Limited Warfare as a Pragmatic Concern: The Bounds of Domestic Consensus, the Controlled Use of Force, and United States Security.

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LIMITED WARFARE AS A PRAGMATIC CONCERN:
THE BOUNDS OF DOMESTIC CONSENSUS,
THE CONTROLLED USE OF FORCE, AND UNITED STATES SECURITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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in

The Department of Political Science

by

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ABSTRACT

Over forty years since the Korean War, Americans continue to face limited war as a fundamental challenge to their security. In order to help the public to deal more effectively with the problem, this study seeks a pragmatic understanding of limited war (i.e., one in which it is possible to judge in retrospect the cumulative practical results of previous limited wars). In achieving that goal, two other objectives are sought: first, to model and critically evaluate two types of knowledge used by policymakers to wage limited wars; and, second, to detail the development of such knowledge from its historical origins in the Korean War.

The first model of knowledge dealt with is the deductive theory of limited war. In order to assess the policymaking impact of the theory, the study addresses the following questions. What framework does the theory provide for limited war strategy? What variables are identified by the theory to which policymakers must give specific strategic content? What logic does the theory associate with the successful employment of limited war
strategy? What strategic use did policymakers make of the theory?

The second model of knowledge dealt with is derived from Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger's 1984 speech to the National Press Club. Reformulated to allow for a comparison of five limited-war case studies, the Weinberger criteria provide five open-ended questions. What interests were used to justify the commitment of troops to combat? What were the political and military objectives to be accomplished? What were the main decisions regarding and consequences of mobilization? What were the levels and timing of public support relative to combat? What combination of military and nonmilitary means were used to achieve political objectives?
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Since the Korean War, few ongoing national security problems have proven more difficult to understand for participants at all levels of the U.S. political system than the problem of limited war. In dealing with this problem, this study has two concurrent goals: (1) to model and critically evaluate two models of knowledge (as defined below) used by policymakers to wage limited wars, and (2) to trace the development of such knowledge from its historical origins in the Korean War. Restating these goals in the form of a research question: To what extent have past limited war efforts by the United States affected its involvement in and conduct of subsequent limited wars?1

1This study is subject to three caveats. First, the lessons of history are generally ambiguous and open to competing interpretations. Second, even in the presence of broad agreement on appropriate lessons to be drawn from particular historical cases, such lessons are open to misapplication to contemporary cases. Third, in order to increase objectivity and consistency in the treatment of available cases, the results of this study are left open to reassessment in view of alternative explanations and additional information. These caveats reflect the work of Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development," in Diplomacy, ed. Paul Gordon Lauren (New York: Free Press, 1979), 43, 58.
The primary difficulty in addressing this question is the general lack of recent literature providing an aid in judging limited war policies in contrast with the phenomenon’s continued development as a U.S. security problem. Even allowing for recent experience in the Persian Gulf War, it is debatable whether the United States retains either the military capabilities to respond effectively to threats or the political consensus needed to persevere in war efforts. The technologies, training, types and uses of intelligence, and methods of operation developed in the past for contingencies involving Soviet and Warsaw Pact aggression have undergone trials by combat against lesser adversaries. However, such combat cannot fully demonstrate the ability to control the use of armed force. There remains the constant problem that disproportionate or indiscriminate force might be applied merely to avoid the prolongation of conflicts threatening domestic consensus. There is also the more subtle problem of being drawn gradually into costly, prolonged conflicts. In either case, knowledge is effectively lacking.

2 An important exception in this regard is Christopher M. Gacek, The Logic of Force (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). Placing limited war theory in historical context, he provides strong empirical evidence of a "complex learning process" (294) whereby "the decisive use of force has become today’s ‘common wisdom’" (311) in American foreign policy. This study complements Gacek’s work by directing more explicit attention to the democratic processes needed for the accumulation and articulation of empirical evidence in such learning.
The task set for this study is to suggest and establish the plausibility of the view that the development of security policy regarding the controlled use of military force can best be explained inductively, by the accumulation of knowledge, through historical experience. Assuming that theoretical knowledge can best be judged after achieving some level of practical success, it appears justified to proceed with an inductive demonstration of such accumulation in limited war.

Two Models of Knowledge

The foregoing remarks are meant only to caution against the limits of knowledge in relation to policymaking. As a matter of course, such caution is appropriate in dealing with the period of limited war theorization and debate that extended roughly from the end of the Korean War through the early years of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. While the former war provided an impetus for theoretical work during the period, that work was deductive and proceeded primarily through logical argumentation rather than empirical evidence. The resulting deductive model of limited war was not subject to further development after the Vietnam War but

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did give rise to a host of derivative concepts (i.e., deterrence, signaling/bargaining, coercive diplomacy) which have since undergone empirical examination by scholars.4

The deductive model of limited war corresponds to one type of knowledge relevant to policymakers' selection and implementation of strategies against adversaries, what George characterizes as "abstract conceptual models of strategies."5 Utilizing the characteristics attributed by George to such models, this study poses the following questions, in order to assess the policymaking impact of the deductive theory of limited war:

1. What "basic framework for understanding the nature and general requirements for designing an effective" limited war strategy was provided by the theory?

2. What were the "critical variable-components" identified by the theory to which policymakers had to give specific strategic content?

3. What "general logic" did the theory associate with the successful employment of limited war strategy?


4. What strategic use did policymakers make of the theory? (The answers to these questions provide the substantive content of chapter 2).

Another type of policy-relevant knowledge referred to by George is "generic knowledge" of those conditions favoring successful strategic outcomes. Such knowledge is based on the "study of past experience that identifies the uses and limitations" of strategies "and the conditions on which" their "effective employment depends." Moreover, "generic knowledge is more useful" to policymakers "when it takes the form of conditional generalizations" (i.e., generalizations that apply under specific conditions).6

Taking these two points into consideration, along with the lack of recent scholarly attention to limited war, this study relies primarily on an existing expression of such knowledge in a speech by Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger to the National Press Club on November 28, 1984. The speech drew on previous U.S. war experiences (particularly in Vietnam) to provide six criteria to guide decisions regarding the use of military force. Weinberger held that policymakers should commit forces to combat only after determining that: (1) vital interests are at stake, (2) sufficient forces are sent to achieve their objectives, (3) political and military objectives are clearly defined,

6 Ibid., xvii, 138.
(4) objectives and means are subject to constant reassessment, (5) prior congressional and popular support are reasonably assured, and (6) combat forces are used as a last resort." (The full text of the speech is given in appendix 1)."

In order for this study to use the five criteria as the basis for systematic comparisons yielding generic knowledge about limited war, it is necessary to keep certain admonitions in mind. First, the criteria represent prescriptive standards and must be converted into questions capable of yielding verifiable answers (discussed more fully below). Second, the criteria potentially attribute "a greater degree of prescience and rationality" to policymakers than can be justified, allowing of course for the role of judgment in decisions." Third, the criteria

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"Using the Weinberger criteria as standards of comparison offers the chance to access their historical and theoretical antecedents as well as to check the possible effects of the criteria on subsequent U.S. limited war involvements and conduct. More importantly, the criteria focus attention on the issue of informing public consensus through the translation of national interests into objectives and means. The idea of utilizing the criteria as comparative standards is based on Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. Policy-Makers and Critics, 2d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1986), 265-71. The ideas expressed by Weinberger have influenced decision makers in subsequent presidential administrations, recently being reiterated under the Clinton administration by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, The Bottom-Up Review: Forces of a New Era (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 1993).

"Crabb, Policy-Makers, 271."
allow for reassessment of military efforts, given changing circumstances, but stress the need for security objectives to be pursued virtually irrespective of military costs.

Reformulated to allow for open-ended responses, the criteria provide the following questions:

1. What were the interests used to justify the commitment of troops to combat?
2. What were the political and military objectives to be accomplished?
3. What were the main decisions regarding and consequences of mobilization for combat?
4. What were the levels and timing of public support relative to combat?
5. What combination of military and nonmilitary means were used to achieve political objectives?

Employing these questions as comparative standards provides a chance to assess the degree to which the Weinberger criteria identify "variables and conditions that account for or explain the variance in the outcomes" of past limited wars. More broadly, the questions should contribute to a greater understanding of limited war as a subject of expert inquiry affected by domestic politics. In this light, the utility of deductive, conceptual models becomes a matter of translating their insights into generic knowledge through the mediums of communication and

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10 George, Bridging the Gap, 120.
participation. Developing the point more fully below, this study seeks a pragmatic understanding of limited war. In this understanding, specific limited war situations become subjects of reiteration in an ongoing public policy inquiry. Democratic political processes strengthen this inquiry, providing a means of arriving at consensually validated standards of military achievement and reassessing standards in view of accumulating evidence.

Defining Limited War

Before it can begin to move towards an understanding of limited war as a subject of ongoing inquiry, this study must first answer a question. What is limited war? A key problem in answering this question is that cases of such war are highly context dependent. An adequate definition must permit comparisons without ignoring the variety of factors that combine to produce individual limited war outcomes. Moreover,

definitions of a complex phenomenon, . . . are often of limited value; they should not be allowed to constrain open-ended empirical analysis of the phenomenon but should be used flexibly as starting points to facilitate such analysis.11

As a formal matter, maintaining a definitional balance between generality and specificity is necessary to the induction of military experiences.

A useful starting point is provided by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who define limited war as "armed conflict short of general war, exclusive of incidents, involving the overt engagement of the military forces of two or more nations." General war is "armed conflict between major powers in which the total resources of the belligerents are employed, and the national survival of a major belligerent is in jeopardy." Incidents are "brief clashes or other military disturbances generally of a transitory nature and not involving protracted hostilities."

The JCS definitions contain three major variables. These include the objectives (political and military), means (types and amounts of resources mobilized), and scope (location and duration of conflict as well as identities of belligerents) of war. Incorporating the three variables, the following definition is offered of limited war from the U.S. perspective: The overt engagement of conventional U.S. military forces in armed conflict against other

\[\text{U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington, DC: GPO, 1989), 209.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 156-57.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 176.}\]
national military forces in which America's security objectives are not linked to threats immediately involving the physical survival of the nation, resources undergo less than total mobilization, and troops are physically present over some period of time.\textsuperscript{15}

Certain operational features of U.S. defense policy can be linked to this definition; however, they are not applicable only to limited wars. Military operations generally include the following: political control over military forces; proportional objectives and means; self-imposed rules of engagement; and flexible responses based on diverse means and a will to avoid the expansion of war.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}The terms of this definition reflect the range of violence that occurs in limited wars. The definition permits consideration of military activities that occur in other forms of war (i.e., unconventional, nuclear) as they affect limited war contexts. The meanings of the main variables, as well as their relations to each other, remain contextual. In other words, the variables reflect "relationships that can be altered by deliberate acts of policy." Stephen M. Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," International Studies Quarterly 35 (1991): 212.

Generalizations, particularly of objectives, occur at multiple levels of analysis and require explicit attention to the identities and environments of actors. The research goal is not only to establish coherent links between military actions and their consequences but also to distinguish which individuals and aggregations thereof attempt to control these consequences.

Although by definition it focuses on limited wars fought by conventional U.S. forces, this study recognizes that such wars exist in conjunction with other forms of war (as discussed below). In other words, conventional forces can be used in all forms of war. Conceptual distinctions must permit overlaps among the forms based on that potential.

One form is unconventional war, also referred to as low intensity conflict. Low intensity conflict is political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies . . . . It is waged by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications.

