalent air campaign induced warnings of reprising failures like Operation Rolling Thunder that implemented gradualism. This was a technique whereby the bombing campaign would gradually increase or decrease in pressure, including halting altogether at times. This did not achieve the desired effect of helping to defeat North Vietnam. Desert Storm eschewed gradualism in favor of an intense bombing campaign that simultaneously attacked the spectrum of targets, from strategic to tactical, with great success. However, many other officer-scholars came to realize that Bosnia and Kosovo had very different characteristics, physically and politically, from both Vietnam and Desert Storm. Therefore, these new wars required a different approach, or rather, a new spin on an old approach. America ended up applying a form of gradualism, inadvertently in Bosnia, but very deliberately in Kosovo, that was reminiscent of, but not the same as, the air war in Vietnam. Mid-level officers assessed the merits of using this approach, even when modified, in an intervention without the same Cold War constraints as America had in Southeast Asia. They debated the level of success this adapted method had towards achieving American strategic goals in the Balkans, and what that meant for American exercise of power in this new and very different era.

As the top-rated officers who attended their service schools at the end of the Clinton Administration attest in their writings, this application of military power and the senior level

debates over it showed how United States political leaders seemed more willing to accept and apply tactics and strategies more appropriate to the new era than its military leaders. It was hard to transition into a new mindset after years of Cold War, and senior uniformed leadership appeared to have more difficulty. Desert Storm provided what turned out to be as many false lessons as positive ones, and the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine had a dogmatic hold on many who did not see it for what it had become in the 1990s – a relic of the previous era. Regardless of how America's top leaders, military or political, progressed on their journey through this new era, mid-level officers seemed to have taken the lead in embracing a new mindset as they came to these conclusions more rapidly. They also demonstrate that, even in the new millennium, America's journey was not yet complete.

From 1993 to 2001, mid-level officer writings discussed many of the pitfalls and roadblocks associated with America's transition. American leaders' gradual adjustments could not keep up with the needs of military officers who implemented policy at the ground level as the United States struggled to find a balance between assertive action and restraint, political sensitivities and military efficiency, and open-ended peacekeeping missions and strategic military preparedness to support national security goals. The world had changed rapidly, and the Balkans demonstrated how the United States adapted to its new international role. Actions there showed how adherence to older ideas, such as strict obedience to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, seeing Desert Storm as the natural successor to World War II as the proper way to wage a war, and avoiding any tactic the United States used during Vietnam was not the proper path to success in this new era. These alleged truths, which many leaders, especially in the military, held to be self-evident, were actually self-limiting. The middle-out observations by America's officer-scholars demonstrate this and provide vital context to the history of America's

post-Cold War evolution in international policy and decisions on military intervention vis-à-vis Bosnia and Kosovo.

### *Background*

After World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, the modern nation of Yugoslavia was formed based on boundaries the Allied victors endorsed during the Paris Peace Conference. It was made up of diverse peoples. The three main groups, who were in constant conflict, were the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. The Serbs were Orthodox Christians with ethnic ties to Russia. The Croats were Roman Catholic and more closely associated with the West. The Muslim population had roots from Islam's spread into Europe centuries earlier. The tensions between these peoples had many origins including the Christian-Muslim conflicts from Ottoman expansion into the region, the differences between the Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism, and the unitarian political position that Serbs pushed in an attempt to dominate Yugoslavia post-Versailles.<sup>14</sup> During World War II, the territories came under Nazi control, disrupting the tenuous unification. However, after the defeat of Nazi Germany, Marshall Josip Tito, a communist leader who refused to be a Soviet lackey, consolidated the six republics of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia into the socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1946. His iron-fisted leadership and enforced communist ideology served to keep the nation together. When he died in 1980, he left a power vacuum.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information on the ethnic rivalries see Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, pp. 2-3, Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense* pp. 616-618; and DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 105.

In 1987, Slobodan Milosevic rose to power as the leader of the Yugoslavian communist party mainly by rallying fellow Serbs in Kosovo. As communism was retreating in Europe, Milosevic saved his party and his status as ruler by playing to racial hatreds in Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup> This opened the Balkan Pandora's Box of ethnic nationalism. The Soviet Union collapse and its breakup in 1991 allowed former communist nations in Europe to turn towards independence and democracy. The effect on Yugoslavia was to spark violence between ethnic factions as nationalism supplanted hopes for shared democracy.<sup>16</sup> Yugoslavia was breaking apart, and Bosnia was a major flashpoint.

Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, each of whom had significant populations in Bosnia, engaged in open warfare by 1992. All three sides committed atrocities against the others, but the Serbs, emboldened by their superior military and support from Milosevic, engaged in the preponderance of brutality against the Muslims who, despite being more numerous in that republic, had the least military capability. Serb violence against them began garnering increasing international media attention. Television images that depicted the unfolding inhumane violence, and accompanying news coverage blaming the Serbs for genocidal actions continually put pressure on the United States to act more assertively against the depicted aggressors.

While media images stimulated European sympathies, it was the volatility and violence that actually began to threaten European stability. The Serb shelling of Muslims in Sarajevo in April of 1992 drove Europeans to action.<sup>17</sup> The United Nations stepped in, deploying observers

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<sup>15</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 81. He also describes how Milosevic dissolved the Communist party in 1990, but it did not disappear, p. 84.

<sup>16</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 24. Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 21-22. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff*, pp. 36-37, 112. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 105. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 618.

<sup>17</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 122-124.



by the end of the month and building up the peacekeeping force in the ensuing months. The fighting continued to escalate, resulting in the passage of Security Council Resolution 781 on 16 October 1992 banning all military flights over Bosnia.<sup>18</sup> NATO military power provided enforcement. It deployed peacekeepers into Bosnia and established a no-fly zone, calling the operation Deny Flight. The goals were to force Bosnian Serbs to stop their attacks, create safe havens for Muslims in Sarajevo and other locations, and protect United Nations peacekeeping forces. Although the United States provided some air forces as part of NATO, President George H. W. Bush deferred leadership and precluded significant American involvement, calling it a European problem to be resolved by Europeans.<sup>19</sup> Candidate Bill Clinton criticized the president's shying away from both American leadership and more robust engagement to stop Serb aggression against their weaker neighbors.<sup>20</sup> When Clinton won the election in 1992, the military looked to prepare for increased involvement in that eastern European enclave.

Upon taking over the Oval Office, President Clinton, despite his campaign rhetoric, continued to take a back seat to European leadership in the matter.<sup>21</sup> He did, however, push for more action. He criticized Europeans for not being more assertive, and at the 1993 dedication of the Holocaust Museum, he proclaimed that the world should never again sit idly by and allow genocide to happen.<sup>22</sup> This speech drove more pressure on the administration to act against the

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<sup>18</sup> Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 12. United Nations Department of Public Information, "Former Yugoslavia – UNPROFOR: United Nations Protection Force" (*United Nations Peacekeeping* website, 1996), [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unprof\\_b.htm](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unprof_b.htm), accessed 21 Feb 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 92. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 126. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 619.

<sup>20</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 4. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 620. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 126. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 23. MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 10. LTC Russ Howard, "United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations" (1993), p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 1. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 619. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 225. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 254-255.

Serbs whose targeting of Muslims gave all the appearances of being genocidal. Clinton's staff developed a strategy to implement a "lift and strike" policy whereby NATO would lift the bans on arms imports into Bosnia so the Muslims could obtain weapons in order to defend themselves, and use of airpower to strike Serb positions more aggressively.<sup>23</sup> NATO balked, and the United States continued to defer to European leadership.

From the onset, Operation Deny Flight and the accompanying peace enforcement ground mission could not stop the violence and stabilize Bosnia. Two major reasons were the political nature of NATO and the involvement of two large, international, bureaucratic organizations, NATO and the United Nations, attempting to work together. An alliance of nations with varying opinions and politics to appease led to many compromises as to the machinations of executing military operations.<sup>24</sup> The result of these debates was NATO implementing convoluted processes and strict rules of engagement for pilots executing Deny Flight that created several difficulties. One example was that United Nations and NATO leadership each developed separate targeting approval procedures. Any target required the consent of both before allowing an air strike. This was called the dual key process for approving bombings. Major military inefficiencies resulted from implementing this cumbersome command apparatus. Abundant caution due to a political focus on limiting collateral damage and casualties on all sides dominated each approval body, resulting in many bombing requests from military planners and commanders being denied. This detracted from Deny Flight's effectiveness in curtailing the violence. In addition, the bureaucratic approval processes made time-sensitive requests like close air support to protect peacekeeping forces nearly impossible to execute in a timely manner.

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<sup>23</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, pp. 4-5. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 254-255. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 224. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 122. Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, p. 96.

<sup>24</sup> This was Richard Haass' major criticism of NATO in *The Reluctant Sheriff*.

Because of this limitation, air forces could not effectively safeguard the safe havens. Weak NATO responses emboldened the Serbs as their paramilitary forces took hundreds of United Nations forces hostage.<sup>25</sup>

The seeming inability to deal with Bosnia began to overshadow Clinton's foreign policy during his first year-and-a-half in office. As Serb aggression increased, so did pressure to resolve the mounting crisis. President Clinton wanted more assertive action, but was hampered by three separate but interrelated factors. The first was a lack of consistent and coherent policy towards Bosnia.<sup>26</sup> Aforementioned contradictions between Clinton's rhetoric and his actual actions accompanied inconsistencies with policy development. This gap contributed to the second factor, which was push-back from the American military leadership on potential involvement. The most notable was that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell did not support military intervention there.<sup>27</sup> Bosnia did not represent a vital national interest, and he viewed the administration's approach towards using military power to achieve its stated objectives in Bosnia as more hope than strategy. As such, Powell saw parallels with America's involvement with Vietnam, and he refused to have the Joint Chiefs of Staff again become co-conspirators to another military debacle.<sup>28</sup> The third was a hesitancy to use military force resulting from the ignominious withdrawal from Somalia. Clinton did not want to risk American casualties and repeat the failure in the Horn of Africa. While Europeans wanted a strong ground

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<sup>25</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 7. D Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 284-285, 294.

<sup>26</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, pp. 7, 184. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 249-250. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 126-127. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 232-239. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>28</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 239.

presence, the Clinton Administration insisted on a stronger air-only response.<sup>29</sup> That prevented a unified NATO strategy, which in turn ensured continuation of the ineffective *status quo*.

By 1995, the effort was failing as the United States did little and NATO was “an accessory to a pathetic UN effort.”<sup>30</sup> The conflict had claimed over 300,000 dead and produced 1.2 million refugees at that point.<sup>31</sup> Those numbers continued to increase. As the crisis escalated, a series of factors opened the door for more assertive action. In May of 1995, Jacques Chirac replaced François Mitterrand as president of France. The latter had been sympathetic to the Serbs and helped keep NATO military action against them more limited. Chirac, however, demanded more action against Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces.<sup>32</sup> The other main factor was that the Serbs began more aggressively consolidating their gains in Bosnia. They attacked United Nations safe zones of Zepa, Gorazde, and Srebrenica. This aggression helped galvanize NATO against the Serbs.

General Ratko Mladic provided the direct impetus for NATO to abandon its no-fly zone strategy in favor of punitive strikes in order to drive a resolution to the crisis. He led the Bosnian Serbs in a ruthless incursion into Muslim areas. In Srebrenica, his people performed especially cruel actions against the populace. When the city fell, Serb forces rounded up all the Muslims. They bussed the women into refugee camps and executed the men, roughly eight thousand in all.<sup>33</sup> With newfound support in NATO, President Clinton was able to exercise American leadership and orchestrate an aggressive air campaign. On 30 August 1995, Operation Deny

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<sup>29</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 284-285. Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 1. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 103. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 622.

<sup>30</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. xi. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 249-251 and Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 13. He echoed the futility of NATO actions.

<sup>31</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 305.

<sup>33</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 297 & 315. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 127. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 620. Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 15.

Flight ended, and Deliberate Force began. Combined with a United States-supported Croat-Muslim army advancing against Serb positions, and diplomatic pressure forcing Milosevic to abandon support for Bosnian Serb forces, NATO was able to use air power to bring all sides to the negotiation table after just three weeks. They met in Dayton, Ohio on 1 November to hammer out a peace agreement.

American pressure ended open conflict and prevented the dissolution of Bosnia. It created two main states within Bosnia: the Serb Republika Srpska, consisting of 49 percent of the land, and the Bosniac-Croat Federation at 51 percent.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the United States was able to codify its goals for the region. They included keeping Bosnia-Herzegovina as one state; preserving the significant history of Sarajevo; ensuring respect for human rights; holding war criminals accountable; and incorporating a positive solution for the region.<sup>35</sup> To ensure adherence to the accords and help foster lasting peace, the United States agreed to contribute peacekeepers to an overall United Nations mission. Though President Clinton designated their presence as being limited to one year, conditions never seemed to produce a level of stability to allow for their withdrawal. He therefore kept extending their presence, first in 1996 for two years and again in 1998 for at least eighteen months, yet the mission lasted until 2002.<sup>36</sup>

While the Dayton Accords were a great leap forward for the United States, and did resolve many of the issues affecting Bosnia-Herzegovina, they failed to address broader problems. While peacekeepers enforced the peace dividends on the ground in Bosnia, another region of the crumbling Yugoslav nation, Kosovo, began rekindling its own ethnic rivalries.

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<sup>34</sup> Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton*, pp. 73-75. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 348.

<sup>35</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 39. Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton*, pp. 1, 253-254, 267.

<sup>36</sup> For more information on the peacekeeping mission, see Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; and Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*.

Occupying a 4,200 square mile block of territory between Serbia and Albania, it had a significant Muslim population of Albanian Kosovars. It had enjoyed a form of semi-autonomy under Yugoslavia until Milosevic altered its status in 1989. Over time, political conditions worsened. By 1997, Serb forces had pushed the limits of the Muslim population's tolerance. The Albanian Kosovars retaliated against their aggression by attacking Serb police forces through terror bombings and assassinations.<sup>37</sup> Unlike in Bosnia, Milosevic did not support Serbs in Kosovo; he led them. He used the attacks as an excuse to wage a war of removal and annihilation that caused fleeing Muslims to effect a major refugee crisis. Within two years, the Muslim Kosovar Liberation Army was in open conflict with Serb police forces in Kosovo.

As Serb leadership responded aggressively and brutally, the United States would become involved in another air war just four years after the conclusion of the Dayton Accords. This time it was for a region of Yugoslavia much more important to Milosevic. America and NATO first tried to stem the new crisis through diplomatic means. They developed the Rambouillet accords which stipulated that Serbia would withdraw all forces from Kosovo; there would be an immediate cease fire; ethnic Albanian Kosovars would be allowed to return home; and Kosovo would be granted autonomy.<sup>38</sup> In March of 1999, the Kosovar Liberation Army signed the accords.<sup>39</sup> Milosevic refused. NATO then used military force to back the resolution and embarked on Operation Allied Force, a second air-only campaign over the skies of Yugoslavia. While it exhibited some characteristics of the previous effort, including limited strikes, strict rules of engagement, and a complex targeting approval, there was no initial denial of flight campaign. It was coercive from the start, even if it was gradualistic in execution.

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<sup>37</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 366.

<sup>38</sup> Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 257-258.

<sup>39</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 421. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 259.

Though it failed to prevent Milosevic from achieving his war aims because he eliminated or displaced most of the ethnic Albanians by April, he did relent by June to accept the bulk of the Rambouillet accords.<sup>40</sup> A combination of increased airstrikes that opened up the Serb capital of Belgrade to intense strategic bombing, isolating Serbia from its main ally of Russia, and the implied threat of American ground units deployed to Macedonia were the deciding factors in Milosevic capitulating. Similar to Bosnia, the result of Kosovo for the United States was using air power to drive Serb belligerents to peace followed by an open-ended commitment to peacekeeping ground forces that would last beyond the Clinton presidency. Unlike Bosnia, the United States took the lead early to implement assertive action and execute definitive leadership. The United States' effectiveness in each of these campaigns was up for debate as mid-level officers discussed issues regarding the strategies, policies, and implementation of America's approach to achieve peace in the Balkans.

### *Engaging and Enlarging in the Balkans*

In 1994, President Clinton published his first National Security Strategy on Engagement and Enlargement. In it, he outlined his policy of enlarging America's global role in fostering democratic expansion, sowing stability, and actively using the military as part of preventive diplomacy and selective engagement.<sup>41</sup> One key region where the administration applied this strategy was the Balkans. Though proactive and assertive intervention did not occur right away, once the United States assumed leadership in addressing the first crisis in the crumbling

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<sup>40</sup> Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 259.

<sup>41</sup> <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (July 1994), pp. 5-6. Accessed 20 Feb 2023.

Yugoslavia, it maintained an active role throughout the decade. Contemporary mid-level officers critiqued this policy execution, implications, and results. Forty-three of the one-hundred thirty papers discussing the Balkans assessed various elements of Clinton's approach. They debate such issues as the importance of involvement in Yugoslavia to American security, justification for intervening in another nation's internal conflict, the appropriateness of Clinton's objectives, and the proper application of force to achieve those objectives. Together, these papers trace the development of United States foreign policy through the turn of the century.

Analyzing whether the crises in Yugoslavia were important enough to justify putting military personnel at risk was a common theme for officers-turned-scholars. Their assessments centered on determining the importance of Bosnia or Kosovo to American interests. Based on the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, the United States should have gotten involved militarily only if a foreign crisis was a vital national interest. Fifteen papers directly state that either of the Balkan crises did fit this category, while twenty-two disagree. However, most of those latter officers concede that there were still important reasons for the United States to involve itself in the region. Even though the majority opinion against the Balkans being a vital interest remained, the gap did narrow as the decade progressed.<sup>42</sup> Part of this shift was due to a change in perspective as to determination of what a vital interest actually was.

The aftermath of the Cold War altered the complexion of America's standing in the world, leading the United States to reconsider the criteria for assessing international security requirements. This recalibration changed the rules for determining important and vital national interests. While still greatly affected by America's long-standing policy of containment and

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<sup>42</sup> From 1993-1997, the ratio of authors expressly stating their opinion on this subject was 7:4 against the Balkans being a vital interest. From 1999-2001, the ratio lowered to 4:3 against. No papers in 1998 directly stated an opinion either way.



decades-long execution of foreign policy in response to a peer competitor, the Clinton Administration looked to open the policy aperture beyond limiting intervention to just pragmatic applications of power. Protecting economic resources or responding to direct threats to American and allied security were not the only vital interests now that the threat of communist expansion was no longer applicable. As leader of the lone world superpower, Clinton set more lofty goals of benevolent hegemony in the face of communism's retreat. How to accomplish this was still quite amorphous at the beginning of Clinton's first term, and it was not fully decided even towards the end of the decade. The crises in the Balkans occurred in the midst of these changing rules and evolving strategies.

Mid-level officers cited NATO stability and credibility as key factors that supported American global goals. NATO's initial failure in Bosnia and Milosevic's challenges over Kosovo threatened to undermine the alliance during a time when the United States and Europe were attempting to adjust to their roles in the new geopolitical environment.<sup>43</sup> Without a Soviet Union, the very reason for NATO existence was questioned. However, as Desert Storm demonstrated, the United States could neither politically nor economically afford to act unilaterally on major international security matters. NATO provided a ready-made coalition important for responding to crises, especially in Europe, but potentially other areas as well.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Maj David M. Riestler, "U.S. Forward Deployment Policy: An Assessment" (1993), p. 12. Maj Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), pp. 57-58. CDR Peter Lyddon, "The Fall and Rise of Coercive Diplomacy in the Balkans" (1996), pp. 37-38. Maj Matthew L. Sorenson, "The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies" (1996), p. 42. COL Gary E. Phillips, "Information Operations – A New Tool for Peacekeeping" (1997), p. 1, 6. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 32. Maj Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 35. Maj Michele G. Ritchie, "A Scalpel instead of a Sledgehammer: A Comparative Cultural Study on Preparing for Future Conflict" (2000), p. 23. Maj Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 89. Maj Troy R. Stone, "The Air War over Serbia" (2001), p. 13. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones" Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 99.

<sup>44</sup> NATO would demonstrate this during the War on Terror in Afghanistan throughout the following decade.

This capability was especially important as former communist nations sought different paths. Some chose a transition to democracy. Others, like Yugoslavia, allowed ethnic nationalism to guide them, resulting in increasing conflict. In an era characterized by tremendous geopolitical flux in areas experiencing a superpower interest vacuum, the Clinton Administration put stability as a top priority.

Critical elements in the Clinton Administration approach to this end were to foster democracy, protect burgeoning economic interests, and safeguard human rights. As Major Mark Seastrom points out, the latter was even more important with regards to protecting Muslims, especially given America's past policies that had brought the United States in conflict with the Islamic community in places like Iraq, Iran, and Palestine.<sup>45</sup> Combining this element with the proximity of the crises to emerging democracies as well as NATO allies, officers began to agree that the Balkans were becoming an indirect threat to direct American interests and Clinton's policy preferences. The tests began immediately with Bosnia, as did the policy discussions over involvement there.

A significant critique from officer-scholars regarding influences on American decisions for military intervention was the idea that United States action was not driven by policy-based decisions supporting national interests in Bosnia. Instead, many saw military involvement as an emotional response to media reporting of barbarous and brutal fighting. Their charge of policy by sentimentality over pragmatism was a continuation of the "do something syndrome" that began with Somalia.<sup>46</sup> Commander William McIntire coined a different phrase, calling it

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<sup>45</sup> MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (1993), pp. 154-156.

<sup>46</sup> CDR William K. McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1994), p. 13. MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (1993), p. iii. LTC Russ Howard, "United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations" (1993), p. 5. Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 21. MAJ Thomas F. Greco,

“impulsive charity.”<sup>47</sup> This seemed to overtake the axiom of intervention for vital interests that was so prevalent in military thinking.

Many papers that argue that the crises in the Balkans did not warrant the use of military force depend on the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine for validation. For these authors, Bosnia, and even Kosovo later in the decade, were peripheral conflicts that had little effect on America’s vitality, much less national survival.<sup>48</sup> They assert that wars of ideals and conscience did not justify risking American lives. They attempt to come to terms with the apparent contradiction of the emerging national strategy of using military force to support ideals with these traditional maxims for use of military power. Major defense reductions, a previous failure in Somalia, and an ongoing unresolved foreign policy dilemma in Iraq bolstered their reservations on expanded military implementation, and therefore justified a need to focus only on vital interests. This sentiment was more prevalent regarding Bosnia in the first half of the decade, but still had its supporters during Kosovo at the turn of the century, despite the growing, though cautious, acceptance of American interventionism.

That support, however, began to give way as service school attendees evolved their opinions on this subject. One of those officers, Major Leslie Burns, concedes that, though

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“Non-Military Agencies in Campaign Planning” (1996), p. 11. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, “A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5” (1996), p. 47. MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, “Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War” (1996), pp. 58-59. MAJ Matthew Sorenson, “The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies” (1996), p. 48. Maj David Angle, “No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy” (1999), p. 6. Lt Col Thomas R. O’Boyle, “The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide” (2000), p. 34. Col Charles Lyon, “Operation Allied Force: A Lesson on Strategy, Risk, and Tactical Execution” (2000), p. 5. He calls it more of a “Do something feeling” but subordinated this notion to the American leadership focus on lessening risk. Also, see chapter 2 on Somalia.

<sup>47</sup> CDR William K. McIntire, “Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations” (1994), p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> MAJ Curtis A. Lapham, “Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia” (1997), abstract. Maj Troy E. Devine, “The Influence of America’s Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine” (1997), pp. 44-45. MAJ Marvin A. Hedstrom, “Limited War in the Precision Engagement Era: The Balance Between Dominant Maneuver and Precision Engagement” (2001), pp. 9-10. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, “Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation” (2001), p. ii. Maj Troy R. Stone, “The Air War over Serbia” (2001), p. 72.

Kosovo was not at all a vital interest, it was consistent with the National Security Strategy as, “U.S. interests [in Kosovo], while not vital, were tied to its leadership within NATO and the action was consistent with national security policy on human rights.”<sup>49</sup> The statement, though presented as a critique of Clinton’s policy for military use, is also demonstrative of a growing understanding and acceptance of the use of American military power for less than vital interests, even when not in agreement.

As American interests changed in the 1990s, many mid-level officers realized that small scale contingencies were becoming more important. Beginning in 1996, their writings reflected that Weinberger-Powell should be replaced if the United States was to effectively employ military force in the new era.<sup>50</sup> Designed in part to prevent another Vietnam, Weinberger-Powell proved to be a detriment towards America’s ability to effectively enact coercive diplomacy in the Balkans. Beginning in the second half of the decade, more service school attendees were showing it to be a relic of the past. Strict adherence to its principles inhibited a coalesced military effort for anything less than responding to an obvious vital interest with overwhelming force. It did not allow for preemptive action to prevent a crisis from escalating to the level of a direct vital interest. Nor did it facilitate use of economy of force in ways that could balance the American public’s demand for a smaller military in the aftermath of the Cold War and the

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<sup>49</sup> Maj Leslie C. Burns, “Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications” (2000), p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> CDR Peter Lyddon, “The Fall and Rise of Coercive Diplomacy in the Balkans” (1996), p. 4. MAJ Matthew Sorenson, “The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies” (1996), pp. 57-58. LtCol R. A. Estillow, “US Military Force and Operations Other Than War: Necessary Questions to Avoid Strategic Failure” (1996), p.22 – he sees Engagement and Enlargement as recognition of need for new criteria, but still wants the rigor of Weinberger-Powell. MAJ Mark Buckman, “Lethal Airpower and Intervention” (1996), pp. 25-28. MAJ Curtis Lapham, “Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia” (1997), pp. 38-39. COL Michael Gilpin, “Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning” (1997), pp. 6-7. MAJ Roger Sangvic, “Weinberger Doctrine: Cold War Dinosaur or a Useful Guide for Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era?” (1999), pp. 1-3. MAJ Michael McMurphy, “Coercion and Land Power” (2000), pp. 28-29. MAJ Robert Wendel, “Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and Analyzed Through the Logic of Clausewitz” (2001), p. 37. The majority of other papers after 1996 discuss the need for changing perspectives, but do not discuss Weinberger-Powell directly.

emerging need to employ that instrument of power more actively in the chaotic global political climate. Even if the military forces were seemingly stretched thin, engagement in the early stages of a crisis allowed for the smaller force to effectively engage to prevent a conflict from growing to an unmanageable size.<sup>51</sup> The influence of this perspective along with the increasing experiences of participating in, and supporting, multiple operations other than war led officers to express their understanding that the military did not exist just to fight wars of national survival, but to help support and respond to changing national interests. There were, however, still issues with increasingly using a smaller military.

With the United States involved in an unprecedented amount of foreign interventions in such a short period of time, many mid-level officers in the 1990s perceived an issue of America's overreliance on the use of what Lieutenant Colonel Cooper called "the propensity to use military diplomacy....in the current New World Order."<sup>52</sup> The high military operational tempo of the early 1990s led many officers to see the United States as relying too much on military coercion without full engagement of other national instruments of power. Papers from 1993 to 1997 discussing Operation Deny Flight over Bosnia exemplified this.<sup>53</sup> They argue that,

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<sup>51</sup> MAJ Todd A. Buchs, "Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous 'Contemporary Peacekeeping' Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)" 1996, pp. 1, 6-7, 9. Maj Marc K. Dippold, "Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions" (1997), p. 22 – he sees the combination of downsizing and engagement as causing issues, so he advocates getting involved early or not at all. COL Gary E. Phillips, "Information Operations - A New Tool for Peacekeeping" (1997), pp. 16-17. Lt Col Charles W. Hasskamp, "Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. 28. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations" (1998), p. 12. Maj Edward J. O'Neal, Jr., "Educating Company Grade Officers in Military Operations Other Than War" (1999), p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> LtCol Michael G. Cooper (1993), "Military Diplomacy in the New World Order" (1993), p. 35.

<sup>53</sup> Lt Col Jaffrey B. Kohler, "Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine" (1993), p. 7. Lt Col Michael G. Cooper, "Military Diplomacy in the New World Order" (1993), p. 34. MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (1993), pp. 18-19. COL Ernest W. Fischer, "The Yugoslav Civil War" (1993), p. 32. CDR William K. McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1994), p. 3. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), p. 13. CDR Karl A. Rader, "Blockades and Cyberblocks: In Search of Doctrinal Purity Will Maritime Interdiction Work in Information Age Warfare?" (1995), p. 39. MAJ Thomas F. Greco, "Non-Military Agencies in Campaign Planning" (1996), pp. 37, 46. This was similar to critiques

without the synergy of a coordinated execution of all the elements of national power, the United States and its allies were unable to effectively address symptoms of the crisis, much less resolve root causes. While their military centricity makes them somewhat biased, the views of these officers illustrate how a growing political penchant for using the military in new and unproven ways was a risky venture for a United States struggling to execute all its available capabilities properly and effectively.

Despite the viewpoints of these officers, scholarship has since documented the effectiveness of diplomacy as an arm of American power for both Balkan conflicts.<sup>54</sup> After the execution of Operation Deliberate Force in 1995 and the subsequent success of the Dayton Accords, a growing number of officers looked to correct the misperceptions that their peers grew to believe about Bosnia.<sup>55</sup> By the time of the Kosovo intervention, officer writings in 2000 thoroughly debunk earlier papers that complained about the United States relying solely on military might and disregarding other political elements in the Balkans as they incorporate America's uses of other instruments of power into their discussions.<sup>56</sup> As evidence to support their argument, these officer-scholars use the United States' activity that persuaded Milosevic to

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of America's handling of post-war Iraq (see chapter 1). Maj David Uzzell, "Air-To-Air Force's Doctring and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), p. vi.

<sup>54</sup> For a comprehensive account of the effectiveness of the diplomatic efforts, see Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*. Others also discuss the impact of other elements of national power on the Balkans. Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, p. 190. He expands on how the US and NATO together linked force and diplomacy in Kosovo. Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 11. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 473.

<sup>55</sup> MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 76. He states that the condition for the Republika Srpska was a major diplomatic incentive. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 473. MAJ Kurt F. Miller, "Deny Flight and Deliberate Force: An Effective Use of Airpower?" (1997), p. 54. MAJ Curtis A. Lapham, "Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia" (1997), p. 44. Maj Steven M. Schneider, "Parallel Warfare: A Strategy for the Future" (1998), p. 57. LCDR Paul D. Hugill, "The Continuing Utility of Naval Blockades in the Twenty-First Century" (1998), p. 140. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 21. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), pp. 86-87. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 2. He argues that US coercive ability by air was only effective after the threat of US ground troops were in place. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 46. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), p. 40. Also, see Chapter 1 on Iraq and Chapter 2 on Somalia for a continuation of this theme.

abandon support for Serb paramilitary units as a critical element in ending the crisis in Bosnia.<sup>57</sup> The loss of their main ally helped bring the Bosnian Serbs to Dayton, not just the use of force. Milosevic went from a facilitator to a victim of United States diplomatic engagement as later American efforts helped eliminate significant Russian support for the Serb effort against Albanian Kosovars four years later with similar effect.<sup>58</sup> Years of institutional adjustments to increased deployments with fewer resources allowed for these later officers to recognize these broader efforts, unlike their predecessors who were still part of the initial shock of processing the myriad of changes resulting in discussions more internally focused on the effects on the military.

An issue that transcended the trend of accepting how the Clinton Administration was indeed progressing in its adjustment of policy to fit the new era was that flaws in the actual development and communication of United States policy adversely affected how America used its military. As with Somalia, mid-level military officer writings continuously lament President Clinton's consistent policy inconsistencies with regards to Bosnia. In total, seventeen papers directly state that the Clinton Administration lacked coherent and uniform guidance to the detriment of the American mission there. Only three refute this, but their support of Clinton in this regard is lukewarm and caveated at best.<sup>59</sup> For the overwhelming majority, their biggest hindrance was America's difficulty in translating poor Balkan policy during Clinton's first term into coherent military goals.

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<sup>57</sup> Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), pp. 3-4, 50. MAJ Kurt F. Miller, "Deny Flight and Deliberate Force: An Effective Use of Airpower?" (1997), pp. 54, 67. Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000), p. 101.

<sup>58</sup> Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 79. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 477. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 259.

<sup>59</sup> Lt Col Jaffrey B. Kohler, "Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine" (1993), p. 7, called Clinton's strategies "adequate," and that was in reference to continuing President Bush's minimal support to Operation Deny Flight. The other two, MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 64 and Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000), pp. 108-109, report there was improvement after the start of Deliberate Force to the point where policy was no longer a significant liability.

The primary concern in this area was the absence of well-defined objectives or a defined political end state.<sup>60</sup> Mid-level officers point to the contradiction of strong rhetoric but weak actions prior to Operation Deliberate Force. Additionally, there was poor articulation of both the rationale for involvement and the foreign policy itself during the operation. These had the effect of confusing the military, NATO allies, the American people, and even the Bosnians.<sup>61</sup> As officer writings demonstrate, these shortfalls impeded the implementation of military actions to support national intent. Lieutenant Colonel Philip Lindner points to one key example of how this manifested. He argues that the Clinton Administration's direction to stop ethnic cleansing was too vague and impractical for military forces, particularly air forces, to properly execute. He states in part that, "it is absolutely imperative for the political objective to be clear and unambiguous, as well as achievable," that Clinton's objectives, "do not necessarily require the commitment of military forces," and how there was "a danger of formulating policies and

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<sup>60</sup> MAJ Mark Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (1993), pp. iii, 14-15, 19. LTC Russ Howard, "United States Army Special Operations Forces Participation in United Nations' Peace-enforcement and Peace-building Operations" (1993), p. 65. MAJ Melissa Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 11. CDR William McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations: Serving the National Interest (1994), p. 21. Maj Susan Strednancky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination" (1995), p. 15. Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 25. MAJ Stephen Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 58. LtCol R. A. Estillow, "US Military Force and Operations Other Than War: Necessary Questions to Avoid Strategic Failure" (1996), pp. 3-4. He blames the National Security Strategy for making criteria for military employment too open-ended. MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 58. He states that both Bush and Clinton had "meandering policy courses." Maj Brian Lacey, et al, "Peace Operations: A New Use of Force?" (1996), p. 3. MAJ Robert B. McFarland, Jr., "Bosnia--Searching for an Exit Strategy: Is There One?" (1999), p. 1. Maj Richard Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), p. 71. Col Jeffrey Stombaugh, "Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance of the Deadline?" (2001), p. 15. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 257. He agrees by saying that Clinton inherited a bad situation and made it worse.

<sup>61</sup> MAJ Melissa A. Applegate, "Military Power in Operations Other Than War" (1994), p. 11. MAJ Stephen G. Stewart, "Safe Areas in Bosnia: Their Impact on the UN Peacekeeping Operations and the Bosnian Civil War" (1996), p. 11. Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 33. Maj John N. Sims, Jr., "Shackled by Perceptions: American's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp. 56-57. MAJ Curtis Lapham, "Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia" (1997), pp. 50-51.



objectives which are controlled by public opinion and not by national interests.”<sup>62</sup> Bombings could not prevent house-to-house roundups from happening, at least not directly. His observation also foreshadowed this same issue during the Kosovo crisis.

Despite these shortfalls, the United States ensured a resolution to the Bosnian crisis in 1995. Unfortunately, the lack of policy clarity and consistency continued, undermining peacekeeping after Dayton. The primary manifestation of these issues that mid-level officers discuss was how these shortcomings led to an open-ended peacekeeping commitment that was not tied to concrete objectives.<sup>63</sup> In fairness, as Commander McIntire discussed, it was difficult to define success in post-Cold War humanitarian and peace operations. This made identifying and eliminating root causes of the crisis in Bosnia that much more elusive.<sup>64</sup> While this did not exonerate the Clinton Administration from its underwhelming ability to develop and implement decisive Bosnia policy before or after major combat operations, it did highlight an American shortfall that transcended who was in the Oval Office: the United States, like its European allies, could not shift on the proverbial dime to a changed international landscape after nearly a half-century of Cold War.

With prior experience in engaging Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, and with a half-decade employing Engagement and Enlargement, United States policy on Kosovo was clearer and more decided than Bosnia. Using Rembouillet as a baseline, an American-led NATO

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<sup>62</sup> LTC Phillip R. Lindner, “U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In what interest... At what cost?” (1993), pp. 15-17.

<sup>63</sup> Maj John Clark, “Keeping the Peace: Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping” (1996), pp. 50-55. Maj Brian Lacey, et al, “Peace Operations: A New Use of Force?” (1996), pp. 3, 72, 78. COL Michael Gilpin, “Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning” (1997), pp. 16, 33. MAJ Michael Clidas, “The Role of Impartiality in Peace Operations” (1997), p. 39 – he argues that the lack of impartiality made peace operations higher risk for failure. Maj Richard Perry, “Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations” (1999), p. 71. He discusses issues with air peace enforcement and ground peacekeeping with regards to mission ambiguities. Col Jeffrey Stombaugh, “Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance of the Deadline?” (2001), p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> CDR William K. McIntire, “Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations” (1994), p. 24. Though he made this observation prior to Dayton, its relevance remained throughout the Clinton Administration.

pursued definitive goals that complemented other instruments of military power.<sup>65</sup> This strategy allowed implementation of an assertive coercive military campaign from the beginning that contributed to the relatively rapid success in driving the Serbs to implement a peace that included ensuring the protection of Albanian Kosovars. Overall, the mid-level officer writings about Kosovo from 1999-2001 agree that the United States developed a better policy to exercise force in resolving that conflict.

