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Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: monitoring the evolution of an agency through rhetorical snapshots of speeches by Generals Omar N. Bradley, Earle G. Wheeler, George S. Brown and Colin L. Powell

John Robert Foster

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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CHAIRMEN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF:
MONITORING THE EVOLUTION OF AN AGENCY THROUGH
RHETORICAL SNAPSHOTS OF SPEECHES BY
GENERALS OMAR N. BRADLEY, EARLE G. WHEELER, GEORGE S. BROWN
AND COLIN L. POWELL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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in

The Department of Communication Studies

by

John Robert Foster

B.A., Northwestern State College of Louisiana, 1970

M.R.E., Texas Christian University, 1972

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ABSTRACT

There is a need to examine the long term rhetorical strategies of military spokesmen within a democratic state characterized by civilian hegemony. This study uses Kenneth Burke's discussion of cluster analysis to discover the various recurring themes from Chairman to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This form of analysis enabled the researcher to document periodic variances or shifts in emphasis among the four Chairmen whose speeches will be examined. The investigation involved two speeches representative of each of these four distinct periods of the discourse of Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, one given to a civilian audience and one given to an audience of military veterans. The snapshots revealed a consistent constraint of talking in the limited space as a subordinate who represents the national security policy decisions of the President. This constraint, seen within each of the four snapshots, indicates a consistent underlying motive to the discourse of each Chairman. Since most organizations go through periodic shifts in their public image, cluster analysis could provide insights into the decline and resurgence of organizations that replace key leaders either on a planned rotation similar to the cycle for the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or due to retirements or even terminations. It may be worthwhile to apply the same method of study to a more loosely structured organization or one in which a leader is given more license to build the authority of his or her office. In many economic, religious and political institutions the leader is not bound to higher authority in a firm statutory manner as he or she is in the military.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The governance of the modern state is carried on through a mosaic of functionally interdependent institutions. Executive voices must take account of legislative voices and judicial voices and all must attend to the voices of specialized bureaucrats and the utterances of external constituencies. Organizations and bureaus that represent labor, business and the military must constantly adapt to the shifting of agendas of those who represent the broader citizenry. Thus, the Secretary of Defense must adjust his public discourse to that of the President.

With very few exceptions, scholars have not identified the rhetorical strategies through which these accommodations are accomplished. George Cheney has studied how the National Council of Catholic Bishops adapted to papal supremacy while remaining accountable to the millions of Catholic laity in the United States. Cheney's work provides some parallels to the competing demands of superior and subordinate constituencies experienced by those who hold or have held the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹ There is a similar need to examine the long term rhetorical strategies of military spokesmen within a democratic state characterized by civilian hegemony.

The rhetoric of the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has evolved partly due to changes in their rhetorical posture. At the inception of the position as a non-voting member of the Joint Chiefs of

¹George Cheney, Rhetoric in an Organizational Society: Managing Multiple Identities (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991) 8.

Staff, the Chairman was basically a titular head of the military. Enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill in 1986 defined a more powerful role. This legislation made the Chairman both the senior military advisor to the civilian leaders of the Executive and Legislative branches, and also the senior member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The evolution from titular figurehead to empowered leader of the Joint Chiefs of Staff afford the opportunity to monitor the rhetorical posture over five decades of sweeping societal change. Making use of Kenneth Burke's method of cluster analysis will allow an examination of change in perspective, message and role from Chairman to Chairman. This form of analysis will identify rhetorical continuity and change among the four Chairmen whose speeches will be examined.

Statement of the Question

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an agency that has remained viable through five decades of massive societal and military change. Situated between the military services and leaders within the Executive and Legislative branches of the Federal government, the agency's discourse was necessarily shaped by the demands and the constraints of these powerful entities. Throughout the Cold War and beyond, however, the agency managed to produce messages that addressed the military mission, responded to changes in international alliances, adjusted to differences in Presidential vision, and still represented its several constituencies. This dissertation asks the following questions: (1) What were the initial constraints on the agency and what rhetorical strategies were employed to manage them? (2) How were these strategies organized as the agency evolved and attempted to manage changes in leadership, presidential style, military culture, and civilian conceptions of the Chairman's role and conception of the armed forces as constituencies? (3) Can any of the resulting insights contribute to a general theory of the managerial rhetoric of organizational change? My assumption is that as the

military and political situation changed, the articulation of the role changed. My task is to name the role and to evaluate the Chairman's message as an appropriate voice given the limitations and opportunities of the speaker's role and historical situation.

Contributory Studies

George Cheney's study of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops offers a paradigmatic examination of organizational communication. He looks specifically at how a subordinate organization identified its role as subordinate without threatening the "higher organizational authority of the Vatican."² Similarly the Chairman's position in the Joint Chiefs of Staff requires role identification within a hierarchal organizational structure. The Chairman's position contends with two superior organizations: The President, the Secretary of Defense and the three service secretaries (Army, Navy and Air Force), which comprise the Executive Branch hierarchy, plus the constitutionally mandated oversight of the United States Congress, which legally created the Chairman's position and controls military expenditures. In other words, the defined role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff contains rhetorical restrictions similar to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Each has to deal with a national and world view of the United States, organizational customs and organizational transcendence of time and place.³

Others scholars have studied organizational development by looking at change in expectations of the communication culture of the organization and monitoring how norms evolve over the life of an agency. Bantz's five patterns of organizational expectation (norms, roles, agenda, motives, and style)

²Cheney 110.

³Cheney 83-83.

closely parallel the pentadic analysis of Burke. Bantz claims that norms are “fundamental to the other four patterns.”⁴ Burke, with less certitude, claims that every critic will establish one pentadic term as dominant for any given work.⁵ The world view variations among critics can lead one researcher to select “act” as a pivotal term while another critic analyzing the same speech may establish “scene” as the controlling term of the pentad. In similar fashion, Burke’s cluster analysis centers on the controlling theme or “...what goes with what.”⁶ A point to begin the investigation would be to examine the military norm of "subordinate loyalty." Every military officer is taught this principle during his/her officer candidacy and it is reinforced throughout his/her service career. The Chairman’s support of the normative hierarchy appears in the authorizing text which created the position. The restrictiveness was overtly expressed in the 1948 Amendments to the National Defense Act of 1947.

There is hereby established within the Department of Defense the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which shall consist of the Chairman, who shall be the presiding officer thereof but who shall have no vote; the Chief of Staff, United States Army, the Chief of Naval Operations; and the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force. The Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be the principal military advisers to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. [Sec. 211.(a)]

As an advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman assumed by custom the requirement of “subordinate loyalty.” Public Law 99-433 dated October 1, 1986, and otherwise known as the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Bill, retained this

⁴Charles R. Bantz, Understanding Organizations: Interpreting Organizational Communication Cultures (University of South Carolina Press, 1993) 136.

⁵Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973) xvi-xvii.

⁶Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973) 20.

customary constraint: “The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. [Sec 151 (a)]” A researcher might expect to find this custom evidenced in the rhetoric of each Chairman regardless of the period.

Another fruitful perspective has been Giddens’s, "Structuration," which is termed a metatheory and which relies on social interactionists like Mead and Burke. Interactionists believe that the rules and resources of a culture help to shape an individual's thoughts and actions: “Structures are the rules people use in interaction.”⁷ One of the structural properties of organizations is competition. War metaphors like “winning battles” or “stockpiling resources” are often used in organizations to convey “winning and losing” strategies. Competition against a rival organization is legitimate, but viewed in the negative within an organization.⁸ The competition of a threat force provides a structural option by which to examine the speeches of Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Will external audiences view the competition of nations with the same expressions of legitimacy as organizational competition? The national outcry over Vietnam may offer some insight to the question.

The dynamic phenomena of any organization can be attributed not to functional variations, but to the interactions of those within the structure of an organization exercising personal

⁷Patricia Riley, “A Structurationist Account of Political Culture,” Administrative Science Quarterly 28 (1983): 414-437.

⁸Riley 414-437.

preferences.⁹ Each person's actual achievements or desires to achieve are woven within a mosaic of language, rules, and past successes and failures. The structural tension of divergent experiences has a regulatory effect on an organization. As Riley points out, people create structures.¹⁰ Thus the organization does not merely roll along, but is reconstructed with each new person added, each promotion awarded, and each person lost to the organization. Can this concept of organization be applied to a nation, as the organizational base? If so then the speeches should contain references to the acceptance or rejection of military competition with other nations as well as other agencies. What would be the rhetorical differences in discourse concerning Vietnam as opposed to Iraq, or when the military challenges freedom of the press? What “lessons” does an organization learn and later have to unlearn?

A variant view of structure and communication looks at the individual with regard to the influence. Chairmen, unlike any other member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must commit “symbolic suicide” by abandoning his branch of service (Army, Navy or Air Force) to assume this role. This transubstantiation demands a reflexive examination of motives. As indicated, the original legislation that created the Chairman's position accorded him expert status, but not an ability to “exercise sanctions” or “legitimate authority.” The legislation offered a flawed status to the Chairman (he took precedence over all other officers, but had no legitimate authority). These legislated paradoxes created a rhetorical burden upon each successive Chairman throughout the history of the position.

⁹Maryan S. Schall, "A Communication-Rules Approach to Organizational Culture," Administrative Science Quarterly, 28 (1983): 557-581.

¹⁰Riley 414-437.

The accommodations precipitated by a rhetorical burden become a series of "social dramas." The development of the Chairman's position can be analyzed in relation to the social dramas which were enacted by those who held the position.¹¹ Borrowing from Burke's pentadic analysis model, these paradoxes should not be interpreted as a simple "cause and effect" but rather part of the scene and agent influence on role performance.¹² The amalgam of those enactments represents a series of snapshots that ultimately lead back to an understanding of motive, the focus of Burke's cluster and pentadic analysis models.

Significance of Study

For almost two centuries, the United States had divided control of its military forces under two separate and competing departments - - the Department of the Navy and the War Department. The Navy extended the international influence of United States and maintained open trade with other nations. The oversight of foreign affairs by the United States Senate arguably made the Navy and its Marine Corps the darlings of the Senate. The War Department, which controlled Army operations, largely maintained borders in the West and Southwestern United States until the late nineteenth century. As the century drew to a close and the twentieth century dawned, the United States became involved in international conflicts that took America military forces to Cuba, the Philippines and China. These deployments were the beginning of a national security policy of internationalism.

¹¹Andrew M. Pettigrew, "On Studying Organizational Cultures," Administrative Science Quarterly 24 (1979): 570-581.

¹²Michael E. Pacanowsky & Nick O'Donnell-Trujillo, "Organizational Communication As Cultural Performance," Communication Monographs 50 (1983): 126-147.

The twentieth century brought a grander scale to United States foreign involvement than had been previously attempted. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Secretary of War Elihu Root envisioned that new technologies would lead to new demands for training of our leaders and that the larger scale of war would require more formal General Staff structures to aid in planning ever expanding and more complex resources. World War I confirmed his vision and by World War II commanders had a trained pool of staff officers capable of service specific operations. World War II, however, brought a new dimension to the battlefield, unifying Army, Navy and Air Forces for joint operations. This integration of the services required planners to learn and apply the tactics of services not their own.

In the Pacific and European theaters, joint operations forced the services to pool their resources to shell land targets from the sea, conduct aerial bombardment of land and sea targets, and to land forces and equipment on beaches. Within the continental United States, joint strategy required decisions about production schedules and about which theaters would receive the priority for equipment and manpower.

Shortly after the United States entry into World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief. He appointed Admiral William D. Leahy as his Chief of Staff with responsibility to coordinate an ad hoc group known as the "Joint Chiefs of Staff." The President thus established the Chain of Command through Admiral Leahy to and from the separate service Chiefs. The structure served both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman well throughout World War II. Convinced of the value of a Joint Staff, President Truman retained a

military Chief of Staff following the war and sought to formalize the position in law. He presented his unification plans to the Army and Navy leaders before presenting a formal request for reorganization to the Congress.¹³

Despite the World War II model, The United States Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1947 without including a specific designation for a Chairman. The original bill did formalize joint operations; it subordinated the service departments under the Secretary of Defense, and it designated each service Chief as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As originally conceived each service Chief had independent access to the President and to the Secretary of Defense. Additionally, this group was required to provide Congress with input into the state of the military and a periodic analysis of those threats to United States security which needed to be addressed. It quickly became apparent that the structure had one severe flaw: no one was officially responsible for reporting to Congress.¹⁴ In 1949, Congress moved to correct this situation by creating the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nearly forty years later, the Chairman received additional reporting and advisory duties with the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill in 1986.

Until the Goldwater-Nichols Bill, the Chairman's position lacked formal authority. Though touted as "first among equals," the Chairman was a non-voting member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who had the responsibility to make an annual report to Congress on the state of the military. The

¹³James F. Schnabel, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol I (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979) 4-5.

¹⁴Congressional Quarterly, Congress and the Nation 1945-1964 Vol I (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1965), p. 255.

legislation of 1949 had made the Joint Staff collectively the principal advisors to the President, National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense, but the 1986 revised legislation gave the Chairman singular status as the principal advisor to all three.

Most researchers seek to examine the rhetoric of key political figures or of movements. Little has been done to study the public address of military leaders in the United States like the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Research may prove valuable both to fill a void in rhetorical criticism and to offer insight to those writing speeches or engaging in public discourse while in uniform. In the context of the broader audience, this study may serve to support or question the issues surrounding communications in a hierarchy where the speaker is in the double bind of being both subordinate and superior, unable to return to the organization which nurtured his rise to the Chairman's seat and equally removed from the civilian hierarchy that he serves as an advisor.

Methodology

In order to assess changes in message adaptation, I intend to look at selected snapshots or historical moments of discourse over time. In each of these samples, I will run a cluster analysis to uncover a picture of the organizational discourse surrounding the Chairman's position. A cluster analysis is an audit of like and opposing or positive and negative schemes of terms. The critic conducts a close reading of a text in order to discern which terms are associated frequently or to find which goes with what and what goes against what. These terms chart the agonistic or moral struggle of the text. They reveal the speaker's definition of the situation, the central problem that must be overcome and his/her role in the solution to the problem. Thus, I will attempt to chart an

evolutionary picture of rhetorical adaptation for each of four distinct time periods: Established Hero Apologist(1949-1960); Scapegoat Apologist (1961-1975); Muted Apologist (1975-1986); Emergent Hero Apologist (1987-present).

The position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an excellent case for the study of rhetorical adaptation. Large responsibility, little formal authority, and undefined powers make the position difficult and demand rhetorical astuteness of a high degree.

Prior to 1986 the average United States citizen may have viewed the Chairman's position as supreme among the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The reality of the position was very different. The popular image began with the first Chairman, General Omar N. Bradley. A bonafide hero, General Bradley's would have given the impression that he was fully in charge with command license. In reality he and other Chairmen were faced with service Chiefs of Staff who routinely by-passed the Chairman to plead with the President or members of Congress on behalf of their specific branch of service (Army, Navy or Air Force). Such parochial zeal often frustrated efforts at the unification President Truman had envisioned when he submitted the request for Congress to pass legislation to make permanent the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The historical snapshots will be based on speeches by a selection of individuals chosen to represent each of the four periods discussed. As mentioned, the initial snapshot will be of the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar N. Bradley, who did much to define the Chairman's role. His speeches represent a baseline for the comparison of trends in the repetitive themes. He faced rhetorical challenges spawned by the Soviet possession of nuclear weapons the

Korean Conflict and, more personally, the novelty of his position. General Bradley's speeches also represent the first period of the Cold War during which much is said in defining the Soviet threat to National Security. The "threat and response" theme seems common throughout each of four periods. A commonality of themes is expected, however, across the four periods.

The second snapshot will analyze the speeches of General Earle G. Wheeler, who held the post longer than any other Chairman. His speeches not only span a six-year term in office and service to two Presidents (one Democrat and one Republican), but they also cover a period of heightened tension and war, a period which included the Cold War threat from the Soviet Union and the limited war of the Vietnam Conflict.

A third snapshot will focus on the addresses of General George S. Brown. General Brown laid the foundation for the repairs to the military image during the period from 1974 through 1978. His addresses seek to move beyond the malaise of the Vietnam War era in order to create a more positive image of the military.

A final snapshot will center on the public address of General Colin L. Powell. His speeches merit review for two reasons: first, he was the Chairman when the former Soviet Union crumbled and he was a most visible spokesman for the military during the highly mediated Gulf War. The shift in the decades-old threat of a Soviet blitzkrieg of Western Europe led Powell to oversee the redefinition of the dominant threats to American national security. The cycle begun by General Bradley would find closure under General Powell and begin a post-Cold War era of hoped for global security. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait lifted the illusion that the world was freed from tyranny.

Type of Data and Method of Analysis

Human beings rely on symbol sets (language). We therefore use and even abuse those symbols.¹⁵ My task is to examine the public addresses of Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assess the symbolic action employing the Burkean cluster analysis. My fundamental assumption is that rhetorical restrictions are imposed by superiors in the hierarchal structures of the executive and legislative branches of the United States and that these limits are powerful determinants of the rhetorical practice of the subordinate agents. A further assumption is that the themes will remain constant. This assumption is based on a function of the Chairmen's chartered responsibility: to identify external military threats and offer an assessment of the United States' capability to respond to that threat.

If these assumptions prove valid then the clusters should have reasonably consistent relationships across the entire period of concern. Two speeches have been selected for each of the four Chairmen. One will provide a predominately civilian audience and one current or former military service members. My analysis is undertaken to reveal the changing understanding of the Chair's role, and then of his definition of the evolving rhetorical situation and what seemed to him an appropriate response.

Burke notes "The main ideal of criticism...is to use all that is there to use."¹⁶ In light of this Aristotelian based ideal, motives cannot be derived exclusively from an analysis of selected

¹⁵Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966) 3-24.

¹⁶Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form 23.

speeches. The critic needs to draw on sources that provide a contextual understanding of the speaking occasion. The next chapter will provide historical background and biographical information to provide a context for the analysis of speeches in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORIC SCENE

Overview

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.¹

This often quoted verse of scripture cuts to the heart of the evolution of the United States military leadership during the last half of the twentieth century. The era of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff began in 1949, amid political tensions that had grown out of an overwhelming victory in the Second World War. The hard won peace was already threatened by unresolved problems. Beginning with the 1949 formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a vast system of postwar alliances was being constructed as the nation abandoned a tradition of hemispheric isolation as old as George Washington. Vast new weapons systems had annihilated the old barriers of time and space. The old Euro-centered world of power balance and client states had been shattered. Advances in technology had shortened the time between decision and act from weeks to hours. The power of atomic weapons was yet to fully understood as both the United States and the Soviet Union possessed nuclear weapons. Such changes argued for a new vision of United States military leadership. That vision had begun to take shape in the halls of the World War II White House and achieved full realization in the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill of 1986.