Even applying the term unconventional, a partial list of the conflict activities making up this form of war range in violence from political and economic sanctions, through

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18 JCS, Department of Defense Dictionary, 212.
peacekeeping, to support of or opposition to subversion, sabotage, terrorism, coups, and insurgency. 19

The other form is general war. In both forms, the potential use of nuclear weapons to supplement conventional forces has provided an important motive for efforts to limit wars. 20 There is much support for the assumption, the one shared by this study, that the use of nuclear weapons other than in a deterrent capacity constitutes an act of general war. 21

The theoretical and contextual complications introduced by nuclear weapons can be summarized around two general issues. First, when (if ever) should the United States begin using nuclear weapons in actual combat?

19 Richard H. Schultz, Jr., "Low-Intensity Conflict and U.S. Policy, in Low-Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology, ed. David J. Dean (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1986), 77. Specific types of unconventional war activities are dealt with individually as they affect limited war. Attention is paid to the timing and significance of the activities relative to conventional conflict.


Second, what means ought the United States keep in readiness for all forms of war?\(^{22}\)

This latter issue is of major significance to an understanding of limited war and concerns military planning as a relatively long-term process and a process subject to the exigencies of any form of ongoing war. Both long-term and immediate plans involve efforts to anticipate contingencies, with mobilization occurring at various levels and stages in advance of and during wars. The purpose of mobilization is to assure the physical availability of types and amounts of resources sufficient to achieve objectives against the limiting factors (e.g., time, space, geography, and logistics) present in one or more operational environments. Admittedly, to the degree that these factors "are calculable with some precision, the military planning process, as it relates to the ponderables of real or hypothetical situations, may result in carefully prescribed and viable results."\(^{23}\)

The conditionality of this statement is necessitated by the dynamic nature of war.\(^{24}\) The relationships between


\(^{24}\)Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17 (1992-93). The author explains war as a nonlinear system, the dynamics of which yield outputs disproportionate to

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objectives, means, and scope produce operational limits relative to ongoing events. It is possible to fight wars of comparatively unlimited means and scope for limited objectives, or vice versa. It becomes empirically untenable to assume a "simple one-to-one correspondence between extent of purpose and extent of method" in war.

Unable to assume such correspondence between objectives and means, the question of the means that should be mobilized before and during any form of war is complicated and ambiguous. Military plans are made with incomplete foreknowledge of the initial forms of war in which U.S. forces will engage and the possibilities for expanded engagement (i.e., in more than one war or form of war at a time). In order to cope with these uncertainties, U.S. plans and actions tend to stress the flexibility of conventional forces.

An indication of this stress is provided by the mobilization of conventional forces for combat in unconventional, limited, and general war. Such inputs and irreducible interactions among variables.

According to Smoke, War, 14, U.S. forces fought "comparatively unlimited wars" for what ended up being limited objectives in Korea and Vietnam. Even though this position can be contested in view of the broad objective of containing Communist expansion, the examples suggest useful counterpoints to U.S. operations in Grenada and Panama. It can be argued that U.S. forces fought comparatively limited wars for unlimited objectives (i.e., overthrowing hostile governments) in the last two cases.

Ibid.
mobilization provides for operational continuity among all three forms of war, enabling them to be arrayed along a spectrum of conflict. Rather than being an arbitrary matter, correspondence between the forms of war and the scale of conventional mobilization depends on the willingness and ability to deliberately control the use of force. Given the relative uncertainties behind military planning, the spectrum necessarily permits areas of overlap between the forms. In any particular context, these areas are contingent on two factors: first, the primary form(s) of war for which conventional forces are mobilized and, second, the degree to which that mobilization detracts from the ability to support objectives in other environments. These factors can combine at some point to lead to the supplementation of standing conventional forces with those that are reconstituted or newly created, as shown in figure 1.

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27 Relatively small conventional forces may be required for limited war (i.e., Grenada and Panama), while large forces may be required for unconventional war activities during limited war (i.e., Vietnam). Moreover, a variety of scenarios suggest possibilities for the onset of nuclear warfare to reduce chances to carry out conventional mobilization. Harvard Nuclear Study Group, "The Shattered Crystal Ball: How Might a Nuclear War Begin?" in International War, 2d ed., ed. Melvin Small and J. David Singer (Chicago: Dorsey, 1989), 355-68.

Fig. 1. The spectrum of conflict and mobilization of U.S. conventional forces for combat.

Source: Adapted from JCS.29

Note: The source defines the spectrum according to the geographic scope of war. U.S. based forces include reserve components. No distinction is made between operational deployments and the onset of combat.

29Ibid., 3-1.
At issue above is timing, which can be defined as the initial engagement in a particular form of war and subsequent opportunities to mobilize conventional forces in order to preclude or carry out expanded engagement. Subject to the timing of war, it is conceivable for plans and preparations to offset constraints on available combat resources, particularly when mobilization includes reconstitution efforts. In this sense, mobilization at all levels can be graduated into stages reflecting the temporal proximity of general war. At a stage furthest from the onset of general war, plans are general, and preparations involve efforts to maintain programs for resource allocation as well as methods to prepare and test resources. Examples of activities during this stage include the following: assuring that standby authorities, legislation, and the Selective Service System are in place, maintaining a pool of trained personnel, stocking certain components, and continuing research and development. At a stage proximate to general wars, plans and preparations are geared to manage more specific crises. Actions can be taken which were prevented earlier due to resource constraints and the lack of more specific objectives. Examples of activities during this stage include surging production of certain weapons as well as purchasing hardware requiring long production periods in anticipation of further production increases. During a national
emergency or war, industrial and personnel mobilizations are made in anticipation of further mobilization approaching totality, as shown in figure 2.

Allowing for both physical and political constraints, the availability of combat resources only partially explains the varying limits of U.S. war efforts up to total mobilization. There might be situations in which U.S. technical and numerical superiority over opponents makes for apparently predictable military outcomes such that initial mobilizations effectively preclude the need for expanded war efforts to achieve objectives (e.g., Grenada). Even in such situations, however, outcomes depend on the tactical and strategic uses made of available resources.

Whatever theoretical and practical significance is attached to the superiority of U.S. resources as a determinant of U.S. military success, resources attain importance in general according to their effective use in

\[ \text{Ibid., 10-5.} \]

\[ ^{31}\text{Tactics are the planning and execution of individual engagements during a war. Strategy is the coordination of engagements with one another in order to achieve the objectives of a war. Strategy determines the times when, locations where, and forces with which engagements are fought, providing for tactical resources and relying on tactical results. Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 128, 196.} \]
Graduated Mobilization

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Fig. 2. The stages of mobilization.

Source: Adapted from JCS.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 10-5.
combat. Resources are necessary, but they are not always sufficient to assure successful military outcomes.

This is not to argue that operational decisions affecting the use of resources are more important to military outcomes than resources themselves. Such an argument oversimplifies an issue requiring more rigorous treatment, the variation of limits due to the interaction of objectives and means. Political conditions establish initial relationships between objectives and means. Political decisions influence military command and are influenced in turn by the political consequences of military decisions. Generalizing operations to include the highest levels of authority, the coincidence of political and military objectives common to total mobilization is also possible at various lower limits due to the ultimate locus of strategic responsibility in government. However much of political discourse is accomplished through military means, whatever modifications are exerted on

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33 Ibid., 95-97. Clausewitz (204-13) defines effectiveness according to four issues: concentrating forces in space, holding forces in reserve to achieve successive results, using reserves for strategically decisive operations, and maximizing combat-related action (204-13). He holds that there are usually a variety of ways by which a weaker power can try to offset the conventional advantages of a stronger power. This is in keeping with his overall stress on the utter importance to military outcomes of moral factors, factors that "cannot be classified or counted" (184). He allows that the readily quantifiable physical factor of numerical superiority can be decisive in those outcomes relative to all other factors affecting them (194-97).
policy by military decisions, the precise mix and measure of resources devoted to war remains subject to the strengths and weaknesses of political decisions. As has more recently been observed, "gross military capabilities provide only the ingredients from which planners must develop usable options," options that political leaders can and will use along with nonmilitary resources to achieve limited objectives.

The significant question above is the degree to which knowledge of specific operational contexts helps actors in the U.S. political system to achieve their objectives through combat mobilizations, especially in contexts where war efforts undergo expansion. The term for the dynamic

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34 Ibid., 81-89, 605-08.

35 George, Avoiding War, 16. The differences between "gross capabilities" and "usable options" are elaborated in Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, eds., The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), ch. 1.

36 Of the relationship between objectives and means, Clausewitz, On War, 585-86, says that To discover how much of our resources must be mobilized for war, we must first examine our own political aim and that of the enemy. We must gauge the strength and situation of the opposing state. We must gauge the character and abilities of its government and people and do the same in regard to our own. Finally, we must evaluate the political sympathies of other states and the effect the war may have on them.

It is obvious that, however partial and transitory, knowledge in war must include reference to the enemy. Objectives and means relate to each other mainly through their interaction with opposing counterparts.

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of war expansion is escalation. Escalation is any action that exceeds the current limits of a war as defined by its more or less salient contextual features (i.e., objectives, means, and scope). Limits vary within and between wars relative to the knowledge that actors have of the consequences of their actions. Actors have more or less accurate knowledge that particular actions and opponents' potential reactions will interact to produce contexts promoting new actions that will exceed still other salient limits.37

Locating the dynamics of war in political knowledge has several implications, not the least of which is to reinforce the need to recognize the mutual effects of objectives and means. Primacy accorded to objectives as extensions of such knowledge is qualified by their adaptation to means selected over the course of a war. Given that wars at all levels of mobilization are political acts, policymakers must initially determine the type of war in which they are engaging, judging as well as possible at the outset what means are needed to achieve their

7Smoke, War, 34-35. Smoke (29) is concerned only with those cases of escalation that demonstrate a "potentially open-ended cyclical sequence" of events driven by less accurate knowledge of consequences. This study shares Smoke's concern but draws on cases of close-ended escalation to explore the interactions of several variables: the superiority of resources and knowledge requirements, the salience of time constraints and the significance of immediate consequences, and the decisiveness of military outcomes and the quality of public inputs into political decisions.
objectives. This holds to whatever extent that observed limits involve mobilization that protracts or ends combat.

**Defining Pragmatism**

Pragmatism is a methodology that seeks the meanings of concepts in their consequences for human experiences and actions and that provides consensual bases for truth(s) in the agreed opinions of those participating in ongoing inquiries. Various tenets are associated with this definition. These include the following: adherence to syncretism, skepticism of *a priori* belief systems, belief in continuous interaction between the mental and physical efforts of humans on one hand and problems presented by environmental changes on the other, stress on the importance of contextual understanding in problem solving, stress on the need to constantly evaluate the relations between ends and means, treatment of science as a community-based endeavor between expert inquirers and others in society, acceptance of the fallibility of knowledge, belief in the possibility of human progress in terms of improving scientific methods and applying them to increasingly complex social problems, preference for

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38 Clausewitz, *On War*, 87-89.

evolutionary changes in human affairs, and adherence to democratic forms of association as the most conducive of progress."

The above definition and list of tenets differ in important respects from other uses of the concept of pragmatism in studies of foreign policy and international relations. Perhaps most basically, there is a tendency for the label "pragmatic" to be associated with students or practitioners of realism. That label is apt in some regards, but does not account for pragmatism's regard for the concept of power as a means of achieving other ends related to human welfare. In a related vein, there has been a tendency for some scholars, working at the level of individual decision makers, to disassociate pragmatic behavior from its welfare orientation and to associate such behavior with a lack of principles.