The post-conflict policies of peacekeeping, however, again left officer-scholars leery of America's future in the Balkans. They express concern over a repeat of Bosnia policies that included indefinite military commitment via continuous extension of deadlines for withdrawal of peacekeeping forces in lieu of establishing objective criteria that determined success. Also, as with officers writing on the events in Somalia, those discussing the Balkans decried the lack of preparation for military forces, in particular the peacekeepers. Nevertheless, there were key differences. The Somalia intervention was not directly intended to bring warring parties to a peaceful settlement, but to feed the populace. Somalia required peace enforcement without prior warfare to achieve this aim, whereas both Bosnia and Kosovo were peacekeeping *post bellum*. Somalia was also a fixed timeframe, albeit not by design, that Clinton instituted after the Battle of Mogadishu. Neither Bosnia nor Kosovo had an actual timeline for the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces, even though the administration continually advertised to the contrary. Despite these distinctions, little had changed from the perspective of those close to the ground level as to the overall approach the United States took in executing peace operations from the

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<sup>65</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 212. Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, p. 190. Some officers writing in the immediate aftermath introduced this idea. Maj Richard M. Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), p. 1. MAJ Viet X. Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), p. 7. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 32. Other scholarship criticizes Clinton's lack of decisiveness in Kosovo, even if overall American actions were more effective. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 367-368, 376. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 257-258.

start of the decade until the end.<sup>66</sup> Unprepared forces needed to improvise their approach, adapt to changing political conditions, and remain indefinitely, or until a major event forced America's hand. Luckily for those officers on the ground, neither Bosnia nor Kosovo devolved into a Mogadishu.

Finally, a significant policy concern was over the continuing conflicting intentions between an overall national strategy that included both military reductions and directives to prepare for two major regional conflicts, and specific Balkan policy that implemented Engagement and Enlargement. Mid-level officers feared that this practice in Bosnia and Kosovo made the United States vulnerable in its ability to fulfill national directives to prepare for two near-simultaneous conventional wars.<sup>67</sup> Based upon how the nation had been using its shrunken

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<sup>66</sup> MAJ Michael F. Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), p. 35. MAJ John M. Keefe, "Stuck in the Middle: The Operational Art of Peace Enforcement" (1995), p. 1. Maj George Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. v. Maj John S. Clark, Jr., "Keeping the Peace" (1996), p. 50. Maj David R. Uzzell, "Air-To-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), pp. vi, 2. MAJ John W. Charlton, "War of Perceptions: Integrating Information Operations into Peacekeeping Plans" (1998), pp. i, 2-3. LCDR Frederick D. Shelton and LCDR Russell T. McLachlan, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Warfare: Is the AEF Ready to Play?" (1999), pp. 3, 33, 37. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. 41. MAJ Viet X. Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), p. iii. MAJ Michele G. Ritchie, "A Scalpel Instead of a Sledgehammer: A Comparative Cultural Study on Preparing for Future Conflict" (2000), pp. 28-29. MAJ Michael L. Current, "Chaos, Complexity, and Ethnic Conflict: A Study in the Application of the Principles of Chaos and Complexity Theory to the Analysis of Ethnic Conflict" (2000), p. 2. MAJ Michael E. Mathes, "Global Challenges & Regional Responses: Organizing for the Future" (2000), pp. 2-3, 5-6. MAJ Joseph F. Birchmeier, "The Impact of MOOTW-based Unit Training on Leader Development" (2000), pp. 1-3. MAJ Tori R. Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force-- Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), p. 44. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 42. MAJ Scott T. Kendrick, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation: Has the Army Been Here Before?" (2000), p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Maj John Clark, "Keeping the Peace: Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping" (1996), p. 50 – Peace ops as ancillary to NSS directives for MRC prep. MAJ Matthew Sorenson, "The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies" (1996), p. 84 – 1994 NSS does not provide overarching principles for types of interventions. MAJ Todd Buchs, "Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous 'Contemporary Peacekeeping' Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)" (1996), p. iii. Maj Scott Lempe, "The Drawdown: Impact on Our Ability to Recruit, Retain and Sustain the Force of 2001" (1997), p. 21. LTC William L. Wimbish III, "Using Army National Guard Combat Battalions for Peace Operations" (1998), p. 1. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), pp. 40, 45. MAJ Robert B. McFarland, Jr., "Bosnia-- Searching for an Exit Strategy: Is There One?" (1999), pp. 1-2 – he discusses how open-ended commitments were sapping resources and capabilities. MAJ Michael Mathes, "Global Challenges & Regional Responses: Organizing for the Future" (2000), pp. 4-6.

military during the decade, Major Sutherland goes so far as to call this requirement, “one gigantic bluff.”<sup>68</sup> A primary reason was that, without the resources to prepare for multiple possibilities, military leaders focused on the more dangerous large-scale war scenario at the expense of the lower-risk, though higher-probability, operations other than war. Doing the reverse invited the very real possibility that units may have faltered, or even failed, in trying to meet America’s top vital interests of national security and survival. While the overall body of work that service school attendees produced on the Balkans conveys trepidation at the presidential direction to do more with less, their evolution indicates an understanding of American policy transition that, in the Balkans, represented positive growing pains.<sup>69</sup>

One consequence of this approach in the context of reduced resources was that premier combat armor units, trained predominantly in conventional war, deployed to conduct peace operations in the Balkans. For example, as Major Viet Luong and Major John Keefe discuss, given the reduced forces, the Army was driven to deploy the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, a top-tier

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<sup>68</sup> MAJ John R. Sutherland III, “Pax Americana: America’s Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony” (1999), p. 40. References author John Hillen from his Command and General Staff College curriculum.

<sup>69</sup> MAJ Edward L. Bowie, Jr., “The Influence of Political Ideology on American Defense Policy: 1783-1800 and 1989-1994” (1994), pp. 127-128. MAJ Todd A. Buchs, “Peacekeeping Operations: Is There A Need for Mechanized Forces as Part of the Peacekeeping Team?” (1995), p. 2. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, “A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5” (1996), p. 4. Maj John S. Clark, Jr., “Keeping the Peace” (1996), p. 47. COL John J. Weeden, “Security Assistance Support Providing for the National Security or A Cause of Instability: Are We At the Crossroads of Change?” (1996), pp. 7-8. MAJ Michael J. Flynn, “Battle Focused Training for Peacekeeping Operations: A METL Adjustment for Infantry Battalions” (1996), p. 43. MAJ Todd A. Buchs, “Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous ‘Contemporary Peacekeeping’ Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)” 1996, pp. 1, 6-7. MAJ Curtis A. Lapham, “Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia” (1997), pp. 50-51. Maj Marc K. Dippold, “Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions” (1997), p. 26. COL Gary E. Phillips, “Information Operations - A New Tool for Peacekeeping” (1997), pp. 16-17. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), p. 23. Lt Col Charles W. Hasskamp, “Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don’t Do Windows” (1998), pp. 25-26. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, “Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations” (1998), p. 12. Maj Edward J. O’Neal, Jr., “Educating Company Grade Officers in Military Operations Other Than War” (1999), p. 6. Lt Col William T. Eliason, “Slowing the Genie’s Spread: Reversing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (2001), p. 43.

combat unit, to conduct peace operations in Bosnia in 1998.<sup>70</sup> Not only was the division ill-prepared for a change in role, but the unit's absence from combat availability detracted from the Army's primary mission to be ready to fight a major theater war. According to observations of contemporary officers, not much changed by 2001. Major Scott Kendrick, writing soon after the end of Clinton's tenure, criticized the Army's inability to properly prepare units for duty in Kosovo as "just the most recent example...demonstrating yet again that the Army is still far from a solution."<sup>71</sup> This was the same sentiment as Major Michael Beech who, writing in 1995, lamented how the Army was "more aggressively oriented" due to the focus on major conventional war.<sup>72</sup> These observations remained consistent throughout Clinton's tenure and represent issues when regional policy, national strategy, and resource constraints conflict.

Despite these fears, because the United States did not engage in a major regional conflict, and because peacekeepers were both trained in conventional warfare and could redeploy to react to such a crisis should it have occurred, the United States was able to implement strategy from the National Command Authority even with the potential shortfalls. While the evolution of mid-level officer writings on the Balkans indicates an understanding of American policy transition that represented many evolutionary improvements, their overall body of work conveys trepidation at the presidential direction to do more with less, particularly being directed to prepare for and execute multiple actions possibly beyond their means.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> MAJ Viet X. Luong, "The Light Infantry Battalion: Facing the Dilemma of Warfighting and Operations Other Than War" (1999), p. 7. MAJ John M. Keefe, "Stuck in the Middle: The Operational Art of Peace Enforcement" (1995), p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> MAJ Scott T. Kendrick, "21st Century Transformation: Has the Army Been Here Before?" (2000), p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> MAJ Michael F. Beech, "'Quasi-War': Training Infantry Small Units for Operations Other than War" (1995), p. 35.

<sup>73</sup> MAJ Edward L. Bowie, Jr., "The Influence of Political Ideology on American Defense Policy: 1783-1800 and 1989-1994" (1994), pp. 127-128. MAJ Todd A. Buchs, "Peacekeeping Operations: Is There A Need for Mechanized Forces as Part of the Peacekeeping Team?" (1995), p. 2. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 4. Maj John S. Clark, Jr., "Keeping the Peace" (1996), p. 47. COL John J. Weeden, "Security Assistance Support Providing for the National Security or A Cause of Instability: Are We

In the midst of multiple crises, policy makers attempted to redefine American priorities, determine applicability for using force within new global parameters, and decide how alliances would continue to function without a Soviet enemy. As such, Bosnia and Kosovo demonstrated that Engagement and Enlargement went through an evolution during the Clinton years. What appeared to be a flawed concept – enlarging military engagement in the midst of the greatest force reduction since before World War II<sup>74</sup> – resulted in an exercise of foreign policy that proved a more fitting baseline for determining the use of force in the new era than the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. Despite its shortcomings during the early stages of the crisis in Bosnia, and though it never fully addressed the resource issues that put tremendous and unnecessary pressure on American military forces, Kosovo demonstrated its validity as a more appropriate foreign policy vehicle and represented a positive step in America’s adjustment to the post-Cold War world. While the trend from mid-level officer writings is that Clinton policies that drove the implementation of military force may have been on the right course by the end of the decade, follow-on peacekeeping policies remained frustratingly lackluster. Their overall conclusion was that positive policy progression in the international arena without ensuring the resources for effective execution, or at least strategies that could help compensate for this shortfall, invited the risk of future failure. There were also other ways in which issues with

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At the Crossroads of Change?” (1996), pp. 7-8. MAJ Michael J. Flynn, “Battle Focused Training for Peacekeeping Operations: A METL Adjustment for Infantry Battalions” (1996), p. 43. MAJ Todd A. Buchs, “Can the United States Be Involved in Simultaneous ‘Contemporary Peacekeeping’ Operations and Maintain the Flexibility to Respond to Two, Nearly-Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts (MRCs)” 1996, pp. 1, 6-7. MAJ Curtis A. Lapham, “Uncle Sam Deploys to Bosnia: United States National Security Interests in Bosnia” (1997), pp. 50-51. Maj Marc K. Dippold, “Air Occupation: Asking the Right Questions” (1997), p. 26. COL Gary E. Phillips, “Information Operations - A New Tool for Peacekeeping” (1997), pp. 16-17. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), p. 23. Lt Col Charles W. Hasskamp, “Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows” (1998), pp. 25-26. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, “Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations” (1998), p. 12. Maj Edward J. O’Neal, Jr., “Educating Company Grade Officers in Military Operations Other Than War” (1999), p. 6. Lt Col William T. Eliason, “Slowing the Genie’s Spread: Reversing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (2001), p. 43.

<sup>74</sup> For specifics on force reductions under George H. W. Bush and William J. Clinton, see Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 606-609.

political influence during a period that saw low public tolerance for flexing international muscle affected the prosecution of Balkan military interventions.

### *The O’Grady Factor and the Impact of Somalia*

On 2 June 1995, Serb forces shot down Air Force Captain Scott O’Grady’s F-16 fighter jet while part of an Operation Deny Flight sortie over Bosnia. He successfully ejected and managed to evade capture for six days until a Marine search and rescue team found the pilot and evacuated him to safety.<sup>75</sup> Many of O’Grady’s contemporaries observe how, during the entire time he was evading Serb forces, the news media seemed obsessed with tracking the progress of finding this downed pilot.<sup>76</sup> They reported witnessing how news outlets like CNN had continual updates throughout their 24/7 news broadcasts that contributed to a nation-wide obsession over him. As Major Sims observed, when this one man was rescued, there seemed to be a national euphoria surrounding it.<sup>77</sup> As the American media focused their attention on the incident, military leadership of Air Forces South (the military command in charge of air operations in Southern Europe that included Bosnia) determined that “the risks involved in further overflights were not commensurate with the gains.”<sup>78</sup> This was one manifestation of what mid-level officers saw as a fixation with one possible casualty being symptomatic of the broader issue affecting

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<sup>75</sup> For specific details see Dario Leone’s “F-16 down: Scott O’Grady explains how he was shot down over Bosnia,” <https://theaviationgeekclub.com/f-16-down-scott-ogrady-explains-how-he-was-shot-down-over-bosnia/> (accessed 21 Feb 2023).

<sup>76</sup> MAJ Kevin S. Woods, “Limiting Casualties: Imperative or Constraint?” (1997), p. 6. Maj Troy E. Devine, “The Influence of America’s Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine” (1997), p. 53. Maj John N. Sims, Jr., “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), pp. 58-59. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, “War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare” (2000), p. 60.

<sup>77</sup> Maj John N. Sims, Jr., “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> Maj John N. Sims, Jr., “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), p. 58. He references a 9 February 1996 interview with Vice Admiral Norman Ray who was the Deputy Chairman of the NATO military Committee during Operation Allied Force.

American foreign policy in the Balkans which was how America's casualty aversion directly influenced senior decision makers, both military and civilian.<sup>79</sup>

The concerns over leadership's oversensitivity to casualties began with the Bush Administration. Even before the Battle of Mogadishu (see chapter 2), American leadership was apprehensive about how casualties, even limited ones, could have derailed American foreign policy goals resulting in a repeat of previous disasters such as Lebanon.<sup>80</sup> Major Timothy Livsey, writing in May of 1993, discusses how Americans would not tolerate high casualties and states, "As a result, the political decision to put U.S. ground combat forces in harms [sic] way is now harder to reach..."<sup>81</sup> Months later, the bloody failure in Africa magnified underlying concerns to not just influence, but drive foreign policy implementation in the Balkans, even prior to Operation Deliberate Force. Combined with the aforementioned concerns about how the American public's will for fighting other people's wars was low, it led United States leaders to impose strict restrictions on risk to American warfighters.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Overall, 55 of the 130 papers discuss the impacts of casualty aversion on American strategy in the Balkans. The four referenced earlier regarding the media coverage of O'Grady's rescue specifically discuss the shutdown as representative of America's oversensitivity to casualties that had an adverse effect on Balkan strategy. Two, Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), pp. 43-44, and Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), p. 31, reverse the cause-effect analysis of the others as they posit that the limits that the United States and NATO put on the mission during Deny Flight is what resulted in O'Grady's shutdown.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Maj Kurtis D. Lohide, "Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia" (1993), pp. 21-22, written prior to the Battle of Mogadishu, devotes his entire second chapter to casualty aversion.

<sup>81</sup> MAJ Timoth D. Livsey, "Air Occupation: A Viable Concept for Campaign Planning?" (1993), p. 7. He references a 1992 speech from his curriculum by Harry Summers who discussed the impact of Vietnam and the Gulf War as setting a precedent of low casualties making it more difficult to commit ground forces, including in the Balkans.

<sup>82</sup> Capt James O. Poss, "Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?" (1994), p. 8. LCDR David W. Gruber, "A Methodology for the Transition from National Strategy to Adaptive Force Packaging" (1994), p. 77. Maj Brooks L. Bash, "The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping" (1994), p. 11. CDR William K. McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1994), p. 13. Later papers reinforced this idea. Maj Troy E. Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. 23. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), p. 25. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 17. Maj David R. Uzzell, "Air-To-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), p. 13. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Air Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 27. MAJ



The other major political factor that went hand-in-hand with casualty aversion was a concern over significant enemy casualties and collateral damage. The weather and terrain in the Balkans contributed to difficulties in bombing accuracy. Forest covered hills, low clouds, and periods of rain made target identification problematic, and therefore increased the chances of stray bombs, putting civilian facilities, and especially lives, in greater danger. This concern led to restrictions that directed pilots to drop their bombs only if there were ideal conditions that all but guaranteed that only the intended target would be struck. One effect that Commander William McIntire observed, and later officer-scholars would also conclude, was that imposing these significant limitations actually increased risk, which seemed to contradict policy that emphasized casualty limitations. Not only did pilots have to loiter longer in dangerous airspace to try and make a perfect shot, but more surface-to-air missiles remained intact because of restrictions on bombing.<sup>83</sup> This approach also reduced coercive effects on belligerents, and extended the conflict, which resulted in more suffering and death. While the rules relaxed somewhat during the more aggressively executed Deliberate Force, both American and European leaders kept a heightened political sensitivity towards anything that could have been considered to be excessive force, mistargeting civilian infrastructure, or unnecessary risk.

The extreme emphasis on pilot safety and avoiding collateral damage drove a climate where military officers could only conduct war under near-perfect conditions. Otherwise, the default option was to abort the mission. Mid-level officers lamented how many aircraft returned to base without having dropped any bombs, reducing the coercive effects of the flights, and

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Roger N. Sangvic, "Weinberger Doctrine: Cold War Dinosaur or a Useful Guide for Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era?" (1999), p. 3. He points to Somalia as the main reason for added caution.

<sup>83</sup> CDR William K. McIntire, "Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations" (1994), p. 13. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), pp. 43-44.

subsequently of the entire intervention.<sup>84</sup> For them, United States policy called the potential loss of a single pilot a political crisis. This view directly affected how leadership conducted operations in the region. The impact on some military commanders was to tell their pilots to put caution over mission as “there was nothing worth dying for in Bosnia.”<sup>85</sup> However, this approach also created a great contradiction in Bosnia as Major Sims reports how “during bombing runs, U.S. pilots were to accept *personal* risk in order to reduce the risk of ‘collateral damage’ to civilians.”<sup>86</sup> Remaining longer in the area of highest vulnerability in order to ensure near-perfect bomb dropping conditions made the pilots more susceptible to ground fire. Overall, America’s priorities for controlling the execution of the air war in order to have minimal risk, minimal damage, and maximal effect seemed at odds.

Another factor, as several mid-level officers point out, was how the issue on limiting strikes in Bosnia had as much to do with maintaining NATO cooperation as it did with concerns over American public opinion regarding casualties and excessive force. NATO nations, too, had similar concerns, and some were even more risk averse with the use of airpower than the United States due to their own domestic and foreign policy concerns.<sup>87</sup> A primary manifestation was how the international political situation led to an inefficient bureaucratic system of target identification that allowed many nations a chance to veto air strikes.<sup>88</sup> This prevented timely

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<sup>84</sup> Maj George Kramlinger, “Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement” (1996), p. 67. Maj Mark Bucknam, “Lethal Airpower and Intervention” (1996), p. 47. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, “Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?” (1997), p. 37. Maj Michael E. Tallent, “Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 34. Maj John Sims, “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s [sic] Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), p. 31.

<sup>85</sup> Maj Troy E. Devine, “The Influence of America’s Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine” (1997), p. 54. She quotes an article in the Army Times by Rick Maze who reported this as a common quote from military commanders to their subordinates who flew combat missions.

<sup>86</sup> Maj John Sims, “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s [sic] Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), pp. 31-32.

<sup>87</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, pp. 184-185. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 446. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff*, p. 96. Haass does not mention NATO casualty aversion nor fear of collateral damage directly, but discusses the political issues within NATO that reduced effectiveness of the intervention.

<sup>88</sup> Maj George D. Kramlinger, “Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement” (1996), p. 58. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, “Targeting for Effect: Is There

military responses to changing conditions on the ground, even though it did help maintain alliance solidarity. It also had a political advantage as it allowed the Clinton Administration to cater to domestic public opinion by implementing restraint without assuming full blame from critics who attacked the military limitations as retarding rapid results.

The reasoning behind acquiescing to this cautious and cumbersome approach that put further constraints on military execution did not satisfy military professionals like Major Michael Tallent. He was a fighter pilot who would go on to command the 94<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron in 2002 supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Writing in 1997, he illuminated how many American combat aircraft flying over Bosnia had technologically superior all-weather capabilities that rendered some of the more restrictive rules of engagement, and therefore the accompanying micromanagement, unnecessary.<sup>89</sup> Despite the technology available to overcome many obstacles in conducting a bombing campaign in Yugoslavia while meeting political goals, the reality was that NATO and American leadership refused to take chances in exercising military action in Bosnia. As Major John Sims, writing just three months after Major Tallent, reported, “Every bomb was a ‘political’ bomb....”<sup>90</sup>

Despite the suboptimal path that combat forces had to traverse, the United States and its NATO allies managed to use military force to successfully bring the warring parties to peace talks in Dayton, Ohio. The Dayton Accords was a significant success for the Clinton

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an Iceberg Ahead?” (1997), MAJ Kurt F. Miller, “Deny Flight and Deliberate Force: An Effective Use of Airpower?” (1997), pp. 39-40, 44. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), p. 26. Maj Richard M. Perry “Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations” (1999), p. 67. Maj Peter W. Huggins, “Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering Conventional Wisdom” (2000), pp. 93-94, 99. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, “War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare” (2000), p. 51. He adds that these issues continued during Kosovo operations. Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 105.

<sup>89</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, “Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 34.

<sup>90</sup> Maj John Sims, “Shackled by Perceptions: American’s [sic] Desire for Bloodless Intervention” (1997), p. 63. He reports what General Ryan, the commander of Operation Allied Force, understood about the bombing campaign.

Administration in asserting American leadership. The agreement did not, however, prevent future violence in other parts of the crumbling Yugoslavia, and the United States again had to contend with issues surrounding casualty aversion, this time in engaging Serb forces in Kosovo who attempted to cleanse the population of ethnic Albanian Muslims. While the United States and NATO, once they decided to use military force, did immediately initiate a coercive campaign, they again imposed strict rules of engagement to limit friendly casualties and collateral damage. As Majors Jeffery Gingras and Tomislav Ruby illuminated, American leaders recognized that NATO needed to maintain the moral high ground during the Kosovo campaign, or otherwise lose legitimacy and risk America's global standing as a more benevolent superpower.<sup>91</sup> In spite of this significant factor, most officers writing about Kosovo still debated impacts of the effects resulting from issues with casualty aversion on strategic accomplishments in this second Balkan campaign.<sup>92</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Philip Ruhlman discusses a case of déjà vu as America began its bombing campaign. Four years after the O'Grady shootdown, the capture of three American soldiers deployed to Macedonia near the Kosovo border created a similar effect on America. The nation again became captivated as Reverend Jesse Jackson led a team to negotiate their

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<sup>91</sup> Maj Jeffrey L. Gingras & Maj Tomislav Z. Ruby, "Morality in Modern Aerial Warfare" (2000), p. 46.

<sup>92</sup> Many papers cover similar issues with casualty aversion and fear of collateral damage on effectiveness as with Bosnia. Maj Richard M. Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), p. 71. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. 42. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), pp. 35-36, 43. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 4. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), pp. 33-34, 40. Col Charles Lyon, Operation Allied Force: A Lesson on Strategy, Risk, and Tactical Execution" (2000), pp. 3-5, 7. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), pp. 60-61. Col Stephen L. Wolborsky, "Swords into Stiletos: The Battle Between Hedgers and Transformers for the Soul of DoD" (2000), pp. 43, 57. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Isolate Before an Urban Attack" (2000), pp. 2-3, 10. MAJ Marvin A. Hedstrom, Jr., "Limited War in the Precision Engagement Era: The Balance Between Dominant Maneuver and Precision Engagement" (2000), pp. 7, 45. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal with Military Distasted for Gradual Escalation" (2001), pp. 18-19. Maj Robert F. Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and Analyzed through the Logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. I, 13-14. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), pp. 26-27.

return.<sup>93</sup> The importance the media put on recovering these three soldiers, especially since the American contingent that went to secure their release had at its helm a significant and popular leader, gave the impression that the political will to continue the intervention rested on returning these American servicemen unharmed. The incident punctuated the effect of the hyper-concerns over casualties that the O'Grady shutdown first exemplified, and subsequent officer writings demonstrated their unease over the public's unrealistic expectations for a clean war, especially since the overwhelming victory over Iraq in 1991.<sup>94</sup>

One manifestation of the impact casualty avoidance that was unique to the latter Balkan campaign was the NATO restriction to protect aircraft by having them fly at altitudes greater than 15,000 feet. Officers debated this decision in their papers. To some, it appeared to represent a dichotomy in America's approach, but actually demonstrated that lowering friendly casualties was a higher priority than reducing collateral damage.<sup>95</sup> Reason seems to demonstrate that higher altitudes keep pilots safer, but increase the risk for collateral damage. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas O'Boyle, an Air Force fighter pilot, in discussing the issue, even pointed to senator and Vietnam fighter pilot John McCain's criticism of the strategy as reducing the effectiveness of bombing in driving the Serbs to cease the violence.<sup>96</sup> However, he also argued,

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<sup>93</sup> Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), pp. 60-61.

<sup>94</sup> A Rand study published in 2002 entitled *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo, 1999*, insists that high casualties would have undermined public opinion (p. 46). However, various polls from April through May 1999 indicate that Americans were less interested in Kosovo, but were also divided on using higher-risk ground forces. This could have indicated that low casualties kept their interest level down, but the fact that there was support for higher risk tactics suggests the reality was much more nuanced.

<sup>95</sup> Maj Leslie C. Burns, "Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications" (2000), pp. 21-22. This officer argues that this was a physical sign of NATO trepidation that buttressed Milosevic's resolve. Col Charles Lyon, "Operation Allied Force: A Lesson on Strategy, Risk, and Tactical Execution" (2000), pp. 8-9, 19, 23-24, 28. He reports how he and fellow combat squadron commanders wrestled with the implied limits and negative effects of a zero-casualty mindset while still trying to get the job done. MAJ Kemp L. Chester, "Rights and Wrongs: Adopting Legitimacy as the Tenth Principle of War" (2000), p. 32. He sees this as a sign of lack of legitimacy. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 26.

<sup>96</sup> Lt Col Thomas R. O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), p. 21.

along with another forward-looking combat pilot, Marine Major Michael O'Halloran, that technology had come a long way since McCain flew. Precision munitions and advanced targeting systems allowed for equivalent accuracy at higher altitudes as it did at lower.<sup>97</sup> By properly leveraging technology, these individuals saw a way to use military means more assertively to increase effectiveness in meeting foreign policy goals in Kosovo while still ensuring sensitivity to the political element of protecting both pilots in the air and civilians on the ground. Unfortunately, politics drove greater risk aversion, regardless of the promises of properly applying modern technology.

Another mid-level officer observation was how limitations allowed Milosevic to control the tempo of operations more effectively than the Serbs did in Bosnia. He was continually ahead of the United States in the information war and constantly forced America and NATO on to the defensive. His exploitation of American public concerns over collateral damage through the use of propaganda became an asymmetric attack against the United States.<sup>98</sup> Any mistargeted bomb found its way into the news cycle, and the Serbs were excellent at spinning the event to paint the United States and NATO in the worst possible light. What had been in past conflicts considered accepted misfortunes of war, such as World War II stray bombs hitting schools in German-occupied territory, took on the appearance of war crimes in Kosovo. This perception amplified American and NATO leadership's concerns over collateral damage. Had the air war lasted longer than it did, it was possible that Milosevic's information operations campaign would have

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<sup>97</sup> Lt Col Thomas R. O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), pp. 18-21. Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, "A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 2. He states that this technology, used properly, delivered necessary effects of quick, low risk, decisive victory.

<sup>98</sup> Maj Robin F. Grantham, "Air War Over Serbia: It is Important to Win the Information War" (2000), p. 5. Maj Wayne A. Larsen, "Serbian Information Operations During Operation Allied Force" (2000), p. iv. CAPT J. Stephen Hoefel, "U.S. Joint Task Forces in the Kosovo Conflict" (2000), pp. 14-15. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 12. He also stated that the limitation of not using ground forces prevented Milosevic from being able to more effectively exploit NATO because it limited additional collateral damage and the potential for more propaganda exploiting ground forces overstepping their bounds, actual, perceived or concocted (p. 53).

been able to cause NATO to further restrict operations. Instead, after seventy-eight days, NATO airpower pushed Milosevic to accept peace terms.

While a casualty-averse approach did prevent American combat deaths and did not greatly hinder winning the war, it had drawbacks, including limiting America's role in securing the peace. Many mid-level officers argue how applying restrictive rules of engagement affected the effectiveness of the follow-on peacekeeping efforts as it had the air campaign.<sup>99</sup> Soldiers and Marines deployed to help enforce the peace agreements could not use the safety of vertical distance to protect them. As such, as several officer-scholars discussed, American leadership put force protection as the most important aspect of the military mission to the point where it inhibited the servicemembers' ability to assist in establishing enduring conditions for lasting peace.<sup>100</sup> American military personnel failed to actively interact with the citizenry and therefore could not establish a rapport critical to balancing the stick that tanks and military hardware presented to potentially violent actors wanting to defy the peace deal, with the carrot of

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<sup>99</sup> Maj David R. Uzzell, "Air-To-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), pp. 6-7. Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 77. Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 34. MAJ Kurt F. Miller, "Deny Flight and Deliberate Force: An Effective Use of Airpower?" (1997), pp. 53-54. Maj John N. Sims, Jr., "Shackled by Perceptions: American's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), p. 55. Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), pp. viii, 37. Maj Troy E. Devine, "The Influence of America's Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine" (1997), p. 54. She concludes that this approach led commanders to become even more gun-shy and restrictive. Maj John N. Sims, Jr., "Shackled by Perceptions: American's Desire for Bloodless Intervention" (1997), pp. 60-61. Maj David R. Hinson. "U.S. Military Interaction with Humanitarian Assistance Organizations During Small-Scale Contingencies" (1998), p. 19. Lt Col Thomas R. O'Boyle, "The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide" (2000), p. 2. He blames the media for exacerbating myths of wanton air destruction forcing changes to ROE. Maj Charles K. Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2000), pp. 2, 14, 53. He argues that peacekeepers focused on force protection were unable to effectively do their jobs. Col Charles Lyon, "Operation Allied Force: A Lesson on Strategy, Risk, and Tactical Execution" (2000), pp. 2-3. Maj Troy R. Stone, "The Air War over Serbia" (2001), p. 72. Maj Robert F. Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> MAJ Morris T. Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), p. 6. Maj Charles K. Hyde, "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers" (2000), pp. ii, 18. MAJ Perry D. Rearick, "Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2001), p. ii, 2, 6. Maj Robert F. Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. 13, 29-30.

developing relationships that assured the people that armed Americans were there for protection rather than aggression. Also, as Americans holed up in mini fortresses, they alienated allies who were doing the hard work of active peacekeeping. As Major Hyde reported, allied peacekeepers ridiculed how the Americans stayed in “Disneyland” while they themselves took all the risks by living among the people.<sup>101</sup> Because of this approach, as well as the limitations during combat operations, mid-level officers expressed a similar concern as they had about the Somalia retreat: they worried that the message these actions conveyed would embolden future adversaries.<sup>102</sup> By prioritizing protection of military forces over mission accomplishment, America could have been inviting asymmetric attacks from an enemy willing to use bombs and not just propaganda, which in turn would have cost more lives in the long run.

Mid-level officers were convinced that American leadership at the highest levels directed the military to avoid risk in carrying out its missions in the former Yugoslavia. Attempting to do so rather than managing risk, whether in the inherently dangerous actions associated with combat, or the more permissive, but still hazardous, task of peacekeeping, invited overly conservative actions which, in the end, could actually increase risk both to combatants and to achieving the goals of the intervention. This was a primary message from the officer-scholars writing about the Balkans. Still, there were officers who understood the changing political

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<sup>101</sup> Maj Charles K. Hyde, “Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers” (2000), p. 18. Concepts reinforced by MAJ Perry D. Rearick, “Force Protection and Mission Accomplishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (2001), pp. 19-20. He states that the US showed it was willing to get the glory without doing the dirty work. MAJ Morris T. Goins, “Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?” (1999), p. 6. MAJ Todd A. Buchs, “Peacekeeping Operations: Is There A Need for Mechanized Forces as Part of the Peacekeeping Team?” (1995), p. 77. He argues that this happened also in Bosnia.

<sup>102</sup> Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, “A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower” (1999), p. 23. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, “Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony” (1999), p. 41. Maj Charles K. Hyde, “Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and Senior Military Officers” (2000), pp. ii, 2. Lt Col Thomas R. O'Boyle, “The War of the Tiger and the Elephant: When the Military and the Media Collide” (2000), p. 19. CAPT J. Stephen Hoefel, “U.S. Joint Task Forces in the Kosovo Conflict” (2000), p. 20. Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 128.



context that required more prudent military action. They accepted risk intolerance and casualty aversion as part of the new geopolitical environment and, despite this phenomenon of needing to drive the number of American casualties during combat to zero, believed in the importance of small-scale operations like Bosnia.<sup>103</sup> They pushed the military to adjust to a new era and to work within the constraints that came with it, including the political limitations of casualty and collateral damage aversion.

The Somalia Effect discussed in Chapter 2 proved alive and well in Europe during the Clinton Administration. In each intervention in the crumbling Yugoslavia, the United States was able to overcome its inhibitions at employing combat power to achieve its goals, but in ways that negatively impacted the overall military mission. However, it did prove to help minimize and overcome political challenges. It prevented reduced public will from ambushing broader regional goals, and aided keeping a diverse NATO coalition coalesced. The United States

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<sup>103</sup> Maj George Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), pp. v., 1. He says the US needed new approach like SCAP. Maj Michael E. Tallent, "Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 35. He argues that air planners needed to adjust to political situation and recommend better actions. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 17. He shows this was a tough problem as the US needed to participate, but also needed to maintain public support. Maj Richard M. Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), pp. 2-3, 67, 71. He argues that Dual Key, not Rules of Engagement, was the issue as NATO could design ROE the right way to meet all goals. MAJ Morris T. Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), p. 3. He says the biggest lesson from 1990s casualty aversion is the military needed to give the NCA better advice. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 3. She asserts that decisive use of airpower may no longer have been applicable in limited conflicts where goal was to coerce. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 12, 47. He states how NATO rejected overwhelming force because goal was to show Milosevic he would lose more by fighting than negotiating, not to destroy Serbia and that a scalpel better was suited than a saw. Maj Jeffrey L. Gingras & Maj Tomislav Z. Ruby, "Morality in Modern Aerial Warfare" (2000), p. 46. They state that to keep the moral high ground, the US needed to avoid collateral damage. MAJ Marvin A. Hedstrom, "Limited War in the Precision Engagement Era: The Balance Between Dominant Maneuver and Precision Engagement" (2001), p. 45. He argues that excessive, inappropriate use of firepower was more damaging to the United States than the enemy. Maj Robert F. Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), pp. i, 34-35. He asserts that the military could and should have understood the restraints and worked to minimize its adverse effects on mission accomplishment, and that this may have made the military's job harder, but it was a fallacy that political restrictions prevented the military from accomplishing its goals as military leaders took force protection emphasis too far and inhibited themselves.

demonstrated that it did learn to better deal with these political effects of casualty aversion, low public desire for broader military interventions, and collateral damage avoidance that typified post-Cold War combat operations as it progressed from indecisiveness in Bosnia to regulated boldness in Kosovo. One major effect of the self-imposed limitations that the wariness over casualties and risk aversion produced redefined the American way of war during the 1990s.

### *To Air is American*

Casualty aversion influenced one of the most profound policy decisions that affected not only American military involvement in the Balkans, but also significantly influenced the establishment of a primary characteristic of Clinton era interventionism – the choice to forego United States ground units during combat operations in favor of the safer air-only option. While NATO members committed peacekeeping forces during Operation Deny Flight, the Bush Administration contributed only limited air power, which President Clinton initially continued. After two years in office, President Clinton, even while pushing for greater involvement, set policy for an air-only American-led response.<sup>104</sup> This set the stage for Operation Deliberate Force. The risk of casualties was not the only concern. The world could have seen ground units as an occupying force from a potentially imperialistic lone superpower. There was also the very practical measure that it was easier to control, or even stop, an air campaign than a ground war. Retreating aircraft took hours or even minutes to leave. Ground forces took much longer, and there were consequences for rolling through territory with armor and infantry. As the American air-only option yielded success in Bosnia, it became the default Clinton position heading into

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<sup>104</sup> Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 184. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 199, 225. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 252. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 103.

Kosovo as the president publicly ruled out ground forces at the onset.<sup>105</sup> Because of these choices, officer-scholars debated the decision to use only American airpower in both Balkan crises, the effectiveness of that decision, and even the presumption that airpower alone was the sole military component that allowed NATO to achieve its aims.