¹Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

This act of Congress established in law the military unification envisioned and used by President Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. Roosevelt had appointed Admiral William Leahy Chief of Staff to the President in July, 1942.² President Truman adopted the exigency driven concept of supreme military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the Congress of the United States from his brief term as wartime Commander-in-Chief following Roosevelt's death. Truman's March 1949 message to Congress sought a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who would "take precedence over all military personnel and be the principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense."³ Truman's lack of popularity in Congress and objections raised by the Navy, however, produced a Chairman without the clearly defined powers sought by the president.⁴ In September 1949, only one month into the first official term of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley received a memo on this topic among a collection of possible speech topics that illustrates the problem:

A brief explanation of the job of Chairman who serves without vote, and who has no command. Cite the example of 104 decisions in August, only two of which had to be taken to the Secretary of Defense.⁵

This note documents the lack of command authority or power to vote in decisions rendered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It illustrates the titular nature of the Chairman's position. Efforts were made

²Ted Morgan, FDR: A Biography (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985) 636.

³"Special Message to the Congress on Reorganization of the National Military Establishment," Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman 1949 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950) 166.

⁴David McCullough, Truman (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992) 476.

⁵The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley: Speeches 1945-1949 Vol 1 (n.p.) 3.

to grant more authority to the Chairman as the unified commander of the entire United States military. President Eisenhower, in his second term of office, spoke of the need to reform the Joint Staff operations and make it stronger⁶. He had experience leading the largest unified and combined commands in the history of the world, the United States and Allied Forces in Europe during World War II. That experience had given him special insight into how to effectively build and lead a joint force. President Kennedy ignored the titular figure of Chairman, as well as the counsel of other members of the Joint Staff. He recalled General Maxwell Taylor to active duty in the post of “military representative to the President.” General Taylor would later be appointed as Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff.⁷ As late as the Carter and Reagan administrations, Presidents ignored the unification proposed by President Truman. President Carter’s “Desert One” operation, designed to free the hostages in Iran, became a disaster with no joint commander appointed. The invasion of Granada proved that unresolved differences within the Joint Chiefs of Staff led to problems in inter-service operations. Plainly stated, the Army radio did not talk to the Navy radio. Goldwater-Nichols did not resolve all those differences, but it provided the structure for the unification of United States military forces proven in the World War II White House. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman understood the need to change was forged in the timeless military maxims “Unity of Command” and “Train as you will fight.” These Presidents knew that threats to the United States demanded

⁶Congressional Quarterly, Congress and the Nation 1985-1988, Vol VII (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1990) 299.

⁷“Maxwell Davenport Taylor,” Columbia Encyclopedia, 6.0. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) <<http://www.bartleby.com/65/ta/Taylor-MD.html>>.

reorganization of the United States military to a fully unified force. Goldwater-Nichols made Roosevelt's vision and Truman's supporting request a reality. The events that led to this reorganization and ultimately to creation of the power ascribed to the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff span the history of the nation. American military leadership in the second half of the twentieth century did not abruptly change, but evolved over five decades.

The reader must also keep in mind the paradoxical American traditions of disdain for a large active military force during peace time in contrast to a demonstrated will to use military force in the name of freedom. The early struggles of small forces in nation building gave way to the massive formations destined to determine the fate of the nation in the Civil War. Isolation and the return to national expansion would give way to international deployments of military forces on a small scale during the Spanish American War and more massive participation in the two world wars. Each period contributed changes that transformed the military community from one which served the growth of a fledgling nation to an internationally committed structure dedicated to freedom and democracy around the globe.

The Early Years: 1789-1860

The United States military began in 1789 with War Department control of both the Army and Navy. By 1798, Congress determined a need for a distinct Department of the Navy to coordinate naval protection of American shipping on the high seas. The Navy enjoyed great support in the Senate which constitutionally had responsibility for oversight of foreign affairs. The Navy, with its Marine contingent, quickly became the favored service in that legislative body. The House of

Representatives favored the Army with its direct role in westward expansion and border protection. American historical events, public attitudes and political exigencies shaped the separate functions for the United States Army and Navy in that first decade of the nation's history. The isolation, provided by two massive oceans, weak neighbors and political unrest in Europe, freed the fledgling nation to develop politically and economically. No one would call the United States a world power even at the end of the War of 1812, yet shortly thereafter, the hint of a larger role surfaced in the cautionary words of the Monroe Doctrine. President James Monroe articulated circumstances for the use of United States military power beyond its own borders and outside the realm of nation building. International trade and political necessity overshadowed the benefits of isolation as early as 1823 when those first infant steps of an emerging world power were taken. Though limited to the hemisphere of the Americas, Monroe's message to Congress and the expanded world audience seems clear; the United States must be vigilant and outward looking in world politics. President James Monroe stated before Congress on December 2, 1823:

In the wars of the European powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy, so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded, or seriously menaced, that we resent injuries, or make preparations for our defense.⁸

During the first half of the 1800s, the "outward look" of the United States was mainly to territories on the North American continent. Treaties were signed and battles fought to gain precious territory

⁸Robert S. Summers, "Monroe Doctrine" Presidents of the United States: James Monroe (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 22 Feb. 2001) <<http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/jmonroe.html>>.

which fueled an expansion that added seventeen states to the Union. Military forces increased steadily to provide manpower to maintain outposts in newly acquired territories. The command structure, which controlled military operations from 1800 through 1861, remained virtually unchanged from the inception of the nation. The small scale battles fought in this expansion did not overly tax commanders the way the massive force structures of the Civil War would.

The Civil War and the Search for Organization

The “War between the States” demonstrated the need to advance American understanding of controlling massive forces across large expanses of terrain. Inadequate structure of staffs surfaced at all levels in the military as did the absence of officers trained in both command and staff functions. President Lincoln became painfully aware of the problem as he searched for a structure adequate for the command and control of huge numbers of troops, vast chains of supply and continental deployment. The massive areas and large battle formations were unfamiliar to the veterans of the far more modest Mexican War. General Winfield Scott had commanded a force of only 14,000 in Mexico. The nation had not yet adopted corps or army structures and thus had no one in the field able to orchestrate battle plans for hundreds of thousands of men and little understanding of the volumes of supplies and equipment required to sustain them. From Virginia in the East to Missouri in the West, battles raged with commanders unable to apply the lessons of Clausewitz on mass and those of Napoleon concerning speed. Missing were the trained staffs necessary to create battle plans and affect resupply. Absent was the capability to organize companies, battalions and brigades into the larger structures of divisions, corps and armies. No mechanism was in place to identify

leaders to serve as generals in war.⁹ The immediate resolutions of these exigencies came in battle. Long term solutions would take nearly forty years for the military to adopt .

President Lincoln began the war by turning to the seventy-four year old veteran of the Mexican War, General in Chief Winfield Scott, for advice. Ill and unable to join the army in the field, General Scott helped the president formulate a basic strategy. He retired the last day of October in 1861, amid unfounded criticism that he interfered with operations in the field.¹⁰ Thus began a search for a Union victory. The search, however, was not as much for a person, i.e. General Ulysses S. Grant, but rather for an organization that, when commanded competently, could produce a victory.

The first step in that process was to adopt a staff structure for organizations in the field. In May of 1862, General McClellan, who took command from General Scott, received a detailed directive to adopt this new organization within his corps. He obviously resisted, as this excerpt from a May 9, 1862 letter from the president attests:

I order the army corps organization not only on the unanimous opinion of the twelve generals whom you have selected...but also on the unanimous opinion of every military man I could get an opinion from, and every modern military book,...I now think it indispensable for you to know how your struggle against it is received in quarters which you cannot entirely disregard.¹¹

Lincoln then faced the reality that officers appointed to command and staff officers lacked experience and training. Commanding generals were often politically appointed to gain support from

⁹T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and His Generals (New York: Alfred A Knoff, 1952) 3.

¹⁰Williams, 43.

¹¹“Letter to General McClellan,” The Lincoln Papers (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1947) <memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:72:/temp/~ammem_KTdJ::>.

one faction in Congress or another. Even those with ability, like Carl Schurz, had to overcome a very modest knowledge of military affairs. Other appointees never did achieve even a moderate degree of success as battlefield generals.¹² Three years of lessons forged in heavy combat casualties was the price paid to define an organization and train men to lead at all levels. Generals Grant and Sherman graduated from this battlefield schooling and emerged to lead Union forces to final victory. General Grant assimilated the tough lessons of combat and rose to General in Chief of the Union army in 1864. A less renowned figure, General Henry Halleck, stepped down from the post Grant assumed and accepted a newly created position as Chief of Staff.

In this capacity, General Halleck provided a structural solution to a problem that had plagued the Union force from the outset of hostilities, communication. Specifically, he translated the wide range of information flowing between civilian chambers and military headquarters when each spoke in terms unique to his station. Speed of delivery via the telegraph or by railroad could not solve the language barrier of interdependent governmental bureaucracies. The skills of an interpreter were needed and General Henry Halleck was assigned the task.¹³

Halleck possessed the best blend of credentials among the active officers. He was a West Point graduate, who had studied military strategy in France and had written a book on strategic deployment of forces, which became a standard at West Point. Following the Mexican War, he left military service to enter California politics. He returned to active duty at the start of the Civil War

¹²Claude M. Fuess, Carl Schurz Reformer (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1932), p. 94.

¹³Stephen E. Ambrose, Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1962) 160.

and successfully commanded in Missouri. He was appointed as General in Chief and was instrumental in modifying the grand strategy of Henri Jomini to fit the American army. His broad range of experiences made him uniquely qualified to play the go-between for Lincoln and Grant. Nearly forty years later, Halleck's training and experience would set a standard for the well trained officer.

This novel concept, born of necessity, freed Grant to focus on the tactical battle while the day to day management of the army was overseen by Halleck. The Chief of Staff dealt deftly with resupply, troop replacements and coordination of the flow of information among the various commands, bureaus and departments. He had the gift of lucid brevity essential to issuing executable orders and summarizing battle reports. Grant became so confident in Halleck's ability to anticipate the needs of all commands, that he was able to devote virtually his full energy prosecuting the battle.

General Sherman, whom Halleck credited for winning the war, commented:

You (General Halleck) possess a knowledge of law and of the principles of war far beyond that of other officers in our service,...Stability is what we lack in our Government, and changes are always bad,...Stand by us and encourage us by your counsels and advice.¹⁴

Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton finally had an advisor who could make sense of the daily battlefield situations and enhance the prosecution of the war. The position borne of necessity would not survive into the post-war period. The hastily created organization was not considered for more permanent adoption, perhaps because of the untimely death of the President and the human desire to seek the familiar. Burke share the concept that language is an illusion that directs us to

¹⁴Ambrose 167.

selection and escape. We tend to escape those things we don't like or understand and select those that we do.¹⁵ Only the historical record hinted at the future visions of Elihu Root at the close of the Spanish American War and of President Roosevelt at the beginning of World War II. The nation would later benefit from the Civil War lessons applied to the highest level of the military.

The Reforms of Elihu Root

Throughout much of the remainder of the Nineteenth Century, the United States remained focused on its own efforts to expand and preserve the nation as evidenced by the addition of twelve new states to the Union. The century closed, however, with events that would shape the future use of United States military forces. The cautions directed in 1823 toward European powers were enforced against Spain in 1898 during decisive military engagements in Cuba. An extension of that conflict included deployment of American troops to the Philippines.

The year 1898, which saw the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the symbol of "looking outward," was an important turning point. It marked the emergence of the United States as a world power.¹⁶

The Boxer uprising in China would follow about a year later and the United States would find itself involved in a period "characterized by rapid enlargement of armies and navies and of far more deadly weapons and tactics."¹⁷ The United States military would undergo similar growth in response to the need to protect its emerging vital interests abroad.

¹⁵Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 8-9.

¹⁶Maurice Matloff, ed. American Military History (Washington, D.C.:GPO, 1969) 15.

¹⁷Matloff, 344.

Secretary of War Elihu Root's vision of a trained and experienced officer corps underpinned the expansion of the American military. His action initiated the formal process to redress the shortcomings that stymied the Union armies during much of the Civil War. Secretary Root developed the Army War College to train command and staff officers for the highest levels of military command and battle staff planning.¹⁸ He directed organizational changes that eliminated the "for life" appointments of War Department staff officers and of the Commanding General. He ordered creation of the position of Chief of Staff and formed the General Staff with a clearly defined chain of command within the War Department. Assignments to the General Staff from Chief of Staff down were for four to five years. Secretary Root's reforms worked against those officers who came to Washington early in their careers and spent more time advancing themselves politically than in supporting the military. These reforms gave more power to the Secretary of War and discouraged direct links between the military and members of Congress without the Secretary's knowledge or approval. Newly instituted staff procedures required all staff actions prepared for Congress to be approved by the Secretary of War.¹⁹

Elihu Root sought a blend of battle and staff experience in Washington. He understood that prior experience with soldiers would make the staff more responsive to the needs of units at distant posts.²⁰ The knowledge that they would one day return to those posts themselves gave added

¹⁸Richard W. Leopold, Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1954) 40.

¹⁹Leopold, 41.

²⁰Leopold, 39.

incentives to acquire updated equipment and provide adequate provisions to outlying garrisons. Root also anticipated the need for rapid expansion of the military as was demanded during the Civil War. He knew that the more officers who possessed both command and staff experience, the easier wartime expansion would be.

Approximately a decade after Root left office, a final part of his reform vision, the National Defense Act of 1916, became law. This piece of legislation expanded the Regular Forces of the Army and Navy, directed formation of an active reserve and provided for the education of new officers through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).²¹ The United States entered World War I within a year of passage of this bill.

Coalition Warfare Enters the American Scene

Talk of American involvement in Europe spurred the isolationist to cry out in opposition. Nonetheless, President Wilson abandoned his initial anti-war stance and committed forces to the allied cause. From the battlefields of Europe, American military and political leaders learned invaluable lessons about coalition warfare. The more flexible organization Root had directed aided the expansion of military forces by trained and competent leaders. Unlike the Civil War, the search for generals was conducted within a pool of trained professionals. Armed with an advanced understanding of operating staffs at all levels of command, these leaders would face new lessons to be learned during World War I. Coalition fighting, the coming together of the forces of several nations to fight across a large front against a common enemy, had to be mastered. Leaders like

²¹Matloff, 366.

Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton and even the World War I veteran, Harry Truman, gained valuable insights that would serve them in the prosecution of World War II.

The interval between world wars brought a strong reaction. A desire for political isolation particularly from Europe swept the United States and became a decisive force in the middle west for two decades.²² Public opinion would not support President Wilson's League of Nations proposal as a means by which to avoid any future wars. Woodrow Wilson's vision of a world organization received a severe blow when the United States Senate voted in favor of public opinion and refused to ratify membership in this world body. The League of Nations opened with thirty-two original member nations, but within a decade this body had ceased to have any meaningful say in international politics. This emasculated international forum could only offer verbal protest of the events which again led the world to war.²³ The isolationist voices such as those of Henry Luce, Senator Norris of Nebraska, and Charles Lindbergh rang out in opposition to the League and to maintaining a large standing army. Force structures were cut rapidly at the end of the First World War. The period between the world wars was marked by the rise of both world communism and fascism. An isolated America became internally focused on domestic prosperity in the 1920s and depression in the 1930s. Nevertheless, virtually unseen, the benefits of Elihu Root's reorganization and the National Defense Act of 1916 continued to accrue. Regular Army Captains and Majors attended Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to hone their skills in

²²Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1971) 9.

²³"League of Nations" Encyclopedia International (New York: Grolier, 1970) 429-432.

battle planning and command of larger force structures. Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels attended the Army War College for further study in the “art of war.” Young men bound for land grant institutions took courses in military science and received commissions in the Regular Army, Army Reserve or Army National Guard. By the start of World War II, the nation had the luxury of an ample supply of trained officers to meet the demands at the outbreak of hostilities.

World War II introduced new challenges to American military planners and their allies. In addition to improved weapons that punctuated battlefields with speed and lethality, this conflict had two major theaters of operations, Europe and the Pacific. Massive force structures had to be led and tactically employed in light of the difficult resource allocation decisions required to support a two-front war. President Franklin Roosevelt sought help in making the difficult decisions this war required. The lesson of acquiring a personal advisor in the form of a Chief of Staff, which Lincoln learned late in the Civil war, President Roosevelt applied early on in his War Cabinet. He filled the post by recalling to active duty Admiral William Leahy who had been the American ambassador to France when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. As Chief of Staff, Admiral Leahy’s main responsibility was to coordinate the strategic military effort of the United States.

The Admiral became a conduit of information to and from the President. Members of Congress, diplomats, as well as members of the military lined up at Leahy’s door seeking his assistance as an intercessor. For the first time in American history, a President had deliberately limited the access of individual service chiefs to their Commander-in-Chief. Daily morning briefings by Leahy freed the President to perform the other duties his high office demanded. Admiral Leahy

wrote of the scope and difficulties of his duties as “the senior military officer of all American armed forces” this way:

The duties of Chief of Staff to the President required careful selection of all military dispatches of sufficient importance to be read by the President...the screening of numerous and, on occasion, insistent demands from many persons-military, diplomatic and civilian-for conferences with the president on matters having a real or supposed military angle.²⁴

Only the senior member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had direct access with a wartime chain of command through the Chief of Staff to the President.²⁵ This system served well in wartime.

President Truman wanted the position to be made permanent. In a speech before Congress in December 19, 1945, he proposed unification of the United States military. The proposal called for Chief of Staff for the National Department of Defense, a Secretary of National Defense and three branches of service.²⁶ The Congress did not share the President’s belief in giving one person unified control over the military. Thus the National Security Act of 1947 provided much of the reorganization Truman requested, but it did not include a senior military leader fashioned after Admiral Leahy’s duties in World War II.

The Unified Department of Defense Begins to Evolve

The American military of the late 1940s was arguably the preeminent military force in the world. The National Security Act of 1947 recognized the need for change in controlling this

²⁴William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950) 2-3.

²⁵James F. Schnabel, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol I (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979) 4-5.

²⁶“Special Message to Congress on Establishment of the Department of Defense,” Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman 1945 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946) 546-560.

awesome power. This legislation subordinated the military departments and their Secretaries under the Department of Defense and the civilian leadership of the Secretary of Defense. Additionally through this Act, Congress separated the Air Force from the Army thereby adding the Department of the Air Force to the Department of Defense. The new law provided for a Joint Staff composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force and the Chief of Naval Operations. This legislation provided for the creation of unified commands. These composite organizations had control over specific assets from each of the branches of service (Army, Navy and Air Force). The unified commanders were assigned responsibility for a certain region of the globe and the varied assets assigned to that theater according to the threat to American interests and regional geography. Among the duties of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was conducting threat analysis and offering recommendations concerning the assignment of forces to these unified commands.