In an approach to the study of collective learning in government, Ernst Haas uses the label "pragmatic" to connote a particular decision-making style among others combining the goals of politicians with the scientific knowledge used by experts in attaining those goals. The "pragmatic" style involves pursuit of a specific or singular policy outcome over a long period of time with the use of expert knowledge that is moving towards greater consensus. "Such knowledge is systematic in the sense that it results in increasingly complex sets of public policy problems that draw on past accumulations of knowledge and begin to moderate competition among political interests. Still, politicians make selective use of such knowledge based on ideological preconceptions."

This study employs pragmatism in a way that differs from those above in its treatment of interest-based politics. Power is not considered an end in itself. This


"Ernst B. Haas, "Collective Learning," in Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy, eds. George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 68-69. Haas (65) defines consensual knowledge as "generally accepted understandings about cause-and-effect linkages about any set of phenomena considered important by society, provided only that the finality of the accepted chain of causation is subject to continuous testing and examination through adversary procedures." A fuller elaboration of Haas' ideas on the relation of expert knowledge and political decisions, particularly those involving the development of international organizations, is not attempted here.

"Ibid., 88-89."
calls into question any assumption of an objective national interest capable of guiding security policies apart from the values expressed through domestic political activities. Competition among interests is treated as a process necessary to provide information of common social concerns to scientific inquirers and politicians who make use of their knowledge. Although competition insures neither responsiveness to social concerns nor policies informed by cumulative knowledge, constant dissent and consent in accordance with democratic ideals are required if policy-relevant knowledge is to accumulate from iterative solutions to public problems.  

**Limited War and Pragmatism**

The relevance of pragmatism to the study of limited war derives from several propositions. First, the phenomenon of limited war remains a central concern of U.S. security policy but has not been developed by scholars as have other concepts in the literature of security studies. Second, in order to understand limited war, it is necessary

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"John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), ch. 6. Democracy is defined here as an ideal whose realization depends on social inquiry in which "the persons for whom something is a problem must themselves partake in the inquiry, must come to agreement on goals and means, and must themselves test the proposed solution in terms of its effects on their lives." Charles Morris, *The Pragmatic Movement in American Philosophy* (New York: George Braziller, 1970), 161-62.
to view the phenomenon and its associated literature in historical context. Third, in this context, limited war exists as a subject of expert inquiry with consequences accessible to members of U.S. society through democratic political processes.

The pragmatic thrust of these three propositions is in support of public opinion as an arbiter of decisions to use limited military force. Short of general war, what constitutes an interest vital enough to prompt U.S. military action usually "emerges only from an authentically democratic aggregation of domestic preferences."4

This position ameliorates the conception of an objective national interest accessible only to certain experts or political leaders as well as the view of the public as capable of judging only the ideological contents of security policies. The improved versions of these policies offer empirical standards of success open to all members of society. These standards are attained when abstract, nonoperational goals are translated into specific, operational objectives and communicated to the public along with means needed to achieve them. Short of unambiguous threats to national security, the main

standards for judging the success of policy actions are those inherent in the rules governing democratic discourse and participation." Do the limits observed in wars arise from the efforts of political leaders to form and maintain consensus around objectives and means?

Apart from normative grounds for doing so, there are growing evidentiary grounds to suggest an affirmative answer. The public is generally moderate in its foreign policy leanings as seen in its expressions of support for U.S. presidents moderating their own actions towards the Soviet Union." This is supported by Shapiro and Page, who demonstrate that U.S. public opinion is highly stable and rationally responds to both domestic and international events." Moreover, public opinion is divisible into four stable dimensions reflecting varying degrees of willingness to utilize force (e.g., use force, cooperate rather than use force, use force only in cooperation with other

"Nincic, Democracy, 166-67.


"Robert Y. Shapiro and Benjamin I. Page, "Foreign Policy and the Rational Public," Journal of Conflict Resolution 32 (1988): 211-47. This provides substantial confirmation of earlier works which "established, for the United States and several European countries, that sustained change in basic attitudes resulted only from repeated, dramatic events." Russett, Controlling the Sword, 93.
nations, avoid cooperation and force). A key finding is that "a new 'post post-Vietnam' pattern has emerged in which public support" for the limited use of force "varies according to" its "principal policy objective."

Accordingly, the public can distinguish between the objective of restraining aggressors (e.g., Saddam Hussein) and of carrying on interference in other nations' political systems (e.g., Panama), generally supporting the former objective.

The suggestion offered on the basis of the above evidence is that the limits in war emerge largely from a consensually arrived at balance of objectives and means within a domestic context. This is only to point out that the domestic political context of limited war is at least as important as its foreign context. Allowing for the knowledge that military leaders have of their opponents' intentions, communication of objectives and means is placed at a premium. Including the public among those involved,

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the knowledge needed to wage limited war emerges from specific contexts rather than abstract speculation.

The goal of this study can be restated by way of a caveat. Domestic consensus and pragmatism can never accumulate absolutely certain knowledge in judging policy objectives, not that such an attempt is a viable option. Objectivity is retrospective, "the judgment that after enough success and consistency in practice and prediction [of policy outcomes], a theoretical application works as it does because it gets things right." Although this study deals directly with the question of relating past U.S. limited wars to subsequent involvements and modifications of conduct, it does not seek to validate the prescriptive standards established by the Weinberger criteria for military actions. The primary goal is to explore limited war as a product of expert inquiry shaped by democratic practice.

By way of a further caveat, democracy is not a panacea for an effective understanding of problems like limited war. Particularly in relation to this problem, consensus can be manipulated by political leaders (e.g., urges to rally around the flag). Although this problem inhibits informed consensus, its effects are temporary and...

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potentially a source of negative public support relative to the duration of war.54

Research Method

In order to explore the topic of limited war as a subject of inquiry with consequences affecting the U.S. public, this study employs what George characterizes as a "systematic progression of . . . controlled comparisons," the method of structured-focused comparison.55 Based on the definition of limited war offered earlier, five cases (e.g., Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf) are available for comparison.

Each case is asked the same set of questions, in order that limited war theory can be linked inductively to its strategic applications. These questions are a means of making "contingent empirical generalizations--contingent because they apply only under certain (specified) conditions, and empirical because they are derived from analyses of multiple historical cases." Generalizations are possible because the five cases are evaluated using the same operational concepts. The diverse contexts of the cases are given a common, theoretical viewpoint enabling accumulated findings to be applied towards subsequent

54Russett, Controlling the Sword, 151.
55George, "Case Studies," 59.
limited war problems and theorization. Essentially, the motive for adopting the method of structured-focused comparison is to arrive at an understanding of limited war that is "neither purely descriptive nor derived from more general propositions about human" actions.56

Unlike early refinements of this inductive method57 and more recent applications,58 this study derives its operational questions from a statement of policy rather than previous scholarly research.59 This statement is, as

56Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," World Politics 61 (1989): 147. According to Achen and Snidal, the focused comparative method is poorly equipped to produce systematic theoretical accumulations or to test hypotheses given its modest requirements in selecting data. Nevertheless, such requirements are complementary of formal, deductive theory because they generate variables, provide contingencies explainable by theory, and generate antecedent knowledge for statistics.

57George "Case Studies"; George and Smoke, Deterrence; Smoke, War.


59Those employing the method of structured-focused comparison seek to provide theory that is policy relevant and offers operational knowledge of potential use to decision makers, Smoke, War, 305-315. The use of focused comparison by this study reverses such an emphasis under the assumption that operational standards already in use by decision makers represent accumulated knowledge of potential use to scholars. In either direction of influence, knowledge should be regarded as impartial and improvable rather than as doctrine.
will be recalled, the Weinberger speech. This choice offers a good opportunity not only to relate the theory of limited war to its practice but also to explore more broadly the relation between scientific inquiry and public opinion.

In answering these questions, this study makes use of both primary and secondary resources. Primary documentation consists of a range of sources. Official statements of policy are found in numerous speech texts and public papers. The operational aspects of those statements are laid out in various directives, enactments, and regulations. The texts of agreements, mutual declarations, resolutions, treaties, and other negotiations supplement the treatment of policy objectives.

Public support is to be primarily documented from Congressional voting records and public opinion polls. The main sources for this study's polling data, when not available from secondary sources, are the Roper Organization, with the addition of various other news polls.

It bears note that this study is not intended as primary historical research. When needed, secondary materials should aid the incorporation of competing explanations into the body of the study. Allowing for

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successful challenges from later scholars or additional cases, the responses provided to the questions above are provisional.

Plan of the Study

In chapter 2, deductive limited war theory is analyzed in historical context. The stress is on the policymaking influence of the theory. Chapter 3 deals with the Korean War. Primary attention is paid to the relevance of the war to the subsequent development of theory. Chapter 4 deals with the Vietnam War. Attention is directed towards the application of limited war theory and its effects on strategy as an instrument of negotiation. Chapters 5 and 6 deal, respectively, with U.S. interventions in Grenada and Panama. These two chapters offer important insights into limited warfare. Attention is drawn to the relation between decisive military action and possibilities for informed public debate as well as to the examples set by those two wars for the use of decisive force. Chapter 7 deals with the Persian Gulf War. Emphasis is on the danger of drawing "too many" lessons from a clear political and military success. Chapter 8 draws out the theoretical implications of the case studies.
CHAPTER 2
THE DEDUCTIVE THEORY OF LIMITED WAR

The deductive theory of limited war has not undergone a great degree of development since the Vietnam War. Viewed in its historical context, however, the theory becomes part of a wide public policy debate. Even though marked by a general lack of recent scholarly attention, the phenomenon with which the theory deals remains a vital concern of U.S. security.¹

At the beginning of an important early essay tracing the theory's development, it is stated that the "need for a capability and doctrine for fighting limited local wars was

¹In a field of such policy relevance as security studies, there are several reasons why limited war qua limited war is not a source of scholarly debate. Walt, Renaissance, 217-18, would remark that limited war theory was part of the "golden age" in the field of security studies but did not survive the Vietnam War to be part of a later "renaissance," among whose "most important developments . . . was greater reliance on history." Given its logical development from the single case of the Korean War and subsequent strategic application in Vietnam, one might argue that the theory fell into disrepute among scholars seeking a public forum for their research. More likely is the position that the theory, although developing as far as it could solely based on general principles, at least survives in terms of its strategic applications, Osgood, Limited War Revisited.
accepted slowly and reluctantly by Americans." Following the application of such capabilities and doctrines in the Vietnam War, another treatment holds that limited war strategy "not only survived" that war "but continued to expand in application and acceptance."3

The central theme in these observations is that of policy-relevant theory and its subsequent application and modification under conditions of public scrutiny. This chapter should contribute to an increased understanding of security policy as an inquiry process involving the democratic selection and evaluation of knowledge by detailing the following: (1) the historical background of the deductive theory of limited war, (2) the basic framework provided by the theory for "effective" strategy, (3) the critical variables identified by the theory for strategy, (4) the general logic identified by the theory for strategy, (5) the strategic uses made by policymakers of the theory, and (6) the exposure of the theory to political consequences.