From 1993 through 2001, there were fifty-six papers that discussed the merits and shortfalls of using only American air forces to counter Serb aggression. Of those, only nine, all of whom were Air Force officers, directly stated that its sole use was the reason the United States achieved decisive victory, undoubtedly biased by their service affiliation. Thirty-one others assessed that, though important, it was either not the right choice, or it was only part of the reason that the Serbs acquiesced. This includes sixteen Air Force leaders who broke with their service's position on air forces finally being able to achieve what early airpower theorists such as Giulio Douhet, Billy Mitchell, and Hugh Trenchard prognosticated: winning a war solely from the air.<sup>106</sup> The remaining papers address the issues and merits surrounding the decision without definitely affirming a positive or negative position. Their debates show how these contemporary observers were attempting to come to grips with how American strategy translated into effective action upon implementation.

One of the primary questions that mid-level officers asked regarded the accuracy of the notion that Bosnia or Kosovo were airpower victories without the need of ground forces. In Bosnia, many discussed how American success would not have been possible without the

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<sup>105</sup> Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 60. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 423-424. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 211. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 623 Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 263. He specifically states that The House voted to keep Clinton from sending ground troops without congressional approval.

<sup>106</sup> The breakdown of other services includes 11 Army, 2 Navy, and 2 Marine Corps. For information on early airpower theorists see Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans Dino Ferrari (Air University Press, 2019) and David R. Mets, *The Air Campaign: John Warden and the Classical Airpower Theorists* (Air University Press, 1999).

Muslim-Croat Confederation army advances.<sup>107</sup> During Operation Deny Flight, Serb forces occupied great swaths of Muslim and Croat territory, providing them a position of strength. The Confederation's ground campaign, even though partly enabled by Operation Deliberate Force, is what directly threatened the Serbian position. For example, the Confederation's taking of Krajina in August of 1995 was a major shift in the conflict as it removed key gains Serbs enjoyed for four years.<sup>108</sup> As Major Michael Stewart summed up, Bosnian Serbs did not want to negotiate from a further weakened position by losing more territory and influence because of enemy ground advances.<sup>109</sup> In essence, the Croat-Muslim Confederation armies served as proxy ground forces for the United States in a combined air-ground military attack, even if they were not coordinated.<sup>110</sup>

A similar, but not equivalent, dynamic occurred in Kosovo. The Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA), an Albanian Kosovar militia group, was the ground component opposing Serb military and police forces that worked to rid Kosovo of its Muslim population through violence, formal deportation, forced exoduses, and executions. The KLA was far from just an innocent party as they used terror attacks in part to provoke Serb atrocities in order to gain international sympathy and support.<sup>111</sup> Despite their tactics, the United States supported this group's efforts as

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<sup>107</sup> Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), pp. 3-4. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 76. MAJ Kurt F. Miller, "Deny Flight and Deliberate Force: An Effective Use of Airpower?" (1997), pp. 54, 67. Maj Richard M. Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), p. 59. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Air Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 31. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), pp. 17-18. Scholarship confirms this assessment as well. Anthony Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots: The Limits of Airpower* (Brookings Institute Press, 2019), pp. 2-3, 34, 41. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. 255, 259. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, p. 128. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 621.

<sup>108</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 348-251. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, pp. 105, 128. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 621. Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, p. 186.

<sup>109</sup> MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 76.

<sup>110</sup> Anthony Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots: The Limits of Airpower* (Brookings Institute Press, 2019). He discusses concepts and issues regarding Croat-Muslim and KLA proxies throughout his book.

<sup>111</sup> Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, pp. 47-48, 81. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 366, 397.

a counter to Serb aggression on the ground. Unlike the Croat-Muslim Confederation, the KLA fought more as urban insurgents. They presented meaningful opposition to Milosevic's forces, but did not retake territory nor directly threaten Serb gains. Ironically, it was American ground forces that were the actual threat.

KLA efforts and the escalation of bombing intensity from pinpricks to flesh wounds had an effect on Milosevic, but some mid-level officers observe that a key factor in driving the Yugoslavian president to the negotiating table was the implied threat of invasion. American rhetoric prior to executing Operation Allied Force that renounced the use of ground forces gave way to Army deployments to the region. This accompanied new language from President Clinton in May of 1999 implying that all options were available, and a diplomatic effort that had Russia convince Milosevic that an American invasion was a possibility. These actions made an impression on Milosevic as he did not break his steadfast defiance until after these events.<sup>112</sup> While the kinetic energy of bombs on Belgrade had a significant effect, these officers argue that it was the potential energy of armor and infantry deployments that ended the conflict. While it did not have the same direct impact of armed forces gaining ground as in Bosnia, it helped demonstrate how Kosovo, like Bosnia, was not an air-only victory, but a combined win.

Even with the acknowledgement by some officer-scholars that the United States leveraged not only ground military capabilities, but other instruments of power as previously discussed, in order to achieve two major foreign policy goals in Eastern Europe, there was no doubt that the use of air forces was the mainstay of American power projection under the Clinton

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<sup>112</sup> MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), pp. 86-87. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 2. He asserts that US coercive ability by air was only effective after the threat of US ground troops was in place. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 46. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), p. 40. He reports that Clinton stated that the US would not take any option off the table even though he also said the US would stick to a bombing campaign.

Administration. Its use as the default military application stemmed from an environment that included military budget cuts, force reductions, and reduced public will to employ combat power in the absence of an existential threat that the Soviet Union posed for many years.<sup>113</sup> Given the overwhelming success of air forces during Desert Storm, which maximized military effects and minimized risk, and the growing track record of Tomahawk Diplomacy the administration was developing, airpower became a very attractive option.<sup>114</sup> For politicians wanting to exercise American power in the 1990s, it was a very tempting tool.

Major Troy Devine expressed the apprehension of her peers as she saw the exaggeration of airpower capabilities as having turned doves, like Clinton and other Vietnam-era anti-war advocates, into hawks at the expense of endangering aviators by too readily choosing military action because of the perceived low-risk engagement through the air.<sup>115</sup> The exchange between then ambassador to the United Nations Madeline Albright and Colin Powell highlights this point. Albright confronted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was reluctant to risk military personnel for less than vital interests. In response she said, “What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?”<sup>116</sup> The relative shelter of the

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<sup>113</sup> Maj Michael E. Tallent, “Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 4. Maj David R. Uzzell, “Air-To-Air Force’s Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation” (1997), p. vi.

<sup>114</sup> Maj Mark Bucknam, “Lethal Airpower and Intervention” (1996), p. 45. Maj Michael O. Beale, “Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina” (1996), p. 30. Maj Michael E. Tallent, “Air Occupation: An Environmental Impact Study (1997), p. 20. Maj Troy E. Devine, “The Influence of America’s Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine” (1997), p. 12. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, “Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives” (1997), p. 3. Maj Leslie C. Burns, “Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications” (2000), p. 21. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, “Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation” (2001), p. 19. He argues that the track record of Tomahawk Diplomacy decreased the credibility of the threat to Serbia.

<sup>115</sup> Maj Troy E. Devine, “The Influence of America’s Casualty Sensitivity on Military Strategy and Doctrine” (1997), p. 12. Between 1996 and 1997, 90% of the papers that criticized using airpower only discussed the political influences and how it made the decision to choose military action easier. Though the airpower critiques continued, even through Kosovo, the writings represented a shift of acceptance of airpower as the dominant choice. This indicates both an acceptance of this overall strategy and a broader acceptance of the increased operational tempo that tempered responses to look more at strategic issues and practical applications of American power projection.

<sup>116</sup> Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, p. 576.

sky enabled a politically safe military option to support Engagement and Enlargement, which some American civilian leaders appeared too quick to use and exploit.

A rapid decision to use force did not always translate into faster achievement of American interests. Several officers pointed to the way the United States implemented its air-only approach as actually having a detrimental effect. In Bosnia, because of the Croat-Muslim Confederation army presence, the impact was much less. However, there were significant repercussions in Kosovo. When the Clinton Administration decided at the onset to rule out ground forces in favor of an air campaign to end Serb ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, some mid-level officers argued that this sent mixed messages. They asserted that this declaration of NATO bombs without the use of American boots is what emboldened Milosevic to ramp up his genocidal activities since the American strategy did not present a significant direct threat to his power.<sup>117</sup> Like Saddam Hussein, Milosevic took the punishment by air free from worry of invasion, and planned to use time and propaganda to undermine the coalition against him. Unlike how the United States dealt with Iraq during the same time period, the strikes against Serb forces were not limited in duration, and they steadily increased in intensity until it reached Milosevic's breaking point. As mentioned earlier, they also eventually came with a threat of ground invasion. Unfortunately, as these officers and some later scholarship argued, many more Albanian Kosovars potentially suffered and died as a result due to the prolonged campaign.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 59 – decision prolonged the war. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), pp. 34, 40. Maj Leslie C. Burns, "Humanitarian Interventions and Just War: Legal, Moral, and Political Implications" (2000), pp. 21-22. This officer states that a ground threat would have been more effective. MAJ Kemp L. Chester, "Rights and Wrongs: Adopting Legitimacy as the Tenth Principle of War" (2001), p. 38. Maj Robert F. Wendel, "Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz" (2001), p. 13. Maj Robin F. Grantham, "Air War Over Serbia: It is Important to Win the Information War" (2000), p. 12. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 26. AJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), pp. 33-34. CAPT J. Stephen Hoefel, "U.S. Joint Task Forces in the Kosovo Conflict" (2000), p. 12.

<sup>118</sup> Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 63. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, p. 259.

What both Bosnia and Kosovo also proved to officer-scholars was that, despite triumphing militarily through the air, the United States could only ensure lasting victory on the ground. Limitations of bombing meant it could not directly stop the atrocities occurring house-to-house during periods of ethnic cleansing. Neither could it prevent these actions from recurring after any peace agreement, driving the need to deploy peacekeeping forces to ensure compliance with peace accords.<sup>119</sup> The primary choice of airpower to achieve the main objectives in Bosnia and especially Kosovo, stopping ethnic cleansing, by its very nature could not directly protect civilians from these atrocities. This required a persistent and intimate engagement. For some officers writing on the subject, this issue became part of a moral dilemma of airpower: its overwhelming firepower and limitations made it questionable to use during peace or humanitarian operations. As Major Mark Bucknam points out, despite its precision, it not only failed to stop individual atrocities and war crimes, but it lacked the discrimination that only ground forces could provide.<sup>120</sup> While the use of air forces helped to end the conflict in a relatively rapid fashion and undoubtedly saved lives, ground forces were a more practical and effective option for the specific task. However, their use was not worth the political risk.

1990s interventions met resistance from many levels, including numerous mid-level officers tasked with implementing a policy of Engagement and Enlargement at the ground level. Airpower was the Clinton Administration's answer to meet America's goals in the Balkans to diminish casualties and collateral damage. As Major Michael O'Halloran observed, "With the combination of stealthy aircraft, precision guided munitions (PGMs), global reach, and stunning

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<sup>119</sup> Between 1996 and 2001, 33 papers discuss the role and importance of ground peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as associated issues surrounding their use. LTC Philip R. Lindner, "U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans: In What Interest...At What Cost?" (1993), p. 18 and MAJ Tori R. Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force--Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), pp. 78-79. The latter officer specifically stated there was a necessity for using follow-on ground elements for peacekeeping/peace enforcement, with the former predicting its need in Bosnia even prior to Operation Deliberate Force.

<sup>120</sup> Maj Mark A. Bucknam, "Lethal Airpower and Intervention" (1996), p. 67.



technological capability, the future of airpower will carry with it the expectation to deliver on its eternal promise—rapid, low casualty, decisive victory.”<sup>121</sup> Airpower minimized political and public opposition to leveraging military force. This allowed the United States to actively engage in a changing world. However, it did not deliver on all promises all the time. It could not win a conflict alone, especially if the enemy conducted unconventional actions in small groups against civilians, especially in an urban environment. This does not mean that the answer lay in a myopic view that pursued a World War II style of total war. As actions in Bosnia and Kosovo demonstrated, the new era required a new approach. Through trial and error that included elements of design, chance, and guesswork, the Clinton Administration eventually employed the necessary combination of American military, diplomatic, and political power to address the crises and implement solutions for peace. Kosovo showed that the United States learned from Bosnia, but also that even years of post-Cold War experience still resulted in American leaders responding to complex issues with imperfect solutions. One of those solutions was the choice of using only airpower for combat.

*Different Ghosts of Vietnam: Blessings and Curses of Gradualism*

Whether it was a shadow, specter, or source for lessons, Vietnam’s influence continued to affect America’s interventions of the 1990s, including both forays into the Balkans. While some mid-level officers still tied issues with casualty aversion to Vietnam, as many did in their discussions on Somalia, the bulk of the writings focused on different impacts on American

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<sup>121</sup> Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, “A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower” (1999), p. 2.

policy and execution.<sup>122</sup> They expressed unease over Bosnia potentially morphing into another Vietnam-like quagmire. They also questioned how limitations on force represented a lack of commitment to winning, similar to what they believed happened during the Johnson Administration. Primarily, mid-level officer-scholars engaged in discourse over the effects of gradualism, the oft criticized tactic of using incremental air power that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara employed during Operation Rolling Thunder. However, as some came to realize, just because this strategy failed during Vietnam did not mean it lacked merit.<sup>123</sup> The ghosts of Vietnam made the military wary of repeating strategies from America's greatest military failure, but studying its actual history inspired many to see the potential in applying similar methods that were ill-suited for the Cold War, but could successfully meet America's national interests in a new global environment.

From the beginning of the crisis in Bosnia, there was an overarching concern, led by General Colin Powell, that committing soldiers and Marines may have set the United States up for another Vietnam-like scenario.<sup>124</sup> Several officer-scholars expressed this and other related concerns about Bosnia at the beginning of Clinton's tenure.<sup>125</sup> The President's vilification of the

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<sup>122</sup> Of the 66 papers that discuss Vietnam and the Balkans, 25 also discuss the impact of casualty aversion. Of these, over half also include other similarities to, or influences from, Vietnam, demonstrating the major impact this conflict had on mid-level officer thinking.

<sup>123</sup> MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 68. Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 80. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), pp. 6, 44. Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000), p. vi. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), p. 22. Maj Jeffrey L. Gingras & Maj Tomislav Z. Ruby, "Morality in Modern Aerial Warfare" (2000), p. 5. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), pp. 19-20. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 100.

<sup>124</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 232, 239. Richard Holbrooke, "Forward" in Derek Chollet's *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study in American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. x, xii. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp. vii-viii, 257-258. Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, p. 558.

<sup>125</sup> MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 68. MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (1993), p. 20. LTC Phillip R. Lindner, "U.S. Military Involvement in the Balkans:

Serbs beginning with his candidacy, and the initial NATO approach to support containment of their aggression, especially in Bosnia, had linkages to the early American approach towards Vietnam. The comparisons did not end there, and mid-level officers continued to discuss them after Deliberate Force and through the Kosovo intervention.<sup>126</sup> They repeatedly used the word “quagmire” and issued warnings over gradualism to argue against elevated American involvement prior to conflict, or to critique effectiveness of execution after the conclusion of hostilities. They had assumed that any strategy akin to what was used during the Vietnam conflict could lead to a repeat failure and was to be avoided at all costs.<sup>127</sup>

Some issues discussed earlier in the chapter took on new meanings when put in the context of Vietnam. A major American decision that drew a direct parallel to how America approached North Vietnam was the pledge to not commit American ground forces in offensive actions against Serbs in either Bosnia or Kosovo. Though the rationale was very different since the United States was not nearly as concerned about repeating the mistake of Korea in drawing a large enemy army into the conflict, the execution was incredibly similar to America’s attempts to use only controlled airpower in North Vietnam in order to coerce the communists into accepting

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In what interest...At what cost?” (1993), p. 23, 27. Maj Brooks L. Bash, “The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping” (1994), p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> In total, 42 papers deliberated issues with the influence of Vietnam regarding policy in Bosnia. Even after Operation Deliberate Force, several officers specifically discussed ongoing concerns about Bosnia either becoming another Vietnam, or how similarities to Vietnam could undermine peacekeeping efforts. Maj Susan E. Strednansky, “Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination” (1995), p. 13. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, “A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5” (1996), pp. 36-37. COL Michael D. Gilpin, “Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning” (1997), pp. 4-5, 14. CDR William K. McIntire, “Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations” (1994), pp. 3, 32-33. MAJ Matthew L. Sorenson, “The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies” (1996), p. 60. Maj Kenneth R. Rizer, “Military Resistance to Humanitarian War in Kosovo and Beyond: An Ideological Explanation” (2000), p. 3. He discusses a rift between the military and NCA over any fighting for less than vital interests existed since Vietnam.

<sup>127</sup> Examples include the Army Command and General Staff College 1998 curriculum that has a C500 section on *Fundamentals of Operational Warfighting* that includes lessons from Vietnam; the Naval War College Strategy and Policy syllabi from 1993-1997 that includes a lesson called *Limited War in a Revolutionary Setting: Vietnam*; the 1995 Air War College curriculum includes a comparison of military applications in Desert Storm with Vietnam; and the 1998 Air War College curriculum includes analyzing proven concepts of warfare during Vietnam in its first block of instruction.

an American-friendly south.<sup>128</sup> In each scenario, this strategy led to limited actions, micromanaged use of airpower, and increased tensions between the Commander-In-Chief and the armed forces. In Bosnia and Kosovo, by deviating from the proven formula of Desert Storm, American leaders gave the appearance at the start of each conflict that the United States lacked a clear commitment to winning, another symptom of Vietnam. In the case of Vietnam, this approach contributed to failure. In the Balkans, it made for less efficient and effective use of military forces at the tactical level, but the end result was the achievement of American goals. As such, the appearance that the United States was not dedicated to military victory was superficial at best.

Officers discussed other similarities that affected America's approach to the conflicts in Southeastern Europe. The Balkans appeared to be characterized by America getting involved in another nation's internal war that included insurgency, harsh terrain, limited direct national interests, and an absence of clear political goals. This drew eerie parallels to Vietnam during debates over Bosnian involvement. These concerns continued during the buildup to Kosovo as officers warned how a technologically inferior enemy could use asymmetric means to defeat and deter dominant airpower if the United States employed self-limiting tactics that would allow the enemy to do so. The North Vietnamese used their small air forces to lure American flyers into traps, and guerilla tactics to undermine American efforts on the ground. The Serbs lacked the capability or the opportunity to use these specific tactics, but as mentioned previously, they did effectively use information exploitation to undermine bombing efforts and attempt to weaken

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<sup>128</sup> Lt Col Mark E. Steblin, "Targeting for Effect: Is There an Iceberg Ahead?" (1997), p. 45. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 36. Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000), p. 114. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), p. 36. Maj Jeffrey L. Gingras & Maj Tomislav Z. Ruby, "Morality in Modern Aerial Warfare" (2000), p. 22. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), p. 19. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 111.

NATO solidarity. Overall, the potential for repeating past failures was a very real possibility for servicemembers. While some of these comparisons seemed less convincing than others, they do demonstrate how institutional memories of Vietnam created major concerns among the policy executors.

Other officers, however, saw that geopolitical conditions were critical elements to consider when it came to using Vietnam as a baseline for developing policy and strategy. As early as 1993 and the beginning of 1994, a handful of officers refuted the idea that Bosnian involvement was destined to become a repeat of Vietnam.<sup>129</sup> One forward-looking Army major, Matthew Duffy, even posited that restraint was a way to avoid a repeated Vietnam-like quagmire of which Colin Powell warned.<sup>130</sup> He argued that it was not until after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that the United States abandoned reasonable military restrictions as they transitioned the war from American advisors to the South Vietnamese defense efforts, to making it an American war that led to the quagmire in question. Therefore, maintaining a proper level of restraint could help ensure a positive outcome. While American-led victories in Bosnia and Kosovo proved these early visionary officers correct, as did many other officers who had the

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<sup>129</sup> MAJ Jonathan B. Hunter, "The Doctrinal Functions of Intelligence: Are They Applicable To Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations?" (1993), pp. 1-2. Maj Thomas G. Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p. 2. MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 68. Maj Kurtis D. Lohide, "Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia" (1993), pp. iii, 1-2, 6. Lt Col Jaffrey B. Kohler, "Peace-Enforcement: Mission, Strategy, and Doctrine" (1993), p. 39. LCDR David W. Gruber, "A Methodology for the Transition from National Strategy to Adaptive Force Packaging" (1994), p. 28. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), p. 13.

<sup>130</sup> MAJ Matthew J. Duffy, "Conventional Forces in the Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Arena in Central and Eastern Europe: Recommendations for the Army Helicopter Task Force Organization" (1993), p. 68. An Air Force counterpart the same year, but at a different school, Maj Kurtis D. Lohide, "Air Power: A Solution for Bosnia" (1993), p. iii, supported that, with limited airpower, Bosnia was not "another Vietnam in waiting."

benefit of hindsight,<sup>131</sup> the manner of victory was still the subject of great debate that had mid-level officers divided on the proper use of airpower in Bosnia and especially Kosovo.

Despite the comparisons and predictions about American involvement in the Balkans becoming a repeat of Southeast Asia of the 1960s, the only significant duplication in execution that played out was the use of gradual airpower. While it was a deliberate tactic during Kosovo, some, starting after the conclusion of the air campaign in 1995, argued that it began inadvertently with NATO's execution of Operation Deny Flight and transition into Deliberate Force in Bosnia.<sup>132</sup> This United Nations-sponsored, NATO executed, limited scope denial campaign was impacted by significant political involvement that resulted in major constraints, including the inability to protect NATO peacekeepers. It was not until the more assertive American-led operation that the Serbs agreed to come to Dayton. Mid-level officers parallel the American efforts to the transition from Rolling Thunder, which had minimal impact, to Linebackers I and II, which, as they understood, helped bring the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table in Paris. Major George Kramlinger even advocated that "gradualistic" coercive airpower, applied properly, actually implemented overwhelming force in a discriminating fashion which met both

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<sup>131</sup> Maj Michael O. Beale, "Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1996), p. 80. Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. iii. MAJ Morris T. Goins, "Does the perception of Casualties affect military operations in the 1990s?" (1999), p. 41. Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000), p. vi. MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), abstract. Maj Jeffrey L. Gingras & Maj Tomislav Z. Ruby, "Morality in Modern Aerial Warfare" (2000), p. 39. MAJ Gian P. Gentile, "Severing the Snake's Head: The Question of Air Power as a Political Instrument in the Post-Cold War Security Environment" (2000), pp. 18-20. Maj Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 38. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), pp. 31-32. Maj William M. Tart, "No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions" (2001), p. 111.

<sup>132</sup> Maj George D. Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), pp. v, 65. CDR Peter Lyddon, "The Fall and Rise of Coercive Diplomacy in the Balkans" (1996), pp. 4, 27. LtCol R. A. Estillow, "US Military Force and Operations Other Than War: Necessary Questions to Avoid Strategic Failure" (1996), p. 8. He describes a gradualistic approach, but does not label it as such. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), p. ii.

military axioms and political objectives.<sup>133</sup> In each case, the United States achieved, diplomatically, both its 1973 goal in France and its 1995 goal in Ohio. The difference that Major Kramlinger did not discuss was that in Vietnam, the United States did not have the political will to enforce the Paris accords. This allowed North Vietnam to invade and absorb South Vietnam within two years. In Bosnia, a combination of American will, or more accurately the absence of strong public protest against post-conflict peacekeeping, and a coalition supporting enforcement of the Dayton Accords allowed the United States to maintain a military presence to follow through on the agreement.

Unlike the employment of air power in Bosnia, Operation Allied Force in Kosovo was designed from the start to be a gradually escalating air campaign. This execution catalyzed a substantial debate starting in 1999 over the effectiveness and appropriateness of gradualism in employing air forces, and by association, the real lessons of Vietnam on this issue.<sup>134</sup> The contrast between the approaches of General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, and his air boss during the war, Lieutenant General Michael Short, Commander, Air Forces Southern Europe, exemplify the overall argument regarding the effectiveness of a limited, gradually escalating air campaign versus employment of overwhelming force to compel Milosevic to accept Rambouillet.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Maj George Kramlinger, "Sustained Coercive Air Presence (SCAP): Provide Comfort, Deny Flight and the Future of Air Power in Peace Enforcement" (1996), p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> Maj David W. Angle, "No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy" (1999), p. 6. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Air Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 32. Maj Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (2000). Maj Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), pp. 45-47. MAJ Gian P. Gentile, "Severing the Snake's Head: The Question of Air Power as a Political Instrument in the Post-Cold War Security Environment" (2000), pp. 19-31. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 1-2, 70. Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001).

<sup>135</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 426, 445-450. Clark, *Waging Modern War*, pp. 243, 364. He only alludes to the conflicting views.

Clark, by nature of his position, had to not only ensure effective prosecution of the war, but needed to work within NATO politics. This demanded less aggression and significant attention to maintaining credibility, legitimacy, and public support. Restraint was the only way to achieve these aims. Short, on the other hand, was more focused on the machinations of employing military forces. Desert Storm taught him that a vigorous air campaign from the onset that targeted not only fielded forces, but infrastructure, command and control, enemy leadership, and support assets in a robust, parallel, and overwhelming manner ensured rapid, definitive victory. Mid-level officer-scholars deliberated over these positions.

Those who argued in favor of unleashing military power in a Desert Storm-like fashion looked to lessons from Vietnam and the First Gulf War, as well as proven military principles. A mainstay of military doctrine was that restrictions extended war, which in the long term resulted in greater loss of life and chance for failure.<sup>136</sup> This was even more urgent in Kosovo where Serb police and military forces were conducting blatant ethnic cleansing without significant opposition. If the United States would not send in ground forces to stop it, the only way was to compel Milosevic to cease and desist. A gradual, limited air campaign, they argued, could not deliver rapid results, condemning more Albanian Kosovar civilians to death and dislocation. In addition, as mentioned in previous sections, Desert Storm had provided an expectation of rapid victory. This very much applied to Kosovo. Extending the conflict made the United States vulnerable to diminished public support, which ran the risk of Milosevic securing victory by American retreat, as happened in Somalia, Beirut, and Vietnam. The start of Operation Allied Force, with its limited targets and restrictions on attacking Belgrade's infrastructure despite

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<sup>136</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Dell Publishing, 1983), p. 13.



having the capability for a larger campaign, allowed Milosevic to step up efforts against Muslim civilians in Kosovo.

To some, it seemed that the United States learned lessons neither from Vietnam nor Bosnia when it came to Kosovo. They argued that the North Vietnamese and the Bosnian Serbs agreed to come to the negotiating table only after a significant escalation in airpower pressure, yet the United States was again starting from a position of using lesser force. Major Michael Johnson posited what later scholars would confirm: that the United States repeated the mistake of misjudging its adversary.<sup>137</sup> Unlike Bosnia, the traditional Serb ties to Kosovo made this region politically vital to Milosevic. This meant that anything less than a hard-fought attempt to keep Kosovo within Serbia would have meant the end of Milosevic's hold on power. As a result, the Yugoslav strongman had a high threshold when it came to being forced away from Kosovo. In the end, he proved that he would respond only to strength and overwhelming force. For many, including Short, the fact that Milosevic capitulated only after NATO ratcheted up air strikes and aggressively hit targets in Belgrade as part of a broader offensive was proof that gradualism was a failed strategy. To these advocates, repeating Desert Storm was how to win wars from the air.

For others, the strategy of gradualism, though it previously failed for one extended period during the Cold War, had a possible future in a new era.<sup>138</sup> International relations after the fall of the Soviet Union suggested that when a lesser enemy is cut off from significant support of a major sponsor, military strikes, even limited ones, had much greater effect. The lulls in bombing during Rolling Thunder allowed Vietnam to leverage Soviet support and not only repair any damage, but implement a robust air defense system that would send many American aircrew to

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<sup>137</sup> Maj Michael W. Johnson, "Clausewitz on Kosovo" (2000), p. 52. Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots*, p. 47. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 452

<sup>138</sup> Only one paper that discussed gradualism in Kosovo directly stated that it was not a viable strategy: Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Air Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), p. 32.

the Hanoi Hilton or to their deaths once the bombings resumed. In the case of Serbs in both Bosnia and Kosovo, once NATO destroyed their assets, they could neither repair nor replenish them because they did not have a sponsor like the Vietnamese had in the Soviet Union.

Even though General Short complained about wasting the vast capabilities of NATO air forces on “tank plinking,” and scholarship describes how the military in general decried this tactic, officer-scholars writing about the use of airpower in Kosovo in particular did not use this term.<sup>139</sup> While pilots executing airpower missions undoubtedly followed General Short’s lead, as Halberstam states, and expressed dissatisfaction on this seemingly ineffective use of airpower, officer-scholars, including pilots, writing about the Kosovo air campaign did not discuss this specific grievance. Only one of the forty-seven papers that examined the second Balkan intervention even mentions the term, and that was only to report General Short’s comments.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps, with some hindsight and their different perspective, these officers better understood the broader context for using military force as America approached the turn of the century.

Under the international conditions of this new era, a nation like the United States with its superior capability and destructive power could afford to gradually increase military pressure in order to balance effects on the battlefield with political and diplomatic considerations. As a result, an American-led NATO had the flexibility to use force to certain effect while still ensuring that the international community saw the effort as noble, or at least preventing world opinion from turning against the effort because of a perception that the lone superpower was indiscriminately pulverizing a small country through an abuse of power. More nations each year

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<sup>139</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 449. The term “tank plinking” refers to a complaint about putting pilots at risk, not to use the tremendous potential of airpower to achieve strategic effects, but for little more than striking insignificant targets, like random tanks. Halberstam states this was a widespread Air Force complaint.

<sup>140</sup> Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, “Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict” (2000), p. 34.

were becoming wary of America acting as world policeman.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, it was vital for the United States to demonstrate benevolence to the extent that it was possible during combat operations. Projecting an altruistic application of military force was a vital interest, and how America won its wars was as important as the win itself. That was another applicable lesson from Vietnam. There was also the practical aspect of this strategy. The United States could afford to gradually ratchet up the pressure and give diplomacy a chance without devastating Serb infrastructure that would affect civilians for years to come, as it had in Iraq. For proponents of gradualism, it was worth the risk for the United States, once committed to military action, to attempt graduated coercion as a means to dissuade Serb forces from aggression and atrocities because the political and reputational risks of executing an immediate, overwhelming campaign were even greater.

Officer scholars who supported gradualism as a viable option argued that it was the best choice to help provide the means to achieve American vital interests. This was not only to end ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, but to work with NATO to end a crisis in a way that ensured the alliance endured. While politics may have limited the bite of airpower, it did not remove the teeth. By the end of both Deliberate Force and Allied Force, the application of force had built to a point that it showed its power to maul when necessary. The Clinton Administration never eliminated the option to overwhelm an adversary by air. Instead, it maintained conditions for significant military power to back diplomatic efforts. It just did not employ this level of force immediately. Because the diplomatic situation demanded restraint, and the tactical situation allowed for flexible limitations without significant military consequences, gradualism, executed properly, had a place in this new environment.

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<sup>141</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 325.

Mid-level officer writings show that it was important that the military as an institution understood the landscape in which it was operating. This refers not to the weather and physical terrain of Yugoslavia, but to the changing weather of public opinion and the political environment. Many in the up-and-coming officer corps saw that the shock and awe traditionalists were too narrow-minded. As Lt Col Moeller observed, just because Milosevic did not relent until NATO unmuzzled airpower at the end of Allied Force does not mean that gradualism did not work.<sup>142</sup> It did. It was not the same gradual application as during Vietnam, but a more graduated approach that eschewed Rolling Thunder's long pauses and reacting to enemy responses in favor of incremental phases that, within a relatively short period of time, reached Milosevic's threshold and drove him to seek resolution.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps more innocent Muslim civilians would have been saved had the United States knocked out the lights in Belgrade on day one and pummeled the Serbs into submission. Perhaps none would have been saved had this action caused NATO unity to collapse. Supporters of the gradual, or rather graduated, campaign understood that the latter was the greater risk.

Analysis of the opinions of mid-level officers on the subject of gradualism in the context of the history of United States involvement in the Balkans during the Clinton Administration yields a conclusion that both sides were right. Bosnia showed that limited action during Operation Deny Flight did very little to stem the tide of violence. Though there were other factors involved, it took more aggressive action from the air to end that conflict. Milosevic not only reaffirmed this concept, but his stubborn adherence to his policy of removing Albanian Kosovars, even in the face of systematic destruction of his fielded forces, revealed that, absent

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<sup>142</sup> Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 1-2.

<sup>143</sup> Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 70-71.

invasion and forced regime change, only brute force from the air could persuade him to cease his actions. However, NATO would not allow these actions until the organization exhausted other options. This led to bureaucratic inefficiencies during prosecution and the overall default to gradualism. While Haass' posse of like-minded nations, as the United States formed to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, may have ensured a more efficient military campaign,<sup>144</sup> it would have failed to ensure the viability of NATO and may have risked America's international reputation. Ironically, the United States may have more rapidly won the war, but it would have lost key diplomatic battles, and perhaps even its status as a global leader.

In this new era, the more enlightened contemporary officer-scholars demonstrated that Cold War failures, properly adapted and retuned, were effective tools of international policy implementation. A gradualistic air campaign worked twice in the Balkans, first, inadvertently in Bosnia, and then with purposeful design in Kosovo. Leadership's imperfect execution, underestimation of Serb resolve, and both overconfidence in, and misunderstanding of, technology aside, the results were successful as it forced cessation of violence and ethnic cleansing. Perhaps it was Desert Storm that provided the wrong lessons, influencing senior military leaders to accept as dogma a solution more applicable to the past than the future. Instead, it was a repackaged Cold War failure used against a not-so-different asymmetric adversary under similar physical, but much changed geopolitical, conditions that provided the balanced solution for American success on several diplomatic fronts. By the turn of the century, mid-level officers showed how tactics that failed during the Cold War had a place in a world where the United States had no main adversary that would undermine its ability to successfully engage in small-scale contingencies.

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<sup>144</sup> Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff*, pp. 93-96.

## *Yugoslavia as the Metaphor for Transition*

The repurposing of Vietnam-era gradualism was one instance where, as a small but enlightened group of mid-level officers believed, the United States and NATO successfully demonstrated they could adapt to the changing global conditions of a post-Cold War world in addressing the complex problems in the Balkans. The majority of these contemporary officer-scholars illuminate many other ways in which that was not always the case. Influenced by their experiences of executing Engagement and Enlargement during the 1990s, forty-three of the one-hundred thirty officers who wrote about the Balkans saw leadership across the board as needing to accept that the post-Cold War environment was radically different. For example, Commander Peter Lyddon points out that initial NATO action in Bosnia was an attempt at containment that appeared to recycle older strategies unfit for the situation. He even went so far as to say, “The international community was also hampered by a limited selection of options which were based on Cold War crisis response mechanisms.”<sup>145</sup> This perspective gained more popularity as the twentieth century gave way to the twenty-first because even by the turn of the century, America was still trying to find the right political balance while fighting embedded dogmas partly due to over forty years of engaging in various undeclared wars under a Cold War umbrella.<sup>146</sup> American leaders had make these adjustments on the fly as they addressed two crises in a crumbling Yugoslavia. This was a tall order. As Colonel Siniscalchi aptly pointed out, Bosnia

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<sup>145</sup> CDR Peter Lyddon, “The Fall and Rise of Coercive Diplomacy in the Balkans” (1996), p. 4. Major Douglas W. Kiely stated this, in some form, applied to the international approach to Kosovo in “‘The End of the Beginning’: On the Application of Aerospace Power in an Age of Fractured Sovereignty” (2001), p. 24.

<sup>146</sup> Only two papers from 1993 to 1995 reflected this opinion. Between 2000 and 2001, 15 had this critique at some level. Those further removed from the Cold War developed different perspectives on developing foreign policy, and how to use military force when furthering that policy.

and other interventions during the Clinton administration “highlight the difficulties in adopting our existing military tools to the new strategic setting.”<sup>147</sup>

A foundational issue that officers writing in their service schools identified that affected America’s ability to achieve efficient and effective outcomes in the Balkans was their belief that both senior policy makers and military leaders lacked the necessary understanding of how to best use force during peace operations. For these service-school attendees, issues with political leaders came from their lack of experience and knowledge regarding effective employment of military force for deterrence, compellence, and peacekeeping. These perceived traits resulted in leadership unnecessarily increasing the difficulty of executing military missions at the lowest levels, especially in Bosnia.<sup>148</sup> As an example, as discussed earlier, because political leaders continued to stress conventional focus, the military grew less prepared to address unconventional and asymmetric tactics. While the National Security Strategy of 1997 shifted to put more

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<sup>147</sup> Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), p. 1. While he was specifically discussing the need to better leverage information technology, his statement also speaks to the broader ideas of using political and diplomatic tools for decision making as well as employing military force.