The final measure of the National Defense Act of 1947 included by Congress was creation of the National Security Council to “advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign and military policies relating to national security.”²⁷

The Act did not authorize the Chairman’s position. At the recommendation of the Hoover Commission report in February of 1949, the Congress added a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the passage of the National Security Act Amendments of 1949.²⁸ In addition to the

²⁷United States. Cong. House Report 99-375. 99th Cong. 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1985) 29.

²⁸Congress and the Nation 1945-1964, Vol I, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1965) 255.

Chairman's position, the original bill did not provide for Marine Corps representation (the Marines are a part of the Navy) on the Joint Staff. The 1949 amendment granted the Marine Corps Commandant voting rights on the Joint Staff.²⁹

Even the modifications passed in 1949 failed to empower fully this position and created a dilemma for those who would assume the post. In total contravention to all the tenets of military leadership taught throughout the services, the position had responsibilities but no authority to exercise those obligations. This amendment to the National Defense Act of 1947 authorized a Chairman for the Joint Staff who would report to the Secretary of Defense and make security estimates to Congress. However, the Chairman had no vote on issues before the Joint Staff. On paper the Chairman held coequal status with other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, without a vote any deadlocked decisions before the Joint Staff had to be taken to the Secretary of Defense for adjudication. Not until the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill of 1986 would an empowered Chairman become the principal advisor to the nation's civilian leadership on military affairs.

In the light of the pre-Goldwater-Nichols limitations, a unique organizational climate existed which challenged each Chairman. General Wheeler, the longest serving Chairman, put it this way: "...the scope of this office is still evolving and the exercise of its powers has varied from incumbent to incumbent."³⁰ How do you exercise leadership in an environment which clearly restricts your

²⁹Matloff, 531-533.

³⁰ "Joint Chiefs of Staff," Addresses By General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: n.p) 9.

actions? Without the role and authority to be the “principal military advisor to the President, the national Security Council and the Secretary of Defense,”³¹ how do you unify what Congress has clearly required to be unified? The answer is captured in the finding of the House Committee on Armed Services in 1985, which spurred Congress to enact the Goldwater-Nichols Bill:

The problem with the Joint Chiefs of Staff as currently structured (particularly when it attempts to address issues that involve the interests of the services, such as resource allocations) is the classic problem faced by committees composed of coequal individuals who represent strong, conflicting interests. Such a group arrives at positions either by dividing along the lines of the competing interests or by negotiating a mutually acceptable consensus in which each member supports the claims of the others. The result is that the JCS frequently acts as a negotiating forum in which each service seeks to maximize its position through bargaining.³²

Before these words were written the Chairman’s authority had remained unchanged for more than a quarter of a century. The responsibility without authority issue created an operational challenge for all who held the office.

As indicated in the previous chapter, there are four distinct periods in the history of the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Three of these periods occurred prior to the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill, the “established hero apologist,” “scapegoat apologist” and “muted apologist” periods. These descriptions seem appropriate to characterize the rhetorical situation each Chairman faced. The fourth, the “emerging hero apologist,” follows the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill. While President Truman’s vision of a unified military was finally

³¹United States. Cong. House Report 99-375. 99th Cong. 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1985) 12.

³²*Ibid.*, 10.

realized, it will take decades of declassified material from most notably the meetings of the National Security Council to determine if the private discourse of various Chairmen who held the position after Goldwater-Nichols Bill was enacted actually realized a rhetorical benefit. The secretive discourse of the decades that followed will provide an opportunity for future study.

The continuity and change in the public institutional discourse will provide a basis for the current study. Beginning with the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar N. Bradley, and ending with General Colin L. Powell allows four decades of public address within sufficiently varied historical settings to gain a sufficient set of snapshots upon which to base a cluster analysis.

The Chairmen

President Truman nominated the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1949. The Cold War had heightened tensions in Europe and the Far East. The Korean conflict would begin in less than a year. The President did not enjoy overwhelming approval in Congress and so he needed a nominee who would receive quick Senate confirmation. General Eisenhower was already headed to Europe to command the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces as Commander, Supreme Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Truman nominated the widely popular and able General Omar N. Bradley. After Senate confirmation, General Bradley was officially sworn into office on August 16, 1949. A bonafide hero of World War II, he entered office having to define in practice what had been legislatively enacted. His previous experiences in the Washington D.C. political scene made him an excellent choice. Beginning in 1945, Bradley headed the Veterans

Administration and he lobbied Congress for support of those who had just fought so valiantly in World War II. He would later follow General Eisenhower as the Chief of Staff of the Army where he sought pay reform and presented assessments of needs in Army manpower and equipment to various legislative committees. He was one of five flag officers (generals or admirals) to receive five star recognition in 1950.

His speeches mark the beginning of the “established hero apologist” period which spanned 1949 until 1960. Included in this period were Admiral Radford and General Twining. Each had distinguished himself during World War II. General Bradley stands out among the three because he was first to don the mantle of Chairman and he held the position in both war and peace. The first Chairman was no stranger to the podium and was cited as actually enjoying the opportunity to speak publically. The public record supports Bradley’s comfort with speaking with four volumes of speeches from 1946 to 1965.

The “scapegoat apologist” period was marked by much national turmoil. The decade of the sixties began with the Cuban Missile Crisis, followed closely by the Bay of Pigs invasion. The civil rights marches of the late fifties would escalate into riots. As the decade ended, the military leaders found themselves increasingly the focus of civil disobedience gatherings. Violence often erupted beyond the capabilities of local authorities to contain. Note that during the integration of Mississippi and Alabama federal troops or “federalized” troops crossed the line to take up domestic police duties for the first time since Shay’s rebellion. National guard, reserve and on rare occasion even active military forces were sent to put down unrest.

General Lemnitzer was given much of the blame of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Though maligned as a Chairman, he achieved more distinction after assuming the office of Commander, Supreme Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Additionally, he would become a valued advisor to Presidents of either party up until his death. General Lemnitzer's successor had been recalled to active duty by John F. Kennedy to advise that president on military matters. Often viewed as abandoning of the Joint Chiefs as advisors, President Kennedy publicly relied on General Taylor for advice concerning the military. Taylor's two-year stint as Chairman was noticeably uninspiring. Like Lemnitzer his best service was ahead of him as he left the Joint Staff to become ambassador to the troubled nation of South Vietnam. General Wheeler was appointed to office by President Johnson in 1964. His six-year, three term appointment was the longest a chairman had served. He was also the first to be appointed by two successive Presidents. The latter point is made more significant by the fact that the Presidents were a Democrat (Johnson) and a Republican (Nixon). General Wheeler's service is distinguished by his oversight of the American entry into the Vietnam conflict beyond the level of merely providing advisors. By 1967, he was required to answer much of the criticism spawned by this unpopular engagement.

Admiral Moorer succeeded General Wheeler. Scandals associated with the bombings of Laos and Cambodia marked his tenure. The negative publicity neutralized his effectiveness as a credible spokesman for the military. General Wheeler seemed the only logical choice to represent the "scapegoat apologist" period in which the civilian leadership allowed military leaders to shoulder the blame for unpopular decisions made at the highest levels of American government.

The tarnished military image of the Vietnam era gave way to the period of the “muted apologist.” The most notable representative, General George S. Brown, took office just months before the overthrow of Saigon, the definitive end to United States operations in Vietnam. General Brown seemed to realize the need to reconstruct the image of the American military as quickly as possible. His work was continued by Generals David C. Jones and General John W. Vessey, Jr. Both these men continued to articulate General Brown’s view that the United States military was being outspent and that produced a serious threat to the free world. Following this same theme, Jones and Vessey called for restructuring the nation’s military to improve military efficiency. Despite the ultimate significance of the desired changes, without the efforts of General Brown to rebuild the image of the military, this change might possibly have taken years longer.

The Goldwater-Nichols Bill of 1986 established in law the changes sought by Brown, Jones and Vessey. Since its passage, five individuals have held the office of Chairman: Admiral Crowe, General Powell, General Shalikashvili, General Shelton and General Ralston. General Colin Powell best represents this group. General Powell’s term in office was marked by several significant events, namely the break up of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact alliance, Desert Storm was fought, and a twenty-five percent reduction in the Department of Defense began during his time as Chairman. General Powell best represents the “emerging hero apologist” period. Admiral Crowe only served a two-year term as the Chairman and only one year was under the tenets of Goldwater-Nichols. General Shalikashvili was the only Chairman not born in the United States. General Shelton and General Ralston had not assumed office at the time this research began.

These four periods from General Bradley to General Powell provide an excellent opportunity to examine a portion of the rhetorical evolution of the United States military in the last half of the twentieth century. This examination of speeches may add insight concerning the evolution of the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Consider this comment made about Presidents and their wartime actions:

What one president has done sets a precedent for others to follow. In this area of constitutional development that has a great deal of “playing by ear,” both by Presidents and by Congress.³³

Obviously to a certain extent a role is defined by the law, but much more hinges on the exigencies of the moment and the interaction of the actors. Roles seldom define more than a fraction of the behaviors that leaders find themselves performing. It is the unspecified and innovative acting that ultimately modifies our roles beyond recognition.

³³Joseph E. Kallenbach, The American Chief Executive (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966) 535.

CHAPTER 3

CLUSTER ANALYSIS: GENERAL OMAR N. BRADLEY SPEECHES

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to perform a Burkean cluster analysis of two speeches delivered by the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar N. Bradley. One speech, “National Guard Convention Speech,” represents his delivery before a military audience; the second, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech,” was delivered before a civilian audience.

The analysis of these speeches will be structured in the following manner. First, there will be a brief overview of the content and purpose of the speech. Second, the God Terms and Devil Terms (Clusters and Agons) will be identified. Third, Bradley’s concept of his role as Chairman will be discussed among the concluding thoughts for this analysis.

National Guard Convention Speech: Content and Purpose

Presented in Montgomery, Alabama, on October 26, 1949, this speech predates the advent of the Korean War (July 1950) and follows closely the Soviet Union’s successful explosion of the atomic bomb. The address is one of the first that Bradley gave after becoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in August 1949, a period that was also marked by the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In brief, Bradley’s speech articulates the new containment doctrine of General George Marshall and the Truman administration. This is not a bellicose speech glorifying war or calling the

nation to arms. Instead, Bradley addresses the National Guard as simply one component in a much larger policy of keeping the peace through preparedness, training, and the maintenance of economic, political and military strength. Bradley's core message is that the United States and the Soviet Union are engaged in an ideological contest that may go on (as it did) for many years. Rather than a transcendent celebrator of the martial virtues, he talks soberly about keeping the peace through the mundane acts of acquiring skills and training and maintaining readiness in cooperation with members of the varied alliances and the United Nations. The actions of diplomats and political actors are foregrounded, and military might is necessary only to give their peace keeping work credibility and authority. He is more bureaucrat than warrior as he emphasizes service to the nation and a posture of responsibility.

National Guard Convention Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

Kenneth Burke's cluster method is a way of auditing texts. In looking for patterns of terms one seeks to discover "what goes with what" and "what goes against what." Public speeches are weighted with values; each articulates a moral universe, an order of communal good. There is a corresponding order of evil and these terms may be openly condemned or simply remain implicit as a dialectical opposite.

Burkean critics assert that every coherent text has a God term around which a cluster of associative terms is organized. These terms give the God terms the local nuances necessary for application to a particular problem or situation. The God terms in Bradley's National Guard Convention Speech are unremarkable: Peace is the God term; War is the Devil term. However, the

associated terms allow Bradley to provide local application to particular problems. As Burke was fond of saying, the subordinate terms allow the speaker to “customize” and contextualize the force of the God terms. Thus, these terms represent incipient action.

Bradley parses the term peace into two parts. There is a “reality” of peace as opposed to “illusory” peace. The latter leads to war. An illustration of illusory peace is the isolationists’ belief that the United States’ peace was assured by hemispheric distance. The error of the isolationists prior to World War II was captured in his opening remark: “In July 1939, the American people believed that distance provided adequate insulation between us and any conflict in Europe or Asia.”¹ Two more years proved the inadequacy of an oceanic barrier. Never again could the nation’s security policy be based on such antiquated isolationist thought.

The nation’s isolationist voices doggedly blocked American intervention and hampered adequate mobilization. The myth of illusion is captured through the metaphor of neighbors failing to help each other: “With a fire raging in our block, we were ready to act if it actually touched our house, but were not prepared to join our neighbors and put it out before it got there.”² The illusionary myth of peace hampered the nation’s efforts to prepare for war. Wide-spread support for isolationism nearly prevented retention of the Selective Service System and authorization for overseas troop deployments. Both measures passed Congress, but by a narrow one vote margin. Bradley claims that half the nation’s representatives opposed preparing the nation for war and by extension half the

¹Omar Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech,” The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley, Vol 1. (n.p.) 577.

²Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 577.

population of America. Four months later the isolationist illusion was smashed by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Drawing upon the precedent of Pearl Harbor, Bradley drove the lesson of “reality” home: “I was gravely worried that there might be a war. I knew that an irresponsible, ill-considered or totally accidental circumstance might well be sufficient to bring war to us.”³ Bradley’s 1949 world was one of tenuous peace and paralleled the political and military posturing prior to and at the outset of World War II.

In an ideal world, vigilance and preparation would not be necessary. The world is not ideal and in reality war is an ever present possibility. In the “real world,” policies of peace are mitigated by the requirements of maintaining peace; not illusionary beliefs but international relationships, expenditures and good reasons shape the policies of peace. The Chair’s remarks, stressing the importance of treaties and obligations to those treaties, express a decided shift in America’s relationship with its European neighbors. United States policy during two World Wars hinged on European countries defending their homelands until the Americans could mobilize and train to fight. The new reality is that America no longer has the luxury of waiting for an external attack. The mutual defense agreements under the North Atlantic Treaty establish a new policy of “defending forward.” This policy requires active duty American military forces to be stationed in Europe, in positions along the potential boundary of Soviet aggression, as part of a coordinated international defense to buy time for reinforcements to arrive:

³Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 578.

There is an even more important consideration than merely the treaties, however, which greatly affects the National Guard. We have previously had a relatively long time to mobilize our forces; but we can no longer count on having anything like this time in the future. We are now ourselves on the firing line, and we can no longer expect to be sheltered by some other nation closer to the enemy than we.⁴

Bradley's remarks remove the possibility that the President or his advisors are entertaining isolationism as an option in future national security policy decisions.

This reversal of policy necessitates a variety of expenditures. There will be the need to modernize equipment, train in new ways and spend time in planning. The reality of peace is that a nation is forced to expend resources for potential war that would be resisted in the idealist and mythical world of the isolationist. In this world of limits exists another reality, the economic reality of careful use of resources for mobilization. Even in a nation realistically driven to make necessary preparations for war, there are limits on how much can be invested. Bradley makes this point that the National Guard, as part-time forces, helps reduce the strain on the budget of the United States:

And yet, in spite of our increased responsibilities, we must face the necessity for realistic economy in our expenditures. These conditions have caused the National Guard to become of even greater importance to the national security.⁵

Bradley maintains that, while it can never be absolutely assured, peace is best preserved by a national policy of avoiding war. Despite the best efforts of diplomacy and the best defensive measures, war may still come. The world is changing for the worse as evidenced by the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor which he equates to organized crime or "national gangsterism."

⁴Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 581.

⁵Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 582-583.

When armed conflict is imminent, the military has three duties. The first of those duties is “to lend strength and force to the words of diplomats who are ceaselessly striving to maintain the peace.”⁶ Diplomats rely on the subordinate military to enhance their power. Peace is first and foremost the domain of those charged with the nation’s political power. The military often has a defining role in diplomatic bantering: “Sad experience has shown us that the influence and prestige of any foreign minister are directly proportional to the number of divisions, war vessels, and aircraft he has arrayed in his corner.”⁷ Failure to maintain the peace triggers the second duty, to restore the peace. The military relies on being prepared to go to war and quickly seize the initiative as a potent offensive force. Bradley outlines the salient points of the national military mission:

...if war comes, ...our armed forces in being must possess the ability to retaliate instantly, decisively, and with overwhelming power to any underhanded sneak attack such as the one on December 7, 1941.⁸

The third duty is to create a boundary that preserves a sufficient level of peace to mobilize the forces needed to win the war, returning the world to a state of peace. Treaties, such as the North Atlantic Treaty, were establish the promise of the fulfillment of these duties in the event of war.

General Bradley breaks down wartime responsibilities among the various components of the United States military. These responsibilities are driven by specific treaties authorized by the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949.

⁶Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 578.

⁷Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 578.

⁸Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 578.

If it becomes necessary to project our power overseas, the first troops to go over will of course be the regular armed forces then on active duty, but those immediately following will have to be obtained in large part, from the reserve components. It is up to you, you members of the National Guard, to prepare yourselves to be ready for action much more quickly than you have ever had to before.⁹

This action agenda makes it clear that the experiences of World War II have debunked the old isolationist illusion and given the nation a more realistic understanding of the conflict of ideological policies. Having cited both the Defense Mutual Assistance Act of 1949 and articles from the North Atlantic Treaty, the Chairman sums up the new reality-driven policy:

You will readily note that by these several instruments we have obligated ourselves, not only to render assistance to the other signatory nations in case of attack, but also to render active assistance in the form of funds and the materials of war prior to the attack.¹⁰

In the future, if the signed treaties are to have meaning, the United States will not be able to sit and watch the neighbor's house burn and not respond, but will have to render active assistance.

Citing historical precedent, Bradley notes mordantly that war is sometimes the path to peace. There are those nations that oppose war and those that engage in war as diplomacy by force. The General does not embrace war, but cautions against avoiding war at the expense of others as the United States clearly did between September 1939 and December 1941.

Paradoxically, Bradley notes that war has often been a final act of diplomacy. When all else failed nations have had to resort to the use of force. However, the world has lost the honorable code of war as a last resort which placed diplomacy ahead of armed aggression. Germany's

⁹Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 579.

¹⁰Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 580.

blitzkrieg of Europe and Japan's attacks in the Pacific exemplify the recent rejection of peace as a national policy in dealings with other nations:

Sad experience here again has shown us that war, which used to be the ultimate expression of one nation's policy in disagreement with that of another, and as such maintained a certain dignity and respect for humanity, has now degenerated into a form of national gangsterism.¹¹

When war becomes a first resort of national policy it is a sickness, a "cancer of aggression." Thus war must be treated as a criminal act:

Just as the counter against organized crime has proved to be the unremitting, relentless pursuit made possible by the F.B.I., so must the counter to deliberate national crime be the certainty of being brought to justice.¹²

Those opposing this criminal intent must assume the duties of world policeman arresting the battlefield advances of the international felon state. While the offended party is reluctant and has sought to prevent the war, justice must be rendered through the defeat of the offender. If a risk of war exists, added protection rests in alliances between and among nations to create a more ominous force to attack; to do less is to tempt the criminal attacker to risk a war of conquest.