3Osgood, Limited War Revisited, 10. For a more detailed treatment of limited war theory and its literature, see Gacek, The Logic of Force.
Historical Background

The deductive theory of limited war developed primarily in response to two historical events; first, the deliberate political restraint of military efforts during the Korean War; and second, the subsequent enunciation of the doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation. The significance of the first event lies in the proximity of World War II, with its outcome of total victory, to the Korean War as well as in President Truman’s removal of Douglas MacArthur from command in the latter war. The significance of the second event lies in the fears generated by the stark terms with which John Foster Dulles originally put forth the doctrine of massive retaliation.

It is an understatement to point out that these two events affected the tone and content of public debate over limited war. In particular, this debate can be discerned


A national security report made to President Truman before the Korean War, NSC-68, anticipated the nuclear and conventional force needs for responding to general and limited wars. Paul H. Nitze, "Limited War or Massive Retaliation?" The Reporter, 5 September 1957, 40-42.

"George and Smoke, Deterrence, 23-27.

in the relationship between the theory and its strategic applications.

Basic Framework

The primary impetus for theorization concerning limited war was the prospect of confronting localized Communist aggression with massive nuclear retaliation. Not only were the deterrent effects of such retaliation called into serious question, but it was also argued that the very existence of nuclear capabilities made it vital to develop alternatives that could be more easily controlled in actual use.

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7 Halperin, Limited War, 2-3. The Truman administration sought to reduce military expenditures in order to provide more money for European recovery under the Marshall Plan. Following the outbreak of the Korean War, however, the administration stressed the buildup of conventional forces to defend Europe. Wallace J. Thies, When Governments Collide (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 163-73. The Eisenhower administration stressed nuclear capabilities both to reduce the burden of defense spending on a prosperous U.S. economy, Ronald Ritchie, NATO (Toronto, ON: Ryerson Press, 1956), 14, and to deter overt Communist aggression, John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 121-22.


Could nuclear weapons form part of U.S. limited war capabilities? One position on this issue was that nuclear weapons should form part only of U.S. general war capabilities, being restricted even then to strikes against military targets. Moreover, the potential productivity of the U.S. economy was seen as grounds for pursuing wars of conventional attrition, allowing for the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons. With stress laid on the distinction between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, it was argued not only that the former weapons could be used in limited warfare but also that such use was the only alternative to general war. A more nuanced approach stressed the need to develop conventional armaments without foregoing the use of tactical nuclear weapons as well as to

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10 Halperin, Limited War (4) indicates that this question was affected by the increasing U.S. stockpile of material from which to produce tactical nuclear weapons. Coupled with the French defeat in Indochina, the possibility of larger numbers of tactical nuclear weapons led to a large public debate over their use.


develop limitations through a differentiated view of warfare at all levels."^4

Critical Variables

A key issue in the development of limitations was the relationship between objectives and means. An important step in arousing theoretical debate over this issue was taken by Osgood. He argued that Americans, unlike the Soviets, did not understand the political nature of warfare as an instrument of diplomacy, an instrument to be combined with other instruments (i.e., economic) in the furtherance of U.S. interests. Developing the Clausewitzian notion of the primacy of politics, Osgood argued that war was only an expression of political conflict at a higher level. Given the limitation of war by policy makers, military forces were to be treated only as a means of negotiating with enemies. In order for the United States to possess a successful limited war strategy, the author stressed the need to reorient American attitudes from their traditional adherence to complete military victory and military autonomy from political influence towards greater

acceptance of limited military objectives decided on by political leaders.15

Kissinger shared the above concern with establishing the primacy of politics, but he also offered positive suggestions for formulating a U.S. limited war strategy. The strategy suggested was continued reliance on nuclear weapons in limited war. He linked the prospects for adhering to limits upon the use of these weapons to the maintenance of limited political objectives.16

Challenges emerged to the notion that limited political objectives could prove themselves sufficient to limit military efforts. Rather than limited political objectives, the destructive potential of nuclear weapons and the corresponding desires among combatants to avoid their use were identified as critical variables in limiting wars.17 Relaxing the stress on the connection between political objectives and chances for limiting the use of nuclear weapons produced arguments to build up conventional forces.18

16Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons.
18Kissinger, Necessity for Choice. Both Osgood and Kissinger were apprehensive of the U.S. public’s ability to accept and understand limited war efforts. This view
Early theory had recognized such tangible factors as geography and weapons as the most crucial sources of limits in war.¹⁹ Taking up the question of such physical variables, Schelling used them in his development of a theory of bargaining between competing nations. Limits were seen as the mutually recognized product of combatants' actions. Apart from actions directly intended to achieve objectives, military activities could also be conducted as a process of bargaining. Carried out as a part of bargaining, military activities were linked by Schelling to salient contextual factors (i.e., weaponry, geography) recognized by all combatants. Limits were seen to expand relative to the strength of communicated intentions between interacting opponents. The threat of escalation to total war became part of a bargaining strategy that could either reduce or increase the level of conflict.²⁰

typifies what Nincic, Democracy (ch. 1) calls the realist thesis of "disruption from below" in relation to popular pressures on foreign policy.


By the early 1960s, a general consensus had emerged among theorists, political leaders, and military strategists on the need for a doctrine and capabilities to confront enemies short of recourse to total war. Based on logic and speculation, the consensus involved the "proper" application of military force in actual contingencies ranging from the least to most intense. Accordingly, the proper way to conduct war was seen as involving a bargaining process through which opponents would apply force incrementally to achieve negotiated settlements.21

Strategic Use22

As early as 1957, the Eisenhower administration had come to state the utility of tactical nuclear weapons to offset reliance on strategic weapons. By 1960, the administration was publicly acknowledging a need for capabilities of responding to threats down to the lowest

21Osgood, Limited War, 9-11.

22This study's treatment of public policy making as an inquiry process would be strengthened if room existed to explicitly detail all the areas of cross-fertilization between the theory and practice of limited war (i.e., think tanks, academics recruited into government). As it stands, reliance is on the political, military, and technological manifestations of theory.
levels of intensity. Still, these pronouncements must be viewed against Soviet advances affecting delivery of strategic weapons (e.g., Sputnik and intercontinental ballistic missiles). In line with these advances and budget constraints, the administration cut spending on conventional and tactical nuclear forces "in order to take some halting steps towards protecting its strategic forces."

The Kennedy administration inherited a strategic situation in which prospects for limited war were largely confined to declaratory emphasis. The new administration responded with the doctrine of flexible, controlled response. Rather than relying on threats of nuclear retaliation, the new doctrine sought to enhance deterrence and diplomatic bargaining power by providing civilian leadership with a wide range of controllable military options at all levels of conflict. Aside from the administration's efforts to build up conventional forces in Europe, the doctrine found its first application in the need for strategies and capabilities to wage unconventional warfare.

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25 Halperin, Limited War, 8.

26 George, Hall and Simons, Coercive Diplomacy, ch. 1.
war in Southeast Asia. Just at the time when the limited war debate had begun to focus upon certain issues (i.e., the relation between political objectives and military means, the importance of winning or not winning), these issues were submerged in the larger problem of dealing with communist aggression in Vietnam.  

**Political Consequences**

The Vietnam War can be seen as a test of limited war theory, in the restricted sense that the war called into question the grounds for previous consensus. The situation is evident in the variety of lessons derived by scholars from the war. Among the "political" lessons associated with Vietnam, perhaps the most general is the need to pay constant attention to the relationship between political objectives and the means needed to achieve them. Domestic expressions of interests should be considered as a

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28Formally speaking, the inductive method would not qualify as a method if it were viewed as "a way of producing one specific result on one specific occasion" rather than "a generic device capable of repetitive application." Nicholas Rescher, *Methodological Pragmatism* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 5. It would be a mistake to regard limited war theory as conclusively invalidated by a single historical case. Similarly, it would be wrong to judge the soundness of a decision to go to war merely on the basis of its success. John E. Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 229.
primary source of objectives rather than merely a constraint on military actions as derived from some appraisal of external interests.\textsuperscript{29}

Related to these political lessons, certain military lessons can be derived from the Vietnam War. Granting the importance of domestic opinion as a source of political objectives, there is the problem of maintaining public support over the period of time needed to achieve objectives. If time becomes the most crucial concern, there is an argument to be made for avoiding politically imposed restrictions on military efforts (including particularly gradual escalation).\textsuperscript{30}

A more subtle understanding of the contexts within which limited wars occur suggests other possible military lessons. In order to avoid overgeneralizing those lessons, each case of limited war needs to be assessed according to its own peculiarities. This assessment should include not


Lessons cited here attain varying levels of consensus among the authors.

\textsuperscript{30}Samuel P. Huntington, \textit{American Military Strategy}, Policy Papers in International Affairs (Berkeley: ITS, 1986). The author maintains such an argument, stressing the need to rely on numerical and technological superiority to overcome the inability of U.S. public opinion to sustain war efforts. Commentary by Paul Seabury in the same volume amends this argument to include the need to change American attitudes. Both positions view democratically articulated interests as a hinderance to the pursuit of security policy.
only the articulation of objectives but also the judgment of the means to be used within particular contexts. The forces and technologies needed in particular situations may or may not be generally adaptable to others.31 Perhaps the most important lesson derived from contextual understanding is, as Clausewitz understood, that political objectives should constitute limits within which military decisions are subject to execution. Clear communication of objectives by political leaders should facilitate operational assessments necessary for execution and, more significantly contribute to the moral bases of both civilian and military decisions.32

31Hoffmann, "Vietnam Reappraised," 7-12.

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CHAPTER 3

THE KOREAN WAR

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950 when North Korean forces invaded South Korea. With the experience of World War II just five years behind them, few among the U.S. public would have predicted that their political and military leaders' response to the invasion would eventuate in an ambiguous "limited" war. Even fewer would have predicted that an era had begun in which Korean-type limited wars would be a norm of U.S. security policy rather than total wars.

Several issues carried over from the Korean War into the era of limited war. The Korean War set the containment policy (Truman Doctrine) on a global footing and established the willingness of U.S. policy makers to enforce the policy through direct military means. With the proliferation of nuclear weapons, such enforcement has involved integrating the goals of achieving military success and avoiding escalation to the point of regional or global conflagration.¹

¹Current U.S. security policy focuses primarily on the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons among regional actors. The assumption of strategic nuclear
Public understanding and support of limited wars has been a key issue in integrating these goals. The question has remained to what extent the U.S. public can differentiate and express conditions favorable to U.S. security beyond the simplified alternatives of "victory" and "stalemate." Complicating this question has been the fact that U.S. involvement in Korea and subsequent limited wars has been undertaken without formal declarations of war by Congress. Instead, authority to wage limited war has generally been sought under provisions of the Constitution dealing with presidential powers and of international agreements (e.g., the United Nations Charter).

**Historical Background**

The Korean War was an outgrowth of strategic problems dating from the end of World War II. Among these, none were more difficult than the development of contingencies war as the main threat to American security has been relaxed, making decisive conventional force a more viable option in confronting aggressors. Aspin, *The Bottom-Up Review*, 5-8; Gerald M. Steinberg, "Non-proliferation: Time for Regional Approaches?" *Orbis* 38 (Summer 1994).


for the Allied defeat of Japan and disposition of Japanese colonial holdings such as Korea.

The Korean contingency was worked out by a rapid series of events in August 1945. The United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 8, and Japan surrendered on August 14. A hasty agreement divided the Korean peninsula into separate U.S. and Soviet occupation zones along the 38th Parallel. As Commander of U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur selected forces under General John Hodge for the U.S. zone on the basis of their availability. The advance elements of Hodge’s command arrived in southern Korea on September 8, 1945, weeks behind Soviet forces in the north.