<sup>148</sup> Maj Mark Bucknam, “Lethal Airpower and Intervention” (1996), p. v. Maj Brian P. Lacey, et al, “Peace Operations: A New Use of Force?” (1996), p. 18. COL Michael D. Gilpin, “Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning” (1997), p. 11. He states that when the US was free of limits of Soviet Union, it did not know how to use it at first, but eventually overcame it. MAJ Robert G. Young, “The Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Midgrade (O3/O4) Army Officer” (1997), p. 19. He asserts that during Cold War, presidents always knew why there was a need to use force, but in the 1990s that rationale was gone, leading to issues in deciding on interventions. MAJ Mat S. Martins, “The “Small Change” of Soldiering? Peace Operations for Future Wars” (1998), p. 40. He asserts that senior leaders needed to change of perspective. MAJ Robert B. McFarland, Jr., “Bosnia--Searching for an Exit Strategy: Is There One?” (1999), p. 2. He says the precedents set by open-ended commitments were demonstrative of national policy. Maj David W. Angle, “No Illusions: The Role of Air Strikes in Coercive Diplomacy” (1999), p. 2. He posits that American leadership did not understand how to effectively use air strikes in post-Cold War environments. Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, “A Kill is a Kill: Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower” (1999), p. 9. He argues that the focus on conventional war drove enemies to asymmetric means, for which the US was not well prepared (viscous cycle). Maj Edward J. O’Neal, Jr., “Educating Company Grade Officers in Military Operations Other Than War” (1999), p. 3. He asserts that the US was still not developing adequate national strategies after 10 years. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, “Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony” (1999), p. 46. He states that the failure to anticipate the new threat environment resulted in allowing troubles in Yugoslavia to become crises. Maj Robert F. Wendel, “Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz” (2001), p. 40. He does not specifically criticize civilian leadership, but underscores their responsibility to be active participants in ensuring the military can achieve the political goals they set forth.

emphasis on warfare at the lower intensity edge of conflict spectrum,<sup>149</sup> mid-level officers who discussed the Balkans feared that a broader and more immediate shift in culture and mindset needed to accompany evolving policy. Otherwise, the United States would continue to fall behind in employing military power in small-scale contingencies that had become most prevalent during the Clinton Administration, such as combat action and peacekeeping in both Balkan crises.

To be fair, American policy makers were indeed attempting to adjust in both mindset and action. When President Clinton reoriented national policy as early as 1994 to increase global engagement, his National Security Strategy helped catalyze the beginning of a push for the national security apparatus, military and civilian, to adapt to the new security environment. However, too many leaders, at least from the mid-level officer perspective, did not fully accept the need for greater change. While the experience of Bosnia helped the United States to learn from its foreign policy growing pains, and assertiveness in Kosovo proved that the Clinton Administration was able to apply some of those lessons, the experience in the Balkans showed the top-rated mid-level officer corps that it was difficult for America to overcome long-standing institutional orientations and well-entrenched habits. However, after 1999, these officers came to more broadly accept civilian leadership as more adaptive. Only one, Major Wendel, discusses any significant issues with the civilian mindset regarding policy adaptation vis-à-vis Kosovo, and even his critique was general in nature.<sup>150</sup> Instead, it was the senior military who seemed less willing to adapt.

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<sup>149</sup> “A National Security Strategy for A New Century” (May 1997), <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, accessed 21 Feb 2023, pp. 9, 12. See also the discussion on the National Security Strategy changes after 1997 in the chapter on Somalia.

<sup>150</sup> Maj Robert F. Wendel, “Casualty Aversion in the Post-Cold War Era: Defined and analyzed through the logic of Clausewitz” (2001), p. 40. He sees the need for civilians to become more active partners with the military to better understand their role.



There was a reluctance for many high-ranking military officials to support engaging in peace operations and humanitarian interventions. Encouraged by the axiom that the main purpose of the military was to fight the nation's wars and defend American shores from attack, which the National Security Strategies reinforced, military leaders stayed focused on this as the primary task of the armed forces. For many, limited warfare, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations, especially within the Engagement and Enlargement strategy, were counter to the military mission. A possible reason for this dissent, as Major Kenneth Rizer discusses throughout his paper, was that the military's institutional conservative realism clashed with the Clinton Administration's Wilsonian liberalism that drove intervention more for ideals than interests.<sup>151</sup> This, in turn, made senior military leaders reluctant to use the military for concepts such as spreading democracy to places that neither had democratic traditions, formed formal alliances with the United States, nor could directly improve American security. These types of involvements had failed spectacularly in places like Vietnam and Somalia, and those memories held significant influence. Those who were against enlarging focus on operations other than war did not see the benefits of risking American lives on a regular basis for these endeavors.

Mid-level officers who wrote about the Balkans had a different perspective. They focused more on ensuring that America's military accepted its role in these unconventional interventions and peacekeeping endeavors rather than rejecting it. Only two papers that discussed Bosnia, both written in 1996, directly disagreed with United States policy that used the military to conduct small-scale contingencies as they did in Bosnia.<sup>152</sup> Nineteen others, however,

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<sup>151</sup> Maj Kenneth R. Rizer, "Military Resistance to Humanitarian War in Kosovo and Beyond: An Ideological Explanation" (2000). His paper discusses this as the root of military leadership's resistance to intervention and lethargic adaptation to realities of new geopolitical world.

<sup>152</sup> Maj John S. Clark, Jr., "Keeping the Peace" (1996), pp. 49-52. MAJ Matthew L. Sorenson, "The Impact of Presidential Decision Directive 25 on Intervention Policy for Complex Emergencies" (1996), p. 3.

criticized military leadership's reluctance to engage in peace operations and small-scale contingencies as shortsighted.<sup>153</sup> While they did not offer opinions as to whether it was right or wrong for the military to shift focus in this way, they advocated that a transformation in mindset was necessary because global changes and national policy dictates made it so. Major Christopher Stockton summed up this revelation he and his fellow officers had come to by the turn of the century. He stated how military leaders had a "myopic focus on a specific crisis" and looked to find the best military solution to quickly resolve the issue. Most often that included advocating for a short, focused, and massive concentration of force once diplomacy failed.<sup>154</sup> This application of military force conflicted with the goals of political leaders who needed to weigh the impacts of using military power on potential economic repercussions, broader security concerns, legitimacy, American public support, and maintaining international relationships.

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<sup>153</sup> MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 4. Maj David R. Uzzell, "Air-To-Air Force's Doctrine and Training for an Air Occupation" (1997), pp. vi, 2. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), pp. 2, 27. Maj Michael V. McKelvey, "Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-Fly Zones to Support National Objectives" (1997), p. 1 – his observation is specific to the need for the US to have better understood no-fly zones as an instrument of national power. MAJ Mat S. Martins, "The "Small Change" of Soldiering? Peace Operations for Future Wars" (1998), pp. 5-8. MAJ Bradley K. Nelson, "Operations Other Than War--Albatross or Twenty-Four Hour Flu on Force Readiness" (1998), p. 17. MAJ Peter L. Jones, "Retaining the Initiative in Peace Operations - Tactical Negotiations and the Joint Military Commission" (1998), pp. 20, 45. MAJ Gary S. Sanders, "Seeing the New Enemy: Battle Command in the Failed State" (1998), pp. 1-2. Maj Richard M. Perry, "Striking the Balance: Airpower Rules of Engagement in Peace Operations" (1999), p. 41. He asserts that peace operations were not going away. Lt Col Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future" (1999), pp. iii, 19. Maj William W. Francis II, "Coercive Air Strategy in Post-Cold War Peace Operations" (1999), pp. 40-41. MAJ Gian P. Gentile, "Severing the Snake's Head: The Question of Air Power as a Political Instrument in the Post-Cold War Security Environment" (2000), p. ii, 19. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), pp. 4-5. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 1-2. He is critical of the military leaders who felt the US should have invaded and captured Milosevic as an outdated mindset. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Isolate Before an Urban Attack" (2001), p. 4. MAJ Marvin A. Hedstrom, "Limited War in the Precision Engagement Era: The Balance Between Dominant Maneuver and Precision Engagement" (2001), p. 10. He argues that the US needed to focus on areas future enemies can exploit through MOOTW ops. Maj Troy R. Stone, "The Air War over Serbia" (2001), p. 72. She sees more Kosovo-type missions in the future. MAJ Kemp L. Chester, "Rights and Wrongs: Adopting Legitimacy as the Tenth Principle of War" (2000), p. iii. He argues that the military should have added "maintaining legitimacy" as a principal of war.

<sup>154</sup> Maj R. Christopher Stockton, "Seeking Middle Ground: Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste For Gradual Escalation" (2001), p. 42. Also references discussions on pp. 19-20.

Mid-level officers, particularly towards the end of the Clinton Administration, pointed out that old habits died hard in the military. As discussed previously in this chapter and in others, Desert Storm had led the armed forces down the wrong path for approaching military operations in the new era as it validated lessons more applicable to Cold War conventional conflicts than contemporary interventions. This was especially the case when put in the context of Kosovo.<sup>155</sup> One Army officer, Major Michael McMurphy, even went so far as to blame his own service's dogmatic adherence to Cold War doctrine for using conventional land forces only in a concentrated, overwhelming manner. He further argued that this perspective prevented his service from developing modern, limited, coercive applications of land power to fit the political and national strategy goals in the Balkans.<sup>156</sup> In his opinion, this narrow all-or-nothing view from the Army helped push political decision makers to rule out land forces altogether. It was not just an issue of casualty aversion or international reputation. As a result, these unnecessary, self-imposed limitations on the use of the Army potentially extended both conflicts.

For this and other reasons discussed earlier, the Army saw its combat role diminish in favor of using airpower, making the Air Force and Navy the primary warfighters. This relegated

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<sup>155</sup> Maj Leon E. Elsarelli, "From Desert Storm to 2025: Close Air Support in the 21st Century" (1998), pp. 4, 27, 33. Maj Matthew P. Donovan, "Full Circle? The Transformation of Dedicated Adversary Air Training in the USAF" (1998), p. 37. Lt Col Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future" (1999), p. 23. MAJ Gian P. Gentile, "Severing the Snake's Head: The Question of Air Power as a Political Instrument in the Post-Cold War Security Environment" (2000), pp. ii, 16. Lt Col Philip M. Ruhlman, "War Winning: Paradigms and Visions for High-End Warfare" (2000), pp. 4-5, 7-8. Lt Col Michael R. Moeller, "Horizon's Edge: The Coercive Effects of Aerospace Power in the 21st Century" (2000), pp. 1-2. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Isolate Before an Urban Attack" (2001), p. 4. MAJ Marvin A. Hedstrom, "Limited War in the Precision Engagement Era: The Balance Between Dominant Maneuver and Precision Engagement" (2001), pp. 9-10. MAJ Scott T. Kendrick, "21st Century Transformation: Has the Army Been Here Before?" (2000), p. 3.

<sup>156</sup> MAJ Michael H. McMurphy, "Coercion and Land Power" (2000), p. 34. Others, including fellow Army and even Air Force officers alluded to this as well. LTC William L. Wimbish III, "Using Army National Guard Combat Battalions for Peace Operations" (1998), p. 32. He states how the Army was only "gradually adjusting to the...new strategic environment" even in 1998. MAJ Gary S. Sanders, "Seeing the New Enemy: Battle Command in the Failed State" (1998), pp. 1-2, 32. He decries how military doctrine still rooted in Cold War. Maj Robert D. Evans, "Effective Air Interdiction in Peace Enforcement" (2000), p. 42. He laments how the Air Force still needed to update its doctrine. MAJ Steven M. Leonar, "Inevitable Evolutions: Punctuated Equilibrium and the Revolution in Military Affairs" (2001), pp. 42-45. He states that the military needed to reinvent itself, especially in midst of information revolution and rise of asymmetric threats.

the Army to a police force of peacekeepers by the middle of the decade.<sup>157</sup> Air Force and Navy aviation, however, also saw their beliefs, forged in the lessons of Vietnam and proven, beyond any doubt for them, in the air campaign for Operation Desert Storm, shattered in the skies over Yugoslavia. Limited strikes replaced assertive bombing campaigns. Gradualism replaced simultaneity and depth in attacking all enemy assets. Civilian scrutiny replaced military freedom of action. Because it was always the job of the military to subordinate itself to civilian direction, and therefore to political considerations, mid-level officers advocated for a shift away from older mindsets. They encouraged doctrinal changes that codify acceptance of these types of operations and bring the military culture in line so as to effectively respond to the new global environment. In that way, the services could embrace diverse ways to employ effective force, including utilizing all capabilities in new and more applicable ways. This was critical to their ability to meet national policy needs in the new era.

The United States had experienced an identity crisis with the end of the Cold War. Commander William McIntire discusses how America lacked a clear purpose in the absence of the Soviet Union and how, “This lack of purpose complicates making a decision about the real interests of the United States. No longer is the answer...obvious...”<sup>158</sup> Civilian leaders, in responding to events in the Balkans, struggled to develop appropriate, applicable policy that could transcend eras. Issues with this transition affected early interventions such as Somalia and Bosnia to create ripple effects on the military. While American adaptation to the new environment seemed to produce amorphous policy at the beginning of the Clinton

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<sup>157</sup> All of the 60 Army officer papers written about the Balkans after Operation Deliberate Force discuss the non-combat roles the Army had taken up after this point. For more information on the use of Army forces as peacekeepers during this timeframe, see DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*; D Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*; Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*; David N. Gibbs, *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2009); and Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton*.

<sup>158</sup> CDR William K. McIntire, “Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations” (1994), p. 20.

Administration, years of executing Engagement and Enlargement coupled with direct experiences from Bosnia yielded more solid adjustments and the improved political intent that came with it. Many military leaders, however, still remained skeptical of the direction the United States took in applying military power even as the century came to a close. They saw inefficient use of force that yielded prolonged conflict, a tenet that was both counter to good military strategy and risked maintaining public support. They were not wrong. Neither were they fully right. The new era demanded greater attention to the political situation, even at the risk of military expediency. Times had changed. Trying to fight the last war, Desert Storm, proved just as adverse as trying not to fight Vietnam. The key was to adjust to the geopolitical situation, apply the right lessons from the past, and meet the United States' goals in a manner conducive to the contemporary environment. Officer-scholars, especially by the turn of the century, saw the dangers of America's leadership being stuck in an old mindset and implored the military to move into the future, or else they feared many aspects of the military would lose relevancy.

### *Conclusion*

When President Clinton took office, his campaign rhetoric promised a more involved, decisive American policy in the Balkans. This did not happen. While attempting to navigate the foreign policy machinations involved with the Oval Office, the administration waffled on policy and encountered political challenges with both domestic support and differing NATO perspectives. The Clinton foreign policy team pressed forward with Bush policies on Bosnia as it searched to find its own way. The United States used the Serb shelling of Sarajevo in 1995 to

assert its leadership and increase military action against Serb aggression. While successful in the end, the road to Dayton was a bumpy, windy, and occasionally treacherous journey, especially for those officers tasked with implementing the military portion of national policy at the ground level. Even though the United States applied valuable lessons towards Kosovo, policy issues and past influences affected both efficiency and effectiveness of the military arm of the Balkan strategy. Political decisions in both conflicts directly affected the prosecution of operations in profound ways that deviated from how the military learned to effectively wage war, both negatively and positively.

One topic that mid-level officers discussed was the change in how the United States formed the criteria for committing military power. The Weinberger-Powell doctrine, so important to the armed forces for determining the use of the military, and put in place to preempt spiraling down another Vietnam-like rabbit hole, was becoming obsolete. Beginning with Somalia, United States policy began diverting from its adherence to vital interests in favor of more idealistic ventures such as humanitarian and peace operations. The shift towards Engagement and Enlargement gave many officers trepidation at the thought of risking their lives and those of their subordinates for what appeared to be geopolitically insignificant backwaters. The fear from policy makers that any casualties would undermine a public opinion that was seemingly so fragile appeared to bolster mid-level officer opinions that the intervention was not worth putting their lives on the line. To these officers, if military action was important enough to risk lives, American leaders needed to accept the risk and let military forces execute their mission without restrictions that, to them, put victory secondary to avoiding casualties. In other words, the United States should not risk lives unless it was worth it, and when it committed to military action, either accept that risk, or choose instead to utilize other instruments of power.

However, others realized that a new era called for a new approach. Without a rival world power in place, the new enemy of America was destabilization. Ideals such as spreading democracy and protecting people from aggression, especially those targeted for genocide, could prevent small crises from escalating into the need for another resource-intensive Desert Storm. Maintaining coalitions like NATO was a primary means by which to enact counter-destabilization efforts, making the integrity of what had appeared just a few years earlier to be a defunct alliance a vital national interest. They were seeing that in the Balkans, instead of being involvement driven by “do something syndrome,” it was actually preemptive engagement to meet emerging security threats in their infancy. Engagement and Enlargement was a better strategy than policy *status quo*, but it had its flaws.

Enlarging and engaging via small-scale contingencies like Bosnia during a time when military cuts reduced resources and casualty aversion from the Somalia Effect limited options seemed to undermine how the military was supposed to execute the combat arm of national policy. The shutdown of Scott O’Grady highlighted the issues surrounding America’s sensitivity to combat losses. To many mid-level officers, this exemplified the public’s unrealistic expectation of clean warfare and the political leadership’s impractical assertion of near-zero risk with maximally effective combat operations. These interlocking conditions also helped explain why the United States, despite other NATO nations committing ground troops as part of the United Nations effort in Bosnia, ruled out using terrestrial combat forces altogether. Instead, America relied on an air campaign as its only coercive military option. Though airpower use alone may have been less effective militarily, it had become a tempting tool for politicians in order to avoid potential political pitfalls that ground combat forces may have

exposed. While it did, in the end, produce the overall desired effect, the actual effectiveness was up for debate.

While never a good option to purposefully and publicly rule out using certain military capabilities in traditional warfare, Bosnia was not traditional. It represented how the United States was adapting to new global conditions by trying to strike the right balance of forcing enemy compliance and maintaining the image of being a global force for good, all while addressing complex political factors at home and abroad. It did not begin well. Poor initial policy, an unwieldy NATO target selection process, and highly restrictive rules of engagement yielded suboptimal military results at the start of Deliberate Force. The United States-led effort eventually brought the warring parties to a negotiated peace at Dayton, but it was not the result of learning how to better use bombs within political constraints. Militarily, ground forces were a necessity as Croat and Muslim armies made significant advances against Serb positions, acting as proxy forces. In addition, the diplomatic efforts, especially Milosevic abandoning his support to Bosnian Serbs, gave them the motivation to seek resolution. Despite the administration deferring to air power throughout Clinton's term, and the proclamation of airpower enthusiasts that Bosnia proved that the United States could win a war from the skies alone, the events on the ground proved otherwise. It was concerted efforts on multiple fronts that culminated in the achievement at Dayton.

While American-led efforts in Bosnia helped mend one fissure in the collapsing Yugoslavia that threatened to crumble onto the Serb, Croat, and Muslim populations, it did not provide the structural support to contain future damage. By not addressing broader issues between the Serbs and Muslims, bad feelings festered in Kosovo, leading to another conflict. The United States proved that it had learned many lessons from its experience in Bosnia as well



as from exercising international policies in the changed environment of the 1990s. Though it sat back and allowed a United Nations-led NATO implementation of a modified containment-style policy vis-à-vis Operation Deny Flight at the start of Bosnia, the United States pursued a strategy of coercion from the onset of the Kosovo intervention. While Clinton and his policy makers still experienced issues with consistency and communication, partially affected by the impeachment proceedings that distracted the White House, the overall result was a much improved, assertive approach that flowed into military strategy. However, it was the military execution that drew much scrutiny from the mid-level officers.

The United States put in place several self-imposed restrictions to minimize risk in order to execute offensive action within political limitation. Similar to Bosnia, the United States ruled out ground forces from the start and imposed strict rules of engagement to limit collateral damage and danger to the pilots. This again threatened to limit effectiveness, especially since the Kosovar Liberation Army was not a robust organic ground component as the Croat-Muslim Federation had been four years earlier. With these restrictions, the United States enacted a controversial strategy that, on the surface, seemed doomed to repeat America's greatest military failure. Instead of using shock and awe akin to Desert Storm, it opted for gradualism reminiscent of the lackluster Rolling Thunder campaign against North Vietnam.

Military members learned from their professional education that failure to avoid the mistakes of Vietnam put military success in tremendous jeopardy. The war to oust Iraq from Kuwait seemed to prove the validity of that outlook. Military leaders up to Lieutenant General Short decried the resurrection of past failed strategies as prolonging the conflict, costing more lives, and risking failure of the overall effort. Since Milosevic did not give in until the United States and NATO built up to a more robust bombing effort, it seemed to prove Short correct.

Instead, as the more enlightened officer-scholars point out, a gradualistic air campaign was a much better fit for 1999 than it was for 1966. It allowed for preservation of NATO cooperation, limiting risk, reducing unnecessary collateral damage, and maintaining options that could accelerate or reduce military pressure depending on the changes to the diplomatic situation. It did all these things without incurring either significant political damage that could have undermined American involvement, or physical damage that would retard post-conflict recovery as it had done in Iraq. This issue, though, continued to adversely impact American policy even beyond Clinton's presidency. While Short was correct that starting slow likely did prolong the conflict, and most likely cost the lives of more Albanian Kosovars, supporters of gradualism were also right in that it most likely prevented the waning of international and domestic support that could have forced an end to the endeavor, leaving the Muslim population even more vulnerable to Serb extermination and dislocation efforts.

Ironically, the mentality that drove avoidance of Vietnam-era strategies at all costs in some ways created a new type of intellectual quagmire that helped prevent leaders, especially in the military, from seeing more effective options. Embedded ideas within the armed forces organization and culture helped slow the military's adaptation to this new era. Adherence to Weinberger-Powell as near dogma and viewing Desert Storm as the natural successor to World War II as the right way to conduct all military operations prevented military leaders from supporting effective implementation of force to achieve national interests. Those officers who defended the bold decision to implement the previously failed tactic of gradualism proved that Vietnam did not need to inhibit America from new possibilities for older ideas. What had failed in the past was not doomed to fail in a new era because conditions had changed significantly since the Cold War.

In fairness to the top military leaders, policy makers did not make it easy for them to adapt. The Clinton Administration held the services to the unrealistic expectation of preparing for two major regional wars while both downsizing forces and directing multiple small-scale contingencies. This drove an institutionally conservative military to become even more so. However, it was up to the military to adjust. Bosnia and Kosovo were the new standards for military employment. After years of implementing Engagement and Enlargement, mid-level officers understood this better than senior leaders like Lieutenant General Short. They knew that some concepts needed to be relegated to the rubble of the Berlin Wall. Limits on military operations did produce limited coercive effects, but lack of limits would have produced negative consequences that went beyond the ninety-five thousand square miles of Yugoslavia's forested hills. In the new environment, the United States found they could only produce maximal military effects in the Balkans through sustained, limited military engagement. When there was no longer a Soviet Union to contain, a win-win approach replaced a zero-sum game. Victory and credibility were symbiotic. The only way to achieve them was understanding how peace operations could function across the spectrum of national interests and acceptance that the military operated in a new global environment that necessitated changes to the political rules of engagement.

While the Clinton Administration proved it could effectively execute a low risk, politically sensitive, and effective campaign in the Balkans by the end of the decade, the unique perspective of mid-level officers demonstrated that American actions in Kosovo nonetheless exposed issues with national policy implementation. Air power, the go-to method of military force, was still vulnerable to failure because, though it operated in three-dimensional airspace, its execution was a one-dimensional strategy. Kosovo demonstrated that victory needed not only

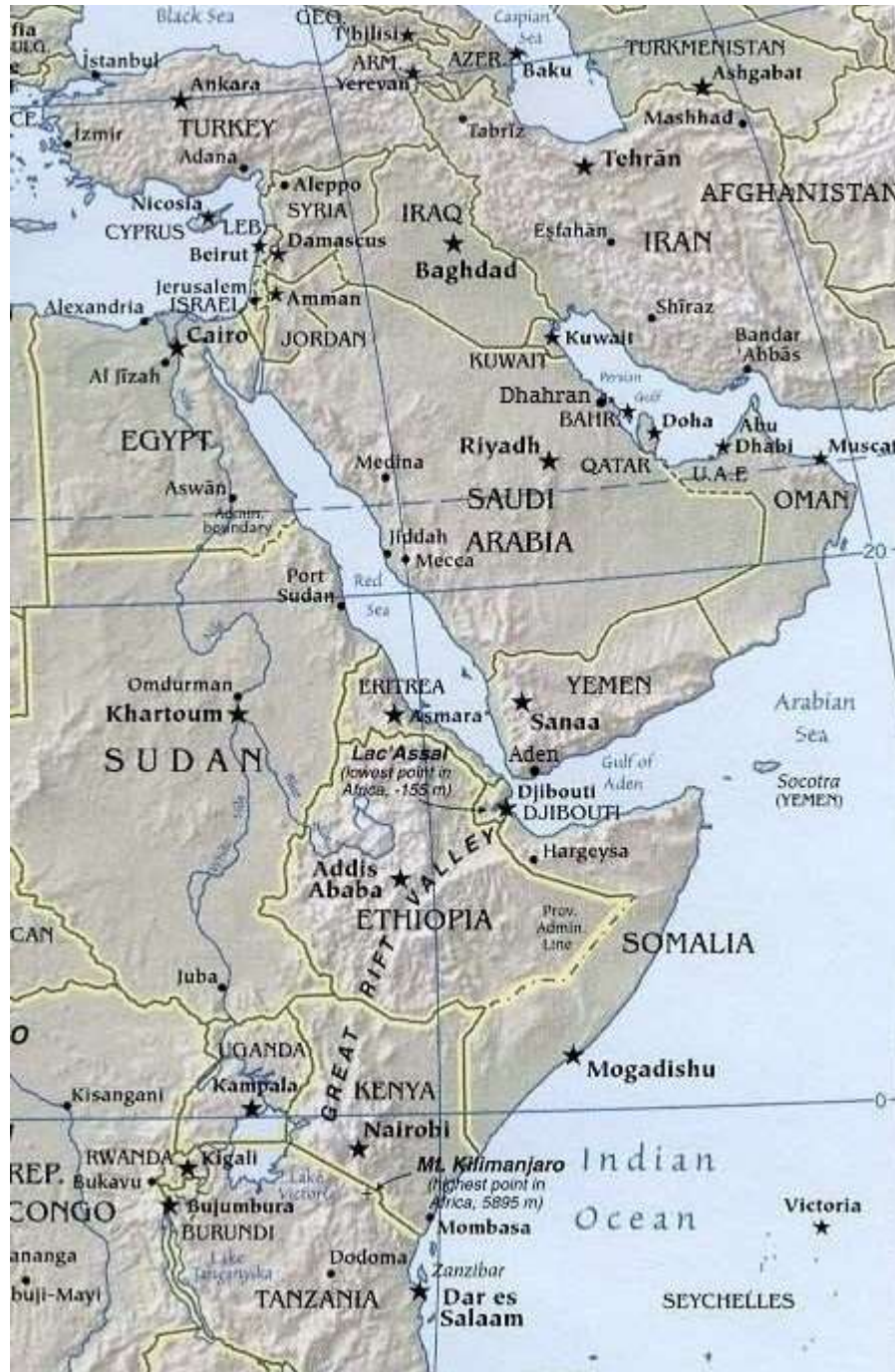
increased bombing pressure, but also the added dimension of deployment of ground forces that intimidated the threat of invasion, pushing Milosevic to concede. While the United States implemented lessons in both assertiveness and restraint from Bosnia, the results of this earlier conflict contributed to American policy makers underestimating Milosevic's resolve. The key reason was because leadership misunderstood Kosovo's value to the head Serb. This led to a failure to adjust the extent of military restraint to more appropriate levels to bring more pressure, direct and indirect, earlier. There was a middle ground between Clinton and Short that the United States perhaps could have achieved.

Finally, while Clinton demonstrated that his administration could learn from its issues and develop greater clarity when employing military force, it repeatedly returned to policy ambiguity in the aftermath of conflict in the Balkans. Through continually extending timelines for peacekeepers in Bosnia, the president sentenced front line military forces to languish in limbo instead of establishing clear post-conflict goals begetting an end state based on real, physical achievements instead of artificial, temporal milestones. The president threatened to continue that pattern in Kosovo, though a change in the Commander-In-Chief and the events of 9/11 shifted the focus dramatically. Despite these issues, American actions in Kosovo demonstrated that the United States could make progress in adapting to a new era in international relations and adjust how military power could successfully complement diplomatic efforts, economic isolation, and maintaining coalition integrity all while limiting casualties. The fact that it was not done perfectly provides historians as well as contemporary observers points for discussion over this foreign policy achievement.

United States involvement in the Balkans provided a physical demonstration of how America was adapting to a new era in international relations. The nation's reaction to the two

crises there demonstrated the difficulty in shedding old paradigms, the problems with creating new policy criteria in the midst of international emergencies and political constraints, and the issues with overcoming organizational inertia. Like his predecessor, President Clinton failed to adjust to the reality of Yugoslavia falling apart, and his foreign policy threatened to fall with it. It did not. It stumbled in Sarajevo, but rose to success in Belgrade. The biggest shortfall was in an exit strategy, an issue not unique to this administration. In the end, it achieved successes in the Balkans, taking a long, windy, bumpy, and at times circuitous route to show that America could be a flexible superpower when it properly applied lessons from the past. Dogmatic adherence to old ideas of diplomacy and warfare, including the overwhelming negative influence of Vietnam, perceptions over American casualty aversion, and what constituted effective use of air forces characterized much of the new era. However, as these mid-level officers demonstrated, progress was also a cornerstone of the period as the United States forged a distinct way to enlarge its influence and engage the enemies of stability as the sole superpower.

#### IV. ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORISM: AN EMERGING AND ELUSIVE THREAT



Map of the Middle East and East Africa<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Study.com, "The Largest Cities in Africa," <https://study.com/academy/lesson/finding-major-african-cities-on-a-map.html> accessed 23 Feb. Cropped and edited for size.

A Lieutenant Colonel was going over operational plans while deployed to King Abdul Aziz Air Base in Saudi Arabia in 1996. His role was to support Operation Southern Watch as he commanded the search and rescue squadron responsible for locating and recovering any downed pilots resulting from combat engagements or mishaps that would force a crash landing or ejection. He had not yet had to respond to any of the former, but given the dangerous nature of enforcing the no-fly zone, he was constantly busy preparing for the worst-case scenario. On the night of 25 June, he tried to take advantage of a rare opportunity to get to bed early for some much-needed rest.<sup>2</sup> Unbeknownst to him, this night off would not last.

The Saudi government provided the United States the use of this Royal Saudi airbase, located within the city of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Khobar Towers, the dormitory that housed many Air Force personnel, including the Lieutenant Colonel and much of his squadron, was located within one hundred feet of the fence line that delineated the city from the base.<sup>3</sup> This made the American base commander uneasy, but the Saudi government was unwilling to move the fence line out into the city. In addition, the agreement that the State Department had with the Saudi government since the First Gulf War kept American security personnel and other guards within the base. The Saudi government decided that only its forces patrolled outside the fence line, leaving Americans with protection responsibility only within the base perimeter.<sup>4</sup> Since it was impossible to physically move the dormitory, the commander could only erect defensive barriers and increase vigilance while he and his staff continued to push for the diplomats to make headway in increasing the security posture outside the base. The increased watchfulness turned out to be very important.

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<sup>2</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> General (Ret) Wayne A. Downing, *Report to the President and Congress on the Protections of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad: Annex A – The Downing Investigation Report* (Washington, DC, 1996), p. 25.

On the roof of the dormitory, two airmen assigned to the Security Forces Squadron, the unit responsible for base protection, noticed some unusual activity. They saw a tanker truck follow a small car down the city street that ended next to the fence adjacent to Khobar Towers. After maneuvering the truck into a very specific position closest to the dormitory, two men jumped out of the truck, quickly got into the car, and sped away. The two rooftop sentries knew something was very wrong. They contacted their leadership to tell them of the danger, then spread the alarm to evacuate the building. Within minutes, other Security Forces personnel joined them, going door-to-door to ensure all the building occupants were quickly egressing.<sup>5</sup>

At the sound of the alarm, the Lieutenant Colonel's roommate and operations officer, a seasoned captain, woke his boss. As they began to run, the captain noticed his commander was shoeless and pointed it out. The senior officer went back to get some footwear. That is when the truck bomb went off with tremendous fury. It blew off the northern face of the dormitory and sent glass and metal flying indiscriminately through the inner rooms.<sup>6</sup> It was so powerful that the force of the blast shattered a merchant's window in downtown Dhahran three-quarters of a mile away.<sup>7</sup> Stunned, shoeless, and with his feet cut by glass, the Lieutenant Colonel emerged from his room. Despite his wounds, he was one of the luckier ones that night.

This was not the first time that terrorists targeted American forces, but it was the largest attack since the end of the Cold War. In all, nineteen were dead and hundreds more wounded.<sup>8</sup> The tactics, targets, and lethality of terror attacks had been changing since early in the last

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<sup>5</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 629. Jamieson, *Khobar Towers*, pp. 53-54. TSgt Michael Battles, "25 Years Later: Remembering Khobar Towers" (Air Force official website, 25 June 2021), <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2671543/25-years-later-remembering-khobar-towers/>, accessed 22 Feb 2023. Both Millett and Jamieson report 19 killed. Millett states 372 wounded, while Jamieson references that 525 had received the Purple Heart as of November of 1997 with the processing not yet complete. TSgt Battles' article states that the blast injured "more than 400 U.S. and international military members and civilians."



decade of the century, presenting a shifting landscape for American officers to navigate. Specifically, these modifications had been taking hold since the Soviet Union evacuated Afghanistan and those supporting international *jihad* shifted their attentions westward.

Terrorism targeting the United States would reach a crescendo on 9/11; however, it was by no means a straightforward path from the Twin Towers attack in 1993 to the one in 2001. The United States had to navigate a complex history associated with the rise of radical Islamic terrorism. It also had to contend with the emerging eminence of non-state actors in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union after focusing extensively on state threats for so long. Adding to the complexity was the intricate network of networks that terror organizations like al Qaeda had formed. Terrorist organizations based in the Middle East had existed for decades, but only in the 1990s did some of them deviate from their predominant local focus, and broaden to more global application of terror activity and strategy with the United States itself in the crosshairs. Mid-level officers during the Clinton Era were responsible for maintaining the first line of defense for vulnerable military forces spread throughout many parts of the world in various deployed locations. They were also gaining increased responsibility to support civil responses to any mass-casualty attack on the homeland. In the midst of all these changes, they wrote about the emergence of a new foe and, in doing so, attempted to navigate the complexities that came with the rise of this fundamental, fundamentalist threat whose actions were having monstrous impacts.

### *Introduction*

The conclusion of the Cold War ended four decades of purposeful foreign policy evolution. One significant impact was that, without an enemy upon which to focus, United

States leaders looked to identify new or overlooked enemies in order to properly orient its foreign policy strategies and military preparedness.<sup>9</sup> A result of this mindset was the Engagement and Enlargement strategy that led to interventions in places like Iraq, Somalia, and the Balkans in order to tackle intangible interests across the globe such as thwarting instability, spreading democracy, and countering violent ethnic nationalism that manifested into physical violence and humanitarian crises discussed in earlier chapters. There was, however, a direct threat that did arise during the 1990s and would strike a terrible blow against the United States at the start of the new millennium. It was not a traditional enemy like the Soviet Union. Nor was it a set of disparate international conditions that, if not thwarted, could have resulted in unstable local situations that may have ballooned into major regional problems. Instead, it was a multi-faceted and multi-organization enemy that sometimes would work in concert with each other, and sometimes would attack independently. They did have one major characteristic in common: violent anti-western radical Islamic fundamentalism. Mid-level military officers writing during the Clinton Administration were trying to help identify this threat and, over time, came to recognize the great danger to national security that it presented.

In the early 1990s, the United States had to assess a muddled international environment in an attempt to determine where America should focus its foreign policy and against what threats national leaders needed to direct the military to prepare. Endeavoring to differentiate between actual dangers and phantom menaces from all the chaos bubbling to the surface in many parts of the world was difficult for policy makers and policy implementers alike, as was prioritizing potential threats. An unpredictable future without America's defining adversary of so long, the USSR, added to the uncertainty leaders at all levels faced. David Halberstam said

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<sup>9</sup> Mueller, "Questing for Monsters to Destroy." This was a main premise of his entire article.

that, during this time period, the United States put a low priority on terrorism because the threats were not yet visible.<sup>10</sup> Mid-level officer writings support this premise. There were few who saw the emerging threat of terrorism at first, and those who did remained unsure of its vector during President Clinton's first term. Still fresh from victories over the Soviet Union and Iraq, America either was not looking for new direct threats, or did not want to look, choosing instead to continue consolidating the peace dividend.