Bradley prepares the nation for containment of the Soviet Union and those who are philosophically opposed to peaceful coexistence:

We may as well face it; a war of aggression is basically a conflict between two different ideals of national life. We feel those two dissimilar ideals or systems can exist side by side at peace. The expressed philosophy of the other ideology is that this is not possible and the destruction of all but its own system is mandatory.¹³

¹¹Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 578.

¹²Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 578.

¹³Bradley, "National Guard Convention Speech" 581.

National Guard Convention Speech: Conclusions

The God term of Peace and the Devil term of War throughout his presentation support a very formulaic discussion of military purpose. War must be avoided not through weakness or less than adequate resources but through planning, training, and collective defense. The approach emphasizes the bureaucratic nature of his position as subordinate to civilian authority, “I have been designated the U.S. Military Representative...”.¹⁴ Bradley’s remarks concerning the responsibilities of the National Guard reflect the role of the messenger delivering the justification for current national policy. His power is that he is able to articulate the defense agenda of the administration he serves. Gone is the certitude of voice that marks the commander and to which others are subordinate. His authority to persuade is a delegated authority. He is the subaltern voice of the administration he serves. Thus, these grand terms are reduced to “method” and this perspective is one that characterizes the essentially bureaucratic role of the Chairman.

Rotary Club Speech: Content and Purpose

The second speech by Bradley I will analyze was presented before the Detroit Rotary Club at the Statler Hotel in Detroit, Michigan, on September 20, 1950. Bradley speaks about the Korean War (July 1950 - March 1953) that started just one month prior to this address. The Korean War marked the first test of the ability of the United Nations to apply a military force drawn from its member nations. Bradley’s speech is given after the United Nations has condemned the attacks by North Korea and for the first time in history deployed an international contingent of

¹⁴Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 582.

forces under United Nations control. On another continent the Cold War tensions of Europe divert American resources and effort in defense of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The Chairman's tone is that of the bureaucratic cheerleader who has risen to excite the crowd's support for President Truman's national security policy. The United States has a new ally in the United Nations that has emerged on the side of freedom and against the aggression of communism. He exhorts the crowd to support the war. His God and Devil terms are the familiar litany of the Cold War: liberty versus slavery, good versus evil, sacrifice versus surrender.

Rotary Club Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

Freedom like peace is parsed through a dialectical tension of myth versus reality. Americans want their freedom without effort or external interference. The absence of war has a soporific affect on the American people who resist abandonment of their isolationist roots:

The people of the free world - - and especially we Americans - - had become victims of our own catch phrase 'cold war' with its illusion that communism is merely an opposing ideology. We now recognize that communism is backed by military force which will be used whenever and wherever it is to their advantage.¹⁵

In the intervening years since the end of World War II, the United States has entered into an active role in the world. That activity has been limited to positive support of peace, which is sought by free nations. The political, economic and even spiritual support provided by free nations he touts as "worthy causes." He laments the current conflict as evidence that there is a mythical dimension to

¹⁵Omar Bradley, "Detroit Rotary Club Speech" The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley, Vol 1. (n.p.) 88.

worthy causes: “Evidently those efforts alone have not been sufficient to win a permanent peace.”¹⁶

The United States has mythically socialized its citizens to view peace as “normal.” Confronting the illusionary state of Americans and others of the free world, he states: “It is hard to shake off a lifetime of belief, but now it appears that our ‘normal’ way of life, for many years to come, may be tension and sacrifice.”¹⁷ Debunking the myth of isolation and foregrounding the existence of aggressive nations strongly legitimizes United Nations and American involvement in Korea. By debunking the myth, he can exhort the nation to accept the demands of reality.

President Truman wanted the United Nations to offer the world an organization that course respond to aggression and restore peace. Bradley relays the message that the United States and all who espouse freedom have sought and found their advocate:

Against a tyranny which understands only force, the United Nations has no recourse but to resort to the use of arms. The fact that free nations were able to meet aggression with armed resistance has established the United Nations as a world power - - a power for freedom, potentially stronger than any single nation, with a single dedication to the higher principles of humanity.¹⁸

While the enemy makes war, the United States and the United Nations defend others.

Armed forces of the United Nations are now engaged in their first hard-fought battles for the enforcement of peace....There was hope and there is still hope, that if free men resist strongly the first open and overt armed aggression, perhaps we may have successfully stopped a whole planned series of aggressive acts.¹⁹

¹⁶Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 88.

¹⁷Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 89.

¹⁸Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 87.

¹⁹Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 88.

The reality of the current conflict is that the free nations of the world, represented by the United Nations, did not chose to enter into conflict. The decision was motivated by ideals of justice and freedom:

Resisting aggression in Korea is not an isolated and unrelated action. It is the culmination of a series of actions that brings to the side of free men the tremendous force of accumulated decision.²⁰

For Bradley, reality is that armed force was not the original decision of free world leaders. They had formed a policy that was resistant to aggression. The real reason the world has been reduced to the state of war in Korea rests with the communist ideology not the free nations.

This resolution to stand and fight is not a departure from the free world's policy of no aggression, no provocation for aggression, and no preventive war. The resolution to stand and fight simply says; we believe that communists and free peoples can live in the world without war, but if communists insist that only one or the other can survive, then we are determined that, with God's help, it shall be the free people.²¹

What American with a historical perspective could miss the ancestral voice of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death"? In this two-valued perspective, liberty and death are the only options presented with liberty as the only American option.

Sacrifice is a cost of freedom. All great struggles demand sacrifice of their participants and sacrifice is a powerful force for identification. Then, Bradley tells of the President's initiatives to provide the needed resources. The numbers are staggering, millions in manpower and billions in dollars, yet he assures the audience that the President has "outlined the economic and financial

²⁰Bradley, "Detroit Rotary Club Speech" 88.

²¹Bradley, "Detroit Rotary Club Speech" 91.

controls”²² necessary to support the United Nations. The expenses to date have been justified and have produced proven results. The reality is that the communists overwhelmed South Korean forces and the piecemeal forces had to be sent quickly to help their defense. He claims it to be the first “successful piecemeal commitment of armed forces”²³ against an attacking enemy in history.

The dividends are real:

From a military viewpoint we have seen the accomplishment of a miracle in Korea. Because Americans exercised the strong and vigorous leadership which the free world looked for, the armed forces of the united Nations were able to hold 1250 square miles of beachhead, turn the tide of battle, and take the offensive.²⁴

He is quick to point out to the audience that the United States has not in the past nor does it want in the future to repeat the piecemeal commitment of forces against an opposing force. Unfortunately we still had not learned the full lessons of World War II. He brings this point home specifically about Korean and any communist aggression:

The heroic fighting against tremendous odds has pointed up the great lesson of 1950 - - a lesson we might have drawn from the accumulation of events since 1945 that when and if we mobilize and apply greater military force than the communists, we win. If we don't, we lose.²⁵

The lessons of Clausewitz on the importance of mass had been validated in World War II. Simply put, the superior force tends to win battles and win them decisively.

²²Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 89.

²³Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 89.

²⁴Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 89.

²⁵Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 90.

Chairman Bradley underscores the value of freedom in remarks about our free press covering his speech. He draws a distinction between the flow of information in free nations versus those who were not: “The rest of the story is by now familiar to all of the free world, thanks to the complete and courageous reporting of the military battles by the members of the press.”²⁶ The press has more than a vital role in reporting the great contest; it has a vital stake in the triumph of freedom. This same theme will arise later in a speech by General Colin Powell. The remark also challenges the larger audience to become and remain informed concerning this and other military operations through the press. His remarks downplay the traditional adversary relationship between the press and the military.

The final reality that Bradley shares with the audience is that Korea is not an isolated manifestation of communist aggression. It is synecdochical, a local expression of a global conflict. Though war has not broken out in Europe, forward deployed forces of the United States and other North Atlantic Treaty signatories along with other nations of the world have been alerted to the significance represented by Korea:

The 12 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have drawn from the lesson of Korea the urgency for vigorous preparation. There will be no excuse if we do not cease our complacent plodding to accomplish more quickly a spirited preparedness.²⁷

He calls upon the audience to share the larger responsibilities of the nation. The challenge is to look beyond Korea to an expanded world view that post dates the isolationism of pre-World War II

²⁶Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 90.

²⁷Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 90.

politics. The United States has assumed the role of world leader and must assume the responsibilities the role demands. In the drama of assuming responsibility he turns to a metaphor to make his point and to further exhort the audience to support the national security agenda of the President: “The sleeping giant of free world strength has been aroused and has shaken off the wishful dream, to face the reality that we must be prepared.”²⁸

Responsibility cannot be met by appeasement. Communism no longer lives under the mask of illusion. Gone is the myth of communist ambitions as it “went one step further than it had ever gone before”²⁹ by initiating its attacks in Korea:

In the battle of Korea - - where our soldiers stood, fought, and retreated to stand and fight again - - communism has shed even its pretense of peaceful intention, and stood fully revealed as a tyrannical military power bent on the destruction of free nations.³⁰

The communists’ dependence “on military force cannot be ignored.”³¹ The events of Korea have “sounded the full alarm” as to the calculating nature of communism and those that resort to its methods. The awaking to reality has left us with a burden, the duty to preserve freedom. It is a burden that requires constant decision and necessary action. The time for talk and wishful thinking has passed and the burden must be accepted. The metaphor of sacrifice seems to capture his intended message “take up your cross and follow me.” Thus, the General invites his audience to

²⁸Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 88.

²⁹Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 87.

³⁰Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 87.

³¹Bradley, “Detroit Rotary Club Speech” 88.

accept the burdens of a global struggle that stretches from the Brandenburg Gate to the Korean front. Those making national security policy have already acted on requirements to assure the nation's security needs are met. What is needed is an equal commitment to service by ordinary American citizens at home.

Rotary Club Speech: Conclusions

General Bradley functions as spokesman for the decisions of others. Much like the cheerleader who represents the team and shares the field, his messages are customized versions of team objectives. His speech contrasts the variety of illusory hopes with the reality of sacrifice and struggles. He presents a manichean world of good and evil, freedom and slavery, light and dark. His message is a transcendent one, almost a secular religion.

Chapter Summary

General Bradley has split his God terms dialectically between myth and reality in each of the two speeches. This rhetorical distinction allows him to express the national goal as an acceptable shift from an isolationist world view to the internationalist view held by the administration he serves. He invites his audience to join in a global moral struggle. Both audiences are called upon to accept the change to an internationally focused national security policy. For the National Guard that acceptance is expressed in changes to training and planning for new wartime roles. Changes are expressed in the mundane bureaucratic language of a messenger on a mission. The Detroit Rotary Club audience is asked to shoulder the burdens of added financial costs, staying informed through the press and serving abroad if called to do so. The Devil terms of war and communism are

synonymous in the sense that each demands the aggressive use of military force. The God terms of freedom, service, and sacrifice become the watchwords of the doctrine of communist containment.

The Chairman is obviously constrained to speak to the policies of President Truman which specifically are in support of the United Nations and an international policy of involvement rather than isolationism. Rhetorically he is a baseline figure upon which to judge whether other chairmen will speak in a bureaucratic statement of facts or if they will be able to more fully develop their own rhetorical style. Thus far in the study the less powerful speaker does not have a voice independent of those to whom he is subordinated. Bradley is entrenched in what Burke would label a tragedy because there are no mitigating terms to soften the conflict between the polar extremes of freedom versus communism. General Earle Wheeler is the next speaker whose discourse will allow a comparison of the rhetoric between two speakers who have each addressed audiences during open conflict with a communist opponent.

CHAPTER 4

CLUSTER ANALYSIS: GENERAL EARLE G. WHEELER SPEECHES

Overview

The decade of the 1960s was a volatile one in the history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The original legislative intent when creating the Chairman position was to rotate the position among the three major services. During the decade of the 1950s four Chairs followed the sequential pattern of rotation, Army, Navy, Air Force back to Army. The 1960s, however, was the sole domain of Army generals as three different Army generals successively occupied the position as Chair. During the 1950s the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman had a modest role as spokesperson in the legitimation of the American foreign policy. In the 1960s, however, consensus over American military policy was fragmented. This uncertainty is reflected in the Chairman's rhetoric and it ultimately affected the nature and purpose of the office itself.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech: Content and Purpose

No generation has been without dissenters but the mid 1960s and early 1970s clearly were unique for the sheer volume of protest. The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s had pioneered the protest march and popularized mass demonstration. These demonstrations created the model for the anti-war and anti-draft protests of the 1960s. On campus after campus, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs were expelled, American flags burned, and protests against the war spilled over into local issues. Even for loyalists, the military behavior was troubling. President

Eisenhower had federalized National Guard forces to ensure safe passage for black students seeking admission to Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. A similar challenge to American civil rights was played out in June of 1963 on the campus of the University of Alabama. Governor George Wallace defiantly blocked entry of two black students after which President Kennedy federalized National Guard forces to allow Vivian Malone and James Hood to enter and enroll at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. These incidents, though seemingly resolved on the side of justice, set a troubling and divisive precedent. The military exercise of a domestic police function troubled both conservative and liberal Americans.

The executive branch treated the military as an irresponsible stepchild. President John F. Kennedy and his Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, sent a clear message of their lack of confidence in the military establishment when they limited access of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to high level discussions of national security in favor of appointing Retired Army General Maxwell D. Taylor as a special military advisor to the President. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army General Lyman Lemnitzer (October 1, 1960 to September 30, 1962) became the first single term chairman in the history of the position. General Maxwell Taylor replaced General Lemnitzer on October 1, 1962, to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff upon his recall to active duty. He served a single term as Chairman and then assumed the post of Ambassador to South Vietnam on July 2, 1964 and oversaw the buildup of American forces in that country.

General Earle Wheeler became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff just six months prior to giving this speech in July 1964. The Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, had been

influential in streamlining the Department of Defense since his appointment. Though only the Chairman for approximately six months, General Wheeler focused his remarks on his role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a general understanding of the functions of the office and upon Secretary McNamara's reform initiatives within the Department of Defense, which he characterized as an effort to improve the quality of military advice on matters of national security.

General Wheeler made this address to the Princeton Club of Washington, D.C. in January 1965. The club is open to all alumni of Princeton University and Princeton parents and had been in existence eighty-nine years in 1965. This audience no doubt had members who held high-level government positions within the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency and Wall Street. As Ivy League Alums, many in the audience were among the established power elite.

His purpose is to offer a benevolent tutorial to an audience he recognizes as generally well informed. The tutorial centers on the evolutionary nature of both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the office of Secretary of Defense. He specifically reflects on recent changes initiated by the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, who sought to bring the scientific model of inquiry and efficiency to national security plans and decisions.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

Throughout the speech, Wheeler's God term is "relationship" which represents the presence of community defined by cluster terms subordinate, formal and duties or roles. The Devil term is its nemesis, "private ambition" and attaches to terms such as violation, disunity and destruction. The weight of the presentation centers on the audience coming to an understanding of the sense of

community born of the complex relationship military leaders share with other American institutions and their role as protector and servant of the American people.

Wheeler begins his discussion of the military leader's relationship in government affairs with constitutional foundation of the nation by asserting that of civilian control over the military remains unchanged (the community is intact). The fact that he must state it publically is an index of the uncertainty and suspicion of the times:

As you know, the military-political relationship in our nation is established by the Constitution, amplified by law and deeply rooted in custom, and is based on the principle of military subordination to political objective and to civil control.¹

The primary reason for the relationship is to ensure national security needs are met and the key military players are the Joint Chiefs:

The point at which the political-military relationships come into focus is in national security affairs. From the military side, the final responsibility in such relationships rests upon the senior professional in each military service and upon the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.²

The varied constituencies have separate and distinct relationships with the Chairman and the Joint Chiefs. The relationships with the President and Congress are the most formal while the relationship with the Secretary of Defense is the most flexibly defined. Wheeler clearly illustrates the flexibility of the Secretary to define relationships in the following observation that refers to the changes McNamara made within the Department of Defense:

¹Earle G. Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech," Addresses by Earle G. Wheeler, Vol II. (Washington, D.C.: n.p.) 7.

²Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech" 8.

I believe the changes could fairly be said to involve three things. First, the Secretary - - and this certainly was his prerogative - - took full command of the enterprise. He was and is the Boss. Second, he insisted on sound, orderly thinking. He wanted decisions to be based on good reasons, and he wanted an orderly organization within the Department and in the field. Third, the tempo of the development of national security objectives and the military structure to support them was stepped up significantly.³

General Wheeler leaves no doubt that Secretary McNamara is at the top of the hierarchy and possesses ultimate power to define the role of the Joint Chiefs. And his point calls attention to the fact that the next Secretary of Defense will have the same prerogative to define relationships, and that this is a formal institutional arrangement, not a whim of the administration or the present occupant of the office.

The General centers audience attention on the more formal structure that surrounds the President. The President holds the ultimate decision-making authority on issues of national security. Thus, advice flows upward to the Chief Executive from the Joint Chiefs at the President's request. Communication is initiated through a formal military request from the subordinate or by means of a direct summons from the President. Access is formally restricted by the President or his staff whose advice may flow through the intercessory action of the Secretary of Defense or the appropriate Service Secretary to the President. Thus, messages from the Chiefs are delivered indirectly and may be filtered by the intercessor. The National Security Council affords another medium through which advice can flow. Both civilian and military subject matter experts attend meetings and compete for the President's attention.

³Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech" 9.

The duties of the Joint Chiefs with the Congress are to facilitate Presidential decisions in national security matters. The Chairman when speaking before Congress will accurately represent the President's decisions for which Congressional funding is being requested. The Chairman or any other member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is required to provide candid responses to legislative questioning after the formal presentation concludes:

...the established procedure is for military representatives to present prepared statements before these Congressional committees, after which they are open to detailed questioning. The prepared statements cover the use to which the funds requested by the President will be put, and they do not go beyond the limits of Presidential decisions. In answer to direct questions, however, the military leader has no moral alternative to giving the Congress the same candid professional judgments that he has previously stated within the JCS or to the Secretary of Defense and the President.⁴

The relationship is based on custom whereby the subordinate presents advisory recommendations which inform but do not obligate the decision maker. Once the President or other senior makes a decision, the Chair and other members of the Joint Chiefs have two choices based in custom.