Administrative choices made under the U.S. occupation to channel Korean nationalism promoted the continued division of the peninsula. General Hodge’s immediate decision to retain Japanese officials provoked such popular opposition that President Truman issued an order leading to increased administrative placement of Koreans in the southern military government. These placements were

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accompanied by occupation moves to introduce electoral politics in the south. By October 1946, elections were held for an interim legislature in which half the members were elected and half appointed by General Hodge. All elected seats went to right-wing nationalist candidates who opposed the occupation, and General Hodge appointed more liberal members to balance the election results.7 By May 1947, Korean administrators in the military government were formed as the South Korean Interim Government (SKIG). Against a dominant nationalist coalition led by Syngman Rhee in the SKIG, the U.S. occupation maintained both an advisory role in and financial control over administration.8

Administrative decisions by Soviet forces also interacted with Korean nationalism, promoting the emergence of a separate northern government. Rather than relying on military government per se, the Soviets retained a system of people’s committees which had been organized by Koreans in the aftermath of the Japanese surrender but were suppressed in the U.S. zone. In early 1946, a national Provisional People’s Committee under the chairmanship of the nationalist Kim Il Sung came to power in the north.


8David Rees, Korea (New York: St. Martin’s, 1964), 11.
All political participation was channeled through the communist National Democratic Front. Polling under this single party led to the formation of a Korean People's Assembly in February 1947 with control centralized under Kim as chairman of a new national People's Committee.9

The emergence of separate governments coincided with two failed attempts by U.S. and Soviet officials to agree on plans to reunify and prepare Korea for independence through a trusteeship. By the end of 1945 and through the spring of 1946, southern nationalists had become sufficiently organized and vocal in their demands for rapid independence to affect U.S. and Soviet discussions at a Joint Commission. When the commission convened on March 20, 1946, the Soviet delegation announced its desire to exclude all political groups that opposed trusteeship from consultation in an interim Korean government. The commission became blocked when U.S. delegates insisted that all groups should be allowed to participate and exercise freedom of speech. By May 6, 1946, the Joint Commission adjourned sine die, having failed to arrive at standards of popular participation acceptable to both U.S. and Soviet

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9Ibid., 11-12.
interests. A second Joint Commission was convened in 1947 but dissolved over the same free speech issue.

Once the second commission failed, the Truman administration had a difficult choice. With the formulation of containment in March 1947, withdrawal from the Korean peninsula seemed desirable to free up personnel and resources for locations more clearly vital to U.S. interests. At the same time, premature withdrawal seemed likely to send a political signal to the Soviets of a lack of commitment or ability to protect those very interests. A compromise was reached by the Truman administration when in November 1947 the U.N. General Assembly passed a U.S. resolution calling for Korea-wide elections to be held by the end of March 1948. Under U.N. observation, Koreans were to elect a national assembly which would draw up a constitution and set up an interim government. Once that government had come into existence, U.S. and Soviet

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occupation forces were to be withdrawn from the peninsula.\textsuperscript{12}

Because the Soviets refused to cooperate in the reunification of Korea, separate governments came to power on the peninsula. In the south, elections were held under U.S. observation, and Syngman Rhee later became president of the Republic of Korea on August 15, 1948. Kim Il Sung became premier of the northern Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 10, 1948. On December 12, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly recognized Rhee's government as the only "freely" elected one; U.N. membership for either republic was prevented by the respective opposition of U.S. and Soviet blocks. By the close of 1948, a pair of hostile Korean governments "founded on opposed ideologies and interests, and each claiming jurisdiction over the whole of Korea, faced each other over the 38th Parallel."\textsuperscript{13}

The hostility exhibited between north and south had affected U.S. provisions for the south's security even before the foundation of separate governments. Given the need to limit such hostility during the U.S. withdrawal, the Truman administration decided to form an indigenous southern constabulary force capable of maintaining internal


\textsuperscript{13}Rees, Korea, 13.
security while only gradually assuming the burden of external defense. With the final withdrawal of U.S. forces in June 1949, an embryonic South Korean army was left under the training of U.S. military advisors whose mission was to prepare defenses. By June 1950, the South Korean army numbered 95,000. U.S. military assistance had limited the arm's offensive capabilities by providing only light artillery and armored cars.  

In the north, the Soviets had set up an army and a constabulary, training and equipping both for combat roles. In December 1948, the Soviets withdrew the last of their forces except for an abundance of advisors. Under these advisors, North Korean forces were built up with conscripts, veterans formerly attached to Chinese communist forces, and personnel trained in the Soviet Union to operate and maintain both combat aircraft and tanks. With military aid from the Soviet Union as well as through their own production, the North Koreans were able to sustain a period of border fighting and large-scale guerrilla operations against the south between the spring of 1949 and the winter of 1950. Nonetheless, the South Korean army was able to overcome these unconventional threats, leaving the north few means of unifying the peninsula other than full-scale invasion. By June 1950, the North Koreans had assembled 135,000 troops equipped with tanks, heavy

**Sawyer, Military Advisors, 12-45, 106.**
artillery, and combat aircraft for just such an invasion. Although U.S. aid prepared the South Korean army to cope with lower-level threats, that army had been equipped only sufficiently enough to resist a conventional assault for fifteen days.\textsuperscript{15}

When the North Koreans invaded the south on June 25, their primary goal was to reunify the peninsula in a fait accompli. This goal reflected a number of considerations. First, although the Soviets did not initiate the invasion, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's decision to escalate from unconventional operations to a massive conventional assault against the south could not have been made without prior Soviet military assistance.\textsuperscript{16} Second, the United States had limited military assistance to South Korea in part to prevent Syngman Rhee from having sufficient offensive capabilities to attempt the forceful reunification of Korea under his own regime.\textsuperscript{17} Third, "the border incidents in which both sides had been involved since the spring of 1949, and Rhee's own martial pronouncements" provided Kim with evidence "of a long-term threat from South Korea,

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 104-105; John Merrill, Korea (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 130-167.


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 100-101.
which would be eliminated only by a preemptive strike southward. Fourth, given U.S. efforts to disengage from Korea as well as an unclear commitment to the south (discussed more fully below), the North Koreans did not count on the swiftness of the American response to aggression.

**U.S. Interests in Korea**

As noted above, Korea's political and military significance to the United States emerged as a subsidiary consideration of ending the war against Japan. In this regard, U.S. interests in Korea were defined as part of broader interests in establishing political conditions to prevent another total war once Japan was defeated. That definition did not change with the advent of the Cold War and the subsequent outbreak of the Korean War.

In a joint statement released on December 1, 1943 following their meeting at the Cairo Conference, President Franklin Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek stated their intentions towards Japanese holdings. Claiming no interest in territorial expansion, the statement expressed the

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determination "that in due course Korea shall become free and independent." 19

The timing of Korean freedom and independence proved to be subsidiary to the maintenance of Allied cooperation in defeating Japan. At the Yalta Conference, President Roosevelt sought options to avoid or minimize any U.S. casualties necessitated by an invasion of Japan's home islands and, subsequently, its holdings in Manchuria and Korea. Given these concerns, Roosevelt signed a top-secret agreement with Joseph Stalin whereby the Soviets would receive territorial concessions (e.g., Kurile Islands, access to a Manchurian port) in return for engaging the Japanese. Although Roosevelt and Stalin discussed a Korean trusteeship in private, the public protocol agreed to at Yalta put off discussions of specific trusteeships at the upcoming United Nations Conference. Left unresolved were the possible duration of a Korean trusteeship and the commitment of Allied occupation forces during that period. 20


President Roosevelt was unable to resolve these issues. Several weeks after Yalta, the Soviets actively began installing pro-Soviet governments in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, before he could convince Stalin that Soviet interests would be strengthened rather than compromised by adherence to international agreements. The President had not realized his ideal of a U.N. organization capable of reconciling the interests of the major powers and, thereby, guiding colonial populations such as Korea's towards self-governance by means of a generalized system of trusteeships.\footnote{Settinius, \textit{Roosevelt}, 93-94, ch. 16.}

Under President Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, the issue of Korean trusteeship would remain unresolved as the administration confronted the larger issue of Soviet expansion. At both the United Nations and Potsdam Conferences, the administration attempted to deal with the same twofold problem of defeating Japan and preventing the Soviets from moving into the Pacific as they had in Eastern Europe. On July 16, 1945, news of the first successful atomic bomb test presented administration officials at Potsdam with evidence that Soviet engagement of Japanese forces was less necessary than when the mob was a mere probability. That day, based on information of Soviet-trained Korean forces, Secretary of War Henry Stimson warned Truman that the Soviets might set up a puppet
government in Korea. The Secretary urged the President to press the issue of trusteeship with the Soviets and to station U.S. forces in Korea as part of a trusteeship.22

Secretary Stimson's advice presaged the administration's commitment of forces to Korea to prevent the Soviets from occupying the entire peninsula following the rapid collapse of Japanese resistance in August 1945.23 With the president's enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 (discussed more fully in chapter 7), that commitment would present an increasing dilemma for the administration as it attempted to free up the economic and military resources to contain the Soviets in other areas (i.e., Europe, the Middle East).

Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson sought to extend the basic rationale of containment to Korea. On March 27, 1947, Acheson personally approved a report which argued that Korea would only be a military liability during a total war. Nevertheless, the loss of U.S. credibility resulting from a withdrawal of U.S. forces in Korea could just as easily encourage Soviet aggression in areas more clearly vital to U.S. security (e.g., Europe). This issue


would affect subsequent considerations of U.S. interests in Korea.24

A report to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JSC 1769/1) on April 29, 1947 was much more stringent in its treatment of U.S. commitments and security assistance. The report pointed out how assistance could be counterproductive to U.S. security when given to governments which sought only to suppress democratic participation (such as Rhee's). Another basis given for determining security assistance was the establishment of the area of primary strategic importance to the United States. In the Pacific, the report set a boundary running from Alaska through the Philippines to Australia. Korea was acknowledged as an area in need of assistance due to the existing U.S. commitment. Nevertheless, the report argued that commitments to Korea could be discontinued without inviting Soviet aggression against more vital areas (i.e., Europe). Because Korea was deemed incapable of providing sufficient support to the United States in a total war, only aid left over from more vital countries was suggested for Korea by the report.25

By November 1947, George Kennan had come to acknowledge the difficulties of applying containment in


Korea. In a planning paper drafted for Secretary of State George Marshall, Kennan noted that the potential for democratic government throughout Korea was non-existent. Furthermore, such conditions favored communist political success. Combined with Korea's lack of strategic significance in a total war, this factor left the United States few options other than to attempt withdrawal, while minimizing the loss of U.S. credibility.26

The decision to turn the political future of Korea over to the U.N. represented just such an option. As noted earlier in dealing with the historical context of attempts to reunify Korea, U.N. acceptance of U.S. proposals for free elections throughout the peninsula provided the Truman administration with a way to smoothly withdraw U.S. forces and a collective security mechanism to confront the Soviets.