Terrorism targeting the United States began to emerge even while the American military was conducting operations in Iraq and Somalia. Independent, non-state actors like al Qaeda would not garner major attention as a significant focus of foreign policy or service school writings for years despite an attempt by radical Islamic terrorists to destroy the World Trade Center in New York in 1993. Instead, mid-level officers early in the Clinton Administration looked at other related concerns. They centered their attention on rogue states and how they could strike at American interests, directly or by leveraging terrorist groups which they controlled or at least held great influence over. They argued that this was a viable threat because of the Soviet Union's collapse. Many of these states who harbored animosity towards the United States and were suspected, if not confirmed, sponsors or supporters of terrorist organizations, had gotten the support of the enemy of its enemy, the Soviet Union. After the leading communist nation collapsed, these other countries no longer received backing and assistance of the former American rival. That meant loss of resources, but also that their international activities were no longer hampered by the restrictions that came with siding with one of the superpowers during the Cold War. The Soviet Union would not have wanted to be tied to a major direct attack against America or its allies; therefore, it was in its interest to leverage its influence to temper the actions

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<sup>10</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 494.

of these states. Without the need to placate the Soviet Union in order to ensure financial and military support, radical non-state actors became potentially less inhibited.

To add to the complexity, there were concerns within the United States over accountability of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union, especially in the republics that were gaining their independence. As the physical location of these weapons came under the control of emerging nations such as Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, there was the very real possibility that a lack of central control could lead to failure to account for these dangerous weapons or their raw materials.<sup>11</sup> In addition, with the Soviet economy in shambles, the United States feared that corrupt agents could steal and sell these materials to terrorists and other enemies, or that former Soviet weapons scientists would sell their expertise to the highest bidder who could then create a weapon of mass destruction.

Mid-level officers who concurred with this possibility focused on rogue states like Iraq and Iran gaining access to these and other weapons of mass destruction. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Necas and his team of writers devote an entire paper to issues with nuclear proliferation and specifically discuss problem nations such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as having violated international conventions outlined in the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty.<sup>12</sup> This and other similar officer writings expresses concerns with the possibility of these nations being able to mount nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons on missiles to strike American forces regionally, as well as providing them to terrorists who could use them against fielded forces in the Middle East, or even against the American homeland. For these officers, nuclear proliferation in this context was the main focus. Though some in the first half of the decade did

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<sup>11</sup> Graham Allison, "What Happened to the Soviet Superpower's Nuclear Arsenal? Clues for the Nuclear Security Summit" (Harvard Kennedy School, 2012), pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Lt Col Paul Necas, et al, "NATO and Nuclear Proliferation" (1996), pp. 37-38.

recognize this as a potentially significant national security threat, they were only able to see movement in the shadows and not a clear enemy.<sup>13</sup>

As the decade progressed, events provided greater illumination as to the changing nature of terrorism. Hijackings and hostage taking took a back seat to large-scale strikes on significant targets. Officer-scholars during Clinton's second term discussed potential scenarios that ranged from troublesome to apocalyptic. State sponsorship gave way to non-state actors in their writings. The first World Trade Center bombing began to take on new applicability to them. The nature of this and other attacks later in the decade inspired mid-level officers to critique the continuing policy of treating terrorists primarily as criminals. Non-state groups, whether supported by states unfriendly to the United States, or acting autonomously, were developing their own policies independent from any state to which they had connections, and executing violent actions to further their own interests. Also, terror strikes became larger in scope and were directed more strategically against the United States. For these reasons, more officers saw terror strikes closer to warfare than to criminality, but many still understood that they exhibited elements of both. This made making effective policy to combat this new threat even more problematic.

While the National Security Strategy did evolve throughout Clinton's tenure to direct more foreign policy attention towards terrorism, it still contained seeming dichotomies. As previous chapters discuss, the United States was focused on other threats and interests which in turn resulted in significant diplomatic, economic, and military efforts. Not until well into Clinton's second term did the threat of terrorism begin to rival the need for Engagement and

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<sup>13</sup> Only 17 of the 112 officer papers referencing terrorism were written from 1993 to 1995, and they mostly focused on state sponsorship of terrorism and not the independent terror organizations that would arise as the main direct threat to the United States.

Enlargement efforts designed to preempt smaller regional conflicts from transforming into major American commitments. Officers attending their service schools debated the effectiveness of engaging terrorists using similar strategies and in very limited ways. Despite their critiques, many of these officer-scholars recognized that there were significant obstacles to generating consistent and focused policy towards such an ambiguous threat.

One continuing theme, which their writings redefined as the century was coming to a close, was the impact of weapons of mass destruction proliferation. They realized that deterrence through pledged reciprocal response would not preempt terrorist organizations from these or other destructive attacks. Due to what they believed was an impending large-scale attack from this imminent threat, officers pushed for changes to these and other policies, as well as to the military mindset that focused on conventional war. They wanted America to be more able to prevent an attack, and prepared to respond to one. As Major Robert Barr stated in April of 2001, “For the U.S. it is not a question of ‘if’ a terrorist attack will occur, instead the question is ‘when.’”<sup>14</sup> As many predicted, the “when” did indeed come, though not in the way they expected.

John Lewis Gaddis says that the terror attacks throughout Bill Clinton’s presidency, from the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 through the attack on the *USS Cole* in 2000 presented no clear pattern, making the 9/11 attacks unpredictable.<sup>15</sup> However, after the 1996

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<sup>14</sup> Maj Robert S. Barr, “Can ‘Airpower’ Counter the Asymmetric Threat” (2001), p. 16. Several other officers specifically stated this belief as well. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, “Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum” (1997), p.8. LCDR John B. Stubbs, “Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power” (1998), p. 3. LTC Paul G. Marksteiner, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Pose a Serious Threat to U. S. Cities: How Prepared Are We?” (1998), p. 7. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, “Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (1999), p. vi. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, “Just-War Theory and Future Warfare” (2000), p.34. MAJ Thomas J. Closs “In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (2001), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, p. 36.

bombing of Khobar Towers, an Air Force dormitory on what was supposed to be a secure air base, mid-level officers were finding a very basic pattern: anti-western Islamic terrorists were targeting the United States with greater firepower than ever before, save maybe Beirut in 1983. They saw a many-headed danger to national security emerging and going on the attack. Sometimes, each head acted independently. Sometimes it struck in concert with other heads. Its major consistency, and consequently what made this enemy a direct threat, was its continual attacks on United States resources, capabilities, and people. Unlike the mythical hydra, this new monster did not come from a Greek swamp, but from the deserts of the Middle East.

### *Background*

Throughout the twentieth century, there had been a growing anti-western sentiment among many Muslims in the Middle East. The specific rise of anti-American radical Islamic terrorism in the 1990s has a long and complex history that has its origins in the formation of the Muslim religion and its expansion throughout the Middle East and beyond. Islam, the primary religion of the region since the seventh century, had once been a wide-spread political force as well. The establishment of the first Islamic empire, or caliphate, ensured the regional dominance of Islam for six centuries. The Mongol Empire supplanted the Caliphate in the thirteenth century, but it had a resurgence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In particular, the Ottoman Empire, vanquished the remnants of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire and stretched from the Arabian Peninsula across North Africa and from modern day Iraq and Turkey into Eastern Europe. It was the most enduring revival of the Islamic Caliphate. However, during the twentieth century, its population and those of the neighboring Islamic areas had suffered

from colonization, industrialization, western liberalization, and the imposition of democratic ideals at the expense of Qur'anic Law, all at the hands of European powers, especially in areas that became British and French protectorates after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire post-World War I.<sup>16</sup> With its breakup, European secular civil authority replaced Islamic political primacy in many parts of the Middle East.

Western powers held mandates over most of the region, including Islam's holiest of places: Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. This created an identity crisis for the Muslim world and led to the rise of organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. This group believed that the loss of Islamic power was directly related to succumbing to western secular ways and egregiously demonstrating a loss of proper faith by removing Sharia law from political life.<sup>17</sup> They embraced fundamentalist ideals and were not afraid to use violence against secular governments to bring about a return to an integrated religious-social-political society under Qur'anic laws and values. This philosophy would inspire later terrorist leaders like Osama bin Laden. Many scholars have explored the historical, cultural, and religious aspects of these and other related events in great detail that provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex history and interwoven relationship of Islam religiously, politically, and societally within the culture of Muslim peoples.<sup>18</sup> However, in very broad and relatively simple terms, western encroachment (perceived and actual) on the physical territories held by Muslim nations, the loss of significant regional power after centuries of dominance, the apparent challenge to the Islamic faith, and the many cultural issues stemming from the political history of the region provide a

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<sup>16</sup> Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, pp. 13-14

<sup>17</sup> Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, pp. 6-7, 10-14.

<sup>18</sup> For more information see Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*; Hegghammer, *The Caravan*; Mandaville, *Global Political Islam; The Blind Spot*, ed. by N. Burns and Price; Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts with Islam will Shape the Future* (Norton, 2006), and Mamdani, "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim."



major foundation for some of the causes that led to a growing conflict between fundamentalists like Osama bin Laden and the United States in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union. The more immediate causes of this conflict come from the Cold War era itself.

The Cold War helped to both contain and focus terrorism to primarily local and nationalistic ambitions. Groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which wanted an independent Palestine and the removal of Israel from the Levant, and Islamic Jihad, whose members assassinated Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, in 1981 for making peace with Israel and, in their estimation, shunning Qur'anic Law through a secular government, are examples of this local focus. While there were exceptions, in general, terrorists in the Middle East had used tactics such as kidnappings, hijackings, assassinations, and relatively low-yield bombings to not just fight against their enemies, but to gain concessions, such as release of political prisoners in exchange for hostages, or as political statements to bring recognition to their cause. Claiming responsibility for an act of terror was also part of the political agenda. For the most part, terrorism during the Cold War conditioned the world that aircraft were hijacked to leverage hostages and bombs set off to make political statements as much as, if not more than, to cause physical harm and damage. However, terrorist tactics were changing.

Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, America began looking towards the Middle East as the home of rising threats against the United States. One event that demonstrated the potentially adverse effects of anti-Americanism in the region was the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979 that overthrew the American-friendly Shah. During this event, some Iranians stormed the American Embassy in Tehran, causing a subsequent hostage crisis between the new fundamentalist Islamic Iranian government and the United States. Even after the hostage crisis

was resolved, tensions between Iran and America continued. This new government's support of anti-American terrorist forces in Lebanon would serve as a direct harbinger for changes to come.

In 1983, United States Marines were in Beirut, Lebanon, as part of a peacekeeping mission. After initial success, the Marines started to lose the trust of some of the local population. The Iranian-supported Palestinian terrorist group Hezbollah, or "Party of God," targeted the Americans because they gave the appearance of being backers of the minority Christian government in addition to being an ally of Israel. On 23 October, members of Hezbollah drove a truck with 2,000 pounds of explosives into the Marine compound in Beirut. Small arms fire from the guards could not keep the suicide bomber from running through the gate and crashing into the building which housed more than 300 Marines as well as the battalion headquarters. The bomb detonated, and the ground shook for over a mile away like an earthquake had struck.<sup>19</sup> When the dust settled, there were 239 dead Americans, including 220 Marines. Soon after, the United States retreated from Lebanon.<sup>20</sup>

The suicide bombing of the American Marines in Beirut by terrorists contributed to changing the nature of not only terrorist actions, but their motivation. The attackers perpetrated this assault to achieve local aims, specifically the removal of American forces from Lebanon. However, the escalation of explosive power demonstrated a new effect. As the United States withdrew soon afterwards, American response revealed how terrorism could influence broader American policy. This would foreshadow changes that would take place in the next decade.

At the time the United States withdrew from Lebanon, it had been supporting anti-Soviet resistance fighters in Afghanistan. Earlier, in December of 1979, the Soviet Union had invaded

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<sup>19</sup> "The Beirut Bombing: Thirty Years Later" (Marine Corps University, 2013) <https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Brief-Histories/Beirut-Bombing-Thirty-Years-Later/> accessed 22 Feb 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 582.

Afghanistan, causing many in the Islamic community to call for a *jihad*, or holy war, against the invaders. “Nearly every country in the Middle East was represented, but with particularly large contingents from Egypt, Algeria, and the [Arabian] Gulf.”<sup>21</sup> This was a watershed moment in the making of the global *jihad* movement.<sup>22</sup> Previously, violent extremists focused on local politics, societal change at home, fighting corruption by reinforcing Islamic law in the body politic of their native countries, and locally repulsing perceived encroachment by infidels. Attacking American invaders in Beirut may have been supported by Iran, but Lebanese and Palestinians executed the action for local gains. The same went for the direct attacks against Israel. Though there were some outside fighters, that was the exception rather than the rule. Afghanistan radically altered this dynamic.

*Jihad* in Afghanistan was not a call from Afghan Muslims, but a push from international Islamists. Those who supported this global rallying cry for Muslims to fight against the Soviets throughout the 1980s believed that as long as infidels occupied Muslim lands, war was justified in removing them to restore peace to fellow Islamic peoples. In this way, they provided justification not only for the violence itself, but also for making it a duty for any Muslim, regardless of where the individual resided, to participate. Many radicals answered the call. The Afghan *jihad* shifted the focus from fighting enemies at home to engaging in war against foreign invaders abroad, making this war in Afghanistan the most transnational rebellion in history.<sup>23</sup> For the terror groups that would form as a consequence of their participation in this holy war, regional, and even global, perspectives would replace localism as their main strategy. One consequence was that the United States became their next focus by the end of the 1980s.

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<sup>21</sup> Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, p. 242.

<sup>22</sup> Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, p. 241. Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, pp. 2-3, 493. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 290.

<sup>23</sup> Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, pp. 2-3.

One individual who was driven to participate in Afghanistan and would take advantage of this opportunity was Osama bin Laden, the son of a wealthy Saudi construction mogul. The bin Laden family made a fortune in contracts with the Saudi royal family. Osama bin Laden used some of this vast wealth to support the Mujahadeen, the Afghans who were fighting the Soviets. He was not a warrior, but a logistics lynchpin. He helped in recruiting, acquiring arms, and arranging for men and materiel to make it into the fight against the Soviets. He spent much time in the borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As such, he was able to establish contacts with the freedom fighters, arms dealers, and other supporters of the war effort. These men came from many different nations united in their radical Islamism, including a belief that anyone who interfered with their strict interpretation of the Qur'an was a legitimate target for *jihad*.<sup>24</sup> It was from this group that he would form his future terror network.

Ironically, it was the American Cold War sponsorship of the Mujahadeen and, indirectly, this *jihad*, that helped fuel many of the changes that terrorist groups would employ against the United States. It also helped provide the opportunity for this emerging enemy to build the terrorist network of networks that al Qaeda would leverage as it seized the opportunity in Afghanistan for geopolitical gain at the expense of the Soviet Union. By supporting the enemy of its enemy, American policymakers hoped to drain Soviet resources. By helping to roll back communist expansion in the mountainous, landlocked nation, this support fit within the ongoing policy of containment. America provided weapons to the Afghani fighters, including small arms and Stinger Missiles, the lethal, shoulder-launched anti-aircraft weapons that had such great effect against the Soviet helicopters. In doing so, it indirectly supported the foreign fighters as well, providing resources that helped bring the international *jihad* together.

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<sup>24</sup> Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, pp. 251.

The United States also indirectly supported the recruitment effort of Muslims within the United States. Saudi financing had provided resources to establish Islamist mosques in various cities in America.<sup>25</sup> Some, like the al Kifah Center in Brooklyn, New York, became places where radicalizing Muslims in America for fighting *jihad* against foreign aggressors occurred. In the 1980s, that meant the Soviets in Afghanistan. However, these networks did not disappear when the Soviet Union finally withdrew. These facilities became a part of the transition towards global *jihad* that organizations such as al Qaeda would inspire and even leverage in their future war against America.

In February of 1989, the last Soviet troops left Afghanistan as the failing superpower drained its war chest without having been able to achieve its goals. The Soviet Union was on its way to collapse for many reasons, of which Afghanistan was a part. However, as the Berlin Wall would come down later that year and the USSR would dissolve within two more, the timing helped solidify the reputation of Afghanistan as the graveyard of empires. This descriptor, not entirely without exaggeration, was based on the nation's reputation for helping facilitate the demise of powerful nations who have fought and lost there, from Persia to Great Britain. The Soviet Union appeared to be the most recent victim.

As it fell, the ensuing chaos brewed a geopolitical primordial ooze of potential dangers and destabilizing elements. Failing states and the ensuing destabilization were a major concern of the Clinton Administration. Another factor that would become a direct threat to the United States was the emerging prominence of transnational actors who employed terrorism independent of the direction of nation-states. What made them even more dangerous was the possibility of gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. This made the increase of large-

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<sup>25</sup> Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*, pp. 169-170, 274-275.

scale terror attacks an even more frightening proposition. While this probability did not come to fruition against the United States, terrorists did begin to engage in much more destructive acts during the Clinton Administration and beyond.

The first major attack that fundamentalists executed against the American homeland was the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993. The leader of the plot, Ramsey Yousef, was inspired by Omar Abdel Rahman, also known as the Blind Sheik. Operating out of the same al Kifah Center that radical Islamists used to recruit for the Afghan *jihād*, Rahman declared a *fatwa* in 1990 against the United States. In strict terms, a *fatwa* is a legal opinion by competent Muslim authority.<sup>26</sup> Rahman's objective was to use his position as a spiritual leader to provide the moral and religious grounds to justify attacks against America.<sup>27</sup> This catalyzed radical Islamists in New York to work towards taking violent action in an attempt to coerce the United States into leaving Muslim lands. Leveraging the moral authority that came with the Blind Sheikh's proclamation, Yousef recruited his accomplices, garnered financing from his uncle and fellow New York radical Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and traveled to Afghanistan where he trained at al Qaeda's Camp Khalden in terror techniques such as explosives creation and execution of bombing attacks.<sup>28</sup> They returned to the United States with resources and training to develop and execute their plan.

On 26 February 1993, the team drove a rental van loaded with a fifteen-thousand-pound bomb they created into New York City and parked it in the southern corner of the massive garage structure of the World Trade Center. They set the timer, exited the vehicle, and left the scene. At 12:18 PM, the bomb exploded, ripping through six floors, destroying cars, and killing

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<sup>26</sup> Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, pp 28-29.

<sup>28</sup> Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*, pp. 169-170, 182-184.

Americans. At the end of the day, six had died and over one thousand were injured. A combination of luck and inaccessibility to resources prevented further damage and loss of life. Had the placement of the bomb been more precise, the bomb would have caused greater destruction. Also, there had been speculation that the group wanted to add radiological material to the device, making it a dirty bomb that could have caused tens of thousands of additional injuries well beyond ground zero.<sup>29</sup> Even without affecting a weapon of mass destruction or knocking down the Twin Towers, it had been the most devastating terror attack in the United States to date.<sup>30</sup> More would follow.

There were two terror attacks in 1995, neither of which was perpetrated by Muslim radicals, that would greatly affect how America, including its mid-level officers, viewed the growing terrorist threat. The first was in March and was not even against the United States. The Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo (referred to as Aum Shinko by the contemporary mid-level officers who wrote about them) released a chemical weapon consisting of the nerve agent Sarin into the crowded Tokyo subway system during rush hour. The toxic gas killed thirteen, with over 5,800 others reporting ailments or injuries related to the attack.<sup>31</sup> While not related to the growing anti-American sentiment in the Islamic communities around the world that drove extremists like al Qaeda, it demonstrated the vulnerability of crowded cities to potential biological and chemical attacks, including those in the United States.

The second was a direct strike against America's heartland. A month after the Tokyo subway attacks, a former Army soldier named Timothy McVeigh, a fervent anti-government

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<sup>29</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*, p. 202.

<sup>30</sup> For more detailed information of the World Trade Center bombing of 1993, see Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*; Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*; and Wright, *The Looming Tower*.

<sup>31</sup> "Aum Shinrikyo: The Japanese Cult Behind the Tokyo Sarin Attack" (BBC News, 6 July 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35975069>, accessed 22 Feb 2023.

radical intent on striking a blow to what he and his comrades saw as the enforcement arm of dangerous government overreach, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, executed a plan to destroy the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. He filled a rental truck with 5,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate fertilizer rigged into a bomb and parked it outside the building. The bomb exploded with terrible force, completely destroying the front of the structure and killing 169, including 19 children.<sup>32</sup> This attack showcased the vulnerability of government facilities and other large buildings to being destroyed by conventional attacks. It also highlighted that the enemies of America could make powerful conventional-like weapons out of seemingly inconspicuous vehicles and do plenty of damage even without penetrating the structure, unlike Beirut or the World Trade Center. The next major attacks would come from Islamic terrorists who looked to exploit these vulnerabilities.

Just over a year later, Islamic extremists linked to Iran and endorsed by bin Laden would repeat this tactic against American forces deployed to Saudi Arabia.<sup>33</sup> They parked a truck laden with the equivalent of 23,000 pounds of TNT just outside the perimeter of King Abdul Aziz Air Base and detonated the explosives. As described at the beginning of the chapter, it all but destroyed Khobar Towers, collapsing the back half of the building and sending vast amounts of debris flying through the front, piercing and shredding airmen as they attempted to evacuate. This attack, though neither al Qaeda enacted nor proven to be al Qaeda sponsored, worked in seeming concert with bin Laden's goals of removing American forces from Islamic holy lands and eliminating United States influence in Muslim affairs in the Middle East.

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<sup>32</sup> Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>33</sup> Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 629.



In February of 1998, Osama bin Laden proclaimed a *fatwa* that in essence declared a holy war against the United States.<sup>34</sup> This had the effect of directing faithful Muslims to kill Americans. Though bin Laden's actual authority to declare a *fatwa* may have been debatable among Muslims at the end of the twentieth century, his status within his network of Islamic radicals that he formed during the Afghan *jihad* carried significant weight. As a result, there were multiple terrorist attacks and attempted strikes that al Qaeda either directed or inspired. By the time of this *fatwa* declaration, al Qaeda had gained strength in East Africa as Osama bin Laden found a haven in Sudan. In August, the group planned and executed two coordinated attacks against American embassies in East Africa on the eighth anniversary of the arrival of United States troops in Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield.<sup>35</sup> They used trucks filled with explosives to attempt to destroy the embassy compounds in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing as many Americans as possible. They aimed to detonate the explosives during morning prayers. To justify their killing fellow Muslims, they reasoned that the devout should have been praying and not in the blast area, therefore, they deserved to die.<sup>36</sup> When it came time to execute the attack, a combination of increased security at Dar es Salaam and low competence of the al Qaeda assailants limited the damage in Tanzania and, to some extent, in Kenya as well. However, the results were still deadly. 213 were killed and over 4,500 wounded in Nairobi, and 11 killed and 85 injured in Dar es Salaam.<sup>37</sup> The vast majority were local residents, with 12 Americans being among the dead.

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<sup>34</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*, p. 295. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 629. Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 56. P Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>35</sup> Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 68.

<sup>36</sup> Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 71. Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, p. 251. Mandaville did not directly refer to the embassy bombings as Hamm did, but discussed Sayyid Qutb, who had a major influence on bin Laden and his followers, and his view that anyone who did not support full devotion to Islam was a legitimate target of *jihad*.

<sup>37</sup> Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 55. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 629.

Unlike with previous attacks, which the United States treated solely as crimes, America responded with military force, albeit Tomahawk Diplomacy. The Clinton Administration launched cruise missile strikes against a suspected chemical weapons plant in Sudan and al Qaeda training facilities in Afghanistan. There was uncertain intelligence on the chemical plant, which could have been a pharmaceutical plant that manufactured baby formula or fertilizer as much as a producer of chemical weapons, yet the United States still destroyed it.<sup>38</sup> The camps, though American leaders hoped to target bin Laden himself, were relatively empty. Though a strong statement in theory, in practice the strike did little to affect al Qaeda capabilities or dissuade them from continuing to strike against the United States.

In late 1999, al Qaeda-inspired operatives planned to strike a blow against the United States at the dawn of the new century. In late December, Ahmed Ressam tried to drive a rental car full of explosives across the Canadian border to Los Angeles International Airport in an attempt to detonate it there on New Year's Day. He was part of an Algerian community in Montreal that was funded by Arabian Gulf Arabs to support Algerian Muslims fleeing civil war in 1992. Ressam was radicalized there, and had spent time training in al Qaeda's Camp Khalden. He and his fellow radicals hatched the plot and worked to execute it. On 14 December when Ressam tried to cross into the United States, a border agent took note of the suspicious way he was acting and inspected the vehicle. He arrested Ressam and foiled the attack.<sup>39</sup> However, this demonstrated the reach and influence al Qaeda had on the global Islamic community, as well as the nature of the organization not as a downward-directing command structure, but as a loose network of networks, making defending against them that much more difficult.

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<sup>38</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*, p. 320. Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 83. Millett, et al, *For the Common Defense*, p. 631. They discuss the missile strike as "possibly killing innocents."

<sup>39</sup> For more details, see Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*, pp. 57-66.

The last major terror attack during the Clinton Administration took the car bomb concept and modified it to attack the United States Navy. On 12 October 2000, the American destroyer *USS Cole* was docked in the Yemeni port of Aden. Yemen was a potential haven for terrorists, pirates, and other destabilizing influences, even though the port was supposed to be secure. That day, a small boat navigated through the harbor towards the destroyer. The two men in the small craft waved amicably towards crewmembers of the destroyer as it maneuvered next to the warship. Before any of the sailors could act on their suspicions, the suicide-mariners detonated the explosives held within their small craft. The explosion ripped a 40-foot hole in the side of the *USS Cole* just above the waterline, killing 17 sailors and wounding another 40.<sup>40</sup> The ship would eventually be towed back to the United States, crippled and unable to execute any future missions. By the end of the year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation would link al Qaeda to the bombings. The United States made no response to this attack. They would, however, provide a forceful response to the next al Qaeda strike in September of the following year.

These terrorist strikes in the context of the aftermath of the Cold War influenced many mid-level officers. They traced the rise of Islamic anti-American terrorism and were starting to identify a new, more resilient enemy that would come to threaten American vital national interests. Terrorists were beginning to attack the United States in earnest, and the officers attending their service schools were attempting to unpack the changing nature of the threat, assessing how American policy was responding to this enemy, and preparing to fight future battles against this dangerous and asymmetric threat. Like many American policymakers, these officers were trying to determine the nature, power, and level of danger this new foe was to the

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<sup>40</sup> “USS Cole Bombing,” FBI History, <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/uss-cole-bombing>, accessed 22 Feb 2023.

United States. Very few, however, would predict the scope of American involvement and the changes to foreign policy that would ensue just nine months after President Clinton left office.

### *New Enemies Emerging*

Military service school attendees produced few works during the first three years of President Clinton's first term about the rising threat of terrorism. Between 1993 and 1995 there were sixteen papers that mention terrorism in any significant way. Of those, only four have terrorism as a primary subject. These writings, though, do reflect the uncertainty over American post-Cold War foreign policy direction, which also affected leaders at all levels. Most of these officers followed the lead of national policy makers, starting with the Bush administration and continuing into the start of Clinton's presidency, that looked mostly towards rogue nations driving the terror threat.<sup>41</sup> Based on world events and their own experiences, their evaluations evolved. As Clinton's time in office progressed, more writings demonstrate a future-looking threat assessment that went beyond traditional adversaries. Through their unique perspectives at the middle level of leadership, they opened the aperture further to explore non-state actors as rising dangers, with some authors demonstrating prophetic insights. While national policy makers and senior leaders were looking for the next enemy, these officers pointed to a Middle East beyond Iraq and Iran. They zeroed in on actors motivated by religious zeal who would engage America in unconventional and asymmetric ways. Their writings demonstrate a trajectory towards a consensus that independent terrorist organizations like al Qaeda would emerge as the next direct threat to America.

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<sup>41</sup> Nearly 70% of the papers on terrorism during this period put rogue states or other nations as the primary threat for either directing terrorist acts or acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, America began looking towards the Middle East as the home of rising threats against the United States. Terrorist violence and the Islamic Revolution in Iran drew America's attention for over a decade. By the 1990s, this history, combined with the perceived post-war Iraqi threat (see Chapter 2), prompted the United States to look to this region as a potential successor to the Soviet Union. The First Gulf War itself was a seminal event that influenced how the United States approached Middle East foreign policy at the start of the Clinton Administration. It helped drive the United States focus to rogue states, affecting its ability to properly identify a new adversary. Terrorist networks, formed from connections made during the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, were preparing to strike the United States as President Clinton took office.

Some mid-level officers early in Clinton's first term identified terrorism, mostly stemming from Islamic fundamentalism and regional strife, as one of the few growing, across-the-board threats to United States interests.<sup>42</sup> A few even began to recognize its evolving nature whereby Cold War-era tactics of skyjacking and hostage taking were being replaced with strategic actions that would potentially involve employing weapons of mass destruction.<sup>43</sup> They saw that states no longer had the monopoly on using violence and powerful weapons to execute a policy of strategic use of force to achieve aims. They began to intimate that non-state actors would author their own forms of anti-American policy and execute attacks with or without

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<sup>42</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), pp 15-16. LTC Larry D. Bruns, "Threat Theory: A Model for Forecasting the Threat Environment of the Future" (1993), p. 60. Maj Mark N. Mazarella, "Adequacy of U.S. Army Attack Helicopter Doctrine to Support the Scope of Attack Helicopter Operations in a Multi-Polar World" (1994), p. 22. MAJ Jack F. Smith, "Clausewitzian Trinity: A Vague Concept or a Tool for the Attack" (1994), pp. 7-8. He discusses terrorism as the primary tool for insurrection and revolution. Maj Gail E. Wojtowicz, "USAF Vulnerability to Limited Ground Attacks" (1994), p. 10. MAJ Vance J. Nannini, "Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia" (1994), p. 34, MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1995), p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), p. 56. Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, "Biological Weapons--The Poor Man's Nuke" (1995), p. 21. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1995), p. 40.

support from nation-states.<sup>44</sup> These officer-scholars also warned that these organizations would use terrorism as a way to provoke the United States into action, and that this tactic would, as Major Matthew McGuinness predicted, “continue to be an attractive option...beyond the year 2000.”<sup>45</sup> Without the benefit of witnessing the large-scale attacks of the latter half of the decade, these early prognosticators were in line with some of the later scholarship on al Qaeda and the broader analyses of the 9/11 attacks.<sup>46</sup>

Other mid-level officer observations reveal insights about terrorism well before the events of 2001. There were some who discussed Islamic extremists centered in and around the Horn of Africa.<sup>47</sup> While they examined Somalia as a terrorist hot spot, one officer, Major Vance Nannini, specifically identified Sudan as a haven as early as 1994. He cited regional instability, Sudan’s fundamentalist government, intelligence reports that Sudan could have been harboring terrorists, and the possible influences of Libya, Iran, and Iraq on fomenting terrorist activity

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<sup>44</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuinness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), p. iii. Maj Mark N. Mazarella, “Adequacy of U.S. Army Attack Helicopter Doctrine to Support the Scope of Attack Helicopter Operations in a Multi-Polar World” (1994), pp. 21-22. Maj Gail E. Wojtowicz, “USAF Vulnerability to Limited Ground Attacks” (1994), p. 10. MAJ Vance J. Nannini, “Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia” (1994), p. 41. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, “Special Forces’ Mission Focus for the Future” (1995), p. 40.

<sup>45</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuinness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), p. 56. Writing after 9/11, Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pp. 309, 428-429, concurred with this opinion. In contrast, Oliver Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Columbia University Press, 2004), states that, “Al Qaeda has no strategic vision.” (pp. 55-57, 294).

<sup>46</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*. He asserts that bin Laden executed these attacks as part of a long-term goal to lure the United States to Afghanistan and “the graveyard of empires” (pp. 309, 428-429). Roy, *Globalized Islam*. He states that, despite a lack of strategic vision, al Qaeda still planned for the United States to invade Afghanistan and, based on the Soviet invasion and American actions in Somalia and Lebanon, hoped this action would turn into another Vietnam (pp. 55-57). In his paper, “Asymmetric Threats to U.S. National Security to the Year 2010” (2001), Maj John A. Nagl quotes Osama bin Laden from a 1997 interview as saying, “If Russia can be destroyed, the United States can also be beheaded.” (p. 49)

<sup>47</sup> Some officers discussed terrorism involvement in Somalia. MAJ Thomas G. Pope, “From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping” (1993), p. 29. MAJ Vance Nannini, “Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia” (1994), p. 34. MAJ Michael A. Newton, “Military Jurisdiction over Foreign Nationals Who Commit International Crimes” (1996), pp. 23, 45-46. Later scholarship also discussed the presence of al Qaeda, but acknowledged it was minimal. Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pp. 6 & 215. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, pp. 71-72. Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, p. 55.

there.<sup>48</sup> He made no indication that he knew about the emerging threat of al Qaeda, but he tried to direct American attention to the very place Osama bin Laden resided at the time. Another early warning that came to fruition was from Major Gail Wojtowicz that same year. She urged the United States military to change its Cold War mentality and start to train and equip to meet “more likely lower threat levels” like terrorism.<sup>49</sup> Heeding this advice might have helped safeguard against the defining terrorist event for mid-level officers of the period: the Khobar Towers attack.

Starting in 1996, more military officers directed their attention towards terrorism.<sup>50</sup> The attack against Khobar Towers that year, a direct assault against the American military, resonated with the servicemembers at their advanced military education courses. In addition, the Oklahoma City bombing a year earlier demonstrated the vulnerability of the American homeland in a way that the World Trade Center bombing just three years earlier failed to do.<sup>51</sup> Officers began looking in earnest towards Islamic terror groups as the greatest international threat to American national security interests, demonstrating that they were rivaling, and even eclipsing, Iraq as a national security interest.<sup>52</sup> The Khobar Towers incident helped catalyze mid-level officers to think more broadly about the dangers of this new enemy within a changed geopolitical environment. One way these officers attempted to make sense of the rise of terrorism in a world

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<sup>48</sup> MAJ Vance J. Nannini, “Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia” (1994), p. 39.

<sup>49</sup> Maj Gail E. Wojtowicz, “USAF Vulnerability to Limited Ground Attacks” (1994), p. 47

<sup>50</sup> In 1996 and 1997, military officers produced twenty-five papers that discuss terrorism as a significant subject. In 2001, papers peak at twenty-two. In all, ninety-six of the one-hundred twelve of these papers were produced between 1996 and 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Before 1996, only one paper made significant mention of the World Trade Center bombing: MAJ Matthew P. McGuinness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), p. 55. After the Oklahoma City bombing, 14 papers discussed the impact of this attack.

<sup>52</sup> 62 of the 96 papers that discuss terrorism written between 1996 and 2001 express this sentiment.

after the Cold War was by determining the next potential threat through assessing the fallout from the demise of their previous adversary.

Khobar Towers caused many officer-scholars to rethink the meaning of the end of the Cold War. Some mid-level officers observed that the end of the Soviet Union and the subsequent turmoil of changing from a largely bipolar world to a multipolar world helped set conditions for international terrorism to become unleashed. During the Cold War, it was in the Soviet Union's interest to pressure the United States, but not provoke it. The global communist leader supported anti-American regimes, some of which sponsored terrorist activities. In doing so, the USSR had significant influence on those countries. During the period of *glasnost*, in the mid- to late 1980s, a practice of more openness from the Soviet Union that helped decrease Cold War tensions, it was important to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to reduce adversarial actions against America.<sup>53</sup> Several officers discuss how this led to even more restraint on terrorist actions as the Soviet Union used its patronage to influence nations that could have affected increased levels of terrorism. As the Soviet Union collapsed, it was no longer in a position to provide aid to those states. These officers argue that, since the Soviet Union no longer held leverage over these nations, the result was a rise in attacks against the United States. That correlated to terror organizations receiving resources from nations untethered by Soviet directives, or in the case of al Qaeda and its affiliates, from wealthy non-state actors like Osama bin Laden who embraced radical Islamist ideology.

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<sup>53</sup> For scholarly information on the easing of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States in context with the continuum of American foreign policy through the 1990s see Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*; Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*; and Nichols, *Winning the World*.



Another aspect mid-level officers explore is the impact of Islamic religious extremism on the potential for violent anti-American action.<sup>54</sup> Though a minority of Muslims turned towards violent fundamentalism, a growing segment of the population within the region harbored increasing feelings of hostility against the United States, a powerful, non-Muslim nation that they saw as imposing its will in their backyard.<sup>55</sup> Al Qaeda was an extremist manifestation of an overall disdain for American influence in the Middle East. With the fall of the Soviet Union, America as the lone superpower was freer to expand its economic, political, military, and cultural reach. This increased friction with regional societal values and traditional Islamic ideals. Major Chelsea Chae summed up the impact as he observes, “The dominant West enhances the desire of non-Western civilizations to shape the world in their ways.”<sup>56</sup> Perceived American encroachment allowed more extremist groups to implement increased radical interpretations of Qur’anic values to justify their extremist actions as legitimate methods of war against an

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<sup>54</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), pp. 16, 58. LTC Larry D. Bruns, “Threat Theory: A Model for Forecasting the Threat Environment of the Future” (1993), p. 60. MAJ Vance J. Nannini, “Decisions in Operations Other Than War: The United States Intervention in Somalia” (1994), p. 34. LtCol Reynolds B. Peele, “Maritime Chokepoints: Key Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and Strategy” (1997), p. 13. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), pp. 24-25. Lt Col Vergel L. Lattimore, “Instruments of Peace: The Viable and Strategic Role of Religious Leadership” (1998), pp. viii, 19. LCDR John B. Stubbs, “Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power” (1998), p. 7. Maj Jason R. Weimer, “Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?” (1998), p. 4. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, “Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations” (1998), p. 15. Maj Michael D. Bean, “United States Air Force Security Forces in an Era of Terrorist Threats” (1999), pp. 13-14. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, “Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders” (1998), p. 1. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, “The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons” (1999), pp. 11-12. CAPT J. Stephen Hoefel, “U.S. Joint Task Forces in the Kosovo Conflict” (2000), pp. 1-2. Maj William M. Tart, “No Fly Zones: Costs, Benefits, and Conditions” (2001), p. 91. MAJ Paul J. Wille, “Operational Art of Counterterrorism” (2001), p. 10. Most other papers at least imply that religious extremism as a known element.