Just as the senior military leader owes his civilian superiors the full and forthright expression of his professional opinions, so does he also owe the acceptance of their final decisions, even though these may be contrary to his own judgment. The alternative, of course, is to request relief from responsibilities he cannot conscientiously assume.⁵

Wheeler clearly articulates the subordinate role of the military chieftain in a hierarchical structure. To speak freely in public the military professional would commit career suicide. Duty, security, and loyalty limit his constitutional right of freedom of expression. Upon entering service, the military

⁴Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech" 9.

⁵Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech" 8.

officer set aside his past life that afforded him the right to freedom of expression and commits in Burke's terms "symbolic suicide."⁶ The military officer agrees to speak in the muted voice of the messenger promoting the decisions of those elected or appointed over him.

"Relationships" strengthen the organization when individuals subordinate their personal goals to the common good. When individuals seek only their personal desires and "private ambitions" the organization is not well served. The Devil term of "private ambitions" is found only once in the text, but it is the most powerful antithesis to relationship, a surrogate term for community, which uses this Devil term in light of the Constitutional objective to subordinate the military to civilian control thus prescribing the military relationship with civilian rule:

"The primary objective is to prevent an individual or group from gaining control of military power to further private ambitions - - one of society's oldest problems."⁷ His expression emphasizes the negative aspects of private ambition. In the extreme such individuals would seek to usurp the Constitution and control nations. In overreaching to gain power the Chiefs would violate prescriptively established norms of behavior and endanger the community. Such power seeking would violate both Constitutional and long established custom. To extend one's power is to destroy relational reciprocity that allows the subordinate to voice his candid opinions until the final decision has been made. Speaking to the importance of balance in the relationship between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs he states:

⁶Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 41-42.

⁷Wheeler, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech" 7.

...the important point is that it is at the Secretary of Defense/Joint Chiefs of Staff level that military-political relationships must be balanced and effective. Otherwise, either the professional military voice is not heard enough or else it will be heard too much.⁸

An expression of private ambition would raise suspicions as to the veracity and usefulness of the Joint Chiefs of Staff advice. National security would be compromised.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech: Conclusions

National Security does not just happen but requires a range of resources and the sharing of ideas that shape the decisions in forming national security policies. The constitutional balance of power is preserved as the President with his layers of civilian and military advisors identify threats to national security and then determine strategic options to counter those threats. The President through various surrogates must then obtain the consent of Congress for funding to support his decisions. The national security policy structure thus depends on extensive organizational relationships and the need of checks and balances that the founders of the republic envisaged as a check to unlimited power. The Joint Chiefs, as subordinates to the varied constituencies they serve, need to know that their advice and recommendations have been given a fair hearing. The senior leaders need to be confident in the support of subordinates that policies will be fairly and accurately represented and implemented. The “relationship” is a covenant which binds each person to a role within an established protocol. The President possesses a transcendent voice in decisions of national security within the Executive Branch. His transcendence is checked and balanced by the Congress and the final judgement ultimately is based on the strength of the communal “relationship”

⁸Wheeler, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff Speech” 9.

within and between both Branches. The Devil term of “private ambitions” reflects a breaking of the covenant in vain self-serving actions. The fissure caused in the community creates a loss of balance between and among members of the relational community.

Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech: Content and Purpose

As the decade of the 1960's passed its mid-point, a war in Southeast Asia began to make Vietnam an American obsession. This conflict became the stimulus for contention throughout the nation. Battle scenes and reports of the Vietnam war were part of the nightly news. The lack of clear objectives or consistent success drew wide-ranging criticism from government and civilian dissenters to the war. The Tet Offensive in February of 1968, in which a nominal victory was reported as a major defeat by the United States press, coupled with President Johnson's decision (March 31, 1968) not to seek reelection further eroded support for the military. Loss of support drew the military into sharp focus as a scapegoat for the war. Virtually anyone in uniform became a target of dissent. Veterans returned home to chants of derision that included “baby killer”; they were spat upon and in general given a message that their service did not evoke gratitude. It was against these latter events that Chairman Wheeler would speak to the forty-third annual reunion of the 36th Infantry Division in Dallas, Texas, on August 31, 1968.

General Wheeler was beginning his third and final term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. During his World War II service he had served with the 36th Infantry Division which gave him a strong bond with the audience. The Chairman's remarks contain the reminiscences of a soldier who learned war under one set of rules but who now serves under new rules, in a new era.

While he affirms the military's service is of central importance, he notes that it must rethink its role and its message. In the comfortable surroundings of old soldiers who would understand his moments of pride and his words of lament, General Wheeler can be seen as taking the gloves off and risking the ire of his superiors. The speech tells of the accomplishments of military service and the problems created by politicians who make service more challenging. "Service" functions as a God term, with "costly," "accepted" and "goals" in the supporting cluster. "Threat" is the Devil term with agon terms of "communism," "Soviet Union" and "Vietnam."

Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

General Wheeler discusses the differences and similarities in service to the nation performed by the military from World War II to the present. He uses a synecdochical device featuring the exploits of the 36th Infantry Division to stand for military service as a whole during World War II.

Into five years and twenty days of World War II federal service, the 36th Infantry Division: (a) Undertook seven campaigns in four countries and endured 366 combat days in the process; (b) suffered in excess of 27, 000 casualties - the 3rd highest total of any US division; and, (c) produced fifteen (15) winners of the medal of honor.⁹

Such a distinguished record was won on a "bloody path" to victory which shows that service can be costly to those in the military. Wheeler offers leaders of all generations a lesson in the importance of timely military intervention. He speculates that, prior to World War II, the choices of the leaders made that path more costly in lives and materiel as the servant arrived late because leaders made poor decisions:

⁹Wheeler, "Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech" 211.

I conjecture that World War II probably could have been avoided if the capacity and will of the democratic nations to employ national military power had been made clearly evident in a timely fashion...For one reason or another, national leaders elected to let events run their course until war erupted.¹⁰

Poor political decisions span the space of time. In the Vietnam War, the military was placed in a double bind by those who understood war least, but had the authority to commit forces on behalf of the nation. Wheeler concern with the limited war, labeled a “strategic defense” in South Vietnam, created a mission that violated sound principles of war and placed the military’s service at risk of failure:

Implicit in my definition of war is the thesis that war is not a passive act; it must be dynamic. That is a war cannot be conducted defensively; strategically it must be prosecuted offensively if the war effort is to be successful.¹¹

Nonetheless the servant accepts the challenge. The military remains steadfast to its duty of service to the nation and its leaders. The politicians may be wrong in having sent the military to respond to crisis in this way, but the dutiful servant continues his work:

Our forces have achieved an unbroken string of victories which, in the aggregate, is something new in our military history. They won while they were learning. There were no Bladensburgs or Bull Runs.¹²

As the United States military in South Vietnam remains “unbeaten and unbeatable,”¹³ it reinforces its role as a worthy servant of freedom.

¹⁰Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 211.

¹¹Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 214.

¹²Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 215.

¹³Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 215.

The Chairman notes that service can be reduced and in matters of national security to levels that put the nation at risk. Politicians are calling for redeployment of forces “from the center of Europe” meant to support the North Atlantic Alliance.¹⁴ Wheeler contends that American forces are serving in the right place and provide a service essential to American security: “My words on NATO will be brief. We need the alliance and the alliance needs us, now more than ever.”¹⁵

Those who provide service to the nation care about the nation’s security needs even when it is “unable or unwilling to consider all the possibilities” of harm that awaits, a fact that is not always appreciated. The servant remains dutiful despite unrequited loyalty. The press, who reported the military’s victory during the Tet offensive in 1968 as a military loss, is cited as a group that has undermined the military and the faith of the civilian population in the United States armed forces:

Despite the torrents of words and pictures that have come from Vietnam, this war remains the least understood in our history. Americans, as they more fully understand the magnificent record of our armed forces in Vietnam, will accord these young men that full measure of respect and honor which is their due.¹⁶

The loss of national confidence in the military is Wheeler’s lament. The military is steadfast in its service to the nation even when people lack the will to support it or in light of poor decisions by politicians. Unwise choices remain despite his claims that he has always furnished “the President with the most realistic advice the JCS can develop.”¹⁷ He acknowledges that the President is not

¹⁴Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 212.

¹⁵Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 212.

¹⁶Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 215.

¹⁷Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 215.

obligated to follow advice, but believes our leaders are confused and the people are confused about what should be done: “We live in a dangerous world. But unlike World War II days, to many of our people the danger is not clear, what needs to be done is not obvious.”¹⁸ His concern is that the military’s service is mismanaged and misunderstood.

Service needs goals and ideals that provide an understanding of the character desired of the servant. Wheeler provides a synopsis of the character of the military he served in World War II and continues to serve in the Vietnam era:

I have argued, am arguing, and will argue, for an American military posture that is (1) Strong, but not belligerent; (2) too determined to be frightened and too strong to be defeated; and (3) unwavering, despite setbacks, disappointments and opposition in following the course we know is the right path to organize a stable and durable peace.¹⁹

Military service faces a new threat. The German threat of World War II has been supplanted by the global threat of communism. The Soviet Union represents the foremost communist threat based on comparative military strength. He states that there are “only two superpowers: The U.S. and the USSR.” The Soviet threat is not benign and defensive, but aggressive and intrinsically wicked. He points to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia as a demonstration that communism has not mellowed and remains imperial and totalitarian:

A...lesson which we must draw is that the Soviet Union will not, where it believes its vital interests to be at stake, refrain from a sudden and overwhelming application of military power despite any and all written and oral assurances to the contrary.”²⁰

¹⁸Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 211.

¹⁹Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 216.

²⁰Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 213.

Despite more pressing domestic needs, Soviet military power continues to mount and pose a threat to friend and foe alike:

Some might have truly believed that the Soviets are so concerned with meeting the consumer needs of their people that the brave new world is on us. Tragically, as we have seen this is not the case. The facts we face are (1) An increase of the Soviet ICBM force; (2) the appearance of a Soviet ABM system; (3) the continuing modernization of Russia's landpower; (4) the projection of Soviet seapower into the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean and (5) the demonstrated capacity and will of the Soviet Union to employ force with power and precision even against one of their own allies.²¹

The Soviets are not the only concern to free nations; China and Vietnam represent the threat of communism as well. Wheeler downplays the then current theme of multiple forms of communism:

Whether communist power is now 'polycentric' as opposed to being 'monolithic,' I find little strategic difference. I don't want the United States to be squeezed to death by one octopus or several octopi.²²

To illustrate further the concerns of the United States, consider the threat communism poses in tiny South Vietnam. The objective of the United States is to preserve the nation of South Vietnam so that it may coexist with the North Vietnamese communist government. The North Vietnamese objectives are the "overthrow" of the current government of South Vietnam and unification under communist control. They will do this by any means possible. As true communists, they first tried military force, but intervention by the United States prevented their military from being successful. Despite their battlefield losses, they have not given up but shifted to a new and not totally truthful strategy. The threat of communism is in its devilish persistence and viral mutations of action:

²¹Wheeler, "Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech" 212.

²²Wheeler, "Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech" 212.

The situation today finds our enemy attempting to (a) Gain political and psychological mileage out of ‘lulls’ in combat - - which I attribute directly to his weakened offensive potential and (b) attempting, alternatively, in the face of superior firepower and spoiling tactics, to create an impression of power by mounting psychologically-conceived and militarily-futile attacks on “prestige” objectives - - and suffering staggering losses in the process.’²³

Wheeler is no doubt referring to the heavy military losses the North Vietnamese received during the Tet Offensive early in 1968.

Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech: Conclusions

Wheeler, addressing a sympathetic audience, speaks of the importance of past and present military service to the nation. That service has not always been easy, appreciated, or well thought out in recent history, but the military has accepted the mission and served the nation well. Wheeler supports Constitutional safeguards that place ultimate decisions concerning military service under civilian control. He laments the lack of understanding of the principles of war and an unwillingness to make full use of military advice. . He sees the unpredictable nature of the threat of communism that attacks friends, refuses to live at peace with a neighboring nation and builds ever more massive arsenals, while their people starve. These do not represent Wheeler’s concept of service. His view of service will accept the costs and burdens necessary to insure the nation survives and prospers.

Chapter Summary

Both speeches illustrate the Chairman’s concern for the image of the military. In the first speech there is the perception of the military at odds with its civilian leadership as General Wheeler seeks to

²³Wheeler, “Situation During World War II Compared With Today Speech” 214.

explain the military-political “relationship.” The traditional “relationship” espoused would play well to a civilian audience. He uses “relationship” as the God term to illustrate a properly functioning governmental bureaucracy. Like the power of God in creation, relationships put everything in motion and in the right place at the right time to the right end. The military is not the highest order of creation, but is an agent of godly purpose.

There is within Wheeler’s two speeches a very dramatic shift in the rhetorical strategy with which he represents the military. From the benignly subservient image presented as he explained the operations of the Joint Chiefs to the civilians of the Princeton Club, the Chairman moves to the powerful but misunderstood military his speech to the 36th Infantry Division reunion portrays. Chairman Wheeler demonstrates more willingness to take rhetorical license within his speeches than did the more bureaucratic General Bradley.

Both speeches illustrate the potential for subordinates not only to have to accept policies that they would not openly advise, but then to become susceptible for blame if those policies fail or cause strain in national strategic policy. The subordinate risks public scorn for failed policies not necessarily of his choosing. The label of scapegoat is applied to such circumstances. Burke supports this observation:

Periods of social crisis occur when an authoritative class, whose purpose and ideals had been generally considered as representative of the total society’s purposes and ideals, becomes considered as antagonistic. Their class character, once felt to be a culminating part of the whole, is now felt to be a divisive part of the whole.²⁴

²⁴Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form 26.

General Wheeler's remarks to the 36th Infantry division seek to justify the military as obedient, but are skeptical of its current mission even as risk of blame for failed policies from which a scapegoat may emerge. The decision has been made, the time for questioning has ended. Ultimately, the subordinate professional military leader obeys the ethical orders and directives handed down for execution in the hopes that history will be kind.

General Wheeler recognizes the same constraints as those experienced by Bradley and his rhetorical strategy in the presentation to the Princeton Club reflects the same bureaucratic delivery of facts. His rhetorical strategy is constrained to reflect support for those in positions of leadership over him. Wheeler's strategy shifts in the 36th Division speech when he on the one hand confirms the subordination of his role to civilian authority, but on the other shares his personal disagreement with the policies in force.

His comments illustrate the frustration of the less powerful speaker who is ultimately constrained to accept the decisions of others. His break with the custom of not publically indicating personal displeasure with a decision occurred before an audience keenly aware of being sent to combat to fulfill missions that they would have personally opposed. His strategy seems to be one of making repairs to his own image when he tells this audience that he has given his best advice, but it has been ignored. Both Bradley and Wheeler were constrained by a structure that limited their ability to change the rules. Their rhetoric reveals a reactionary tenor rather than that of one who can pro-actively determine the course of future decisions. This is further evidence of the restrictions placed on their positions.

Wheeler's rhetoric, when viewed through the frames of Burke's dramatism, shares the same polar tragedy as that of Bradley. There is an unspoken yet assumed audience question that fuels the drama and has surfaced in the discourse of the two Chairmen. That question is: "Are we safe?" Which establishes the dualism of evil antagonist versus good foil. Each speaker addresses this question in different ways. Bradley assures the National Guard that they will receive the equipment and training needed to complete their assigned missions against a future threat. His Rotary Club speech seeks to allay public fears by citing the alliances that have been established to defend freedom from tyranny. Wheeler's answer to the Princeton Club is shaped in relationships that follow the rules versus the individualism of private ambition. In his address to the 36th Division, his remarks reveal that service to freedom can thwart the advance of communism. There is an underlying consistency in the obligation to answer that question.

General George Brown will be the next Chairman examined and his rhetoric will offer a look at the immediate post-Vietnam era and offer insight as to how the Chairman elected to speak to or ignore the immediate past. His is a period of no active conflict, but is significant in that it occurs in the aftermath of a most unpopular American incursion on foreign soil.

CHAPTER 5

CLUSTER ANALYSIS: GENERAL GEORGE S. BROWN SPEECHES

Overview

The purpose of this chapter, as with the two previous analysis chapters, is to perform a Burkean cluster analysis of two speeches delivered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General George S. Brown. One speech was delivered to the Clovis, New Mexico, Chamber of Commerce before a civilian audience on October 17, 1975. The second speech was presented at an Armed Forces Day dinner in New York City on May 15, 1976, to the Military Order of World Wars and represents his delivery before a military audience. The speeches are representative of the Chair's post-Vietnam addresses. They reflect the doubt and malaise of the nation at large, its deep unease over the defeat in Vietnam, and some tentative attempts at military reform. Universal military training and the broadly representative civilian army (or citizen soldier) are mere memories. The ideas of restoration through modernization and volunteerism were the underlying theme of military discourse during the mid-1970s.

Chamber of Commerce Speech: Content and Purpose

The United States had experienced the unprecedented removal of the President and Vice-President. President Richard M. Nixon and his Vice-President Spiro T. Agnew won re-election in 1972 with sixty percent of the popular vote and the electoral votes of every state but Massachusetts. Vice-President Agnew resigned from office in October of 1973 on charges of bribery, conspiracy and

tax evasion.¹ President Nixon's resignation followed in August of 1974 for his involvement in covering up information regarding the Democrat Party Headquarters break-in at the Watergate Hotel. An appointed Vice-President, in the person of Gerald R. Ford, ascended to the highest office in the land with the unenviable task of restoring American confidence in the integrity of the Presidency and of government officials in general. One of his first acts as president did not do much to help public confidence when he issued a full pardon to President Nixon and "provoked a storm of protests."² This weakened his abbreviated term as President and damaged his efforts to seek an elected term. The nation was further shaken in April of 1975 when North Vietnam launched a successful offensive in South Vietnam toppling the government long supported politically and militarily by the United States. The fall of Saigon ushered in the communist unification of Vietnam. Less than six months after Saigon fell to communist control, General George S. Brown made this presentation to the Chamber of Commerce in Clovis, New Mexico, a town adjacent to Cannon Air Force Base, on October 17, 1975. General Brown had entered office on July 1, 1974, and thus had served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff approximately fifteen months at the time of this speech.

Chairman Brown charts two futures for the military. One is decline and danger. The other is security and strength. His purpose is to raise awareness and seek reversal of a worrisome decline in the nation's security posture. He argues that without such a reversal every citizen will be affected by unconsidered consequences. He has established the Soviet Union as the strawman against which to

¹Marquis Childs, "The Agnew Case," Encyclopedia Yearbook 1974 (New York: Grolier Incorporated, 1974) 20.

²Robert J. Huckshorn, "Nixon's 5 1/2 Years in the White House," Encyclopedia Yearbook 1975 (New York: Grolier Incorporated, 1975) 31.

establish the severity of the decline in American military forces. Brown's discussion of the future of the military as having the potential to move in one of two directions, establishes "decline" as the Devil term and "strength" as the God term.