Even though the U.S. position was bolstered by adherence to U.N. authority, withdrawal from Korea was still an issue requiring consideration of the costs to U.S. credibility. According to a National Security Council paper (NSC 8) put out in April 1948, U.S. forces would be withdrawn from the south by December 1948. Granting Korea's military drawbacks, NSC 8 stipulated that security assistance to the south would forestall communist dominance. Considering both internal and external threats, 26Ibid., 95-96.
U.S. forces had not been withdrawn by December 12, 1948, when the U.N. General Assembly recognized South Korea's government as the only freely elected one on the peninsula.27

A revision of NSC 8, designated NSC 8/2, was put out in March 1949. NSC 8/2 provided for the final withdrawal of U.S. forces in June 1949. NSC 8/2 acknowledged that Korea would not be a primary theater of operations in a total war and provided for substantial security assistance to South Korea. NSC 8/2 went on to admit the possibility of overt communist aggression against the south but provided several reasons to expect that U.S. credibility would remain unaffected. South Korean constabulary forces could deal with threats themselves. U.S. troops would not be in any wartime situations risking defeat or surrender at the hands of numerically superior communist forces. Prior to the final withdrawal of U.S. forces, a public statement would be made to signal that the United States had not abandoned its commitment to South Korea.28

Between December 23 and 30, 1949, two National Security Council papers (NSC 48/1 and NSC 48/2) were issued

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regarding U.S. policy in Asia. Among its provisions, NSC 48/1 restated the main objective of NSC 8/2:

- to strengthen that Government [South Korea] to the point where it can (1) successfully contain the threat of expanding Communist influence and control arising out of the existence in north Korea of an aggressive Soviet-dominated regime, and (2) serve as a nucleus for the eventual peaceful unification of the entire country on a democratic basis.²⁹

Although not included in the revised NSC 48/2, the second part of the above objective presaged U.S. efforts under U.N. authority to unify Korea by force.

NSC 48/2 pledged continued material and political support to South Korea, providing for both unilateral and multilateral efforts. Among its general provisions for Asia, NSC 48/2 held that the United States was aware of Formosa’s strategic significance but lacked the military means to prevent the Chinese Communists from taking the island from the Chinese Nationalists. In a related sense, NSC 48/2 stressed that U.S. security in Asia would be best served by ambivalence in treating with the Chinese Communists, avoiding moves that might prevent the exploitation of any Sino-Soviet rifts. With an ambiguous situation in China and Formosa, NSC 48/2 urged the improvement of the overall U.S. situation vis-à-vis Japan, the Ryukus, and the Philippines.³⁰

²⁹Etzold and Gaddis, Containment, 256.

³⁰Ibid., 272-75.

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These three groups of islands formed the bottom portion of a U.S. defensive perimeter anchored in the north Pacific by the Aleutian islands. The perimeter was first announced by Secretary of State Acheson on January 12, 1950 in a speech to the National Press Club. Accordingly, the perimeter represented the primary U.S. interests in the Pacific, or at least the interests for which Acheson felt the United States could bear the primary responsibility to defend. Outside the area of primary interests were South Korea and Formosa. Secretary Acheson stated that

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack ... Should such an attack occur--one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from—the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression (emphasis mine).31

This was an accurate statement of the subsequent military responses following the North Korean invasion.

The invasion’s implications extended beyond the Korean peninsula. According to John Foster Dulles, "to sit by while Korea is overrun" would produce a "disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war."32

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31Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 357.

32Schnabel and Watson, Joint Chiefs, 67.
This though was elaborated by President Truman, who felt that

if the communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger communist neighbors.³³

In this context, the president linked U.S. interests with the United Nations in opposing the invasion. Ultimately, it was the possibility of a world war that led the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to choose to limit the war to the peninsula and seek a negotiated settlement through the United Nations.

U.S. Objectives in Korea

In the immediate aftermath of the North Korean invasion, the Truman administration took steps to convene an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council. When the council met on June 25, 1950, it passed an American sponsored resolution calling for "the immediate cessation of hostilities." The resolution called for "the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the thirty-eighth parallel" and for all members "to render every assistance to the United nations

in the execution of" the resolution "and to refrain from giving assistance to the north Korean authorities."34

Once the North Koreans failed to comply with that resolution, the Security Council passed another on June 27. The new resolution recommended that U.N. members "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."35

These resolutions reflected the Truman administrations' efforts to establish political and military objectives under crisis conditions. In a second meeting with his top diplomatic and military leaders on June 26, the president decided to use air and naval forces to attack North Korean forces below the 38th parallel. This decision was extended to the use of ground troops on June 30 (both decisions are discussed more fully below). Between those dates, on June 27, the president made a national statement regarding objectives in Korea. In a speech dealing predominantly with the military quarantine of Formosa (Taiwan), he noted that "I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean government


35 Ibid., 713. The Soviets were boycotting the Security Council over its refusal to admit China as a member and were thus unable to veto the resolutions passed on June 25 and 27. Schnabel and Watson, Joint Chiefs, 76.
troops cover and support." For the time being, U.S. objectives remained primarily to restore the territorial and political sovereignty of South Korea.

Between July and September 1950, the battle for South Korea varied between the North's farthest advance to the Pusan Perimeter and the destruction of northern forces as an effective fighting force. Utilizing air strikes, amphibious landings, naval blockades, and infantry assaults, U.N. and South Korean forces routed the North Korean army and had achieved the original U.N. and American objectives by September 1950.

The route of the North Koreans beginning in mid-September reflected a significant expansion of objectives from the restoration of South Korea. According to a National Security Council report (NSC 81/1) signed by President Truman on September 11, "the political objective of the United Nations in Korea is to bring about the complete independence and unity of Korea." NSC 81/1 went on to qualify that objective with two other

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37 Acheson, President at the Creation, 405.


39 Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1950: Korea, 713.
objectives: avoiding general war with the Soviet Union and China and building U.N. support for the imposition of a political settlement on North Korea.  

By September 26, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had drafted orders for U.N. Commander General Douglas MacArthur. The orders stated that his military objective is the destruction of the North Korean armed forces. In attaining this objective you [MacArthur] are authorized to conduct military operations, . . . north of the 38th parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operation [sic] there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. Under no circumstances, however, will your forces cross the Manchurian or USSR borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean ground forces will be used in the northeast provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border.  

In the event of Soviet intervention, MacArthur was ordered to "assure the defense," take no action "to aggravate the situation," and "report to Washington." Regarding Chinese intervention, MacArthur was ordered to continue "action as long as action by your forces offers a reasonable chance of successful resistance." The issues would remain how far to advance beyond the 38th parallel without crossing specified boundaries and what forms or extent of action to take against the Chinese once they intervened in the war.  

"Ibid., 713-16.  
"Ibid., 781.  
"Ibid.
On October 7, 1950, forces commanded by MacArthur crossed the 38th parallel, having been authorized by U.N. Resolution 376 to take "all appropriate steps . . . to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea." By mid-October, with no apparent signs of Chinese intervention, MacArthur had violated his orders and sent non-Korean troops to within thirty-five miles of Manchuria. Without contradictory orders from Washington, he ordered his forces towards the Yalu River on October 24.

As of late November 1950, it had become apparent that massive numbers of Chinese Communist "volunteers" had entered North Korea from Manchuria (approximately 210,000). U.N. forces were forced to retreat south, back across the 38th parallel. In January 1951, U.N. forces were able to regroup, counterattack, and force the combined Chinese and North Korean armies back into North Korea. Rather than pursuing those armies, however, U.N. forces were required to remain south of the parallel. The war stalemate there for over the next two years.

China's entry into the war presented the Truman administration with the problem of managing relations with U.N. allies as well as neutral members (e.g., India). In particular, the administration had to confront growing

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43Ibid., 904.

44Schnabel and Watson, Joint Chiefs, 274-76.

45Mossman, Ebb and Flow, ch. 3, ch. 26, ch. 27.
demands for cease-fire arrangements while preventing measures leading to a compromise which might encourage further Chinese aggression. "Many in Washington were afraid that a cease-fire . . . would give the Chinese time to build up their forces for another thrust southward."46

Reflecting these concerns, the administration had moved by March 20, 1951, to open cease-fire negotiations with the Chinese. The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed General MacArthur "that, with [the] clearing of [the] bulk of South Korea of aggressors, [the] United Nations [is] now prepared to discuss conditions of settlement in Korea."47 In response to this, MacArthur released a public statement in which he noted that China

must now be painfully aware that a decision of the United Nations to depart from its tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea through expansion of our military operations to . . . [Chinese] coastal and interior bases would doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse . . . .48

Having previously been refused in his requests to carry out such an expansion,"49 MacArthur persisted in his

46Kaufman, Korean War, 115.
47Schnabel and Watson, Joint Chiefs, 525.
49On January 9, 1951, the Joint Chiefs informed MacArthur that he could not blockade China, carry out naval and air attacks against China, or obtain reinforcements from Taiwan. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, vol. 7, Korea (Washington, DC: GPO, 1983), 41-42.
contradiction of administration authority until relieved by Truman on April 11, 1951.\textsuperscript{50}

Although not directly connected, MacArthur's relief coincided with a change in objectives from that of seeking a military solution in Korea to seeking a political one. As the president told a national audience upon relieving the general, "in the simplest terms, what we are doing is . . . trying to prevent a third world war."\textsuperscript{51} This objective was reiterated in a national security report (NSC 48/5) signed by Truman on May 17, 1951. NSC 48/5 held that the main U.S. objective had become "a political, not military, solution which would [eventually] provide for a united, independent, and democratic Korea."\textsuperscript{52}

NSC 48/5 provided for a substantially altered military mission, establishing greater political restrictions on the new U.N. Commander General Matthew Ridgway than had been set for MacArthur. Ridgway's orders were to

\begin{quote}
inflict the maximum personnel and materiel losses on the forces of North Korea and Communist China operating within the geographic boundaries of Korea and waters adjacent . . . in order to create conditions favorable
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50}For details on the decision to relieve MacArthur, see Schnabel and Watson, Joint Chiefs, ch. 10.

\textsuperscript{51}President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1965), Harry Truman, 1951, 223.

\textsuperscript{52}James F. Schnabel, Policy and Direction (Washington, DC: GPO, 1972), 393.
to a settlement of the Korean conflict which would, as a minimum, a. Terminate hostilities under appropriate armistice arrangements; b. Establish the authority of . . . [the Republic of Korea] over all Korea south of a northern boundary so located as to facilitate, to the maximum extent possible, both administration and [military] defense, and in no case south of the 38th parallel; c. Provide for the withdrawal by appropriate stages of non-Korean armed forces from Korea; d. Permit the building of sufficient . . . [Republic of Korea military] power to deter or repel a renewed North Korean aggression.\textsuperscript{53}

Less than a year into the war, the conditions had been set for a subsequent two-year stalemate. To prevent a wider war, orders given to Ridgway would remain in force for subsequent commanders during that period. Washington's objectives had shifted from restoration of South Korea's independence by force, to the reunification of the Korean peninsula by force, and then to the maintenance of South Korean independence through negotiations backed by force. Strategically, mobilization of U.S. combat resources had become necessary to maintain a war of attrition.