<sup>55</sup> John O. Voll, “Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*” in *Voices of a Resurgent Islam*, p. 44. John L. Esposito, “Muhammad Iqbal and the Islamic State” in *Voices of a Resurgent Islam*, pp. 181-182. He argues that Iqbal, a Muslim scholar from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who influenced later leaders like Qutb who then influenced bin Laden and other extremists, asserted Islam was a religion of peace and *jihad* was only for defense. Khurshid Ahmad, “The Nature of the Islamic Resurgence” in *Voices of a Resurgent Islam*, p. 226. He says that the true nature of the Islamic resurgence was not fundamentalist. Other scholars also discuss the aspects of the majority of Muslims sharing anti-Western ideas in various levels of intensity, but only a minority practice extremism, including Hegghammer, *The Caravan*; Mamdani, “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim;” Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*; and Roy, *Globalized Islam*.

<sup>56</sup> MAJ Chelsea Y. Chae, “The Roles and Missions of Rangers in the Twenty-First Century” (1996), p. 74.

encroaching infidel, making them more likely to strike the United States.<sup>57</sup> This radical minority, who chose to shape events violently, was a major point of interest for these officers.

Part of officer-scholar concerns was stoked by an element of their course curricula that discussed how the cultural differences between the Judeo-Christian West and the Islamic Middle East was a major factor in the increase of large-scale anti-American terrorism throughout the 1990s. These students were exposed to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis during their courses, which influenced many papers.<sup>58</sup> While scholars on Islamic history refute Huntington's claims that the conflict between the Middle East and the West was a product of a seemingly inevitable clash due to differences in ideologies based on significant cultural divides,<sup>59</sup> this notion influenced many mid-level officers who were witnessing and experiencing an intensifying conflict with very different peoples who were resorting to non-conventional means of attack with growing lethality.

Mid-level officers also point to America's success in the Gulf War of 1991 as a significant factor in both enabling a new type of enemy and influencing how it employed its more deadly methods. They discuss its influence on non-state actors who were rivalling nation-

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<sup>57</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), p. 58. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 49. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, "Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders" (1998), p. 84. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), p. vi. Maj Michael D. Bean, "United States Air Force Security Forces in an Era of Terrorist Threats" (1999), pp. 13-14. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 107. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 15. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), pp. 2, 10. This is not dissimilar from scholarly sources, including *The Blind Spot*, edited by N. Burns and Price; *Voices of a Resurgent Islam* by John Esposito; *The Caravan* by Thomas Hegghammer; *Global Political Islam* by Peter Mandaville; *Globalized Islam* by Olivier Roy; *The Al Qaeda Factor* by Mitchell Silber; and *The Looming Tower* by Lawrence Wright.

<sup>58</sup> There are few available full syllabi for the services from 1993-2001. However, Air Force syllabi from both 1995 and 1998 use various works by Samuel Huntington in the curriculum. In addition, 45 total papers on terrorism from multiple service schools written between 1993 and 2001 directly reference Huntington.

<sup>59</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs* (Vol. 72, No. 3, 1993) pp. 22-23. Oliver Roy opposes Huntington, refuting this notion by discussing the many ways the West blames Islam as a whole for many ills from terrorism to suppression of women's rights without understanding the overall cultural context also at play (pp. 9-11).

states as major anti-western forces in the Middle East.<sup>60</sup> With the United States demonstrating incredible conventional dominance during Desert Storm, its enemies took notice, forcing them to use asymmetric and unconventional attack, either by a state leveraging these non-state actors, or by the non-state actors advancing their own agendas through terrorist attacks.<sup>61</sup> For the contemporary mid-level officers, because these terror organizations were neither subordinate to, nor operating under, dictates from an individual nation, even though they stayed hidden within the borders of rogue or failed states, it was difficult to definitively link the governments who harbored them with their violent actions. As such, their writings reveal that the threat contained an esoteric character, and therefore it created significant challenges for American policymakers

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<sup>60</sup> Maj Mark N. Mazarella, "Adequacy of U.S. Army Attack Helicopter Doctrine to Support the Scope of Attack Helicopter Operations in a Multi-Polar World" (1994), p. 21. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1995), p. 40. Maj Dale A. Blackburn, et al, "A National Policy for Deterring the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1996), pp. 2, 6. MAJ MAJ Michael D. Stewart, "A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5" (1996), p. 32. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 10. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), pp. 24-25. Maj Al G. Keeler, "Third World Computer Systems" (1997), p. 4. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), p. 28, 30. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), p. v. Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999), p. 29. Maj Scott M. Nicholson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, "Radiological Weapons of Terror" (1999), p. 17. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. 8, 11. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), p. 7. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Weapons of Mass Destruction and United States NBC Defense Readiness: Has America Provided the Attacker Asymmetric Advantage?" (1999), p. 3. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), pp. 35, 85. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 3. Lt Col Drew D. Jeter, "Lonely at the Top: The U.S. & Asymmetric Warfare" (2000), p. 5. MAJ Joseph L. Smith, "The Role of the Army Reserve in the Weapons of Mass Destruction/Homeland Defense Program" (2000), pp. 2-3. MAJ John A. Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), pp. 3-8. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), pp. 1, 20. LCDR Michael A. Megan, "Force Protection and Coastal Security - A National Challenge, A Coast Guard Response" (2001), abstract, p. 6. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), pp. 5, 11-12. Lt Col Robert F. Wright, "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001), p. 19. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 29. Col Lansen P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> 26 papers between 1996 and 2001 discuss the influence on America's war with Iraq as a primary driver for its enemies to embrace asymmetric means with the enabling of non-state actors as one potential consequence. Over 90% of all remaining papers on terrorism during this period discuss facing asymmetric threats without specifically identifying them as such, or the reasons why enemies chose to use those techniques.

to directly address the threat, or even retaliate against actual attacks.<sup>62</sup> As terror actions became more brash, these officers discussed the evolution towards a threat they named superterrorism.

By President Clinton's second term, many mid-level officers argued that the decrease in the number of terrorist attacks and the increase in power and lethality of each attack was a direct signal that a more powerful adversary that leveraged greater firepower directed at American targets was emerging.<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant Commander John Stubbs calls this threat "superterrorism," describing it as "a newer, more lethal terrorism using...weapons not traditionally used by terrorists and very high casualties."<sup>64</sup> These weapons might have included, but were not limited to, chemical, biological, or nuclear devices. The American embassy bombings in 1998 at Dar es

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<sup>62</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), pp. iii, 39. He credits the "evolving nature of terrorism" as significantly contributing to this characteristic. MAJ Chelsea Y. Chae, "The Roles and Missions of Rangers in the Twenty-First Century" (1996), p. 71. Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. 15. Maj Timothy E. Spaeth, "Terrorist Vulnerability: Failure of Policy?" (1997), p. 3. Maj Katherine K. Tucker, "Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)" (1998), pp. 12-13. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, "Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders" (1998), p. 1. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. 27. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 90. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), pp. 29-30. Col Stephen L. Wolborsky, "Swords into Stiletts: The Battle Between Hedgers and Transformers for the Soul of DoD" (2000), p. 82. MAJ Joseph L. Smith, "The Role of the Army Reserve in the Weapons of Mass Destruction/Homeland Defense Program" (2000), p. 4. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 15. COL George A. Latham II, "Installation Power Projection Platforms Role in Support of the Deployed Force" (2001), p. 3. Maj Victor J. Valdez, "Intelligence Oversight Revisited: Does CONUS Base Security Require a Change?" (2001), p. 3. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 25.

<sup>63</sup> Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 5. Maj Jason R. Weimer, "Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?" (1998), pp. 7, 56. LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 1. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), p. 12. MAJ Robert B. Polk, "Fourth Generation Warfare and its Impact on the Army" (2000), pp. 10-11. LCDR Michael A. Megan, "Force Protection and Coastal Security - A National Challenge, A Coast Guard Response" (2001), p. 2. Maj Victor J. Valdez, "Intelligence Oversight Revisited: Does CONUS Base Security Require a Change?" (2001), p. 1. MAJ Paul J. Wille, "Operational Art of Counterterrorism" (2001), pp. 14-15.

<sup>64</sup> LCDR Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 3. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), 2001, pp. 1-2. He also employs this specific terminology. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), pp. 44, 49. He uses the term "mega-terrorism." Between 1996 and 2001 there are 55 other papers that also directly discuss the dangers of large-scale terrorist attacks.

Salaam and Nairobi punctuated their belief in this trend that, for them, began with the Khobar Towers strike two years earlier.

Superterrorists went beyond the hijackings, assassinations, hostage taking, and even the low-level bombings most terrorists used in the past. Instead, they employed exponential leaps in firepower to strike strategically. While an attack like the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut used a comparable size explosive as the one used against Khobar Towers, and killed more people as well, the former was a tactical attack against an enemy force to achieve a limited goal. The latter was a strategic strike in an attempt to influence broader American regional policy.<sup>65</sup> The embassy bombings were even more demonstrative, striking not only against key strategic diplomatic posts on what the international community recognized as protected American territory, but also sending a message to fellow Muslims to respect Qur'anic law.<sup>66</sup> In effect, this latter point demonstrated how al Qaeda also attempted a strategic fundamentalist strike against what they saw as sacrilegious behavior within the *ummah*, or the global community of Muslims.<sup>67</sup>

As the turn of the century approached, more officers became focused on a particular superterrorist, Osama bin Laden, and his al Qaeda organization. As the trend for strikes became more intense, concern grew among United States leadership that conventional bombmaking would not be enough for these groups. These officers also believed that terrorists would seek access to weapons with greater lethality, and that access was relatively easy.

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas Hegghammer and Oliver Roy both discuss in detail the change in Islamist fundamentalists from the focus of their violent actions being on local politics and issues pre-1990s, to broader agendas and internationalism after. Lawrence Wright states the various actions against the United States were part of a broader plan to lure the United States into battle in the Middle East, though Roy disputes that neither al Qaeda nor the organizations it inspired had a grand strategy, but rather a general scheme to broadly attack the United States.

<sup>66</sup> See background section regarding details on the time of the strike being during prayers and how al Qaeda believed that, since the Muslim victims were not being devout at the time of the attack, they deserved their fate.

<sup>67</sup> For more information on the *ummah*, see Roy, *Globalized Islam*.

## *The Impact of Suspected Weapons Proliferation*

Explosives stealthily employed, like those in New York City, Oklahoma City, and King Abdul Aziz Airbase, gave a sense of vulnerability to both citizen and soldier. Though categorized as conventional bombs, they were not traditional. They were contrived from fertilizers and other everyday chemicals, designed for maximal explosive effect, packed into a truck or van, and unleashed. The idea that while most vulnerable, such as going into work or even sleeping soundly in bed, one could become a victim of tremendous concussive force and flying shrapnel was scary enough. The possibility that it could instead be a nuclear, biological, or chemical device was exponentially more frightening. Mid-level officers reflect this concern in their writings. They express a commonly held belief that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction materials, technology, and even fully weaponized devices provided terrorists and rogue states with frighteningly powerful capabilities they could employ against the American homeland or military forces deployed in vulnerable locations overseas. This trepidation began with apprehension over the breakup of the Soviet Union and its perceived inability to fully account for all the nuclear material, biological agents, and chemical weapons stockpiles in its arsenal.

Mid-level officers were concerned over weapons proliferation in the wake of the end of the Cold War.<sup>68</sup> Their focus during the first three years of the Clinton presidency had been on a general worry over weapons of mass destruction from the former Soviet Union getting into the hands of rogue states such as Iran and Iraq, and from there to terrorists. The Soviet Union had

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<sup>68</sup> In the first three years of Clinton's presidency, though there were only 16 papers on terrorism, over 60% discussed concerns with proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Though the percentages decreased starting in 1996 due to the increase in papers discussing terrorism overall from many different angles, thirty-three officers included proliferation as an important aspect of the terrorist threat during these later years.

nuclear weapons in multiple republics that were becoming separate nations. While it seemed logical that Russia would have become responsible for the disposition of these weapons, these new states were no longer beholden to Moscow. In addition, there were also stockpiles of chemical weapons. Uncertainty about which new government controlled these capabilities, fears over corrupt former Soviet officials and scientists selling technology or even weapons during the chaos of the breakup, and trepidation over the possible breakdown of bureaucratic processes that allowed for accountability of these capabilities topped the concerns of these officers.<sup>69</sup> These new threats had the potential to become catastrophic. One scenario that officers pondered was the consequences if a weapon of mass destruction were to have been used to attack the World Trade Center in 1993.<sup>70</sup> A nuclear warhead would have caused the casualties to jump from hundreds to millions. Even a successful chemical attack had the potential of skyrocketing casualties in a densely populated urban center such as Manhattan.

These officers' primary proliferation concern during Clinton's first term, especially before the bombing of Khobar Towers, was the threat of rogue states obtaining weapons of mass destruction.<sup>71</sup> Terrorism was a concern, but more because radical Islamist groups could obtain

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<sup>69</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, "Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East" (1993), p. 49-50. LCDR David W. Gruber, "A Methodology for the Transition from National Strategy to Adaptive Force Packaging" (1994), p. 2. Maj Thomas G. Pope, "From Camouflage Helmets to Blue Berets-The Transition from Peace Enforcement to Peacekeeping" (1993), p. 5. Lt Col Thomas D. Shearer, "A Three-Pronged Strategy" (1994), p. v. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), p. 26. Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. iv. Maj Brooks L. Bash, "The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping" (1994), p. 10. MAJ Mark R. Seastrom, "What Strategic Considerations Should Affect a Decision by the United States to Intervene with Military Force in Bosnia-Harcegovina?" (1993), p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, "Biological Weapons--The Poor Man's Nuke" (1995), p. 3. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 4. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), p. 2. Maj Scott M. Nicholson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, "Radiological Weapons of Terror" (1999), p. 18. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), p. 6. Maj Mark A. Lee, "Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense" (2001), p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), p. 1. Lt Col Thomas D. Shearer, "A Three-Pronged Strategy" (1994), p. 13. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), p. 2. Maj Brooks L. Bash, "The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping" (1994), p. 10. Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, "Biological Weapons--The Poor Man's Nuke" (1995), pp. 3, 15. Maj James M. Collins, et al, "Safety,

this capability from sponsor states. These officers supported the idea that rogue Middle Eastern nations sought to both enhance their regional power and attempt to compensate for their significant deficit in conventional military capability when compared to the United States by obtaining chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons technology. They then would have had the means to furnish these weapons to terrorists and direct their employment against the United States. Officer-scholar assessments demonstrate a belief that any terrorist use of these weapons would have been the result of a spillover effect from this assessed threat because the state still held supremacy in international policy. The power vacuum left by the Soviet Union's collapse opened the door for nations seeking regional hegemony. Iraq was one such nation. The precedent Saddam Hussein set by using chemical weapons demonstrated to these officers that these nations had a potential increase in resolve to employ this destructive capability, making a chemical, biological, or nuclear attack from an enemy state more likely. Major incidents that occurred in the latter half of President Clinton's first term would start to shift their conversation in a different direction.

The event that demonstrated America's vulnerability to weapons of mass destruction to many American leaders, including the cadre of mid-level officer service school attendees, took place halfway around the world against one of America's allies. Aum Shinrikyo was not an Islamist group, but a Japanese cult. They did not strike against American strategic interests or to alter United States policy in the Middle East. What they did was to unleash a weaponized chemical agent, sarin gas, into the Tokyo subway system. This attack influenced many mid-level

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Security, and Stability: The Role of Nuclear Control Regimes in a Proliferated World" (1995), pp. iii, x. Maj Dale A. Blackburn, et al, "A National Policy for Deterring the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1996), pp. 1-2, 5. Lt Col Paul Necas, et al, "NATO and Nuclear Proliferation" (1996), p. 9. Maj Michael G. Archuleta, et al, "Proliferation Profile Assessment of Emerging Biological Weapons Threats" (1996), p. vi, 3. MAJ Chelsea Y. Chae, "The Roles and Missions of Rangers in the Twenty-First Century" (1996), p. 77.



officers to shift from general concerns over proliferation to specific concerns over weapons of mass destruction use against American citizens by individual terrorist groups.<sup>72</sup> Major Katherine Tucker captured the sentiment of her peers as she writes, “Some analysts see the development and proliferation of WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] of all types...as the single major threat to national security.... Thus, it is the threat of highly lethal WMD against which the nation must prepare.”<sup>73</sup>

Three officers, however, refuted that this attack was an actual harbinger. Lieutenant Colonel Danny Webb, after six years of observing terror attacks starting with the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, argued that conventional explosive power was still the terrorists’ weapons of choice. A primary reason he cited was that it was difficult for terrorists to effectively weaponize chemical agents into a stealthily deployable device like the one used in Tokyo. In addition, though terrorists had the capability to create chemical weapons, only this Japanese cult had shown the willingness to employ them.<sup>74</sup> Major Victor Valdez, writing just two years later

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<sup>72</sup> Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, “Biological Weapons--The Poor Man’s Nuke” (1995), p. 11. Maj Dale A. Blackburn, et al, “A National Policy for Deterring the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (1996), p. 39. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, “Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum” (1997), p. 7. Maj Katherine K. Tucker, “Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)” (1998), p. 15. Maj Jason R. Weimer, “Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?” (1998), p. 56. MAJ Peter L. Jones, “Retaining the Initiative in Peace Operations - Tactical Negotiations and the Joint Military Commission” (1998), p. 11. LCDR John B. Stubbs, “Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power” (1998), p. iv. LTC Paul G. Marksteiner, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Pose a Serious Threat to U. S. Cities: How Prepared Are We?” (1998), p. v. MAJ Daniel S. Murray, “Chemical and Biological Defense of Ports of Debarkation: What Actions Are Being Taken and How Effective Are They?” (1999), p. 11. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, “Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist” (1999), pp. 2-3. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, “Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction” (1999), p. 4. Maj Scott M. Nicholson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, “Radiological Weapons of Terror” (1999), pp. 13, 20. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, “Weapons of Mass Destruction and United States NBC Defense Readiness: Has America Provided the Attacker Asymmetric Advantage?” (1999), p. 1. Maj Robert S. Barr, “Can ‘Airpower’ Counter the Asymmetric Threat” (2001), p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> Maj Katherine K. Tucker, “Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)” (1998), p. 15. She referenced Richard K. Betts, “The New Threat of Mass Destruction,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol 77, no 1 (Jan/Feb 98), pp. 26-41, when conveying the opinion as to the assessed threat level of proliferation.

<sup>74</sup> Lt Col Danny W. Webb, “The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons” (1999), 1999, p. 27.

in the months before 9/11, points to the failure of Aum Shinrikyo to execute a true mass-killing event because terrorists did not have the capability to effectively employ weapons of mass destruction, even if they could actually fabricate them.<sup>75</sup> Major Mark Lee acknowledges that this attack made many experts see it as a blueprint for future terror attacks, but he points out that another similar attack had yet to happen by 2001, a full six years later. He also argues that the overall casualty numbers were grossly exaggerated, intimating that this incident led the United States down a rabbit hole of chemical-biological terrorism focus.<sup>76</sup> As he puts it, “The weapons of choice for the terrorist remains the gun and the bomb.”<sup>77</sup> While somewhat prophetic in seeing that the next large attack would not be using what most thought of when discussing a weapon of mass destruction, specifically a nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological device, these authors still reflect the widespread belief that these materials were widely available.

The attack in the Tokyo subway showed the majority of mid-level officers that terrorist use of these types of weapons was a possibility, but it was the Oklahoma City bombing that demonstrated America’s vulnerability. However, it was not until the attack on Khobar Towers that mid-level military professionals began to seriously focus on the trend that began with the World Trade Center. Before the Oklahoma City bombing, from 1993 through 1994, only one paper on terrorism discussed the 1993 attack on the Twin Towers.<sup>78</sup> After the Oklahoma City bombing, there was one paper between 1995 and 1996 that mentioned the New York City attack,

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<sup>75</sup> Maj Victor J. Valdez, “Intelligence Oversight Revisited: Does CONUS Base Security Require a Change?” (2001), p. 19.

<sup>76</sup> Maj Mark A. Lee, “Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense” (2001), p. 31. He referenced a 2000 study by Amy Smithson and Leslie-Anne Levy for the Washington D.C. Henry L. Stimson Center titled *Ataxia: The Chemical and Biological Terrorism Threat and the US Response* that reported how, though the 12 deaths were accurate, the number of actual injuries were 37 with severe exposure symptoms, 984 with mild symptoms, and 4,470 with no actual symptoms but went to the hospital either as a precaution or with phantom symptoms.

<sup>77</sup> Maj Mark A. Lee, “Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense” (2001), p. 19.

<sup>78</sup> MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, “Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East” (1993), p. 55.

and it was only to discuss the possible casualties if a biological agent was incorporated.<sup>79</sup> After the attack on Khobar Towers in June of 1996, these events influenced a greater conversation on protecting the homeland from terrorism as a direct and massive terrorist attack on a major military installation caused many service school attendees to focus on terrorism and revisit past terror strikes. Over the next five years, fifteen papers tied Oklahoma City and/or the World Trade Center bombing with the rise of Islamic anti-American terrorism to advocate for the importance of protecting the homeland. Major David Chase sums up the sentiment of his fellow officers as he states how the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings combined with the rise in attacks against American interests overseas indicated that America needed to expect a large attack, yet it was “woefully unprepared to unilaterally act/react to these types of terrorist activities.”<sup>80</sup> The threats that came from weapons proliferation and the fear of the additional damage they could, and likely would in their estimations, cause was the primary catalyst for these concerns.

Focusing more on terrorism as the decade progressed led mid-level officers to shift more towards terror organizations as a threat equal to, or even greater than, individual nations for acquiring and employing weapons of mass destruction against the United States. In 1996, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Necas and five of his Air Command and Staff College colleagues coauthored a paper that was the first to include a section that significantly spotlights the danger of terrorists without a state sponsor gaining access to nuclear weapons.<sup>81</sup> The following year, the first full academic year after the Khobar Towers attack, service school attendees began in earnest to look at terrorist organizations as independent entities dangerous to national security. From

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<sup>79</sup> Lt Col Terry N. Mayer, “Biological Weapons--The Poor Man’s Nuke” (1995), p. 21.

<sup>80</sup> MAJ David W. Chase, “Posse Comitatus: A Nineteenth Century Law Worthy of Review for the Future?” (2001), p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> Lt Col Paul Necas, et al, “NATO and Nuclear Proliferation” (1996), pp. 9-10.

1997 to 1998, 80 percent of the authors who wrote about weapons proliferation discussed terrorist access to these destructive weapons as an increased threat at least on par with rogue nations, with 25 percent of the total viewing terrorism as the greater overall threat. While this number dips slightly to 70 percent for papers between 1999 and 2001, perhaps due to a renewed emphasis on American actions in Iraq that was devolving into a war of attrition (see chapter 1) as well as events in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo (see chapter 3), the percentage of those who saw independent terrorist organizations as the main threat to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States grows to 40 percent. This is compared to 90 percent of the authors between 1993 and 1996 who viewed rogue states as the top potential perpetrators of employing weapons and technology gained due to proliferation.

The evolution of mid-level officer opinions on the threat from chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons proliferation reflects America's overall changing assessments as to the dangers of these technologies reaching enemy hands, but also provides insight into how the nation was attempting to find the right enemy to target during this era of varied emerging threats. In the aftermath of the First Gulf War, the United States looked to focus its attention on places like Iraq to prevent development of weapons of mass destruction, both for Saddam Hussein's use in aggression and regional destabilization, and for distribution to terrorist organizations. While the Clinton Administration kept these goals as major priorities, officers who wrote about terrorism looked away from Iraq and gravitated towards non-state entities like al Qaeda as the source for acquiring and employing mass casualty weapons. Major Alan Bridges, writing in 1999, sums up the feeling of his colleagues as he states in the first sentence of his introduction, "The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is a problem facing the U.S. at the end of

the 1990s, and will continue to be a trenchant problem in the future.”<sup>82</sup> His entire paper on United States policy towards weapons of mass destruction proliferation uses as its foundation this acceptance that there was a widespread availability of access to these weapons at the end of the 1990s. As America marched towards the new millennium, some of the key questions for these officers were how to approach this developing and rising danger, and what actions America should take to protect its interests, the most vital of which was protecting its borders.

*Enemy Combatants, Criminals, or Something In-Between?*

A pivotal aspect of determining and implementing policy to address the rise of non-state actor terrorism in the 1990s was defining the problem. Mid-level officers discussed the policy trajectory of assessing the nature of terrorism from the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 through the attack on the *USS Cole* in 2000. Specifically, they opined on the appropriateness of United States leaders treating radical Islamist terror attacks primarily as crimes. They also considered the proper levels of military responses to these actions. Their discussions illuminate how America’s decisions on terrorism policy and response hinged upon the point at which, if at all, these acts of terror became acts of war. Officer writings from the first three years of Clinton’s presidency indicate a general consensus that the primary process of treating the attacks as criminal activities seemed reasonable. However, as more significant incidents occurred, opinions shifted to a belief that America was indeed at war. Despite the terror targeting of American military forces and strategic interests, and Osama bin Laden issuing a *fatwa* against the United States in 1998, which basically declared a state of war (albeit limited to a small but

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<sup>82</sup> Maj Alan C. Bridges, “Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: U.S. Policy and Practice in the Late 1990s” (1999), p. 1.

potentially potent subsection of radicals), the American approach continued to slowly evolve rather than shift into more of a war footing. Mid-level officer discussions of these issues highlight how America was attempting to adjust to this growing threat within the new era as they both trace and critique the evolution of American reaction to each incident.

Before 1996, no officer papers offered direct opinions on assessing America's approach towards attacks such as the World Trade Center bombing being a crime.<sup>83</sup> In this specific case, though radicalized men of Muslim faith acted on a *fatwa* from the Blind Sheikh to conduct *jihād* against America, there were no other obvious indications of a broad targeting of the United States by an extensive terror network. In addition, though ambitions may have been great, the attack killed few. The result was that the American government handled it as a crime.<sup>84</sup> The Oklahoma City bombing, and even the Olympic bombing in 1996 where Eric Rudolph planted an explosion in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park killing one and injuring a hundred others,<sup>85</sup> were domestic terror attacks that America treated criminally. These events helped condition officers who attended their service schools in the early years of President Clinton's tenure to accept that these types of acts could be handled as crimes.

Two months before the terror strike on Khobar Towers in June of 1996, Major Michael Newton submitted his paper advocating that terrorism should be treated as a crime.<sup>86</sup> He was an officer-lawyer writing at the Army's Judge Advocate General school. It is not unusual that a military attorney would take a position that focused on the legality of an incident, and in this

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<sup>83</sup> All 111 papers discuss military aspects of dealing with terrorism, intimating discussions of military responses, offensive or defensive, as having elements of warfare without necessarily directly opining on the terror acts themselves. Overall, 24 papers, all written between 1996 and 2001, specifically address the debate over terrorism as a crime versus an act of war.

<sup>84</sup> Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*, pp. 169-170, 274. Hamm, *Terrorism as a Crime*, pp. 28-29, 49.

<sup>85</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Eric Rudolph," <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/eric-rudolph>, accessed 22 Feb 2023.

<sup>86</sup> MAJ Michael A. Newton, "Military Jurisdiction Over Foreign Nationals Who Commit International Crimes" (1996).

case, terrorism was no exception. It was unique in that no other previous paper during the period directly addressed the issue of criminality. His position was consistent with the international view of terrorism that had its roots in the 1930s. The League of Nations, responding to the assassinations of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1934, established a baseline definition of acts of terrorism still used through the end of the century as “criminal acts directed against a state.”<sup>87</sup> For the American military, events perpetuated a change in perspective.

After the bombing of the Air Force dormitory in Saudi Arabia, not only did more students address the impact of terrorism, but focusing on its criminality became the minority opinion. Instead, these officers looked closely at the national security implications and how the military, instead of just law enforcement, should be a significant component in both prevention and response. This shift is not surprising. Anti-American terrorism in the 1990s was proving to be dreadfully different from the terrorist actions of 1930s. The increased lethality and calculated broad purposed targeting that continued through the turn of the century reinforced the perspective that an enemy conducted acts of war against the United States. While the increased use of American military in response to these events influenced the United States in taking a new look at this approach, it was the military that, by its nature of being responsible for the conduct of warfare, focused on treating terrorism predominantly as acts of war until the 9/11 attacks radically altered civil leadership’s approach to fight terrorism predominantly through warfare. Mid-level officers demonstrated this aspect by starting to make this shift a half-decade earlier.

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<sup>87</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, “Introduction to International Terrorism” in *University Module Series* (United Nations, 2018), p. 7. The document references Article I of the League of Nations Terrorism Convention of 1937.

Of the officers writing after June of 1996, only two state that these acts of terror should have been treated predominantly as crimes.<sup>88</sup> Major Mark McAlpine specifically discusses the precedent that the Reagan Administration set to treat terrorists as criminals and to focus diplomatic, economic, and even military efforts against the state sponsors.<sup>89</sup> However, American policy precedents regarding terrorism were not that simple as President Reagan also discussed terrorism as “acts of war,” but this was with respect to the state sponsors.<sup>90</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, times had changed, and non-state actors were growing in power separate from any ties to rogue nations. The combination of mass targeting of military forces and passage of time from the Cold War helped lead most mid-level officers to agree that large-scale anti-American terror attacks were individual acts of war independent of a specific nation state, with many arguing that it was an adaptation of warfare more consistent with other military actions of the 1990s.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Maj Mark S. McAlpine, “Future Roles of Air and Space Power in Combatting Terrorism” (1997), p. 7. MAJ Mark A. Jackson, “Domestic Threat Intelligence Management” (2001), p. iii.

<sup>89</sup> Maj Mark S. McAlpine, “Future Roles of Air and Space Power in Combatting Terrorism” (1997), p. 7. Maj Martha K. Jordan, “Terrorism and US Policy” (1997), p. 7. She echoes this sentiment, but puts the emphasis on terrorism as acts of war.

<sup>90</sup> Reagan, Ronald, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the American Bar Association” (July 08, 1985), <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-annual-convention-the-american-bar-association> accessed 22 Feb 2023.

<sup>91</sup> MAJ Thomas E. Bryant, “Personal Protection Against Terrorism: The Missing Link in United States Army Force Protection” (1996), p. 10. LT Peter Josef Alfred Riehm, “Suasion Through Military Presence: An Analysis of the Role of Presence in U.S.-Libyan Relations” (1996), p. 173. MAJ Michael D. Stewart, “A Small View of War: Toward a Brader FM 100-5” (1996), p. 32. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, “Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy” (1997), p. 61. He puts these actions more under the umbrella of MOOTW. Maj Jason R. Weimer, “Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?” (1998), p. 87. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, “Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders” (1998), pp. 83-85. LCDR John B. Stubbs, “Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power” (1998), pp. 10, 27-28. Lt Col Vergel L. Lattimore, “Instruments of Peace: The Viable and Strategic Role of Religious Leadership” (1998), p. 15. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, “Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces” (1998), p. 29. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, “Good Intentions or Good Targets? NBC Defense Considerations During Peace Operations” (1998), p. 15. He sees radical Islamic support of Bosniacs as part of a growing *jihad*. Maj Alan C. Bridges, “Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990s” (1999), pp. 31, 35-36. He argues that the retaliation against embassy bombings was an act of self-defense which cannot occur if not at some level of war. Maj Michael D. Bean, “United States Air Force Security Forces in an Era of Terrorist Threats” (1999), p. 9. Maj Donald C. Hickman, “Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk” (2000), pp. 61-62, 70. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, “Just-War Theory and Future Warfare” (2000), pp. 3, 36. MAJ Paul J. Wille, “Operational Art of Counterterrorism” (2001), p. 1.



One aspect that seemed to influence this view was the military's role under the Clinton Administration that repeatedly called upon the armed forces to conduct small scale contingencies. While formally referred to as Military Operations Other Than War, it was, for those executing it, a type of warfare. Their collective writings show how the president's emphasis on execution of these conflicts as part of Engagement and Enlargement, including the ongoing operations in Iraq and the Balkans, or the shift to warlord hunting in Somalia, demonstrated that the military needed to modify its thinking in order to fight these new wars. For those closer to ground level writing after 1996, this was the predominant type of warfare they had known throughout most of their military service, even if the United States did not always define these actions as such. Though Congress did not declare war, the military was ordered to fly combat patrols over Iraq, bomb targets in the Balkans, and engage hostile clans in Somalia, all while getting fired upon. To those at the lower levels, it was warfare.

The evolving nature of terrorism seemed to fit into this paradigm. Preventing Saddam Hussein from developing and distributing weapons of mass destruction to these non-state actors, as most believed was happening, or destroying a suspected chemical weapons plant in Sudan to deny Osama bin Laden access to these capabilities, which many thought was a very real possibility, was a level of war that military professionals executed under the tactical leadership of mid-level officers. Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, by law, were not law enforcement, even if the Commander-In-Chief ordered them to duties such as peacekeeping, as in the aftermath of Bosnia or Kosovo. Therefore, for these officers, the military use against terrorists was not to prosecute criminals. However, others recognized that this adversary was not strictly a military opponent. Even with the terrorist strikes equating to an application of strategic attack

synonymous with warfare, their methods still contained characteristics that, in order to effectively combat, should have been assessed at some level as crimes.

Because of the dual nature of terrorists, several mid-level officers realized that it would take a combination approach to effectively face this threat, defend the homeland, and respond to attacks on America's citizenry. Therefore, there are those who saw the necessity of also looking at these acts as crimes. These officers label large-scale terror strikes as closer to illegal acts of war.<sup>92</sup> A primary reason for taking this dual approach was the pivotal importance of determining if there was any host nation responsible in assisting with the attacks. Any military strike against a terrorist organization would have to take place within a sovereign nation. As Lieutenant Commander Stubbs points out, when executing a military response to a superterrorist attack, as he and others called these large-scale strikes as discussed earlier, the United States needed to be certain who was responsible, where they resided, and, most importantly, whether the nation-state that America was planning to target vis-à-vis the terrorists was actually responsible for sponsoring the attack, or merely complicit in that they turned a blind eye to a terrorist organization using their nation as a safe haven.<sup>93</sup> Answering many of these questions demanded investigation within the expertise of a criminal detective.

The strikes on the Sudanese chemical plant and Afghanistan training camps were the subjects of the debate on whether American leadership properly investigated and fully adjudicated their findings prior to their ordering the attacks. In 1998 the United States used

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<sup>92</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. vi. Lt Col Charles W. Hasskamp, "Operations other than War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. 14. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), pp. 3, 31-40. Maj Scott M. Nichelson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, "Radiological Weapons of Terror" (1999), pp. 14, 20. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), 1999, p. 22. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), pp. vi, 29, 34-35. Col Lansan P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), pp. 14-15.

<sup>93</sup> LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 7.

kinetic force within the sovereign nations of Sudan and Afghanistan. However, determination of responsibility for the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania required more than military intelligence alone. Mid-level officers debated whether the United States took the right approach, if leaders came to the right conclusion, and if the strikes were even effective. By treating the embassy bombings closer to acts of war and not crimes, a handful of officer-scholars believed that the United States acted too hastily against Sudan, destroying what could have been a legitimate chemical plant.<sup>94</sup> There were concerns that, because this very real possibility swayed global public opinion, the United States lost international legitimacy in its overall anti-terrorism efforts. In addition, officers speculated that there were flawed political reasons for such a rapid response. Major Jody Blanchfield goes so far as to say that the haste in attacking Sudan without proper evidential cause was in order to distract the American public from the Monica Lewinsky scandal.<sup>95</sup> Her observation represented yet another layer of complexity surrounding the already complicated aspect of America's attempts to properly address how to treat a non-state actor conducting violent acts against the United States.

Others whose writings demonstrate a belief that terrorism is on the warfare spectrum applauded the intent (if not necessarily the execution) of the missile strikes as helping to deter terrorist attacks, many calling them proactive and preemptive.<sup>96</sup> While the latter statement

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<sup>94</sup> Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, "A Kill is A Kill Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), p. 37. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), p. 30. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), pp. 41-42. Maj Alan C. Bridges, "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990s" (1999), p. 33. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 29. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), 1999, pp. 16-17.

<sup>95</sup> Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 29. President Clinton was embroiled in a scandal regarding an affair with an intern, Monica Lewinsky. He would later be impeached for perjury over lying about the affair under oath.

<sup>96</sup> Maj Scott M. Nicholson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, "Radiological Weapons of Terror" (1999), p. 15. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), p. 34. He has critiques, but agrees with the overall strategic approach. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), pp. 29, 34-35. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for

proved untrue as Al Qaeda and organizations affiliated with them went on to bomb the *USS Cole*, planned to blow up Los Angeles International Airport at the start of the millennium, and ultimately executed the 9/11 attacks, the idea to use offensive military force to preempt enemy activity was not conceptually wrong. These officers demonstrate some foresight as assertive preemption would become the American policy after 9/11 and, in concert with many other changes, helped prevent another direct superterrorist strike against the American homeland or major strategic assets abroad. However, in 1998 the United States had neither the international political capital, domestic will, nor justification to employ an effective, large scale preemptive mission.