Chamber of Commerce Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

In recognition of the probable indifference of an audience to military matters after Vietnam, General Brown quickly challenges the civilian members of the Chamber of Commerce to consider the economic impact of a loss in military strength. If the Soviet Union were to surpass the United States in military power, the consequences might be grave. Strength, security and prosperity are associated terms throughout the speech:

Should this occur, vital US long-range interests could be jeopardized, and not just US defense interests. We sometimes forget that US commercial, agricultural, and financial interests - those pursuits that make up the day-to-day activity of many Americans - could be drastically changed if this country could not protect its overseas interests and have free access to international markets.³

He makes it clear that whether you are selling grain in overseas markets or dependant on oil from overseas, much is riding on an adequate amount of military strength.

The adequacy of military forces is proportional to the amount of money a nation is capable of and willing to spend on its security needs. The underlying decision is pragmatic, "Is the amount being spent equal to the level of security sought?" This basic economic principle applies to the military as it does to any other business decision: "To play an active role in the world requires a strong military, which, in turn, requires an adequate budget in real terms as opposed to continuous budget

³George S. Brown, "Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech," Addresses and Statements by General George S. Brown, USAF (Washington, D.C.: n.p.) 93.

reductions.”⁴ As the nation looks at the missions assigned to the American military and the real advances of the Soviet military power, there are both budgetary and diplomatic options available to maintain the strength national security demands. Both options must be used to avoid Soviet domination and continuation of a runaway arms race that the United States cannot afford to lose:

If these Soviet efforts are not constrained by negotiation, or balanced by major US arms initiative, the Soviets could attain unacceptable advantage over the United States in strategic nuclear forces.⁵

The Soviets are not standing still in their efforts to build upon their superpower status. Brown mentions the Soviet Union’s record of compliance with a range of treaties. It has ignored or openly violated arms control agreements. One such treaty is the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I). The talks were supposed to limit the size of United States and Soviet nuclear arsenals. Since signing this agreement, the Soviets have shown little intention of honoring the limits to which each side was pledged. Brown quoted a report of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, “It is apparent that in spite of SALT I and a potential SALT II, the Soviet Union has not decided to forego an aggressive strategic arms race.”⁶ Brown reports the President’s assertion that the nation must be prepared to increase spending on readiness:

...Congress and the American people must realize that, unless agreement is achieved, I will have no choice but to recommend to the Congress an additional two to three billion dollars for strategic weapon programs in the current and coming fiscal years.⁷

⁴Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 94.

⁵Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 95.

⁶Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 95.

⁷Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 96.

The alternative to military might, diplomacy, will be practiced constantly, but its outcome is uncertain. For this reason, the United States has to be realistic in assessing the needs for an adequate military force to deter potential Soviet aggression against America and its allies. Therefore, Chairman Brown offers a mathematical comparison of both strategic and conventional forces of each nation. He quantitatively compares numerical differences in force size and major weapon systems between the United States and the Soviet Union: “As you can see, we are doing our best to make good use of the resources the American people provide us - - but the challenges we face give no cause for undue optimism.”⁸ He notes the burden of treaties obligating the United States to provide military forces in defense of “forty-one nations.”⁹ To Brown there is a clear need for additional expenditures, but they must be targeted in a prudent manner not a tank-for-tank, missile-for-missile strategy that would be ruinous to the American economy:

I do mean that we must continue to develop and maintain military forces adequate to deter an attack on the United States and our allies, and forces adequate to contribute to a number of regional military balances throughout the world.¹⁰

He extends his arguments against budget cuts to the nation’s international role as freedom’s leader. “The preservation of our military power is indispensable...to our inescapable role as the leader of the party of liberty in the world arena.”¹¹ The nation’s broader alliances cannot be ignored. For the sake of the nation and its allies, budget cuts cannot continue.

⁸Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 98.

⁹Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 98.

¹⁰Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 98.

¹¹Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 99.

A major factor in budget reductions is public opinion. Unlike the isolationist view to which Bradley spoke, public opinion in 1975 “endorses an active role in the world.”¹² There is a notable shift in public opinion, from an isolationist world view to an international world view sought by President Truman. The budget challenges stem from a public that lacks a realistic understanding of the cost of military strength to support the desired level of global activity:

...according to a number of recent public opinion polls, about one-third of our adult population and over half of our opinion leaders - businessmen, academicians, Congressmen, and government officials - believe the defense budget should be cut.¹³

General Brown understands that in “a world rendered small by today’s technology,”¹⁴ America cannot turn back to isolationism. He understands the need for military strength to maintain a stable international community requires budget decisions that are not his to make. The American people through their elected representatives will decide how successfully America will play its role as the “leader of the party of liberty in the world arena.”¹⁵

Chamber of Commerce Speech: Conclusions

The Speech to the Clovis Chamber of Commerce captures the God term of strength and the Devil term of decline. A nation cannot expect miracles to overcome poor decisions. The strength of the force is declining as more and more people turn from their obligation through a lack of caring or

¹²Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 94.

¹³Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 94.

¹⁴Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 99.

¹⁵Brown, “Clovis Chamber of Commerce Speech” 99.

simple indifference. The American people are philosophically open to globalism, but do not yet demonstrate the practical demands participation demands. The philosophy of military strength is understood, but they are missing the pragmatic reality that strength costs money. Those who assign missions must always provide resources to accomplish those missions. The military has been assigned a mission of strength, but not been given adequate resources to be strong. American military strength cannot be maintained in a climate of unchecked Soviet military growth coupled with American military decline.

Military Order of World Wars Speech: Content and Purpose

Internationally, President Ford followed the lead of former President Nixon by voicing support for a shift in defense policy. Each called for limiting American defense spending by sharing “global responsibilities with like-minded allies”¹⁶ Nationally, The United States was fully engaged in celebrating its Bicentennial at the time this speech was given. The year was filled with revolutionary war re-enactments, fireworks displays, televising of historic sites and musical tributes to the nation. Government leaders gave speeches with messages of the proud history of the nation. Among those proud to be citizens of the United States were the members of the Military Order of World Wars to whom General Brown spoke on May 15, 1976. This organization was founded in January, 1919, in Detroit, Michigan. One of the chief proponents of the organization was General John J. Pershing. He stated at the 1926 convention of the organization, “In the future there will be many forces trying

¹⁶Robert J. McMahon, “Helping Others, Help Ourselves,” Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History, ed. Martin Medhurst and H.W. Brands (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000) 241.

to destroy this freedom, so band together and dedicate yourselves to protecting that freedom you have so valiantly won on the battlefield.’¹⁷ The group’s ideal is “It is nobler to serve than to be served.” Their measure of fulfillment of this ideal was to “Take time to serve your country.’¹⁸ Given that the United States was founded through service on the colonial battlefields and that preservation of a free nation called generation upon generation to serve the nation in time of war, a presentation to an organization that reveres such service would seem to provide an ideal audience for a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General George S. Brown addressed this organization of former military officers in New York, New York.

The Bicentennial offered the rhetor a backdrop against which to display the nation and its military. His comments celebrate the nation and by extension the military through two centuries of successful life. The speech is epideictic, praising the military, the nation and its ideals. “Liberty” is his God term and is clustered with challenge, honor, and obedience. In juxtaposition, the devil term of “dissent” is associated with fragmentation, loss, and defeat.

Military Order of World Wars Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

General Brown partners the military with the American people to convey unity of purpose in a time of national celebration. The observance of two hundred years of history dedicated to the liberating principle of equality is enviable to many in the world with no such unifying national purpose:

¹⁷Military Order of World Wars, 29 Nov. 2002 <<http://www.militaryorder.org>>.

¹⁸Ibid.

It is fitting and proper that we honor America in this 200th anniversary of her birthday - - a country so dedicated to the defense and preservation of the basic rights of the individual that she commands the loyalty and support of her own people, and captures the imagination and respect of peoples in countries not so dedicated to individual rights.¹⁹

In synecdochical form the military becomes illustrative of the whole. The military is united in the causes of the nation with a willingness to collectively respond to the challenges of the nation.

There is unity within the military: “Today, the US Armed Forces, qualitatively across the board, are the best equipped, the best trained, the most experienced, and the best led in the world.”²⁰ The military is unified with the nation: “We are not an end in ourselves, but simply a means to the end of protecting and preserving your national security.”²¹ The military is unified internationally: “They are part of a defense network that enables many smaller nations to remain within the framework of a Free World.”²²

The military and the nation subscribe to unifying principles, “patriotism, professionalism, and integrity.”²³ To the military, patriotism is loyalty to the nation; professionalism is loyalty to the task; and integrity is loyalty to others and self. His audience of former military officers with war time experience embrace these principles in continued service to the nation.

¹⁹George S. Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech,” Addresses and Statements by General George S. Brown, USAF (Washington, D.C.: n.p.) 148-152.

²⁰Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 148.

²¹Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 148.

²²Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 148.

²³Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 149.

America was uniquely established on the principle of the “intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual.”²⁴ The Bicentennial punctuates the enduring nature of such a unifying concept:

For the first time in the history of mankind, the preservation of liberty was made the key objective of government - - not power, not privilege or wealth, not merely protection or security, and not empire or dominion - - but, deliberately the preservation of liberty.²⁵

The vision of national unity predates the Constitution and was realized upon the acceptance of personal risk. Brown shares John Hancock’s reply to General Washington’s concerns over the potential destruction of the properties of patriots in Boston to illustrate that risk is associated with those who unify in support of the cause of liberty.

It is true, Sir, nearly all of the property I have in the world is in houses and other real estate in the town of Boston; but if the liberties of our country require their being burnt to ashes - issue the order for that purpose immediately.²⁶

The “faith and the spirit” of “Founding Fathers” is a national treasure to be preserved as the first defining act of unification in service to the nation.

Dissent is a concern of General Brown. While the Chairman does not overtly make this claim, his message is that not all Americans seek or embrace the spirit of unity the nation celebrates. To this end, dissent is a code word for those who were in opposition to the Vietnam War and who still blame the government in general and the military specifically for the problems of that era. The radical actions such as campus demonstrations and even violence against those in service to the

²⁴Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 150.

²⁵Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 150.

²⁶Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 152.

nation are recent memories. University administrators acted to remove military training programs like the Reserve Officers Training Program (ROTC) from campus. Those who left the nation in resistance to military service signaled their lack of support for the republic's process of dissent through established channels of our representative form of government. The amnesty program offered by President Ford gave legitimacy to both the message and the actions of dissent.

Support for those whose illegal acts were ultimately rewarded would resonate in the mind of a military leader such as Brown who stands for those who have answered the call to duty, men and women who trained, fought and thousands died at the request of the nation. The military question that surrounded Vietnam ultimately was, "Why are we the bad guys?" This question did not get any easier when the words signifying that the flag, which draped the coffin of a loved one, was provided by "a grateful nation." Such words rang hollow against the protest demonstrations and various acts of violence and sabotage. Those considered traitors to the nation, like Jane Fonda, moved about the country as voices of dissent against the military and expressing their support of the nation's enemy, North Vietnam.

For General Brown, the active protest of the Vietnam War may have subsided, but the aftermath is still quite evident. Universities did not accept military training back on campus after the conflict ended. The image of the military was tainted and the negatives of dissent were still being felt as military budgets, equipment levels and manpower had declined below pre-Vietnam levels.

The General was expressing concern for the sense of patriotism necessary for the defense of the nation. He was calling those dissenting voices back to the Constitution to remind them that they

not the military had elected the officials who dispatched the military to a war in Vietnam. He reminded them of the need for civil discourse to decide national security policies and not the mob rule and unlawful conduct that can eventually topple governments. Brown makes an interesting observation of dissent being a concern to the founders of the nation. They were concerned that “in times of peace” a military overthrow of the government was possible. Those who framed the Constitution created a government with checks and balances to reduce the possibility of militant attacks on the nation from an internal threat. Neither Brown nor the framers of the Constitution envisioned similar uprisings in times of war.

Brown recognizes that dissent can be a positive force in society to help overcome injustice and advance the nation to the ideals of the founders. The voice of dissent has been raised on varied issues throughout the nation’s history, one of which is equal rights. That voice sought unity within the United States and a commitment to change. Though the task is not yet complete, as an agency of the government, the military has responded to the voice of dissent:

We are still working to provide equal opportunity for our citizens. The Armed Forces have helped in this respect by providing social mobility, skills, and self-respect for many of our young people.²⁷

Military Order of World Wars Speech: Conclusions

The speech celebrates two hundred years of national unity in full recognition that dissent was possible, even likely. The Bicentennial could present a rhetorical challenge to the epideictic speaker whose Devil term is dissent and whose God term, unity, honors a nation born in dissent. Brown

²⁷Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 152.

avoided direct reference to disloyalty to the nation. The nation was founded on individual liberty. Those with whom I disagree may be “erroneous” and unaware of “reality,” but the nation stands unified and ready to preserve each individual’s right to have and express an opinion. National unity was preserved from external dissent by the constitutional provision to raise and support a military force that provides for the common defense. It preserved unity by placing the military under civilian control. In so doing, the military was given presence and standing within the nation it is sworn to defend.

Chapter Summary

The efforts of George Brown can be viewed as that of a “muted apologist.” He consistently places the military role in the present and future needs of the nation and does not dwell on the past especially the recent past of Vietnam. Both presentations were given within approximately a year of the fall of Saigon, which signaled the end of the Vietnam War, and yet in both speeches he brushes that conflict aside as a mere point of reference. The conflict in Vietnam is a mere benchmark from which to gauge force size differences. His remarks speak to the size of the force before the Vietnam War in comparison to the current size of the force. In the speech to the Clovis Chamber of Commerce, he never mentions this war in any other context despite the lapse of less than six months since the fall of Saigon had marked the official end of American involvement in Vietnam. His presentation to the former military officers in New York held a brief comment about the “long and difficult war in Vietnam.”²⁸

²⁸Brown, “Military Order Of World Wars Speech” 148.

Chairman Brown expresses an enduring sense of patriotic nostalgia. He has seen a more prosperous time in military service when forces were larger and weapons more abundant. He has seen worse days but he avoids talking about them. Instead he uses both speeches to go “Back to the Future.” He is at a seminal point in history for both the nation and the military. He speaks to what the nation is doing well and specifically attaches military virtues of unity and strength. In a rhetorical sense the two speeches represent a sense that the military needs to catch up and tune into the nation. The warrior has returned home, but is only vaguely familiar with those that greet him and they with him. With no past, he can only construct a discourse of the present and the future.

As a muted voice he affirms all the more dramatically the dualism of the previously considered chairmen. The same basic question concerning safety remains, but a tension of distrust spurs his rhetoric to point to the external threat as one that is gaining strength while the foil (America) weakens its ability to defend against an aggressive threat.

Brown’s twist on the drama is that it carries a message of momentary security teetering on the edge of impending doom. The drama has less certainty of future military strength than the assurance provided by Bradley and Wheeler. He rhetorically diverts the potential negative outcome from the possibility of military failures to publically supported national security policies that accept a less prepared and capable military force. He has moved the conflict between good and evil into the board rooms, halls of Congress and even public opinion as to whether or not the nation will ultimately empower the military to provide adequate levels of national defense. His remarks are pragmatic and pointed.

General Brown's rhetoric is nonetheless as constrained as the previous two chairmen. He is admitting that he has little power to decide his fate and those of the men and women in military service. His remarks carry the same message of the reactionary who must await the move of those with the power to decide before he is able to act.

General Colin Powell will follow and will represent the first of those entering office after the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill which strengthened the Chairman's position within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell will speak to the beginning and end of the Desert Shield/Desert Storm action.

CHAPTER 6

CLUSTER ANALYSIS: GENERAL COLIN L. POWELL SPEECHES

Overview

This chapter will continue tracing the evolution of the rhetoric of the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Colin L. Powell is an axial figure in the transformation of the office, and his Chairmanship was powerfully affected by two factors. He was the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to enter office under the provisions of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill of 1986, a factor that strengthened his position by making him superior to the service chiefs. During his tenure, the Gulf War was fought to a successful conclusion, an event that rehabilitated the image of the American military and enhanced Powell's personal prestige as well as the public perception of the centrality and importance of the Chairmanship.

Two speeches have been selected as representative of Powell's mission and message. The first, "American Legion Speech," was delivered on August 30, 1990, in Indianapolis, Indiana, before a military audience. The second "National Newspaper Association Speech," was delivered on March 15, 1991, in Washington, D.C. to the National Newspaper Association, a powerful and influential civilian audience.

American Legion Convention Speech: Content and Purpose

General Colin L. Powell was born in Harlem and grew up in the Bronx to parents that had immigrated to the United States from the (then) British Colony of Jamaica. He completed City

College of New York and received a commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry in June of 1958. He rose through a succession of assignments that included completion of a Master of Business Administration degree from George Washington University. A fortuitous set of circumstances saved him from a mundane job in computer programming and placed him in a circle of officers “rethinking the role and structure of the entire U.S. Army,” in effect, to reshape the image of the military.¹ His career gained momentum as a White House Fellow in 1972-1973 where he worked in the powerful Office of Manpower and the Budget (OMB). It was there he established friendships with two future Secretaries of Defense in Casper Weinberger and Frank Carlucci. Both would be instrumental in Powell’s selection as National Security Advisor to President Reagan in November 1987. While in this position, he also won favor with Vice-President Bush who would later nominate him to the post of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 1989.²

When Powell entered his final military assignment, the world seemed to be settling into an unprecedented period of peace. The Soviet Union was disbanding which gave rise to those that proclaimed the “Cold War” had ended. Many in America announced the need to realize the “peace dividend” from the years of large military expenditures. Demobilization began as the President and Secretary of Defense announced manpower reductions of up to twenty five percent of the active military; closure of facilities in the United States and overseas; and the elimination of organizations throughout the structure. Even as these plans were being prepared for this reduction in force, the

¹Colin Powell and Joseph E. Persico, My American Journey (New York: Random House, 1995) 156.

²Powell and Persico, My American Journey 157, 389

Iraqi military launched a successful invasion of Kuwait. With this stirring reminder of the ubiquity of conflict, the nation began the task of preparing a response to Saddam Hussein's aggression.

The speech to the American Legion came just days after deployment of Regular forces, augmented by National Guard and Reserve units, began under Operation Desert Shield as America's response to Saddam Hussein's August 2, 1990, invasion of neighboring Kuwait. The attack generated immediate diplomatic statements renouncing the invasion from nations around the world. Issuing a counter-response published in an August 9, 1990, article, Saddam Hussein "vows to fight" brushing aside "international outrage."³ Saddam's actions are attacked by General Powell in his address to the American Legion as he called Saddam Hussein a leader "who rules by fear."⁴

American Legion Convention Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

This is a speech that changed in the final hours before its delivery from exhorting the advent of a "remarkable era of peace" to the more troubling message of force deployments to an unforeseen conflict. The key terms around which other terms cluster include "tyranny" as the Devil term and "freedom" as the God term. Freedom is associated with a cluster that includes strength, support, and preparedness. The antithetical cluster of tyranny includes deceit, fear and treachery (sneak attack).