\textbf{U.S. Mobilization}

The North Korean invasion of South Korea in late June 1950 came at a time when the Truman administration was beginning to reassess its plans for fighting the Soviet Union. In light of the Soviet's development of nuclear capabilities nearly a year earlier, the administration had

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1951: Korea}, 489-90.
recently begun to question its own position that nuclear weapons were sufficient to compensate for the demobilization of conventional forces since World War II.\textsuperscript{54} In particular, President Truman was still considering a report (NSC 68) that "without superior aggregate [allied] military strength, in being and readily mobilizable, a policy of 'containment' . . . is no more than a policy of bluff."\textsuperscript{55} Without both nuclear and conventional strength, NSC 68 argued that the United States would "be confronted more frequently with the dilemma of reacting totally to a limited [local] extension of Soviet control or of not reacting at all (except with ineffectual protests and half measures)."\textsuperscript{56}

Reflecting the administration's nascent concern for Soviet nuclear capabilities, military planners had begun to assume a shorter warning period in which to mobilize for combat than they had assumed at the end of World War II. Still, at the time of the North Korean invasion, plans and preparations continued to focus on the primary contingency

\textsuperscript{54}In order to curb inflation expected as a result of military spending, the administration had placed primary reliance on nuclear weapons as a more economical means of dealing with Soviet aggression than sustained conventional mobilization. Etzold and Gaddis, \textit{Containment}, 383-84.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., 402.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 428.
of another total war in which mobilization would be extended over at least two years.\(^5\)\(^7\)

This focus would quickly call into question "preparedness for a larger, perhaps global struggle centered on Europe" once President Truman committed forces to defend South Korea.\(^5\)\(^8\) At that time, the United States had standing ground forces consisting primarily of 630,000 army personnel, with 108,000 devoted to the continued occupation and defense of Japan under General MacArthur.\(^5\)\(^9\)

Having determined by June 30, 1950, that air and naval forces were inadequate to halt the North Korean offensive, the president authorized MacArthur to use what forces he needed to prevent the communists from overrunning the south.\(^6\)\(^0\)

Before committing nearly a fourth of America's ground forces to Korea, Truman had received congressional authority to obtain draftees through selective service and to employ reserve forces (discussed more fully below).


\(^{58}\)Ibid., 28.

\(^{59}\)MacArthur's forces were understrength and largely unprepared for combat. This problem was shared by active and reserve forces stationed in the United States, about 960,000 strategic replacements to support worldwide commitments. Ibid., 25.

\(^{60}\)Schnabel and Watson, \textit{Joint Chiefs}, 90, 118; Department of State, \textit{Foreign Relations, 1950: Korea}, 178-183.
Nonetheless, he expected that restoration of South Korean control up to the 38th parallel would not require prolonged combat.\textsuperscript{61} "Congressional authorization was necessary since the president had not declared a national emergency."\textsuperscript{62}

On the basis of that authorization, the United States had deployed enough ground forces (about 155,000 army and marine personnel) by November 1950 to sustain the offensive along with South Korean forces (about 82,000) across the 38th parallel. When the Chinese intervened with nearly 300,000 troops, the president declared a national emergency. As part of that emergency, the administration speeded up efforts to increase the nation’s standing forces for use in other areas (i.e., Europe) while simultaneously beginning plans to redeploy from Korea. At the same time, the president did not move to totally mobilize the nation’s industrial and manpower resources. He decided that mobilization would remain partial, with preparations being made for the possibility of a larger war against the Soviets and with only sufficient men and materiel being sent to Korea to contain the Chinese and North Koreans without triggering such a war.\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 248-53.
\item \textsuperscript{62}Gough, \textit{Mobilization}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{63}Bevin Alexander, \textit{Korea} (New York: Hippocrene, 1986), 310; Gough, \textit{Mobilization}, 37, 45, 55-56.
\end{itemize}

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The problem of balancing the U.S. commitment to South Korea against other commitments (e.g., Europe, Japan) became less urgent with the effective reduction of Chinese offensive capabilities by June 1951. Yet, the problem became more difficult with the initiation of cease-fire negotiations the following month (discussed more fully below). Although U.S. forces would not be driven from Korea, their continuing presence was required so long as negotiations proceeded and South Korean forces remained unable to defend themselves.

It was not until two years later on July 27, 1953, that negotiations were brought to a conclusion under the Eisenhower administration. The United States had 139,272 combat related casualties, including 24,965 killed in action and 12,939 missing and presumed dead. Of South Korea's 272,975 casualties, 46,812 were killed in action and 66,436 were missing and presumed dead. U.N. allies suffered 14,103 combat casualties, with 2,597 killed and 1,925 missing or dead. The Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that North Korea had 620,264 casualties, with 214,899 killed in action and 101,680 missing or dead. China had an estimated 909,607 casualties, with 401,401 killed and 21,211 missing."


"Alexander, Korea, 483.
On the same day that an armistice was signed in Korea, sixteen U.N. members signed a "Greater Sanctions Statement" indicating their support for South Korea in the event of renewed communist aggression. The members affirmed

in the interests of world peace, that if there is a renewal of the armed attack [on South Korea], challenging again the principles of the United Nations, we should again be united and prompt to resist. The consequences of such a breach of the armistice would be so grave that, in all probability, it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea."

By the time this statement was signed, the United States had built up its forces to include over 1,526,921 active army personnel." Any doubt that those forces would not provide the greater part of the sanctions in the statement was removed by the Eisenhower administration. On December 26, 1954, the president announced that he would begin a gradual withdrawal of most of the 327,000 U.S. personnel remaining in South Korea (whose forces then numbered over 450,000). That announcement was followed three days later with one by Secretary of State Dulles that, as part of the administration's new strategy, renewed

"Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Basic Documents, 1950-55 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1957), 2662.

"Gough, Mobilization, 17.
communist aggression could result in the bombing of North Korea and China.\textsuperscript{68}

**U.S. Public Support**

Initially very popular with Congress and the public, the Korean War became less so following Chinese intervention. Given rapidly shifting political and military objectives (as detailed above), congressional members and their constituents had little time to develop an understanding of the peace process initiated by the president. Led to expect victory prior to China's entry, the public expressed a growing, but not overwhelming, preference for decisive action to end the war. This was an indication that the public required greater knowledge of the war's changing political and military objectives.

On the day that President Truman announced the first air and naval actions against North Korean forces (June 27, 1950), members of Congress discussed the U.S. intervention. Although the president had not yet committed ground forces, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly (315-4) on a bill to extend the draft for a period of one year and to allow the president to begin reserve mobilization. The Senate unanimously approved the measure the next day.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} Lee, *U.S. Forces in Korea*, 59.

\textsuperscript{69} Alexander, *Korea*, 42.
After President Truman had implicit support for the use of ground forces, he did not ask Congress to declare a state of war, preferring to let the war be known as a police action. "Thus was born" a "presidential precedent to try to sanitize and minimize American military actions by avoiding formal congressional" authorization.70

It was not until the president relieved General MacArthur in the spring of 1951 that congressional members began to focus on the problem of limited war in Korea. Explaining that the primary aim of U.S. policy was to prevent another world war, the president told the nation that

> events have made it evident that General MacArthur did not agree with that policy. I have therefore considered it essential to relieve General MacArthur so that there would be no doubt or confusion as to the real purpose and aim of our policy."71

In the highly politicized atmosphere surrounding his relief, MacArthur’s response before a congressional audience was that the goal of decisive victory in Korea had been "fully shared by practically every military leader, including our own Joint Chiefs of Staff."72

In Senate testimony beginning on May 3, 1951, MacArthur held that the policy of limited war removed the potential "of destroying the enemy’s military power and

70Ibid.

71President, Public Papers, 1951, 226.

72Kaufman, Korean War, 166.
bringing the conflict to a decisive close in the minimum of
time and with a minimum loss of life."" In contrast with
this position, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
General Omar Bradley pointed out that
objectives in a war are not entirely military. In
other words, the end results of war are a combination
of military and political considerations, and you use
the military to obtain your political objectives."
Between the issues of prolonging hostilities and of
subordinating military objectives to political objectives
(i.e., avoiding a U.S.-Soviet strategic confrontation over
Korea), the terms of debate had been set for the American
political system regarding the limits to be observed in
war.

At the time of the Senate’s hearings, the American
public was not privileged to the testimony presented by
witnesses. Nevertheless, there was a general awareness of
the issues at stake in Korea. In particular, while public
approval decreased over the course of the war, the public
remained committed to American war efforts. The public’s
primary problem was understanding how the war could be
terminated without escalating to a total war.

A Gallup poll conducted in August 1950 showed that 66
percent of those polled approved of America’s involvement
in the war, with only 12 percent expressing a desire for

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"Gacek, Logic of Force, 65.
"Ibid., 69.
withdrawal. Following Chinese intervention, that approval had fallen to only 39 percent when the poll was conducted in December 1950. Still only eleven percent favored withdrawal.\textsuperscript{75}

Consistent with the Gallup poll, a NORC poll conducted in June 1951 showed that only 37 percent approved of the initial decision to go to war in Korea; however, 76 percent favored maintaining the U.S. commitment. When the war stalemated, public approval remained around 40 percent for the next 22 months. Various polls indicated between 12 and 17 percent favoring withdrawal over the same period.\textsuperscript{76} The constancy of approval during this period was in part attributable to the Chinese intervention, which had earlier removed the support of those unsure of unwilling to maintain a commitment in a prolonged war.\textsuperscript{77}

While there was little variance in public support for the war following the Chinese intervention, the eventual stalemate caused the public to increasingly support escalation of the war against China. An April 1952 NORC poll showed 31 percent favoring to remain in Korea and 49 percent favoring war with China. Through the course of the


\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.

war, about 77 percent of respondents to a Roper poll favored retaining a U.S. presence in Korea. Respondents favoring escalation rose from 20 percent in June 1950 to 40 percent around the period of Chinese intervention, remaining between 45 and 49 percent between June 1951 and the end of the war. Those favoring escalation outnumbered respondents favoring withdrawal by a margin of 2 to 1 in June 1950 and 5 to 1 from July 1951 onward.

These opinions illustrated "the public's considerable frustration over what to do next in the war." While later observers and theorists would come to recognize that frustration as a considerable source of pressure to escalate limited wars like Korea, they would not provide a practical means of informing or channeling the public's desire for escalation.

Military and Nonmilitary Means

A significant source of public frustration with the Korean War was the Truman administration's continued willingness to prolong combat while seeking a political solution to the war. The report (NSC 118/2) which formalized that policy noted that

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79 Mueller, War, 103.
it must be expected that, in the event armistice negotiations fail, U.S. public opinion may demand the adoption of military measures adequate to achieve a political and military decision of the Korean struggle. 80

NSC 118/2 was correct in its expectation that negotiations would become a primary source of pressure to escalate the war though it overstated the ultimate impact that public opinion had in exerting such pressure. 81

In a review of NSC 118/2 (NSC 147) undertaken by the Eisenhower administration in April 1954, it was noted that American "sentiment for vigorous action to achieve a settlement [in Korea] is widespread, but there is no strong demand for any particular course of action." 82 With armistice talks stalled on the issue of prisoner of war repatriation (the Chinese favoring forcible repatriation), the administration was considering actions ranging from a gradual redeployment from Korea to the forcible reunification of the peninsula. All options except the redeployment of forces left open the possible use of nuclear weapons.83

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80 Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1951: Korea, 1388.

81 During the Eisenhower administration, the economic costs of prolonging the war played a substantial role in considerations to escalate the war. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, vol. 15, Korea, part 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984), 847.