Nevertheless, American enemies were plotting against it, and United States actions would not be enough to thwart them. Lieutenant Colonel Webb's assessment seems the most prophetic. He acknowledges the appropriateness of the United States action in striking against bin Laden, but feared that the al Qaeda leader's motivation was less for retaliation, which may have been more typical of terrorism during the Cold War, and more to counter American reach and power. To accomplish this, a major asymmetric, mass casualty strike was the Saudi national's best option given how the United States employed its military capabilities in August of 1998.<sup>97</sup> Three years later, his prediction came to fruition.

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International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), p. 23. MAJ Roger A. Pretsch, "Tomahawk Diplomacy and U.S. National Security" (1999), p. 3, 9-10 – he agrees with the action, but critiques lack of evidence as hurting justification. Maj Alan C. Bridges, "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990s" (1999), p. 31. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 80. Maj Jody L. Blanchfield, "Bombs Away: A Strategic Analysis of Airpower in Limited Conflict" (2000), p. 28-29. She supports the theory behind it, but criticizes the execution as well as the timing with the Lewinsky scandal. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), p. 80. Col Lansen P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), pp. 7-8.

<sup>97</sup> Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), 1999, pp. 16-17.

There are also several authors who do not offer direct opinions on terrorism as a crime or act of war, but their focus on military response intimates that they believe at some level that the radical Islamic terror strikes should have been put on the warfare spectrum, not altogether different from the military operations other than war or small scale contingency approach the Clinton Administration was taking.<sup>98</sup> For example, as some of these officers discuss, the uses of Tomahawk Diplomacy, from the 1993 strike on the Iraqi intelligence headquarters to the 1998 Afghan and Sudan attacks, could have been considered military counterterrorism actions consistent with the low intensity conflict approach to warfare that Clinton demonstrated in most other military actions of his tenure. Critical of this tack, Major Martha Jordan critiques the execution by stating how this approach failed to attack this enemy's center of gravity. Instead, it was "directed toward peripheral parts of the system (infrastructure and fielded forces)."<sup>99</sup> This speaks directly to what the military taught as being counter to proper strategy when conducting warfare because, by engaging only the most tactical targets and avoiding the strategic factors, the United States lost the ability to achieve effective results.<sup>100</sup>

While Major Jordan and other officers with similar opinions advocated for employing wartime tactics and strategies when engaging terror organizations, these officers did not advocate for all out warfare. Modification to military approaches including unconventional, non-

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<sup>98</sup> Dale A. Blackburn, et al, "A National Policy for Deterring the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1996), pp. 39, 42, 48. MAJ Thomas E. Bryant, "Personal Protection Against Terrorism: The Missing Link in United States Army Force Protection" (1996), pp. 40, 43. Lt Col Max D. Shaevitz, "Airpower in the Next Millennium" (1997), pp. 65-66, 89-90. Col Michael D. Gilpin, "Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning" (1997), pp. 4-5, 27. Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), p. 61. Maj Timothy E. Spaeth, "Terrorist Vulnerability: Failure of Policy?" (1997), p. 15. Maj Katherine K. Tucker, "Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)" (1998), p. 22. Maj Philip M. Senna, "The JFACC and Small Scale [sic] Contingency Operations" (1998), pp. 31-32. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. vi.

<sup>100</sup> Clausewitz discusses strategic centers of gravity for the enemy as primary targets for military action. After Desert Storm, Colonel John Warden, the architect of the air campaign, built the air war plan around treating the enemy as a system, focusing on strategic targets as the most important. These concepts were mainstays in military teaching during the 1990s and beyond in various forms.

traditional, or techniques closer to how the military had been conducting operations other than war would have been appropriate. They understood that there were political considerations, domestic and international, as well as the nature of this unconventional, non-state enemy that policy makers and implementers alike needed to consider. However, their overall advocacy was to employ modified military principles of war rather than intermittent limited uses of force in an attempt to bring criminals to justice or defeat these enemy combatants.

Whether superterrorism was an act of war, an international crime, or a different type of war crime, the United States military was engaging this new enemy. As al Qaeda and other terrorist groups targeted America to advance greater policy objectives, the armed services were forced to defend against a broad range of future attacks. With the inclusion of other points of American power as terrorist targets, such as overseas embassies, some officers took a new look at the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 as part of a continuum of larger scale assaults on America. They pushed for a focused military strategy, even one more in line with other military actions of the Clinton era, against what they came to identify as an emerging and monstrous threat. It would take the next attack on the Twin Towers to force a major shift towards fighting a large scale, unconventional enemy in a proactive and preemptive way. In the meantime, United States policy makers and military leaders were evolving slowly, even though they were making progress towards preparing to meet this threat. Reasons for this methodical progression included the deliberate developmental process of modernizing policy during the last decade of the millennium and the slow pace of military transformation.

### *Other Policy Concerns*

In transitioning away from the Cold War to America's new role in the world, policy makers struggled with defining a national vector. Conversely, mid-level officers who discussed terrorism began to see more clearly Islamic terrorism as the proper prime focus of national defense policy. In the latter half of the Clinton presidency, as terrorist organizations became greater and more direct dangers to the United States, officer service school writings discussed particular policy issues regarding America's ability to respond to this threat. Like critiques surrounding other American endeavors discussed in earlier chapters, issues such as low military budgets and directives to prepare for two major regional contingencies while constantly executing small-scale operations affected America's preparedness to fight terrorism.<sup>101</sup> This new enemy may have emerged from the Cold War through fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan, but dealing with it required a shift away from Cold War thinking. It had grossly different characteristics than a near-peer like the Soviet Union, or even a regional power like Iraq or

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<sup>101</sup> Maj Clifton L. Dickey, "Air Base Defense for the Air Expeditionary Force: More Than Defending the Redline" (1998), p. 20. Maj John J. Ziegler III, "From Beirut to Khobar Towers: Improving the Combating Terrorism Program" (1998), pp. 2, 21-22. Maj Michael A. O'Halloran, "A Kill is A Kill Asymmetrically Attacking U.S. Airpower" (1999), pp. 61-62. Lt Col Thomas W. Bergeson, "Shielding the Sword: A Strategy for Protecting the AEF" (1999), p. 13. MAJ Justice S. Stewart, "Sumo in a Ninja Fight: A Critical Study of Army Force Structure in the 21st Century Environment" (1999), p. 13. Maj Stephen E. Wright, "Aerospace Strategy for the Aerospace Nation" (1994), pp. 25-26. MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future" (1995) abstract, pp. 37-40. MAJ James Keith Johnson, "Implications for the Ten Division Army: Selective Engagement or Managed Chaos" (1996), pp. iii, 1-2. Lt Col Max D. Shaevitz, "Airpower in the Next Millennium" (1997), p. 52. Maj Jason R. Weimer, "Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?" (1998), pp. 3-4. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), pp. 1-2. Maj Philip M. Senna, "The JFACC and Small Scale [sic] Contingency Operations" (1998), pp. 1-2. LCDR Frederick D. Shelton and LCDR Russell T. McLachlan, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Warfare: Is the AEF Ready to Play?" (1999), pp. 2-3. MAJ John R. Sutherland III, "Pax Americana: America's Bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony" (1999), p. ii. Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999), pp. 3, 17. Maj Michael D. Bean, "United States Air Force Security Forces in an Era of Terrorist Threats" (1999), p. iv, 1-2. MAJ Tori R. Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force--Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), pp. 2, 5. MAJ John A. Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 66. Maj Gregory A. Hermsmeyer, "Preparing for Catastrophe: A New U.S. Framework for International Disaster Response" (2001), pp. 2, 9, 78-81. Col Lansen P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), p. 13. Nine other papers discuss issues with downsizing, but do not directly equate that to issues combatting terrorism.

Serbia. One of these attributes was a robust ability to stealthily attack America, potentially with biological, chemical, or even nuclear weapons. For these reasons, officer-scholars also incorporated other non-military policy issues in their analyses in ways different from their counterparts who wrote about Somalia, Iraq, or the Balkans. While they recognized how the White House was putting more emphasis on terrorism as the calendar year approached 2000, they also discussed how competing priorities and mixed signals from the National Command Authority helped prevent a conservative military, in which resistance to change was a significant cultural characteristic, from focusing on what would become the most dangerous and direct threat to the American homeland. Instead, adherence to conventional overseas combat preparation dominated the military approach. As Lieutenant Commander Anita DeVries writes, “The American public expects security within our borders and quick and decisive victories when confronting adversaries.... It can no longer be business as usual.”<sup>102</sup> There were many factors from both civilian and military leadership that prevented the adjustment she and many of her colleagues wanted.

One key issue that these officers point to in America’s inability to counter the rising terrorist threat was the failure of policy makers to define terrorism effectively, whether state sponsored or independent non-state actors.<sup>103</sup> Though there were inconsistencies from not only top policymakers, but also between different federal agencies, this was not strictly an American problem. Student-officers discuss in their writings the issues with conflicting international

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<sup>102</sup> LCDR Anita D. DeVries, “Information Warfare and Its Impact on National Security” (1997), p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, “Terrorism and US Policy” (1997), pp. vi, 8-10, 16. LCDR John B. Stubbs, “Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power” (1998), p. 3. Maj Michael D. Bean, “United States Air Force Security Forces in an Era of Terrorist Threats” (1999), pp. 6-8. Maj Katherine K. Tucker, “Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)” (1998), pp. 12-13. Maj Craig J. Stiles, “Joint Vision 2010: A Unilateral Vision for a Multilateral (sic) Future” (1998), p. 5. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, “Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders” (1998), p. 1. Maj Mark A. Lee, “Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense” (2001), p. 24.



guidance on terrorism that include how the aforementioned problems with determining whether to treat terrorism as a crime or an act of war affected policy development. In addition, they commented on how nation-states were losing their monopoly on executing policy as several non-state actors exhibited this characteristic. As a result, information regarding terrorism that international organizations developed and disseminated, such as the applicable laws of armed conflict from the Geneva Convention, became less clear when dealing with violent non-state organizations. Finally, different nations had various approaches towards terrorism. As this was an international issue and it was clear to these officers that the United States needed to act in concert with the global community, these complications convoluted the possibility of developing a common understanding to use as a baseline, both between the United States and its allies, and within America's ability to develop anti-terrorism policy. As Major Martha Jordan simply states, "If one looks to the international community for a clear definition, there is none to be found."<sup>104</sup> Given the transnational nature of the terrorist threat, the United States could not act unilaterally in the 1990s the way it could after 9/11; therefore it needed a policy that prioritized international considerations. However, if the world could not even agree on a definition, any policy of international cooperation was doomed to lack clarity, as was the ability to properly recognize the actual danger.

Domestically, mid-level officers lamented how American policies worked against progress towards focusing on this rising threat. Officer-scholars argued that one result of using the military to do more overall missions with fewer resources was insufficient or convoluted policy guidance with respect to countering terrorism and preventing proliferation.<sup>105</sup> Budget cuts

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<sup>104</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> Maj Steven R. Prebeck, "Preventive Attack in the 1990s" (1993), pp. 32-33. Maj Gail E. Wojtowicz, "USAF Vulnerability to Limited Ground Attacks" (1994), p. 24. LCDR Anita D. DeVries, "Information Warfare and Its Impact on National Security" (1997), p. 15. Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. 31. Maj

combined with America's active execution of Engagement and Enlargement retarded the ability of the nation to focus on the spectrum of weapons of mass destruction threats, both in response and deterrence, thus leaving the nation vulnerable to enemies willing to execute mass casualty attacks. While some acknowledge that the National Security Strategies after the Khobar Towers bombing kept increasing its emphasis on terrorism, the continued direction for military preparation for two major regional conflicts and the focus on small scale contingencies left the military with too many competing priorities. For example, the 2000 National Security Strategy emphasizes counterproliferation, the threat of terrorism, and homeland security in several places, stating that "defense of the homeland against WMD terrorism has taken on new importance..." but it also discusses countering regional aggressors in the Persian Gulf and Korean Peninsula, "steering international peace and stability operations," continuing with engagement, and preparing for "large-scale, cross-border aggression in two distant theaters in overlapping time frames."<sup>106</sup> These mid-level officers, who were directly responsible for their units' ability to

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Hugh D. Bowman, "The Weakening of America" (1997), p. 28. Maj Clifton L. Dickey, "Air Base Defense for the Air Expeditionary Force: More Than Defending the Redline" (1998), pp. 20, 55. Maj Jason R. Weimer, "Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?" (1998), pp. 5-7. Maj Katherine K. Tucker, "Assessing the Prospects and Limitations of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)" (1998), p. 12. Maj John J. Ziegler III, "From Beirut to Khobar Towers: Improving the Combating Terrorism Program" (1998), pp. 21-22, 30. LtCol Robert Creamer Jr. and Lt Col James C. Seat, "Khobar Towers: The Aftermath and Implications for Commanders" (1998), p. 1. LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. vii. MAJ Anthony K. Crawford, "The Search for Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa--An American Perspective" (1998), pp. 35, 52-53. He specifically discusses policy towards Africa. Maj Scott M. Nicholson and Maj Darren D. Medlin, "Radiological Weapons of Terror" (1999), pp. 1-2, 45. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 107. COL James A. Geiling, "Medical Support to the Kenya Embassy Bombing, A Model for Success or a Platform for Reform?" (2000), pp. 29, 34, 58. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), pp. iii, 62. Col Lansan P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), pp. ii, 1, 12-13, 21-22 – calls it "waffling and stumbling on the part of the last two administrations..." (12). MAJ David W. Chase, "Posse Comitatus: A Nineteenth Century Law Worthy of Review for the Future?" (2001), pp. 24, 31, 43. Maj Gregory A. Hermsmeyer, "PREPARING FOR CATASTROPHE: A New U.S. Framework for International Disaster Response" (2001), pp. ix, 2. He specifically discusses disaster response policy. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 96.<sup>106</sup> <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>, "A National Security Strategy for a Global Age" (2000), accessed 21 Feb 2023, pp. 7, 13, 22-24.

execute presidential directives, found themselves unable to do it all. Instead, they wrote hoping to move the national policy conversation towards a more focused emphasis on the terrorist threat.

There were those who supported President Clinton's approach, even if they still had critiques, believing that his policy adjustments to address terrorism and the overall use of the military during the latter half of his administration had positive effects, or were at least on the right track.<sup>107</sup> They saw Engagement and Enlargement as a way the United States was being more proactive in addressing issues overseas. They further argue that it had positive effects on deterring attacks on the homeland and, if used properly, would have continued to do so. By demonstrating a willingness to engage beyond just Tomahawk Diplomacy, the United States put itself in a better position to both gain situational awareness on potential terror threats and execute counterterrorist strikes.

The most apropos discussions about policy and adaptation to the new era was how many officers advocated for further departure from Cold War methods. They argued that traditional deterrence would not work against major international terror networks.<sup>108</sup> The threat of a

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<sup>107</sup> Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 62. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), p. 30. LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 16. He critiqued Clinton's policies of his first term, but states positive steps to date in his second. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), pp. 24-25. Maj Alan C. Bridges, "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: US Policy and Practice in the Late 1990s" (1999), p. 11. MAJ Justice S. Stewart, "Sumo in a Ninja Fight: A Critical Study of Army Force Structure in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Environment" (1999), p. 13. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. vi, 19. Maj Donald C. Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), pp. vii, 1. Col Stephen L. Wolborsky, "Swords into Stiletos: The Battle Between Hedgers and Transformers for the Soul of DoD" (2000), p. 84. He is critical of many policy aspects, but is pro-engagement. MAJ Joseph L. Smith, "The Role of the Army Reserve in the Weapons of Mass Destruction/Homeland Defense Program" (2000), pp. 3-4. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), pp. 8, 36, 96. He advocates for *Engagement and Enlargement* to be used against the terror threat.

<sup>108</sup> Maj Dale A. Blackburn, et al, "A National Policy for Deterring the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1996), p. 15. MAJ Peter L. Jones, "Retaining the Initiative in Peace Operations - Tactical Negotiations and the Joint Military Commission" (1998), p. 8. MAJ Daniel S. Murray, "Chemical and Biological Defense of Ports of Debarkation: What Actions Are Being Taken and How Effective Are They?" (1999), p. 8. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), p. 24. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), pp. 20-21, 28. Maj Donald C.

massive nuclear response against a rogue nation which could have leveraged terrorists to plant a nuclear, biological, or chemical device in a major American city could still have been an effective deterrent in the 1990s as the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) was in the 1970s. However, when dealing with superterrorists who acted independently, these officers firmly believed that relying on MAD was indeed mad. Though they advocated for new approaches to preclude terrorist aggression, they were more consigned to the reality that these organizations could not be deterred. Prevention and response, therefore, were critical. They argue that intelligence assets required improvement, and overreliance on technology needed to be curbed in favor of human intelligence in order to discover plots and stop them pre-execution. In addition, military units, including the National Guard and Reserves, ought to have started partnering with civil authorities to respond to what many saw as an inevitable mass casualty event within America's borders. The continued rise of terrorism necessitated adaptiveness for American policy to fit this new era. While politicians were slow to adjust, mid-level officers recognized that their own services were even slower.

It was especially necessary for the military to adjust to a new global dynamic. As the front line in both preemptive capability as well as reactive response to terrorist activity, these mid-level leaders saw that their services needed to adapt to new conditions and change from Cold War approaches and organizational configurations in order to effectively meet the defense demands of the twenty-first century.<sup>109</sup> They cite how force structures and units were still

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Hickman, "Biological Warfare and American Strategic Risk" (2000), pp. 81-85, 94. Lt Col Drew D. Jeter, "Lonely at the Top: The U.S. & Asymmetric Warfare" (2000), p. 13. Col Stephen L. Wolborsky, "Swords into Stiletos: The Battle Between Hedges and Transformers for the Soul of DoD" (2000), p. 49. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 1. Maj Mark A. Lee, "Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense" (2001), p. 3. Lt Col William T. Eliason, "Slowing the Genie's Spread: Reversing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), pp. 10-26.

<sup>109</sup> Lt Col Max D. Shaevitz, "Airpower in the Next Millennium" (1997), p. 55. Maj Jason R. Weimer, "Antiterrorism Doctrine Today: A Recipe for Disaster?" (1998), p. 5. Maj Craig J. Stiles, "Joint Vision 2010: A Unilateral Vision for a Multilateral (sic) Future" (1998), p. 12. Lt Col Charles W. Hasskamp, "Operations other than

organized around large-scale conventional war despite years of executing small-scale contingencies, missions short of war, and the rising terror threat that would require engaging an asymmetric enemy. They saw senior military leaders still stuck in old ways of doing business that inhibited doctrine, strategy, and plans from effectively evolving. They recognized how the military acquisition process could not keep up with fielding technologies more adept at countering these new threats. They also identified how support structures were not conducive to adjusting to what these officers saw, from their experiences closer to the ground level, was a changing reality for military engagement.

One significant example that Major Richard Culkin cites was the military's archaic wargaming practices.<sup>110</sup> He discusses how military wargames, the tools that the armed forces use to develop strategies, training, and other major preparation for fighting America's wars, were still focused on major theater war and World War II-style conventional battle actions applied to another Desert Storm or modern-day Korean conflict scenario. Given the military employment of the 1990s and the rise of terror, he advocated for the twenty-first century military

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War: Who Says Warriors Don't Do Windows" (1998), p. iii. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), p. 1. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. 20. Maj David W. Coffman, "Operational Art and the Human Dimension of Warfare in the 21st Century" (1999), pp. 5, 8-12. Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999). MAJ Justice S. Stewart, "Sumo in a Ninja Fight: A Critical Study of Army Force Structure in the 21st Century Environment" (1999), pp. 10-13. MAJ Michael E. Mathes, "Global Challenges & Regional Responses: Organizing for the Future" (2000), pp. ii, 6, 50. MAJ Tori R. Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force--Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), pp. 3, 9, 82. MAJ Scott T. Kendrick, "21st Century Transformation: Has the Army Been Here Before?" (2001), p. 1. LCDR John K. Martins, "A 21st Century Navy Vision: Motivating Sailors to Achieve Optimum Warfighting Readiness" (2001), p. 58. MAJ John A. Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), pp. iii, 59-60. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), pp. 4, 21, 29. MAJ Mark A. Jackson, "Domestic Threat Intelligence Management" (2001), p. 1. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), pp. 68-72. MAJ Steven M. Leonar, "Inevitable Evolutions: Punctuated Equilibrium and the Revolution in Military Affairs" (2001), p. 43. Lt Col Robert F. Wright. "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001), pp. 18, 30, 34-36.

<sup>110</sup> Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999).

preparedness to focus on unconventional attacks.<sup>111</sup> In this way, America's armed forces would have been best prepared to face the more probable dangers and enemies. Until then, he argued, America would be ill-suited for the tasks of combating international terrorism and other asymmetric foes. He sums up what many of his peers suggest when he states, "These asymmetric challenges are difficult to simulate...but they are fearful realities that command attention...."<sup>112</sup>

While it is clear that America's anti-terrorism policy with respect to non-state actors and preventing use of weapons of mass destruction against the homeland had progressed during President Clinton's second term, there were many issues that inhibited effectiveness. Several competing priorities in a resource-restricted military caused policy attentions to be spread thin. Focusing on major conventional war, executing multiple small-scale contingencies, and trying to best respond to terror attacks that increased in lethality slowed America's ability in relation to the military to direct proper attention on what was becoming a direct threat to national security. Mid-level officers debated the applicability of Engagement and Enlargement to combatting this threat, the practical effectiveness of increased presidential attention on terrorism, the factors inhibiting definitive and executable terrorism prevention and response, and the culpability of the military that seemed stuck on adhering to Cold War paradigms. American policy makers may have been on the right track, but the overall consensus was their pace was frighteningly slow. While none of these officers had a crystal ball, they did see a new and formidable enemy lurking beneath the surface who was not afraid to strike. The question for them was how able the United States was to respond.

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<sup>111</sup> Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999), p. 23.

<sup>112</sup> Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999), p. 29.

### *Conclusion: Predicting 9/11?*

During the Clinton Administration, mid-level officer-scholars attempted what many other American leaders were trying to do: predict the next threat against the United States in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union. From the perspective of the United States, the Cold War ended with a great dragon having been slain, though its death was not really a result of Saint George, in a feat of martial bravery, attacking and destroying the beast in an epic battle. Instead, this dragon was slowly weakened through starvation and exhaustion until it no longer had the strength to hold itself up. Afterwards, the state of global affairs seemed to demonstrate that many smaller metaphorical monsters emerged, no longer fearful of the dragon. They caused havoc and local mayhem, but their dangers were limited. United States policy implementation looked to keep it that way, and even attempted to reverse the chaos with varying levels of success. The nation demonstrated this in places like Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. However, by the end of the century, many mid-level officers came to realize that there was another enemy using the ashes of the Cold War to conceal itself. It would partially emerge to strategically strike at America, and then seemed to disappear again. It did not fully reveal its full destructive abilities until months after President Clinton left office.

During Desert Storm, the United States demonstrated that it was dominant in conventional warfare. Mid-level officer writings discuss how America's enemies would have needed to, and indeed did, resort to asymmetric means to counter this supremacy. This trend became especially troublesome with the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction technology and capability. The breakup of the Soviet Union brought into question accountability of its nuclear and chemical stockpiles in the chaos that accompanied its death throes. In addition,

the belief in an Iraqi chemical and biological program and the relative ease in creating such raw materials led many during Clinton's first term to establish as a significant threat rogue states acquiring this means and using it against American forces overseas, or even against the homeland. As Chapter 1 discusses, that was a primary motivation for the United States continuing its engagement with Iraq for over a decade following the First Gulf War.

World events caused a shift in mid-level officer focus away from rogue states. The Aum Shinrikyo attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 demonstrated the potential dangers of weaponized chemical agents to civilian populations in the hands of terrorists. Later that year, the Oklahoma City bombing highlighted the vulnerability of the United States to large scale terrorism. These events led officer-scholars to begin to look at the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 in a new light. They hypothesized that the death toll could have been catastrophic had terrorists been more competent or deployed chemical or biological agents. In 1996, the bombing of Khobar Towers drove officers to pinpoint non-state actors with ties to the Middle East as direct threats to the American homeland. Subsequent attacks and planned strikes including the embassy bombings in Africa, the Millennium Plot to blow up Los Angeles International Airport, and the waterborne assault on the *USS Cole* drove more officers to anticipate an even greater mass casualty event against the United States, either against fielded forces or civilian targets in the homeland.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Col Bradley L. Butler, "The Need for a USAF Information Warfare (IW) Strategy for Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)" (1996), p. 32. Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 5. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), pp. 38, 47. LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 1. LTC Paul G. Marksteiner, "Weapons of Mass Destruction Pose a Serious Threat to U. S. Cities: How Prepared Are We?" (1998), pp. 5-7. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), pp. 1-2. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), p. vi. Maj Richard T. Culkin, "Post-Cold War Wargaming and the American Military Leadership Challenge" (1999), p. 30. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. 16-17. MAJ Scott D.



In analyzing the trend of fewer, yet more destructive, terrorist attacks aimed against the United States, mid-level officers increasingly concluded that terrorism would be the next major direct threat. They saw American civilian populations and morale as terrorist targets.<sup>114</sup> Many also believed a mass casualty event using nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological technology was inevitable.<sup>115</sup> While they may have been incorrect about the means, they were

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Kimmell, "Weapons of Mass Destruction and United States NBC Defense Readiness: Has America Provided the Attacker Asymmetric Advantage?" (1999), p. 40. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 34. Col Stephen L. Wolborsky, "Swords into Stilettos: The Battle Between Hedgers and Transformers for the Soul of DoD" (2000), pp. 82-84. MAJ Joseph L. Smith, "The Role of the Army Reserve in the Weapons of Mass Destruction/Homeland Defense Program" (2000), pp. 2-3. MAJ Tori R. Carlile, "The US Army: A Relevant Force--Leapfrogging to the Twenty-First Century" (2000), p. 82. MAJ John A. Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 68. Maj Robert S. Barr, "Can 'Airpower' Counter the Asymmetric Threat" (2001), p. 16. MAJ Mark A. Jackson, "Domestic Threat Intelligence Management" (2001), p. 1. LCDR Michael A. Megan, "Force Protection and Coastal Security - A National Challenge, A Coast Guard Response" (2001), p. 2. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), pp. 1-2. Maj Victor J. Valdez, "Intelligence Oversight Revisited: Does CONUS Base Security Require a Change?" (2001), pp. vii, 1, 12. Col Lansen P. Conley, "Views on Military Intervention: The Role of Moral Hazard" (2001), pp. 19, 27. Lt Col Robert F. Wright. "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001), pp. 19-21. MAJ David W. Chase, "Posse Comitatus: A Nineteenth Century Law Worthy of Review for the Future?" (2001), pp. 25, 31. Maj Mark A. Lee, "Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense" (2001), p. 39. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> Col Joseph Siniscalchi, "Non-Lethal Technologies: Implications for Military Strategy" (1997), p. 25. Maj Timothy E. Spaeth, "Terrorist Vulnerability: Failure of Policy?" (1997), p. 11. MAJ Aidis L. Zinde, "Rangers and the Strategic Requirements for Direct Action Forces" (1998), p. 38. LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 4. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. 16-17. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Weapons of Mass Destruction and United States NBC Defense Readiness: Has America Provided the Attacker Asymmetric Advantage?" (1999), p. 40. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), p. 71. Maj Mark A. Lee, "Seeing the Elephant -- Consequence Management Policy for the Department of Defense" (2001), p. 39. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 33.

<sup>115</sup> Maj Scott C. Cottrell, "Identifying the Roles of the Separate Governmental Agencies in Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Among Nonstate Actors Throughout the Counterproliferation Continuum" (1997), p. 5. LTC Paul G. Marksteiner, "Weapons of Mass Destruction Pose a Serious Threat to U. S. Cities: How Prepared Are We?" (1998), p. 7. MAJ Daniel S. Murray, "Chemical and Biological Defense of Ports of Debarkation: What Actions Are Being Taken and How Effective Are They?" (1999), p. 146. Lt Col Linde E. Torrens, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Counterstrategies for the WMD Terrorist" (1999), pp. 1-2. Lt Col Lansing E. Dickinson, "Military Role in Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (1999), pp. vi, 5-6. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. 16-17. MAJ Michael W. Johnson, "Just-War Theory and Future Warfare" (2000), p. 34. MAJ Joseph L. Smith, "The Role of the Army Reserve in the Weapons of Mass Destruction/Homeland Defense Program" (2000), p. 3. MAJ John A. Nagl, "Asymmetric Threats to the U.S. National Security to the Year 2010" (2001), p. 68. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), pp. 11, 71. MAJ David W. Chase, "Posse Comitatus: A Nineteenth Century Law Worthy of Review for the Future?" (2001), p. 25.

not wrong about the objective. Others who did not believe that terrorists had the ability to effectively weaponize and leverage these technologies predicted that terrorists would employ conventional-type explosives in ways to magnify their power to create greater destruction.<sup>116</sup> To help defend against this menace, these mid-level officers called for a broader definition for what a weapon of mass destruction was, and implored American leaders to enhance the United States' disaster response capabilities. While their ideas represented varying degrees of predictive analyses, some exhibited prophetic assessments. In 1997, Major Martha Jordan warned of the danger of Afghanistan harboring terrorists, and in 1999, Lieutenant Colonel Danny Webb discussed various motivations that Osama bin Laden had to execute a mass-casualty attack directly against the United States.<sup>117</sup> For these officers, the enemy had already revealed itself and was poised to strike.

While the United States may have been questing for monsters to destroy, as John Mueller posited, and the world was full of dangerous serpents in the aftermath of the Cold War that demanded attention, as R. James Woolsey assessed, America's next real foe was lurking within the chaos. This was not a monolithic colossus with singular purpose and action, but a network of terror networks that sometimes would work in concert, sometimes independently, but all unified by a radical Islamic ideology with the goal of devouring American influence. These officers,

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<sup>116</sup> LCDR John B. Stubbs, "Superterrorism and the Military Instrument of Power" (1998), p. 3. MAJ Scott D. Kimmell, "Weapons of Mass Destruction and United States NBC Defense Readiness: Has America Provided the Attacker Asymmetric Advantage?" (1999), p. 49. MAJ Thomas J. Closs "In Front of the Threat: Evolving the Department of Defense Strategic Organizational Structure to Prepare for the Challenges of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2001), p. 11. Maj Victor J. Valdez, "Intelligence Oversight Revisited: Does CONUS Base Security Require a Change?" (2001), p. 19 – he argues that Aum Shinko demonstrated that WMD was too hard to weaponize for terrorists. Lt Col Robert F. Wright. "Paranoia, Disruption, and Dominance: Corporate Lessons for the DoD" (2001), pp. 21-22. MAJ Heinz P. Dinter, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Forces Roles in Asymmetric Warfare" (2001), p. 47.

<sup>117</sup> Maj Martha K. Jordan, "Terrorism and US Policy" (1997), p. 11. Lt Col Danny W. Webb, "The Prospects for International Terrorist Groups Employing Chemical Weapons" (1999), pp. 16-17. While Webb believed it would be a chemical attack and falsely believed in a partnership between a chemical-weapons enabled Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, his assessment of bin Laden planning to cause great casualties against the United States is valid.

like their seniors in the chain of command or even national leaders and policy makers, did not comprehend the full extent of the linkages, plans, and capabilities of al Qaeda's terrorist organization and its affiliates. However, those at the middle level of national policy implementation did know that America was not yet ready to meet the challenges that were to come. Engagement and Enlargement may have generally been a better course for American security policy than Cold War strategies, but it helped distract from this particular threat. In spite of this, America still improved upon its policies. The progress that senior leaders had made, slow as it was compared to what many of the mid-level officers wanted, did allow the United States to rapidly adjust once directly attacked in 2001, even if it was more reactionary. This, in many ways, was the culmination of America's journey in this new era with regards to its response to the rise of terrorism as the events of 9/11 abruptly ended this era of uncertainty and began a long global war. The insights of mid-level officers writing during the Clinton Administration help illuminate the progression and pitfalls of America's foreign policy development and implementation from the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union through to its next, and more defined, major global foreign policy challenge.

## CONCLUSION: A NEW ERA IN FOREIGN POLICY AND MILITARY INTERVENTION

A seasoned captain came into his office after his morning workout on a bright late summer morning in 2001. He was in charge of the elements within his unit responsible for responding to short-notice contingencies and other emergencies requiring special operations forces. On this particular day, he was pulling double duty. While he was on alert in case his element was called upon, he also was the acting commander of his unit. His boss, all the other officers, and much of the rest of the enlisted personnel were overseas on an exercise designed to prepare the next group for their time on alert. The captain was up for promotion the following year, and indeed would pin on major the year after that. Therefore, this role was very close to the level of his responsibility his rank and experience dictated. That 11 September morning would put this notion to the test.

Shortly before 9:00 AM, people were discussing how an airplane had crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City. Not having much other information, they speculated that a small plane must have accidentally flown into the building, as had been the case many years earlier with the Empire State Building.<sup>1</sup> As the captain went into a meeting, the organizer came in, announced that a second plane had hit the towers, and that the United States was under attack. The hour-long meeting was cut short, and the participants went back to their areas to get more information. The captain shared an office with his First Sergeant and had a television there. He turned it on. Several of the noncommissioned officers and petty officers (it was a joint unit, having soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines) watched in horror as the images showed the buildings engulfed in flame, and the announcers discussed a possible attack on the Pentagon. At

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<sup>1</sup> In 1945, a twin-engine propeller plane, a military B-25, crashed into the Empire State Building.

9:59, horror turned to shock as the South Tower seemed to disappear before their eyes in a cloud of smoke. Within thirty minutes, the North Tower would meet the same fate.

Later that day, as the exercise participants tried to get emergency clearance to fly back to the United States despite all airspace having been shut down to any air traffic, the captain was preparing his people for a possible response. The entire base was secured, leaving few entry points. Those makeshift gates had incredibly heightened security measures in place, including inspections of every vehicle. This made any travel to and from the service members' homes nightmarishly long. A twenty-minute commute turned into four or five hours. The on-call team had to stay on base or risk failing to be able to respond in a timely manner if summoned for a short-notice deployment. The captain needed to adjust to the circumstances, effectively interpret the incoming information, and exercise a much broader perspective than he did as a more junior officer working in the Eighth Air Force operations center if he was going to do his part to effectively meet this crisis and lead his unit.

Tactical focus and strategic understanding were hallmarks of the mid-level officer and were critical in executing national policy through military interventions. That was as important in the 1990s as it would become in fighting the Global War on Terror. Though the captain's on-call team did not deploy right away, he had to begin preparing his unit for what then was being called Operation Infinite Justice. Though the rest of the unit soon received clearance to return and would be fully engaged in what the Bush Administration quickly changed to Operation Enduring Freedom, the captain's broader perspective on national policy and world events was critical to bridge the gap between senior commanders and junior enlisted to help ensure that, when the time came, all would be ready to do their duty and face the proverbial monster in its nest. That was the job of the mid-level officer. That was my job as the senior captain.

## *Global Changes*

When the metaphorical Tiamat's strongest head attacked on 9/11, the United States rapidly mobilized to attack a hydra. Years spent executing operations in the new era had helped America to prepare for this type of response. This preparation, unfortunately, was incomplete. Mid-level officer writings from 1993 to 2001 help demonstrate the progression of American foreign policy throughout this period that culminated in the terror attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Their skepticism over the Clinton Administration's strategy and direction early in his tenure gave way to a general acceptance, and even support, of the overall approach the president and his cabinet took in attempting to deal with the changes affecting the world after the dust settled from the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a group, these officers lamented how the implementation of selective Engagement and Enlargement during foreign interventions demonstrated significant flaws and inefficiencies at the tactical level. They also recognized, in real time, that this approach failed to identify terrorism as the primary direct threat to national security and fell short in proactively protecting America against superterrorist attacks. Still, a selective and proactive approach of promoting stability and preventing smaller conflicts from escalating into major regional security concerns was a strategy that fit the new era.

These officers were not without their biases. In analyzing these areas, they reveal the influences of their cultural backgrounds and orientation, which were not uncommon for policy makers and implementers alike. Also, because of their military predispositions, their analyses – a byproduct of being invested in their chosen profession – sometimes failed to account for the contributions of the other arms of national power, and most times focused a great deal on the military-related effects of policy implementation so that they did not account for other important

political considerations. Nevertheless, they also have incredible insights, unique points of view, exceptional historical perspectives, and even prophetic prognostications. Even when their opinions were based on what we know today to be false information, which many senior leaders also took as facts, such as the belief in caches of hidden chemical and biological weapons in Iraq or the ease of access terrorists had to weapons of mass destruction, the reasons for their errors also provide important context to understand American foreign policy development and implementation. Their unique viewpoints illuminate America's progress in a new era and preparedness for future challenges. They provide a different perspective on events, and that is one of the greatest values of their opinions on matters concerning American international policy and employment of military power.