Freedom is actively in search of the opportunity to liberate. The recent fall of the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain, and the Warsaw Pact mark the success freedom has enjoyed:

³"Iraq Scorns Global Rage, Vows to Fight," Washington Times 9 Aug. 1990
<http://nl9.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_action=list&p_topdoc=31>.

⁴Colin L. Powell, "American Legion Convention Speech" (n.p., 1990) 2.

“We have seen freedom break through the barbed wire and concrete walls of a divided Europe.”⁵

To accomplish this end freedom gathered allies to end the Cold War. Those who personify freedom are shaping new alliances from all quarters of the globe from peoples of every race and religion to confront the tyranny of Iraq. Even organizations, like the United Nations, whose service to freedom have been suspect in the past have rallied in support. In a short expanse of time, the United Nations has passed “five Security Council resolutions” without any dissent. Nations that seek freedom resort first to diplomacy not armed force. In the spirit of freedom the Security Council resolutions called for withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait not immediate armed retaliation. The United Nations representing the collective of world opinion dispatched the Secretary-General to speak diplomatically with leaders of Iraq:

Today the Secretary-General of the United Nations begins a dialogue with Iraq. I hope - - we all hope, the world hopes - - that he convinces Saddam Hussein to accept the judgment of the world community.⁶

To those in opposition to the pursuit of freedom, there is a tendency to misunderstand diplomatic overtures as a sign of weakness. The Chairman in a direct message to the personification of tyranny, Saddam Hussein, says, “Do not think for one moment that we are cowed or coerced by your actions or your threats. We’re made of much tougher stuff than that.”⁷ Freedom does not exist in the absence of strength. Nations that enjoy freedom have from time to time had to defend those

⁵Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 2.

⁶Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 4.

⁷Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 4.

freedoms and have learned the lessons of preparedness. He recalls the December 3, 1941, conference that followed the large scale Louisiana Maneuvers during which General Marshall indicated the military needed six months to a year to be ready for war. The tyranny of a Japanese attack gave them four days. Such lessons abound in the history of war. Those that learn from the lesson preserve their strength and in so doing their freedom.

Skepticism is a resource of freedom. Even in light of the recent shift in politics and policies that controlled the former Soviet Union, the weapons of a superpower were still in place. The skepticism of freedom confirms that the potential for tyranny has fully passed before dropping its defenses. He uses the Soviet Union to make his point: “President Gorbachev wants his country to improve economically...But he doesn’t intend that his country give up its status as a military superpower.”⁸ There is always the potential that a deceitful enemy will signal peaceful intentions and appear at the gate with a Trojan Horse. The General was both hopeful and wary about future relations with the Soviet Union.

Powell places the United States at the vanguard of free people. He recounts the varied regions of the world that seek the support of the United States and are dependent on its leadership. The United States has a history of being called upon in crisis to perform the unpopular but necessary duties of world policeman. The world recognizes the United States as a leader because it is strong enough to defend freedom: “...American leadership cannot be effective in the absence of America’s

⁸Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 8.

strength.”⁹ If America is to remain the leader of the free world, the security decisions and contingency planning must address strength levels that transcend the needs to protect the nation’s boundaries.

American strength that supports freedom has specific needs. Powell shares the range of weapons systems and regional areas of interest that must be examined by those forming national security plans. As the world changes, the planning of the nation must keep pace so that the strength of the nation can preserve freedom. Ultimately success rests with those making the decisions that will calculate and approve the plans upon which freedom will rely. The President has a sound plan for the future that must be sent to Congress for their decision:

The Congress will soon be back in session and will be forced to make a judgment about the President’s budget that is up for their consideration. We need that Congressional decision to be the right one. We need that decision to be one that allows us to move prudently rather than precipitously toward a smaller but even better force. What President Bush has asked for in his budget is what American needs for its protection.¹⁰

Freedom requires the support of the people. That support comes first in the form of those who will roll up their sleeves and prepare for the possibility of being sent to battle. The volunteer soldiers on their way to the Middle East will join the ranks of those “who have always been there when the need arose.”¹¹ Freedom also requires the support of those left behind who “watch over

⁹Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 18-19.

¹⁰Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 14-15.

¹¹Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 20.

them and their families.”¹² When freedom is threatened the nation adds to its strength by coming together and contributing to freedom’s cause by answering the call to service.

Freedom is opposed by tyranny. In contrast to liberating nations, tyranny “breaks the borders of a peaceful neighbor”¹³ as it did in Kuwait and as it had done at the fall of Saigon. Those who personify tyranny like Saddam Hussein seek to enslave others and “rule by fear.”¹⁴ The Chairman sees an ideological difference between those who seek freedom and those who employ tyranny. “It is a struggle between those who believe in the rule of law and those who still, in this new era, believe in the rule of the gun.”¹⁵

Those like Saddam Hussein who rely on acts of tyranny must change or they will be forced to change. As Powell says, “He will not prevail and the crisis will pass.”¹⁶ Tyranny in the Persian Gulf will lose through diplomacy or, in the extreme, on the battlefield as surely as it lost through protracted posturing along the Iron Curtain at the end of the Cold War.

Uncertainty is an ever present ally of tyranny. General Marshall sought added time to prepare American soldiers for deployment in World War, but tyranny did not wait. It is difficult to predict who will direct tyranny or how, when or where it will occur, because “...the unknown, the

¹²Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 20

¹³Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 2.

¹⁴Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 2

¹⁵Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 4.

¹⁶Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 5.

uncertain, the crisis that no one predicted would happen, the contingency that nobody had planned for.”¹⁷ Tyranny lurks seeking and waiting for that moment of surprise when it can spring upon its prey. It studies its prey and waits for a time of weakness. Perhaps it comes when the door is left unlocked or the gate untended. Just as Iraq entered an unprepared Kuwait, tyranny can enter in a time of miscalculation:

If we get a decision out of Congress that won’t allow for what we believe America needs, a decision that cuts too much too soon out of our Armed Forces, then we will be unable to structure the kind of proud, ready armed forces that our nation is most certainly going to need in the years ahead.¹⁸

American Legion Convention Speech: Conclusions

Chairman Powell’s presentation to the American Legion reflects a sharing of common experience which transcends the passage of time. The current exigency in the Persian Gulf would resonate with an audience of veterans, as once again the nation’s military is sent into harm’s way. The nation, in the cause of freedom, has responded. It could do so because it was ready. International forces deploy in protest not to initiate immediate acts of retaliation, but to posture in the hope diplomacy, not gun fire, will resolve the tyranny. Resolutions have already given way to diplomacy. The question that reflects the uncertainty of the moment and seeks an answer is, “Will diplomacy give way to a military solution?”

In an ideal world the uncertainty of tyranny would disappear because nations would sit down and share openly and honestly their concerns for peace and freedom. Persian Gulf tensions,

¹⁷Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 13.

¹⁸Powell, “American Legion Convention Speech” 15.

however, demonstrate the absence of the ideal and unimpeded dialectic sought by freedom. In its place is the all too familiar need for military strength to lift the grip of tyranny from a nation like Kuwait.

Powell raises concern that not all share his vision as to the strength necessary to preserve freedom and for the United States to remain a leader among free nations. His specific concern is that the impending decision of Congress may weaken the nation. The General knows that freedom is tenuous for the weak. Kuwait serves as a reminder that tyranny, like a bird of prey, is ever stalking and seeking the opportunity to overpower its victim.

National Newspaper Association Speech: Content and Purpose

General Powell held a passionate concern for the military and sought to understand and challenge the unpopular image that was pervasive in the United States throughout much of his career. His application for the White House Fellowship expressed this concern in his response to the question that asked why he wanted to be a White House Fellow. He paraphrased his response autobiographically when he wrote, "I wanted the civilian world to see that military officers did not have horns."¹⁹

His audience was the National Newspaper Association that was founded in New Orleans in February of 1885 to promote local newspapers. The organizational goals sought to keep members informed of legislative agendas that materially impact the local newspaper business operations. Central to the organization's concerns is the ever dominant issue of freedom of the press. Its

¹⁹Powell and Persico, My American Journey 162.

pragmatic agenda is to inform members of the policies that help or harm thousands of small businesses that publish hometown newspapers. Like other small business owners, their concerns address the cost of doing business. Among the issues are postal rates upon which they depend for home delivery; estate taxes which too often force newspapers to be sold or shut down to pay taxes; the issues of privacy; fair labor standards; and most other federal regulations that impact the average small business in America. The group has an active legislative agenda which, at the time of this presentation, they promoted from their headquarters in Washington, DC.²⁰

General Powell rose to national media prominence during the Gulf War and was arguably one of the most popular American military figures since Eisenhower. Powell, like Eisenhower before him, was seen as an architect of coalition forces fighting a war of liberation. The combination air and ground campaign known as Desert Storm took just six weeks to complete. The ground force fight, which lasted just four days, followed weeks of aerial bombardment to weaken enemy defenses. The combined air and ground attack on Iraq had ended just sixteen days before Chairman Powell delivered this address. His remarks reflect the popular support for this campaign, without looking past those who opposed the war and expressed their concern in the press. The speech, therefore, recognizes that the physical fighting may be over, but the war of words is just beginning as the search for the truth begins. He spoke to the issue of press pools which effectively blocked “independent reporting” and were unpopular among correspondents and members of Congress.²¹

²⁰National Newspaper Association 29 Nov. 2002 <<http://www.nna.org>>.

²¹Herbert N. Foerstel, From Watergate to Monicagate: Ten Controversies in Modern Journalism and Media (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001) 100.

The speech contains a sophisticated level of rhetoric. “Accountability” is his God term. “Accountability” in both the media and government is in dialectical tension with “secrets,” his Devil term. He then introduces a term of mitigation, “responsibility,” that gives the government temporary relief from accountability and mediates between secrecy and accountability. He honors both sets of values, noting that at different times one or the other may be dominant. In crisis secrecy, although counter to our deepest democratic belief and subversive of trust, must be honored. Ordinarily, the free flow of democratic dialogue is the most important. Only the demands of survival allow us to keep our plans and actions secret.

National Newspaper Association Speech: God Terms and Devil Terms Agon and Clusters

Chairman Powell wastes no time establishing that both he and the press are accountable to the people of the United States and that in times of national crisis the military leader and the press may appear at cross purposes. As a government official, he accounts for his actions through the press and in turn the press informs the American people from a range of sources on all sides of an issue, so that the people can make informed decisions.

Press accountability is not served by being trusting, but by being “aggressive, free, challenging and untrusting.”²² The press is the conduit through which government officials account for their actions. A degree of skepticism resides in both camps as each withholds information from the other. The military has secrets that ultimately protect American lives. The press has its secrets, as well, known as “reliable sources” or “confidential informants.”

²²Colin L. Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech”(n.p., 1991) 2.

In fact, when both are doing their jobs properly, there should be a tension, skepticism and friction between government and the media. As I tell my staff, we should always be just on the verge of having a food fight with each other.²³

The Chair categorizes the secrets he keeps as “the people’s secrets.” Legitimate secrets of the people “directly relate to the safety of young American men and women being sent to battle in the name of the people.”²⁴ The decision of who is at risk and when rests with the military leadership who understood “what was dangerous and what was not.”²⁵ There must be then a balance between providing information and keeping secrets. Then he redeems a despised practice by associating it with the people’s security and well being. To answer any question as to why the military had the right to judge he stated:

Our President and the American people entrust us with the lives of 540,000 Americans. The people of 28 nations entrusted us with the lives of their sons and daughters. The United Nations entrusted us with the obligation to implement its Security Council resolutions...we had to be and we were the judge of what was dangerous and what was not. We could not have fulfilled our obligation to anyone had we not been judge.²⁶

Telling secrets can violate a trust and endanger military and civilian lives.

Current reporting technologies increase the need of secrets. Technology has made transmission of information virtually instantaneous. The press report doesn’t appear in tomorrow morning’s newspaper, but at the exact second information is uttered by the military personnel

²³Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech” 2.

²⁴Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech” 3.

²⁵Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech” 6.

²⁶Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech” 6.

responsible for disclosing it. The Chairman is willing to err on the side of secrecy rather than risk giving the enemy any advanced warning to America's battle plans and intended actions:

In this new environment of thousands of vivid impressions portrayed at warp speed to a world audience, we will have to seek new ways to satisfy our dual obligations of informing the people and protecting their legitimate secrets.²⁷

The press is reminded that secrets in the United States are only briefly held. When an operation has begun or a battle won the information needed for the press to account to the people will flow rather quickly. He compares America's openness to the press to the lack of openness of Iraq. He admits that changes are possible and invites the press to offer suggestions on how to improve the flow of information in the future through a reflective process known as an "after-action review" used to gather facts and determine how best to make changes.

The mitigating term, responsibility, speaks to a need for balance between the information that is easily accessible to the press and that which is withheld as secret. In order to strike this balance a tension will arise between press and military. Powell summarizes the tension in the following remark: "These two responsibilities then, to inform the people and to protect their legitimate secrets, are almost always in conflict and are the subject of constant debate."²⁸

Near the end of the speech he muses over the successes of Desert Shield/Desert Storm as one tendering the account for which he is responsible. There is a sense that he is purging the last vestiges of the Vietnam War from his memory. General Powell stops short of proclaiming the

²⁷Powell, "National Newspaper Association Speech" 7.

²⁸Powell, "National Newspaper Association Speech" 3.

military's tarnished image has been successfully changed, but he does use "success" to place the two conflicts in sharp contrast.

...the reason for going to war was clear...
...a great military coalition...
...we had a trained and ready Armed Forces...
...we had made the necessary investment in the finest military equipment in the world.
...our Armed Forces were well led.
...our Armed Forces are made up of courageous young men and women who volunteered to go in harm's way to serve our nation.
...because our Armed Forces enjoyed the solid support of the American people.²⁹

The goal he had written on the way to a White House Fellowship had come to fruition in the sands of a desert nation half way around the globe.

The pragmatist notes the accounting will continue as the press continue their task of informing the public:

Undoubtedly over time, as this euphoria fades, there'll be some critics, among them journalists, who will attack the military for something we did wrong. Someone may even follow up with a six-part series concluding that the problem is worse than initially imagined.³⁰

After the new round of accusations in the press lead to denial from the accused and investigations by members of Congress, the people will come to know the truth.

National Newspaper Association Speech: Conclusions

Chairman Powell speaks as a soldier who faced the failure of Vietnam, but was able to rise from the ashes and regain a professional distinction in the Gulf War. He challenges members of his audience to remember the burden of citizenship that calls them to give their consent to the actions of

²⁹Powell, "National Newspaper Association Speech" 9-11.

³⁰Powell, "National Newspaper Association Speech" 13.

government. Before that consent is given the public must demand information that enables them to render informed decisions. His remarks acknowledge the reality of an adversarial relationship between the press and those the press seeks to hold accountable on behalf of the people. The press desire to report information in a timely manner must be mitigated by withholding disclosures detrimental to the national interests. Powell accepts the responsibility to withhold such information. If this is not done, Burke might contend, that in the rush to do its job, the press becomes guilty of acts that are conceived as a blessing being in action a curse to the nation.³¹ Responsible journalists accept delays in reporting information for the good of society. The citizens will ultimately be informed, the accounting done.

His speech is an account of the Gulf War that sets forth a sophisticated rhetorical argument which gives legitimacy to both full disclosure and limited disclosure through a bridging term, “responsibility.” It is a very mature strategy of triangulated terms that reveal the cautious warrior. Drama is based on the collision of clusters and agons or good versus evil. Comedy, Negotiation, and Commerce always search for a middle ground and avoid the train wreck of direct confrontation. When there is a third term, we don’t need a scapegoat or the expiation of guilt or ritual transformation. The third term gives a kind of comic alternative to the tragedy of opposing clusters.

Chapter Summary

The two speeches illustrate two very different definitions of a situation. But both are about orientation. Powell describes the role of two different constituencies, and in each case lays out what

³¹Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form 53-54.

he considers an appropriate supporting role for the success of the defense of the United States. The Press speech is a carefully shaded speech in which Powell describes the role of information in war and peace and the complex demands upon his office as a provider and gatekeeper of vital information. The War speech is about world order and the maintenance of national dominance.

Powell is more than an advisor or an apologist in these speeches. His role is even larger than that of spokesman. His rhetoric is that of an active planner and policy maker. He is not defensive like Brown, but his style is more up beat. He conveys the status of the newly equipped, better trained and superbly led military that transforms the rhetoric of the emergent hero apologist as one who has helped orchestrate the metamorphosis of the military from the unwanted stepchild of the Vietnam era to those returning to the resounding cheers of the American people. In the glow of success, Powell appears much more visible and powerful than earlier Chiefs of Staff. His observations are direct and pointed and he no longer seems a mere ventriloquist for the administration such as General Bradley.

He, however, is still constrained by the same requirement to account for the safety of the nation that is threatened by tyrants such as Saddam Hussein. His accounts are not his independent decisions because, like his predecessors, he remains in the shadow of the Secretary of Defense and the President. His increase in power does grant him a stronger advisory role and more access than other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but ultimately national security policy decisions rest with the President and Secretary of Defense.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This dissertation used a text-based analysis of speeches to chart the evolution of a significant governmental office, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It employed a Burkean cluster analysis to analyze the Chairman's speeches at strategic moments over the fifty-year tenure of the office. These snapshots revealed changes in the conception of the office and role of the chairman.

The Chairmanship has changed from a peripheral advisory office with few substantive powers to an office whose influence and power can be compared with that of Cabinet level officials and (in wartime) nearly co-equal with that of the Secretary of Defense. A cluster analysis confirmed that the voice, role and message of the Chairman evolved over time from a conduit for presidential Cold War policy to bureaucratic manager, to apologist and reformer, to action-oriented military executive. The message as well as the role proved to be extraordinarily sensitive to the ups and downs of military success and military image. After beginning as merely one spokesperson among many, the Chairs spent a good deal of time discussing procedures, protocol and military organization. Their speeches to military audiences were those of an office still searching for rules, procedures and boundaries. Before the office could consolidate its gains, the Vietnam War and its aftermath created vertigo and defensiveness throughout the military establishment, and the Chairman found a new voice, first as apologist for a shattered institution and then as reformer. New legislation

and a successful war transformed the role of Chairman into a much more visible and active presence. The present Chair is more than a spokesperson, more than an apologist or defender. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is now an active participant in shaping the identity and mission of the Armed Forces. The voice of the Chief no longer has to struggle so hard with the heads of the rival services to be heard. He has regular and privileged access to the Commander in Chief, the Secretaries of State and of Defense and to the Congress.