These writings are also important observations by highly regarded officers, specially selected for attendance in service schools reserved for those with the most potential to become top military leaders. As such, they have tremendous value as contemporary witnesses of the events of the period as well as real- and near real-time analysts of America's interventions. Their views provide greater understanding of policy issues at the end of the millennium. They experienced and wrote about how the Clinton Administration began with conflict and uncertainty during its search to find an appropriate foreign policy and identify the proper implementation of its military arm as it was trying to find its way in a world without a Cold War.

While these officers came to believe in the Clinton Administration's overall approach, they still illuminate many issues with both the evolution and execution of policy. They show how the president and his cabinet never fully resolved conflicted opinions and ambiguity as they undertook a rocky foreign policy journey that involved finding the right diplomatic foci, forging a new way of war, and experiencing many growing pains. Leading the lone superpower, the

administration tried to balance using its new status for global engagement and desire to cultivate a reputation as a benevolent world leader. There were as many opinions on the proper way in which to achieve these goals as there were attempted ways at its implementation. It was an era of experimentation, reapplying old lessons, and debatable results. As mid-level officer writings reveal, it was, indeed, an Era of Mixed Feelings.

What makes these officers' perspectives even more valuable is their experience at the level of American foreign policy implementation. They faced many global changes and endured the challenges policy makers levied upon them. They led efforts to both execute and provide support to operations that became the manifestation of America's strategic changes as the nation sought to redirect itself from a well-established Cold War footing into an unprecedented position within the new world order. From their first assignments as junior officers through their service school attendance as seasoned mid-level officers, they were eyewitnesses to many global changes. In addition, they experienced different stages of America's ongoing attempts at adaptation firsthand. All these officers were also much more. They experienced the effects of American policy at the lowest levels. They felt the effectiveness of America's interventions, the cause-and-effect relationship of policy on the military, and the overall two-way impacts of senior leader decisions between the American polity and political leaders from the middle-out perspective.

Background, experience, and being active participants in the making of the history of American interventions during the Clinton Administration are key factors in how their writings progressed over this period, and what that progression reveals about the evolution of American international policy. While early writers exhibited trepidation over changing global events and cynicism over how the new administration handled them, later officers demonstrated greater



acceptance with the policy and defense strategies, even if wary of their execution. Many of the issues these officers discussed at the beginning of Clinton's time in office had a foundation in their personal histories. Authors writing from 1993-1996 produced scholarly papers that were influenced by spending their formative military years at the tail end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> They benefitted from the end of the Reagan buildup, learned to implement an overall containment strategy at the tactical level, and, though introduced to low intensity conflict as a focus area, their main goal was to prepare for large scale conventional war, primarily either in Europe from a Soviet invasion, or in South Korea for a renewal of old hostilities still unresolved. They were also the first group to experience the start of post-Cold War budget reductions. Though these cuts began under President George H. W. Bush, despite a brief respite for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, they continued in earnest under President Clinton, who took the major brunt of their critiques.

Another key factor in the larger criticism contained in these early papers was prevailing poor opinions of the new Commander-in-Chief. Bill Clinton was the first president since Franklin D. Roosevelt not to have served in the military, but at least the latter had military connections through his civil service in the Navy Department. Many senior military officers did not trust Clinton.<sup>3</sup> His focus on domestic issues, pushes for further military cuts, and seeming indifference to foreign policy did not help with his reputation.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, his position on

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<sup>2</sup> Majors and lieutenant commanders attending schools during this time would generally have been commissioned between 1982 and 1988. Lieutenant colonels and commanders would have commissioned four to six years earlier. During the end of the decade, this latter group would also have a similar foundation, but also more experience implementing policy in the new era, which lessened the influences of the later Cold War years.

<sup>3</sup> For discussions on tension between Clinton and the military, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*; Al Millet, et al, *For the Common Defense*; and Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*.

<sup>4</sup> Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, pp 245-247, discusses foreign crises as distractions and public relations problems for Clinton. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp 193, 306-307 relays how the National Security Advisor did not have direct access to Clinton until 1995.

gays in the military also upset many senior officers.<sup>5</sup> With troops in harm's way over Iraq and on the ground in Somalia, he did not appear to inspire confidence.<sup>6</sup> Though some of these impressions exist in officer papers during Clinton's first term, overall they do not fully confirm scholarship's assessment that the military as an entire entity did not respect President Clinton, especially officer writings after 1996. While still critical of Clinton's policies, their observations center on issues and impacts with policy, and their conclusions strive to present possible solutions to the vast array of issues. Overall, they demonstrate a level of acceptance of the new leadership and the changing role of the military that continued to increase as the United States marched through the turn of the century. What overshadowed early writings, though, was how a successful end to the Cold War and the initial period of great hope morphed into a confusing, chaotic, uncertain world in which their profession, already a dangerous one, seemed to become infinitely more so.

Global instability was at the forefront of the volatile geopolitical environment, and was a major emphasis of American foreign policy. Naturally, this became a primary element of mid-level officers' discussions in their writings. Most of them saw the shift to humanitarian endeavors and operations other than war as a growth industry for the military. One of their biggest concerns was what or who exactly should be the focus of their preparedness. Though some may have fallen into the trap of wanting to hunt for a replacement for the Soviet Union, most had less Cold War baggage. They were more intent on looking at the future than the past. That future, however, was murky. Global troubles made it more so. There were many differing

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<sup>5</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars*, p. 60. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 205. Colin Powell and Joseph E. Perisco, *My American Journey* (Ballentine Books, 2003), pp. 563-564.

<sup>6</sup> Colin Powell and Joseph E. Perisco, *My American Journey* (Ballentine Books, 2003), pp 562-564. Powell discusses being impressed with Clinton's intellect, but wary of him as commander-in-chief. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 256, echoes this view as it relates to the relationship between senior military officers and President Clinton.

opinions as to how involved the United States should be in managing crises throughout the globe, and specifically what criteria should senior leaders use to determine military involvement. These officer-scholars weighed the importance of humanitarian operations that were not vital national interests. They evaluated threats such as rogue nations, failed states, non-state actors, ethnic rivalries, religious fanaticism, and the overall instability created by a shift to a world somewhere between unipolar and multipolar. They, like United States policy makers, were attempting, in their own way, to create order out of the chaos.

They also had significant worries about facing a world with many unknown threats while military budgets dwindled. The pattern of increased deployments and decreased resources added even more angst for military professionals who took great pride in expertly executing their assigned missions. Without knowing for what to specifically prepare and how much support they could expect when tasked to execute military activities, they pushed for achievable solutions within their resource constrained environment. Understanding the role of the military as subordinate to civilian authority, they put much of the responsibility on their services, and by extension themselves, to develop the flexibility to implement national policy. They also lamented that a lack of clear policy direction that accompanied dwindling budgets, making this task more daunting. Their writings also implored their chains of command to press the National Command Authority to provide clarity and strategic guidance. While ambiguity and inconsistency remained an issue throughout the period, their writings demonstrate that the Clinton Administration did evolve.

Officer-scholars show how United States policy makers did progress in pushing past Cold War standards to better fit the new global and political conditions. The Clinton Administration experienced failure in Somalia and setbacks during the early stages of the crisis in Bosnia. It was

then able to produce successes in the Balkans through assertive leadership and modifying old lessons that failed during the Cold War into success over Kosovo. However, the president and his international strategists also allowed the excessive layering of older perceived lessons onto newer ones gleaned from the streets of Mogadishu. The result was extreme casualty aversion, risk avoidance, and one-dimensional air-only military action that came to characterize the new American way of war in the 1990s. These approaches contributed to the failure to achieve resolution in Iraq or to prevent terrorists from attacking the American homeland, though it is uncertain if the United States had either the political capital, definitive intelligence, or cultural acumen regarding the Middle East in order to execute an encompassing and acceptable solution to either issue. Despite these shortcomings, senior civilian leaders did advance in their ability to face the challenges in the new era faster than senior military leaders.

Mid-level officer writings, especially during Clinton's second term, become more critical of military service leaders' ability to adapt to a world without a Cold War. The military has always been a conservative organization. It deals in war, risk, and death. Significant changes have the potential to increase vulnerabilities that could lead to greater combat losses in personnel and equipment, and potentially failure to win a conflict, putting the nation's survivability at risk. Adding to this tendency was the dichotomy of increased small-scale operations under Clinton's policy of Engagement and Enlargement while still operating under the directive to be able to fight two near-simultaneous major regional conflicts, all with fewer resources. These elements combined to retard military leadership's adaptability to the new strategic changes and global circumstances. Nevertheless, from the service school attendee's middle-out perspective, they believed their respective services could, and should, have been more adaptable to the new era.

The world would not wait for the United States to acclimate to new conditions. Instead, it seemed to increase the pressure through instability, ethnic strife, and violent religious fundamentalism. The successes of German reunification, expansion of NATO, the spread of democracy in Europe, and the defeat of tyranny in Kuwait gave way to chaos in the Balkans, man-made humanitarian crises in Africa, threats to regional stability from the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley, and the rise of a new type of deadly adversary in the broader Middle East. After over 40 years of Cold War, the United States needed to pivot perspective to succeed as the sole superpower in this new era. That was easier said than done.

### *Cold War Lessons*

The long struggle against the Soviet Union that ultimately resulted in an American victory left an overwhelming impression upon the United States well beyond its conclusion. Two generations of American leadership had a singular focus, even though it manifested in many different ways. This was a hard policy paradigm to overcome. The bedrock of American strategy during this timeframe was containment, which spurred American action and influenced American inaction across the globe. While the United States did not interfere in communist crackdowns in places already within the Soviet sphere like Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, it became actively involved in Korea and Vietnam. It also continually prepared for a major military defense of Europe from invasion while it used its nuclear deterrent to help prevent World War III. When faced with issues in the 1990s that included keeping an Iraqi dictator from expanding his influence, thwarting weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and a political climate that demanded limiting military action during interventions, the United States

demonstrated that Cold War experiences strongly influenced policy development and implementation.

Preparing for large-scale conventional war was something the United States, particularly its military, found very familiar. It had done so in Europe for decades. After fighting a conventional war in Korea, America also maintained a significant state of readiness from its military on that Asian peninsula. The resounding victory over Iraq in 1991 punctuated the importance of this preparedness. As President Clinton articulated in his National Security Strategies, he directed the armed forces to continue that preparedness as the primary security consideration. It was easy for the military to give precedence to this approach. The clash in priorities with the many small-scale contingencies as a part of Engagement and Enlargement under a resource-constrained environment, however, undercut the military's ability to meet all the president's directives. In an unconventional world, conventional focus seemed a flawed convention.

One major unconventional concern was the belief in proliferation of chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons capabilities that made American cities, deployed forces, and strategic interests more susceptible to attack and annihilation. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union had the potential to strike any of these categories of targets, but the strategy of overwhelming retaliatory nuclear capabilities created a coercive effect that helped deter a Soviet first strike. In the 1990s, the United States feared that a chemical or nuclear armed Iraq could launch a missile with great destructive power against American forces in the region, or that enemy nations like Iran could leverage terrorist proxies to plant a nuclear, biological, or chemical device within an American city, killing millions. The principle of Mutually Assured Destruction was still considered a powerful deterrent against rogue nations. However, the emergence of non-

state actors who engaged in anti-American terrorism made this strategy obsolete in their case. It was doubtful that individual organizations like al Qaeda that were not directly tied to a nation were swayed by America's nuclear power to avoid executing a mass-casualty event. In addition, the United States would have been hard-pressed to execute such a response against a nation unless it directly and unequivocally tied that nation to the use of chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological weapons against it. Massive retaliation was no longer the effective deterrent it had been. While anti-American terrorist organizations did not employ these specific weapons of mass destruction, they creatively used materials and means to employ powerful explosives as weapons against the United States. The sole superpower may have helped limit proliferation, but was unable to find an effective policy of deterrence or prevention of large-scale superterrorism attacks in the new era.

Another Cold War influence on policy development and implementation during the Clinton Administration was the legacy of Vietnam. For many American senior leaders, both civilian and military, this was a pivotal period of their professional development. For the Clinton Administration, especially those who did not serve in the military during this conflict, its senior members witnessed firsthand the impacts this failure had on society. They lived through the anti-war protests, saw the impact of rising casualty counts on public opinion when popular support began to diminish, and formed strong opinions over how the media came to influence anti-war sentiment. Combined with a shift to domestic concerns and a public that saw the need for a smaller military footprint with the Soviet Union gone, perceptions regarding Vietnam helped drive policymakers towards caution in military interventions. Oversensitivity towards American casualties and fears over collateral damage would greatly influence decisions. Also, the dynamic of a large nation imposing its will unjustly upon a weaker one, as appeared to be the

case in Vietnam, affected the Clinton Administration's motivation to maintain positive global opinion. As a result, the president attempted to minimize risk in military action, which by its nature was intrinsically dangerous, to as close to zero as possible. This combination of factors led to Tomahawk Diplomacy, elimination of ground combat forces, and reliance on airpower with strict limitations and highly restrictive rules of engagement. For many senior leaders in the armed services, the administration's attempt to avoid the political mistakes of Vietnam threatened to repeat the military mistakes that led to the United States losing a war.

A primary lesson of Vietnam for the military was how not to fight an armed conflict, and several senior leaders took this lesson to heart. Those like Generals Colin Powell and Michael Short, who experienced service in Vietnam firsthand, expressed disdain for any action that bore any resemblance to tactics and strategies that led to the loss in Southeast Asia.<sup>7</sup> These beliefs were well institutionalized in the military, and the majority of military officers were exposed to them from their commissioning programs through their advanced service schools. This influenced many to call for caution when the Clinton Administration was, in the opinion of senior military members and many mid-level officers, being too free in its execution of Engagement and Enlargement, too restrictive with how the military prosecuted a combat intervention, or one-dimensional in its use of force. It also limited the military's openness to new applications of older strategies such as gradualism that may have failed under the international conditions of the 1960s, but had a place in a more unipolar world in the 1990s. Learning the lessons of Vietnam was important to avoid another major foreign policy fiasco, but both the military and the political leadership myopically applied their perceived lessons with equal weight to their salient experiences. Nevertheless, the interventions of the Clinton

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<sup>7</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 232.



presidency demonstrated that American victory in Desert Storm had not exorcised the demons of Vietnam. In some ways, it may have even made them worse.

The Cold War, with its many characteristics, had a profound impact on American interventions in the new era. It shaped perspectives, altered perceptions, provided focus, and even clouded the lens through which policy creators and implementers viewed and assessed contemporary foreign affairs incidents and circumstances. As America's leaders attempted to navigate uncharted territory after the end of the Cold War, its long and deep-rooted influence along with their penchant for proceeding conservatively helped keep them from best preparing for the next war rather than the previous one. Their approach induced contradictions in national security policy, prompted significant alterations in how the United States prosecuted military action, and slowed America's evolution. There was progression over the course of the Clinton Administration, as the concept of Engagement and Enlargement demonstrated. Nevertheless, given the issues with its execution and the military institution's resistance to rapid adaptation, mid-level officer testimonies reveal that, while the Cold War left the United States, the United States had trouble leaving the Cold War. The characteristics of the interventions during Bill Clinton's presidency certainly demonstrated this.

### *Engagements*

When William Jefferson Clinton was inaugurated on 20 January 1993, the United States was in the throes of a post-Cold War transition. Despite a desire to focus domestically, his responses to international events would be a major factor in defining his first term. The Clinton Administration needed to contend with a defiant Saddam Hussein who had thwarted the efforts

of the previous presidency to enforce the cease fire accords and subsequent United Nations resolutions after the First Gulf War. The forty-second president also needed to manage an American military commitment to Somalia which, despite making significant progress, was supposed to have concluded before he took office. Atop his foreign policy agenda, at least according to his campaign rhetoric that criticized what he deemed to be the lackluster Bush policies regarding the crumbling Yugoslavia, was the conflict in Bosnia. If these issues were not enough to divert attention from his domestic agenda, the first shots of a new war on the United States occurred in New York City as terrorists made their initial attempt to destroy the World Trade Center. It would take years to elevate in importance within foreign policy, but it was another factor that drove focus towards national security considerations. For a president without much foreign policy experience and no prior military service, leading a Democratic cabinet whose last practical application of managing international issues came during the Carter administration,<sup>8</sup> these tasks would prove to be daunting.

Iraq was immediately on Clinton's extranational docket. The previous administration had set the United States on a course of containment through establishment of no-fly zones and limited use of airpower. Clinton continued the *status quo* from the George H. W. Bush Administration without much progress. Limited airstrikes, including expanding Tomahawk Diplomacy, yielded some short-term gains, but no resolution. The United States then settled into a strategy of continuing to contain Saddam Hussein from spreading his influence in the region. Because the United States believed that the dictator had the capability to produce and employ weapons of mass destruction, it was a vital interest to prevent Iraq from leveraging these capabilities, either regionally against fielded forces, or by providing them to terrorists.

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<sup>8</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 180

Gradually, the United States under President Clinton added elements of a limited war of attrition to its containment strategy. This added greater attempts at coercion and enhanced retaliation for aggressive actions through more active, though still limited, strikes.

What America discovered was that trying to face the current situation with older strategies, even when modified, did not allow for progress in achieving its goals in Iraq. It is possible that, even had the Clinton Administration overcome its relative policy stagnation, Saddam Hussein had so solidified his position that only extreme measures could have achieved Iraqi compliance. Implementing such measures, however, was an untenable option for the United States. The impact of sanctions on the Iraqi people eroded international support for continued action, especially from Arab nations that had allied with the United States in evicting Iraq from Kuwait in 1991. Every day of America's prolonged air occupation and intermittent kinetic actions against Iraq lessened world opinion on how the United States was handling the situation, limiting American options further. The appearance of the shift to a low-level war of attrition exacerbated these negative issues.

While the overall strategy to engage Iraq seemed sound, especially given the belief that the nation harbored weapons of mass destruction, the implementation was problematic. The United States did indeed keep Saddam Hussein contained, but its actions did not produce the desired results. The situation remained in an unwinnable and perpetual state of limited war with Iraq with no clear path to a permanent solution. It was not until after the 9/11 attacks that the United States earned the political capital, internationally and domestically, as well as the will to end this foreign policy frustration, albeit to be replaced by another.

While American involvement over the skies of Iraq represents an evolutionary shift away from older policy ideas, Somalia indicates a more direct change in foreign policy enactment on

multiple fronts. When in the waning weeks of his presidency, George H. W. Bush decided to commit American military forces to support the humanitarian effort in Somalia, a non-vital American interest, he set a precedent for interventions that helped influence American actions through the end of the century. Eschewing the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, and against initial protests from his Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the latter-named architect of this solution to avoid another Vietnam-like error, Bush gave the order to exercise the United States' sole superpower capabilities and employ its military might for benevolent purposes. It was the first intervention of the new era that directly demonstrated a policy shift that represented a significant adaptation to the new geopolitical environment.

President Clinton also inherited this intervention. Unlike Iraq, Somalia was on the road to success when he took office in 1993 based on the original criteria of ensuring that international relief supplies reached the Somali people and were kept out of the hands of warlords. However, within a few months the United Nations altered the focus in Somalia, shifting to nation building. As the Clinton Administration allowed mission creep in what was to be a vain attempt to achieve these new objectives, American troops went from a humanitarian mission to peace enforcement that included warlord hunting. The situation slowly deteriorated. The culminating event, the Battle of Mogadishu, radically shifted both American involvement and future policy.

In all, eighteen Americans lost their lives, and one was taken prisoner. The specter of Vietnam appeared again as there were questions on the real reasons for United States involvement, the president's support of the combat troops, lack of native population support, and how the media could influence a shift in public opinion. The most profound impact, however, was how a relatively low number of casualties drove the United States into announcing its

retreat. The Clinton Administration came to believe that that the public would not tolerate any casualties if the United States were to conduct future military operations. This was the Somalia Effect. Somalia also demonstrated that limited foreign interventions under these new conditions, necessary though they may have been, involved great political risk with only limited political reward. The result of America's involvement there was for the Clinton Administration to include casualty aversion as a prime consideration when using military force in the future. The Somalia Effect would also prevent employing ground forces, as America opted for increased use of Tomahawk Diplomacy, or, if greater power was necessary, adding only manned air forces with significant limitations on execution of bombing strikes.

The two American interventions in the Balkans showcased the impact of the Somalia Effect on policy implementation as well as the overall evolution of policy development during the Clinton Administration. While President Clinton inherited the international situation surrounding the violence that erupted during the fallout from the collapse of Yugoslavia, he did not take over a significant intervention like he did in Iraq and Somalia. Instead, his predecessor limited American involvement in NATO's meager campaign to tamp down Serb aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite his criticizing Bush's handling of Bosnia during the 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton maintained the *status quo* regarding Bosnia once he took office, much as he did with Iraq. The Somalia Effect was also a factor, driving hesitation to become militarily involved in another mission that did not overtly or directly affect American national interests. Clinton wanted greater American leadership and involvement, but hesitated, begetting inconsistent policy. His one consistency, though, was ruling out any American ground forces while there were still hostilities, another application of his lessons learned from Somalia.

Based on the analysis of mid-level officer papers on how the Clinton Administration implemented it, one significant conclusion is that the Somalia Effect was actually a Vietnam Corollary.<sup>9</sup> The belief in the negative impacts of casualties and unfavorable media reporting exacerbated preconceived conceptions regarding how these elements affected public opinion over Vietnam, which the Battle of Mogadishu seemed to confirm. America's involvement in Desert Storm also contributed to this outlook as it showed the public that the United States could win a major conflict with minimal casualties. In some ways, this conditioned the public to expect overwhelming victory with minimal losses. The prevailing logic regarding Bosnia was that, with Vietnam still prevalent in American memory, and the fight in downtown Mogadishu still fresh in the minds of Americans, the public would not support combat action for what appeared to be for less than vital American interests if there were any friendly casualties. Therefore, United States prosecution of military action in the Balkans took advantage of the safety that altitude provided.

Conditions changed as the world came to see, through media reporting of Serb atrocities, that the weaker Muslim and Croat forces needed protection that would involve militarily forcing the Serb paramilitary forces to end aggressive actions. That is when the United States took the opportunity to conduct its first direct and official implementation of Engagement and Enlargement. It enlarged its leadership role in the crisis and actively engaged military forces, albeit one-dimensionally. Bosnia was also where the United States showcased its new way of war to meet military and political objectives simultaneously – an air-only combat military intervention. It continued this strategy later in Kosovo, though the United States was more assertive and decisive in taking a leadership role and choosing to act. While demonstrating a

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<sup>9</sup> This term was neither in officer papers nor other scholarship, but coined as a result of interpreting the findings from each.

successful implementation of a strategy conducive to the changing times, there were still significant issues with its execution. Limitations very likely prolonged the conflict even if they helped maintain NATO integrity and reduced significant international backlash resulting from collateral damage. Imposing limitations typified American involvement during the Clinton Administration and was a double-edged sword.

American leaders understood that limitations were necessary to maintain international support. The potential for direct conflict with the Soviet Union or even China drove American limits during the Cold War. During this new era, America was self-limited during its interventions. This was primarily based on a desire to establish and maintain a status of being a benevolent superpower and avoid earning a reputation of imposing its will at the expense of others who, by comparison, were nearly defenseless. As such, America's leadership levied strict rules of engagement that seemed to put the military mission subordinate to political concerns to extreme levels that, to the warfighters, seemed to adversely impact accomplishing national objectives. The new American way of war appeared to be cautious, low-risk, air-only operations to achieve non-vital United States interests.

However, from a different perspective, the United States put as a central security concern addressing areas of instability that had the potential to escalate into larger, regional clashes that could have become more expensive in both American lives and treasure. Selective engagement in these lower-level conflicts in their infancy to prevent their expansion was, indeed, protecting a key vital interest. In addition, NATO defense was a treaty obligation. Conflict in the Balkans affected neighboring allies directly through the refugee crises, and also had the potential for the violence to spill over into those countries. Another consideration was the viability of the alliance, which Serb aggression threatened twice during the decade, which was of national

importance. This new era redefined what was to be considered vital as international conditions changed the criteria for when and how to commit military force. America's answer was limited airpower.

Kosovo demonstrated that the United States would persist in engaging its new enemy, destabilization, in ways more suited to the new era. While casualty and collateral damage aversion continued to drive the option for airpower, the United States incorporated an old Cold War strategy that failed under Cold War conditions. To the chagrin of senior airpower enthusiasts like Lieutenant General Michael Short who, like many others, saw the comprehensive air campaign of Desert Storm as the proper method to prosecute an air war, President Clinton opted for a form of gradualism. Like Vietnam, the goal was to slowly ratchet up the pressure through incremental bombing to coerce the enemy to accept a peace the United States favored. Unlike what happened in Southeast Asia, the United States did not implement multiple bombing halts, and the Serbs had no external sponsors to provide them with the capability to repair their air defenses, replace offensive weapons, or restore its infrastructure. As many mid-level officers came to see, under new conditions at the close of the twentieth century, this old method, tweaked for improved execution, worked.

Overall, this new method of intervention had its shortcomings, but proved successful, and a much better fit for the new era than recreating the actions of Desert Storm. Unfortunately, one of those limitations was its lack of effectiveness against the rise of superterrorism, the primary direct threat to the United States homeland since the fall of the Soviet Union. It was hard to pinpoint as it hid among the chaff that filled the chaotic global environment. It emerged as fear of the circulation of weapons of mass destruction became a major focal point for the United States, driving policies and engagements to counter suspected proliferation. Preventing rogue



states from obtaining these capabilities became a priority. The United States demonstrated, through its prolific prosecution of Operation Desert Storm, that no nation on earth could compete with America's conventional military prowess. That is what made weapons of mass destruction appealing to these nations as they could have served as an asymmetric counterweight to American military might. However, events from the second half of the 1990s through the turn of the century demonstrated that another enemy, partially hidden and harder to deter, was more of a direct threat to employ these strategies.

Terror strikes against the United States during the Clinton Administration began to illuminate the primacy of non-state actors like al Qaeda as the most likely enemy to directly attack American interests. The attack on Khobar Towers in 1996 caused the military to focus on these dangers. The 1993 World Trade Center bombing by radical Islamists in America who were loosely affiliated with al Qaeda took on more importance afterwards. Terrorist organizations unaffiliated with nation-states surpassed rogue nations as the more likely threat to strike with weapons of mass destruction in either traditional or unorthodox ways. They continued to demonstrate this with attacks that, though few in number, were more destructive. These assaults and plots to strategically strike the United States culminated on 11 September 2001.

As terror organizations continued to directly target the United States throughout the Clinton presidency, policy evolved to address this enemy. The versions of the National Security Strategy at the turn of the century put greater emphasis on combatting terrorism, including countering weapons of mass destruction capabilities outside of just state actors. Yet the United States was still not fully prepared to meet this threat by the start of the new millennium. While twenty-first century hindsight shows that the United States should have enhanced intelligence capabilities and implemented more preemptive strategies, late twentieth century foresight did not

provide this level of clarity, nor could the Clinton Administration have enacted aggressive preemptive actions without significant diplomatic and domestic consequences. Also, though terrorists did not seem able to effectively weaponize nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological materials, they did manage to replicate similar effects through the use of high-yield explosives and innovative exploitation of the potential destructive power of fuel-laden jetliners. They were able to surprise the United States as its leaders did not broaden their definition of weapons of mass destruction beyond the aforementioned traditional categories, much less predict the events of 9/11. These attacks are another indication of the pitfalls that accompanied an era of geostrategic uncertainty that the United States was forced to navigate after the Cold War.

These military interventions during the Clinton Administration represent an atlas of American foreign policy progression as the United States attempted to navigate the seemingly uncharted territory of a new global environment. It plotted strategic courses that would sometimes circumnavigate Cold War habits and approaches, and other times remain on familiar paths. Each intervention and its associated courses of action illustrate policy development and reveal the various lessons, actual and apparent, that American leaders used. The lengthy political, diplomatic, and military battle that was the Cold War left signposts for policy makers during the 1990s that led to progress, regression, and everything in between. While Engagement and Enlargement was an appropriate strategy, its execution had as many flaws as strengths. One was its inability to deter superterrorism. While it was easy to see today that the United States could have done more in these areas, it is unfair to fully blame policy makers and leaders. There were many competing international priorities, regional crises, and global changes that inhibited contemporary leaders from the ability to guarantee maximal success for any course of action in either the short- or long-term. American policymakers needed to face the changing environment

of the new era armed with information and experience, including all the positive and negative influences of the past.

### *End of an Era*

The fall of the Berlin Wall and demise of the Soviet Union caused a celebration of the achievements of American foreign and security policies. Desert Storm demonstrated to America how the labors of American preparedness against a Soviet attack into Europe bore fruits with its overwhelming victory, consummating the perceived benefits of America's Cold War preparedness. It also reinforced beliefs that the United States had resolved several issues from Vietnam and determined the proper way to conduct a foreign intervention. But as the dust settled from the victory in Iraq, democratization efforts in Europe, and the end of the threat of communism, it became apparent that the world was still a very dangerous place. Threats emerged from the former communist Yugoslavia, old Cold War battlegrounds in Africa, and the Middle East to name a few. By 1993, the honeymoon was over.

Studying mid-level officer observations on the interventions of the Clinton Administration provides contemporary assessments and opinions regarding the many significant elements of America's attempt to adjust to a new global dynamic that became a new era in foreign policy development and implementation. Their perspectives reveal many reasons associated with American policy progression as well as the impacts of American strategies from the lower level of implementation to the upper echelons of development. Of course, the cohort of mid-level officers was not always consistent in its analyses, even when writing during the same year or even from the same service. They also had many biases, including both military-

centric and predominantly western-centric viewpoints. Their predictive analyses were as incorrect as they were correct. Their record is not unique. Their seniors through the military chain of command up to the Clinton Administration itself experienced the same issues when attempting to interpret ongoing events and predict future threats. The officer writings are representative of their time, particularly in their cultural leanings, perceptions, and access to much of the same imperfect information that informed policy. They were unique in their particular position as implementers of policy at the lower levels. They provided both distinctive and representative perceptions, feelings, misconceptions, and perspectives that help illuminate many layers of American foreign policy of the period.

Analysis of their writings reveals many conclusions regarding American foreign policy under President Bill Clinton, both directly from their theses and assertions, and indirectly through their expressed opinions and chosen foci. The first was the impact of the Cold War on American policy development and directed implementation. American leaders began from a foundation that included the habits of containment and Mutually Assured Destruction, and the teachings of America's Vietnam experience. While there were positive lessons in the past, these approaches were often faulty when America applied them in the new era. The United States contained Saddam Hussein, keeping him from imposing his will upon his neighbors, but it could not find a way to resolve its involvement in Iraq after the First Gulf War. America's great power and nuclear arsenal may have dissuaded enemy nation-states from employing nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons against it, but it was questionable whether America could keep non-state actors from using these capabilities if they were able to effectively weaponize these mediums. As 9/11 proved, it did not dissuade al Qaeda from employing non-traditional weapons of mass destruction.

Additionally, these officers concluded that United States actions in the Balkans showed that the nation's leaders should not completely abandon methods it used in Vietnam. Given the radically different circumstances of the 1990s, older strategies such as gradualism that failed in the 1960s not only succeeded when purposefully applied in Kosovo, and even its happenstance use in Bosnia, but were much more appropriate given the international political climate than applying a Desert Storm-like massive air campaign, as many senior military leaders and airpower advocates wanted. In order to maintain coalition integrity and positive world opinion, two important national objectives, a true lesson of Vietnam was America's ability to apply the right strategy based on contemporary conditions, not avoid previously failed tactics due to a one-size-fits-all mentality.

Another area that mid-level officers highlighted was the shift to a new American way of war. While they debated the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Clinton Administration's default to using only air power after the failure in Somalia, they acknowledged the need for a shift to more appropriate to changed conditions. The Clinton Administration did indeed implement various degrees of alteration to employing military power as its strategy played out in no-fly zones, Tomahawk Diplomacy, and publicly ruling out the use of ground forces altogether. However, American successes still relied on ground forces, despite American leadership's best efforts. As sound in principle as Engagement and Enlargement was, given the international climate of the 1990s, adjunct policies that forced deviation from proven tactical maxims resulted in at worst a flawed, and at best an inefficient, implementation of security strategy.

When the United States could not compensate for shortfalls in its execution, it failed to achieve resolution. The Saddam Hussein puzzle remained unsolvable until 2003, and Tomahawk

Diplomacy did not prevent terrorists from continuing their attacks on United States targets. America did not have the support, either internationally or domestically, to prosecute any sort of ground operation against Saddam Hussein or al Qaeda under Clinton's leadership, eliminating this option without risking tremendous global diplomatic standing. Despite its two successes in the Balkans, this tactic did demonstrate a pitfall with a one-dimensional military strategy, even when America used economic and diplomatic instruments of power in a concerted effort to achieve national objectives.

While mid-level officers certainly critiqued these strategies, their writings reveal that, despite a reputation to the contrary, there was not a universal military revulsion towards Clinton's policies. This perspective became more apparent as the decade wore on. It is logical to deduce that officer criticisms may have been tempered due to the illegality of harshly criticizing the Commander-In-Chief, specifically in using "contemptuous words against the President...."<sup>10</sup> However, despite the academic freedom that the service schools allowed, officers generally did not levy overly harsh or emotional criticisms indicative of targeting a disliked president. In fact, writings even grew to support overall American strategies of proactive and selective engagement. Many understood that a new environment called for different uses of the military.

They did, however, lament the policy inconsistencies that came with both America's attempt to adjust to a different global environment, and the choice to increase military involvement while cutting budgets and downsizing capabilities. While Engagement and Enlargement may have been a viable strategy in the new era, increased deployments of military forces using older equipment and fewer personnel put a significant strain on the force. At times,

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Code, Title 10, Article 88.

the ability to effectively meet national objectives through the combat arm of policy implementation seemed tenuous at best. Despite the increased stress that Clinton's policies put on the individual military member, the fact that there was a significant number of mid-level officers that supported, or at least understood, the importance of this approach illuminates how the United States was progressing away from Cold War habits in finding more appropriate solutions to foreign policy challenges in the new era.

Over the course of Clinton's tenure as president, officer-scholar criticisms seemed to gravitate more towards the senior leaders within their services not being able to adjust at the rate of the civilian leadership. Many writings decry the service stagnation due to overly conservative senior military leadership. Their consensus during Clinton's second term in office came to see how the approach of the high-level officers diminished each service's ability to institutionally orient focus towards the threats of the future. However, this was not a simple case of a myopic world view that could not transcend the Cold War. Military reductions and increases in operations other than war combined with primary directives in the National Security Strategies to prepare to engage in two near-simultaneous major regional conflicts affected military leadership. Generals and admirals had an improbable task of preparing to fight two Desert Storm-like conflicts while supporting a myriad of small-scale global military contingencies. These conditions increased demands on the military and forced senior leaders to make difficult strategic choices that erred on the side of conservatism, just as they contributed to mid-level officers being unable to achieve national objectives effectively and efficiently at the tactical level. Senior officers focused on what most likely had the greatest potential direct impact on the United States, and that was a major conventional war. It was a hard choice that better ensured the survivability of the nation, but allowed for major gaps in the ability to defend against the other threats so

prevalent in this new international environment. When tasked to do more with less, the less was not enough to effectively meet all national goals effectively.

Finally, the chaotic environment, American search for how best to address it, and the interrelationship between Somalia's legacy, long-term involvement in Iraq, and American approach to the Balkans helped an actual direct threat to the United States, terrorism, to successfully remain obscured, even when continuing to strike at American interests. And strike it did. Like Tiamat of Babylonian mythology, it threatened to destroy America's universe, or so it appeared on 11 September 2001. America was not fully prepared to respond to meet the challenges of the attacks, nor to immediately and effectively react. It went to fight the hydra, and had to change. It did so by sending in its own heroes whose experiences were rooted in the interventions of the Clinton Administration. While the United States did quickly adapt in many ways, it continued to make mistakes as well as gains in resolving many old problems. It also created new ones. Perhaps this is just a characteristic of foreign policy development in the wake of significant international change.

9/11 abruptly ended one era and forced embarkation onto another. The United States no longer struggled to overcome the influences of the Cold War the way it had the previous decade. Its singular purpose, at least in the immediate aftermath of these terror attacks, was a significant shift from the seeming absence of a consistent vector after initially consolidating Cold War gains. However, neither the fall of the Berlin Wall nor the collapse of the Soviet Union provided the same type of jolt as 9/11. Instead, policy changes of the Clinton Administration were more evolutionary than reactionary, though events drove both characteristics. As a result, it became a time of adjustment, uncertainty, and inconsistency as America struggled to find its way in a radically different world. Mid-level officers had a front-row seat to how it unfolded. They saw



positive strategic strides and experienced the imperfect implementation that accompanied resultant policy directives. They had many different opinions on the direction America should have gone, applications of United States policies, and critiques of American actions. It was an era characterized by discovery, reinvention, contradictions, unpredictability, political conflict, military uncertainty, and trepidation at the forced abandonment of almost a half-century of global conditioning. America engaged a changed world, and in doing so, changed how it conducted foreign policy, fought wars, and developed security priorities.

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