My rhetorical studies have exaggerated the role of the speaker as an influential architect of events and institutions. In this study it is clear that the Chairman was not the architect of his own fortunes. The power and relevance of the Chairs waxed and waned with the fortunes of their nation and with the vicissitudes of the Cold War. No matter how ambitious they might be for increasing the power and autonomy of the office, they were dependent on many factors beyond their control. They had to wait upon a practitioner of the Cold War like Reagan or a more favorable image of the nation's military or the Fall of the Soviet Union in order to gain a serious hearing for any agenda of their own. There are some offices that sound the death knell of careers; perhaps the first several decades of the Chairmanship may have been one of these.

At the outset of this study three questions were posited. The answers to these questions form an expanded basis of the conclusion discussed above.

Question One: What Were the Constraints and Rhetorical Strategies?

“What were the initial constraints on the agency and what rhetorical strategies were employed to manage them?”

The constraints may be traced to the management style of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. According to Persico, Roosevelt enjoyed setting up a formal organizational chart and then sabotaging it with back channeling and special advisors.¹ The Chief of Staff began life as an advisor with no formal power, but immense informal influence. He supplied a counter weight to the service heads, and the Secretary of State. When Truman formally instituted the office, the old motive of going around the formal structure was gone and the 1949 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had neither formal nor special informal authority. He could intervene in service policy, while he was at the beck and call of the President, Congress and the Secretaries of State and Defense. In short he had no agenda of his own and was expected to have none. His role was articulate administration of policy especially in the areas of preparedness and long range planning.

Thus, the Chairman became the Cold War military apologist justifying the ideological bipolarism of the Truman administration. His rhetoric operated within a manichean frame of freedom versus enslavement. The Chair did not argue basic premises; he merely asserted military measures and procedures as if they had been mandated by the Cold War situation.

At this point it would be easy to fall prey to the critic's dilemma set forth by Burke when he notes, "The critic tries to explain a complexity in terms of a simplicity...and a simplicity is precisely what a complexity is not."² The complexity lies not in the consistency of the message, but the variations in environment that surround the discourse of a specific Chairman. General Omar Bradley

¹Joseph E. Persico, Roosevelt's Secret War (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2002) xi-xiii.

²Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form 22.

spoke against the backdrop of the newly formed United Nations, the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Soviet Union's detonation of an atomic bomb that spawned the advent of the Cold War and a politically limited war in Korea. General Earle Wheeler's remarks were cast in the shadow of President Kennedy backing down the Soviets in Cuba, Kennedy's assassination, domestic unrest chiefly fueled by the civil rights movement, the United States and Soviet Union space race, and the limited war in Vietnam. General George Brown took office following the overt protests and anti-war sentiments of the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies; passage of the War Powers Act of 1973; he faced the crowning mark of defeat to the United States policies and military actions in Vietnam with the April 1975 fall of Saigon; he witnessed the clemency program for those who evaded the draft; and he was Chairman during the preparations and celebration of the United States Bicentennial. General Colin Powell entered office at the end of President Reagan's efforts to strengthen the military; the Soviet Union was in a state of collapse that precipitated a call for force reductions with the Cold War at an end; and Iraq under Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

Each of these exigencies had economic, social and political ramifications on the success of the discourse of each Chairman. Each period held a citizenry that interpreted the stock issues of defense according their informed understanding of the issues of the day. Not all economic, social and political "apologists" embraced the "military apologist's" claims of the importance or magnitude of military solutions to national problems. Voices that spoke of economic freedom and the threat of recession or depression touched Americans in their homes. Still others addressed the concern for

Americans to escape the bonds of poverty and to be free to live their dreams free from the threat of prejudice or discrimination on the basis of socially prescribed biases such as race or gender. Each Chairman spoke against a cacophony of competing interpretations of “freedom” and “threat” which lead to varying degrees of success in the discourse of the “military apologist.”

Other influences stem from the Presidential world view that constrained the rhetoric of the Chairmen. President Truman was a vocal supporter of the United Nations and during his travels he shared a generalized theme of having a historical “responsibility” not to “repeat the blunders of the past.” He was conveying the need for an international forum, such as the United Nations, to keep the peace.³ General Bradley was therefore obligated to convey support for the United Nations. In the speech to the National Guard Convention in Montgomery, Alabama, the general refers to the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949 which Truman supported and had signed into law just twenty days prior to Bradley’s address to the National Guard.⁴ Within the Congressional wording of this Act is a justification for nations to enter into protective treaties according “to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.”⁵ In his address to the Detroit Rotary Club he states that the world has a “new power” in the United Nations. He dedicates much of the speech to the concept that “freedom” was a goal of the United Nations as opposed to “communism” which represented a major obstacle to the preservation of freedom among nations of the world.

³McCullough, Truman 287.

⁴Truman Presidential Library 2001 <<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/truman-3.htm>>.

⁵Bradley, “National Guard Convention Speech” 579.

President Lyndon Johnson's goal in Vietnam was to limit the tactical role of the United States to adding defensive strength to South Vietnam. Concerned that the Chinese might back North Vietnam as they had North Korea, the President did not want the actions of the United States to provoke large-scale war.⁶ This intent became a constraint on the rhetoric of General Earle Wheeler during the Johnson Administration. His comments are direct in his speech to the reunion of the 36th Infantry Division when he states, "The political objective established by our government to be gained in Southeast Asia is simple and limited..."⁷ While not violating the policy of the President, he steps forth as the "scapegoat apologist" to defend the military record and reveals his sense of the need to deflect blame through the comment, "Our answer to the current situation in Southeast Asia is, of course, a matter for national decision now and in the weeks and months ahead."⁸ While such a comment may be lost on a civilian audience, those with military experience quickly understand his remark points to a decision made at a higher level. General Wheeler was keenly aware of his role as a national security advisor. He had made this point three years earlier to the Princeton Club of Washington, D.C. as he spoke to the fact that the President makes security decisions and the military is in an advisory role.

Shifting to the late and post-Vietnam Chairman, General George Brown served much of his time under President Ford who wanted to add more support in the form of weapons and

⁶Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspective of the Presidency 1963-1969 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) 115.

⁷Wheeler, "Situation During World War II Compared With Today" 213.

⁸Wheeler, "Situation During World War II Compared With Today" 215.

ammunition to South Vietnam and Cambodia. The President did not believe Congress would support such a request.⁹ As a politically experienced former Congressman, President Ford minimized his own remarks concerning immediate past military action. He even sought to heal the nation after Vietnam by offering amnesty to those who had fled the nation to avoid military service during a conflict they opposed. Together, these acts restrained the public discourse of General Brown and reinforced the finding that he was a “muted apologist.”

Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush worked to strengthen the military during the decade of the 1980s. Under President Reagan new weapons systems were fielded that became household terms during the Gulf War. Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, Cruise and Patriot missiles were battle tested and proven to perform to expectations. Military morale got a boost when President Reagan issued his direct and cutting reference to the Soviet Union as the “Evil Empire” in a 1982 address to the British House of Commons.¹⁰ In so doing he set the tone for a more positive national acceptance of the military. America’s successful, though troubled, invasion of Grenada provided a long awaited positive portrayal of military service. Appointed by President Reagan, General Powell would become one of a new generation of American heroes. President Bush’s decision to commit forces to the Gulf War cast Chairman Powell into the public spotlight in a dramatic way as he appeared almost daily on Cable News Network (CNN) to brief the American

⁹“Vietnam, Cambodia April 9, 1975,” National Security Council Meeting Minutes, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, 12 Mar. 2001 <<http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/document/nscmin/nscmin.htm>>.

¹⁰Paul Halsall, “Ronald Reagan: Evil Empire Speech,” Internet Modern History Sourcebook May 1998 <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1982reagan1.html>>.

people on the progress of that campaign. As the fighting drew to a close, General Powell in his speech to the National Newspaper Association spoke of the “professional military” that fought the Gulf War. Powell and other Vietnam era veterans had come home to derision and anything but a professional image. In marked contrast, his junior successors, the Gulf War veterans, came home to much new found respect. General Powell an “emergent hero apologist” as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shares in their success and positive image.

Clearly each general who held the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was foremost a “military apologist.” The rhetorical success of each was framed by the historical circumstances that influenced their respective terms in office.

Question Two: How Were these Strategies Organized?

How were these strategies organized as the agency evolved and attempted to manage changes in leadership, presidential style, military culture, and civilian conceptions of the Chairman's role and conception of the armed forces as constituencies?

The anticipated dramatic change forecast in association with implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill does not seem to have materialized in the public address of Chairmen holding the office subsequent to its passage. At the outset of this investigation, I expected to find a marked difference rhetorically due to the evolution of the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff over time. The variation I found, however, was not due to organizational changes contained within the Goldwater-Nichols Bill, but the outside influences on the structure which precipitated varied themes of the Chairmen’s speeches of justification.

As previously mentioned, four distinct apologist periods surface in the review of Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the speeches that have been reviewed in this study. The periods are first that of General Omar Bradley, labeled the “established hero apologist” that spanned the decade of the 1950s. General Earle Wheeler represents the “scapegoat apologist” of the 1960s to mid-1970’s and encompassing the Vietnam War era. The “muted apologist” followed the Vietnam War beginning in 1975 until the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Bill with the first apologist being Chairman George Brown. The final of the four represents the “emergent hero apologist” represented by General Colin Powell.

The intent and expectation of President Truman in proposing a Chairman’s position was to create in law the successful wartime association President Roosevelt had put in place by creating a senior military advisor. He envisioned a stronger more unified force to safeguard the nation. He sought one unified voice to set aside parochial infighting among the varied service chiefs and provide sound timely military advice to the civilian leadership charged with national security issues. In their public addresses, I found the chairmen took on the tenor of the President, while remaining consistent with the dialectical themes of “freedom” versus “threat,” “strength” versus “decline,” “peace” versus “war” and “unity” versus “dissent” of the “military apologist” at any moment in time.

I found in their public discourse that the Chairmen conveyed to the varied constituencies, both civilian and military, Burke’s concept of a “god-term.” As previously mentioned, the “god-term” consistently used by these Chairmen in various forms was “freedom.” The consistency of the message over the course of time led this researcher to apply the term “military apologist” to the

discourse. The question then becomes how effectively is the discourse being received and what can be learned from the periods.

A problem with the “god-term” is in the consistency of application and audience interpretation. While the “god-term” may be consistently applied among a group of rhetors representing the same organizational voice over time, the importance society places on the rhetoric of each organizational voice rests in the situation or motive of the moment of their discourse. This can be seen in a brief overview of the four Chairmen studied.

The triumphs for freedom of World War II weighted the discourse of the “established hero apologist,” General Bradley. In the span of the prior decade, his constituencies had witnessed the loss or threatened loss of freedom in the nations of Europe and the Pacific rim. The freedom of the United States was directly threatened at Pearl Harbor. Chairman Bradley spoke with the authority of one who had helped the United States and its allies regain and secure the freedom of sovereign nations. The announcement of the nuclear threat imposed by the Soviet Union revisited the vivid images of atomic destruction in Japan. The nation needed experienced leaders at such time of crisis. Korea brought back the memories of Hitler’s plundering small nations of Europe while more powerful nations watched. Korea demanded a more timely response to overt aggression than the delayed international response prior to World War II. Again, the experience proven leader was in place as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Wheeler became the “scapegoat apologist” in an era when the nation was embroiled in coming to terms with the historical internal denial of freedom to racial minorities and women. In

light of the nation's internal strife over constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, the claims of advancing freedom in Vietnam rang hollow. The military draft and the inequities of the draft selection process drew criticism as further evidence of the denial of basic freedom to individuals forced into military service. Internationally, almost twenty years had elapsed since the Soviet Union had detonated their first atomic bomb and the possibilities of a nuclear war had not been realized. If a major power such as the Soviet Union had not attacked the United States or its allies, what significant threat did Vietnam present? Those opposed to the Vietnam War rhetorically challenged the threat to American freedoms posed in Vietnam. Dissenting voices advocated internal change and viewed the greater threat to the national freedom as internal denial of liberty to American citizens.

The "muted apologist," General Brown, avoided reference to past efforts to preserve freedoms in Vietnam. Unlike General Bradley, General Brown had no recent success in preserving freedom to rally public opinion. Saigon had fallen and communism, the greatest threat to "free world" liberty, had gained an advantage. The Soviet Union had not been idle during the decade American forces were fighting in Vietnam, a decade that for most Americans is clearly better forgotten. The "muted apologist" thus spoke to a time before Vietnam as a model of military strength to which he seeks a return. The bicentennial of a nation contributed to the muted voice. How could General Brown celebrate the cherished history surrounding the bicentennial while publicly talking about the recent military defeat by a markedly inferior military force. The General returned to the time honored dialectic of good versus evil and centered his remarks on the risks posed to a nation whose liberty was historically achieved. He speaks of the Soviet Union's technological and

manpower improvements that demand a technological response by the United States in order to preserve historic freedoms. The “muted apologist” therefore cannot build on the success of the recent past like the “established hero apologist” and if he does not desire to endure the attacks levied against the “scapegoat apologist,” he must avoid mention of “freedom’s” most recent failure, Vietnam.

The return of the “emergent hero apologist” was born in the person of General Powell. A clear loss of freedom confronted Kuwait and an international case was made to restore freedom to this nation. A case was made for each of the following: the vital interests of the United States and its allies were at stake; with United Nations resolutions in hand the international community supported liberating Kuwait, and finally, the allied forces would decisively engage the enemy. General Powell spoke anew of American forces capable of restoring freedom. The United States had the means in weapons and manpower, and it had an obligation to come to the aid of a weaker nation. The altruistic hero emerged in his comment to the National Newspaper Association when he said, “We sought no territory. We wanted only to eject the aggressor and restore stability and legitimacy to the region.”¹¹

Clearly each Chairman drew on the situation of the moment that shaped his discourse. Some were cast in positive terms, other were negatively perceived while still others blended timelessly into the rhetorical landscape advancing their message as much by what they did not talk about as what they did. The diversity of their discourse ranged from the bureaucratically precise and devoid of

¹¹Powell, “National Newspaper Association Speech” 9.

humor speeches of Omar Bradley to sophisticated constructs of General Powell that were more personally engaging and made use of humor. In sum, the rhetoric of the Chairmen had evolved with the position.

Question Three: What Insights Contribute to a General Theory?

Can any of the resulting insights contribute to a general theory of the managerial rhetoric of organizational change?

The periods are rhetorically significant because they characterize the varied forms speeches of justification may take within military organizations during cycles of decline and resurgence. Since most organizations go through periodic shifts in their public image. The difficulty rests with the fact that these shifts can emanate from a range of organizational exigencies throughout the hierarchy of the organizations. Amid the press coverage concerning Ford Explorers, the managerial rhetoric at both Firestone and Ford included a variety of accounts seeking to assure the American people that both companies were working in the public interest. This time of crisis gave rise to the corporate apologists answering the same assumed audience member concern, “Am I safe?” When a sports team fires a coach or manager and hires another the organizational rhetoric shifts to justify both actions and answer the assumed audience question “Will we win?” The questions may or may not transcend organizations, but there seem to be questions that recur and to which an organization’s rhetoric is linked.

Among the chairmen examined each answered, in relation to the exigency of the moment, the unspoken but assumed audience question, “Am I safe?” The prevalence of the question across

Chairmen implies a constraint on the rhetoric of the speaker. In an effort to answer this question each Chairman discusses the current state of the military in accordance with the President's vision of national security during the exigency presented. General Bradley conveys the message that the military has to move to an international force controlled by treaties. General Wheeler sees the military as a capable and supporting political objectives. General Brown states the military needs to change with growth, but General Powell says the military needs to be reduced in size. None of these positions were the vision of the Chairman, but he remains the conduit through which the message flows.

Cheney found that "Organizational rhetoric is complex by nature"¹² There are many factors that ultimately influence how an organization expands or limits its managerial rhetoric.

This dissertation suggests that in rigid organizations structure is more important than the characteristics of the occupant of the office. Powerless rhetoricians lack speaker status. Speakers must have access to significant audiences and they must be able to command media attention.

However, this result may be the result of the organization I have chosen to study. It may be worthwhile to apply the same method of study to a more loosely structured organization or one in which a leader is given more license to build the authority of his or her office. In many economic, religious and political institutions the leader is not bound to higher authority in a firm statutory manner as he or she is in the military. In such cases we may find structural changes make a less decisive change in the speaker's message than in the military.

¹²Cheney 164.

Powell makes a point in his speech with the National Newspaper Association that he is even more constrained in time of conflict because of his responsibility to safeguard service members. It would be helpful to do a similar snapshot analysis of the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since General Powell that have been exposed to the increased media scrutiny during a major crisis. What impact have televised press conferences had on managerial rhetoric? Who is present during such media events? Who answers what questions? Who defers to whom? Access to a national and international audience of the magnitude of Cable News Network (CNN) should provide a clearer understanding of the degree of autonomy of the Chairman's position.

Suggestions for Further Research

a. Much research has been centered on the rhetoric of Presidents, members of Congress and Cabinet level officials, but few have looked at the spokespersons who offer speeches of justification for the agencies headed by life-long bureaucrats offering formal justification for regulations or budget reviews before Congress.

b. The same method might be applied to long-lasting business organizations that have undergone the so-called managerial revolution. What changes were made in the role and message of leadership as ownership and control were separated? And how were these changes presented to external and internal constituencies?

c. . Historian speak of periods of organizational decadence followed by periods of reform followed by another cycle of decadence and reform. Are there topoi of decadence and reform and are there degrees of rhetorical competence that are necessary for survival?

d. When organizations change models (familial for corporate) how are transitions conceptualized and expressed to stakeholders?

e. A similar study might be conducted in religious organizations in order to compare and contrast the organizational leadership with regard to variables of orthodoxy, centralized structure or rate of growth. Is there a stock set of arguments and appeals that seem to accompany these sorts of organizational changes?

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VITA

John Robert Foster was born in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, on April 30, 1948. His family moved frequently among a range of Air Force Bases during his father's active duty career. John followed his father's lead into the military and entered the United States Army in July of 1972 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He served in a variety of assignments through the central part of the United States and two tours in the Federal Republic of Germany. He retired in September of 1992 having achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

John has taught in the Language and Communication Department at Northwestern State University of Louisiana since his military retirement. He has restructured the speech education curriculum and directed the general speech communication program since 1997. John is a member of the National Communication Association, a life-member of the Southern States Communication Association, the Religious Communication Association and the Retired Officers Association.

John holds a Seminary Degree from Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University and has served churches in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. He has been active as a Local Pastor in the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church for the past ten years.