82 Ibid., 847.

83 Ibid., 840, 845.
In order to pressure the Chinese into concluding an armistice, President Eisenhower threatened to escalate the war to include the use of nuclear weapons against Chinese targets, thus risking a general war. While the actual impact of that threat on the Chinese remained open to question," Eisenhower's willingness to even make it pointed "to the tremendous difficulties that inhere in using force nondecisively against an opponent possessing great resources and the will to fight."**

**Conclusion**

The Korean War raised a number of issues which carried over into and helped define an era of limited war. The war established containment as a global policy enforced by the threat or actual use of military force. The spread of nuclear weapons complicated that issue, creating a dilemma for Americans in which the need for military success and the threat of nuclear escalation appeared as equally valid concerns. As Matthew Ridgway notes

Korea taught us that all warfare from this time forth must be limited. It could no longer be a question of

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**"For more thorough discussion, see Rosemary Foot, The Wrong War (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985). Also by the same author, see A Substitute for Victory (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).**

**"Gacek, Logic of Force, 86-87."**
whether to fight a limited war, but of how to avoid fighting any other kind.86

The difficulty was in determining which groups learned this particular lesson and how they interpreted it.

One group consisted of the theorists who drew on the single case of Korea to develop a theory of limited war.

Notwithstanding considerable [public] dissatisfaction with the conduct and results of the Korean War, it was widely accepted [by theorists and civilian experts] as a preferable alternative to the contemporary alternatives of total war and acquiescence in aggression.87

Passed on to civilian experts who began to assume greater responsibilities for military strategy in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the theory of limited war gained prominence as a means of minimizing the risks of combat while achieving military success.88 The theory appeared to offer an acceptable strategic guide to President Johnson, who was concerned with maintaining U.S. commitments in Vietnam while attempting to avoid major combat. Given an overall lack of empirical content, the theory offered poor guidance.

With their primary focus on the prevention of total war, limited war theorists underestimated the need for public support in the evaluation of conditions favorable to U.S. security. This situation was made worse by the

86Ridgway, Korean War, vi.
87O'Brien, Just and Limited War, 257.
precedent set in Korea of bypassing congressional debate in committing forces to combat in limited wars. For President Johnson, expert consensus on the need for limited war in Vietnam would not prove to be an adequate substitute for popular consensus as to the meaning of such a war.
CHAPTER 4

THE VIETNAM WAR

In a news conference on July 28, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson announced the deployment of additional combat forces to protect South Vietnam against an insurgency supplied and directed by the north. He argued that failure to oppose Asian communism would lead to further communist aggression, a situation in which no nation "could ever again have the same confidence in American promises, or in American protection." As part of his announcement on March 31, 1968, that he would not stand for reelection, Johnson stressed that the United States was still committed to South Vietnam but would begin a unilateral deescalation of its war efforts in order to achieve a negotiated end to the Vietnam War.

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When President Richard Nixon came into office, he expanded on Johnson's efforts to negotiate an end to the war and to decrease American involvement. President Nixon implemented a plan meant to provide "a prospect of honorable disengagement that was not hostage to" communist "cooperation" and that would not lead to further aggression. By the end of 1973, about 250 U.S. personnel remained in South Vietnam, over 14,000 less than the number present before President Johnson assumed his office in late November 1963.

Over two decades since the United States disengaged from the Vietnam War, that experience has continued to exercise profound influence on the nation's approach to the problem of limited war. A number of important and pertinent questions have remained over how the formation and implementation of U.S. policy towards Vietnam could have been so misdirected. In short, how did things go wrong?

American involvement in Vietnam did not come about due to a precise set of circumstances. Neither was the nation's conduct of the war based on a fully developed strategy addressing "the question of 'how' to use military

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*Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 306.

*Department of the Army, Defense Information School, Vietnam, 10 Years Later (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984), 100, 105.
means to achieve" its political objectives. American commitments and operations evolved over time, drawing strategic guidance from the abstract framework given by limited war theory for influencing opponents without waging a total war to defeat them (as detailed in chapter 2). Applied to the specific case of Vietnam, that framework contributed to a situation in which the costs of gradually expanded war efforts eventually weakened the popular support needed to sustain an effective negotiating stance with the North Vietnamese and a commitment to South Vietnam.

Historical Background

The Vietnam War was largely a continuation of an earlier war (the first Indochina war) which began in December 1946 between communist Viet Nam nationalists led by Ho Chi Minh and the French, who sought to reassert

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"Two early studies isolated casualty levels among American personnel as the primary variable, explaining increasing public aversion to the risks of prolonged conflict in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. See Mueller, War as well as Jeffrey S. Millstein, Dynamics of the Vietnam War (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1974).

"The proceeding discussion deals primarily with internal developments in Vietnam. American involvement in those developments is discussed more fully in subsequent sections of this chapter.
colonial control over Indochina after World War II. That war ended in July 1954 with a negotiated settlement, the Geneva Accords, following the French defeat at Dienbienphu two months earlier. The accords provided for a division of Indochina at the 17th parallel until reunification elections could be held in 1956.9

Although a truce was achieved, it was one "that awaited a political settlement, which never happened." Instead, one regime was set up in the north, and another set up in the south. The former, led by Ho Chi Minh, was dedicated to reunifying Vietnam under communist control. The latter, led by Ngo Dinh Diem, sought to build a separate nation.

In the immediate aftermath of the Geneva Accords, U.S. military and economic assistance enabled Diem to begin to consolidate his political position in South Vietnam after the French began to withdraw from South Vietnam in February 1955. In the spring of that year, he suppressed armed opposition by Buddhist sects. After proclaiming himself president of South Vietnam as a result of elections in October 1955, he refused to negotiate with the North Vietnamese. By July 1956, he had refused to hold reunification elections. (Neither the U.S. nor the South


Vietnamese representatives at Geneva had signed the 1954 accords).\textsuperscript{10}

As part of his efforts to consolidate power, Diem had been waging a successful campaign against the 5,000 to 10,000 Viet Minh who had remained in the south since 1954. Having been left with orders from the north to engage only in a political struggle against Diem's regime, the Viet Minh organized themselves as armed insurgents between 1956 and 1957, after Diem had nearly succeeded in eliminating them as a revolutionary force. By the spring of 1959, the Viet Minh insurgents had become known as Vietcong, being supplied and directed by Ho's regime in Hanoi.\textsuperscript{11}

Hanoi based its conduct of the war against South Vietnam on the same strategy of protracted war that had been used against the French, a strategy developed in turn from theories which Mao Tse Tung had applied in China. The strategy called for a gradual shift from guerrilla operations, which were defensive in nature, to an all-out offensive conducted by conventional forces. The strategic shift allowed for the continuation of unconventional operations while those forces were being assembled in the north. Unconventional operations were generally localized, intended to weaken popular support for the South Vietnamese


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 71-81.
government and disperse its army's capabilities. Moreover, guerrilla forces served as a "source of manpower" for the development of regular forces in the south "whose scope of activities was more extensive and whose combat effectiveness and armament were better."\(^{12}\)

By 1962, Hanoi had begun to infiltrate forces into the south to help organize the Vietcong and to replace their losses. As of 1964, large units of the regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were being sent to the south, a trend that only increased with the introduction of American combat forces a year later. "The infiltration of NVA men and units, together with combat and logistic support assets continued unabated despite heavy" American bombardment.\(^{13}\)

### U.S. Interests in Vietnam

American interests in Vietnam date back to World War II. America found itself caught between two competing and problematic foreign policy objectives. On one hand, Franklin Roosevelt's administration was firmly committed to anticolonialism. In an internal memorandum, Roosevelt stated that: "France has had the country [Indochina] thirty million inhabitants, for nearly one hundred years,

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\(^{13}\)Ibid.
and the people are worse off than they were at the beginning."\textsuperscript{14}

Roosevelt was unsuccessful in convincing the European allies to give their colonies independence. This led to a competing American foreign policy objective, the need to satisfy the allied desire to retain colonial holdings in order to keep the war effort against the Axis powers in place. With the death of Roosevelt, the dilemma over anti-colonialism and the need to support the European allies was far from being resolved. The situation did not improve with the administration of President Harry Truman.\textsuperscript{15}

With the advent of the Cold War and the formulation and enunciation of the Truman Doctrine, the defense of Europe was linked to collective security in Asia. According to William Bundy, who became a senior policy maker in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, President Truman compromised on the issue of French colonialism in Indochina in order to improve chances for "the effective organization and rearming of" the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.\textsuperscript{16} By May 1950, the Truman administration


\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 6-7.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 23.
was providing $75 million in military assistance to support French efforts against the Viet Minh.¹⁷

The president's decision to help the French was reinforced by subsequent events. In particular,

the outbreak of the Korean War, and the American decision to resist North Korean aggression, sharpened overnight [American] thoughts and actions with respect to Southeast Asia. The French struggle in Indochina came far more than before to be seen as an integral part of the containment of communism in that region of the world . . . . ¹⁸

The Korean War would play a major role in the formulation of American foreign policy toward Indochina for many years to follow.

While that war was still being waged, events in 1953 would further magnify Indochina's importance to the United States. Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president following a campaign in which Republicans accused the Truman administration of being responsible for the loss of China to communism. The possibility of an armistice in Korea only added to speculation that the Chinese would turn their attention to Indochina. During the campaign, John Foster Dulles traveled the United States arguing that Southeast Asia was a key region in the conflict with communist imperialism, and that it was important to draw


¹⁸Ibid., 83.
the line of containment north of Indochina. This position
was endorsed by Eisenhower in his first State of the Union
Address, in which he linked communist aggression in Korea
and Malaya with Indochina.19

On April 7, 1954, President Eisenhower held a news
conference in which he echoed this theme. During the
course of the conference, Eisenhower was asked whether he
would mind commenting on the strategic importance of
Indochina to the free world. In his response, he
elaborated on what he called the "falling domino"
principle. He stated that:

You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the
first one, and what will happen to the last one is the
certainty that it will go over very quickly . . . .
When we come to the possible sequence of events, the
loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the
[Malaysian] Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you
begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the
disadvantages that you would suffer through the loss of
materials, sources of materials, but now you are
talking really about millions and millions and millions
of people.20

As in Korea, failure to combat communist aggression in
Indochina had come to be linked (correctly or not) with the
prevention of future threats at a regional and global
level. For President Eisenhower and those who would follow

19Ibid., 85.

20President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the
United States (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal
Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1960-61),
Dwight Eisenhower, 1954, 383. The domino principle or
theory had been formalized in NSC 64, a report signed by
him in office, the question would remain of the means needed to confront localized aggression on balance with larger threats.

By 1954, the Eisenhower administration faced the problem of more firmly establishing its commitment to Indochina, particularly in light of increasing French losses to the Chinese and Soviet supplied Viet Minh. Prior to the fall of Dienbienphu, the French requested American intervention. Apart from the prospects that such intervention would lead to Chinese intervention, there was also a considered risk that direct combat on the side of the French would detract from the ability to defend Europe. In either case, Eisenhower and his top political and military advisors did not want to repeat their experience with a protracted war of attrition as in Korea.\textsuperscript{21} Even after Dienbienphu fell, "the Soviet Union and China feared" the implicit threat represented by the administration's strategic emphasis on "massive retaliation" and forced the Viet Minh to accept a truce at Geneva which "was far better" for the United States "than the military situation" in Indochina "warranted."\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21}Gacek, Logic of Force, ch. 4.

\textsuperscript{22}Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 634. It must be remembered that the Viet Minh victory at Dienbienphu has helped obscure "the extent to which the persistence of military stalemate in Indochina shaped the indecisive peace settlement at Geneva." George C. Herring, "The Legacy of the First Indochina War," in Second Indochina War Symposium, ed. John Schlight

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Whatever the role of massive retaliation in achieving that truce, conditions remained open for a growing American role in supporting the Diem regime in South Vietnam. Paralleling that role was an increasing debate over the adequacy of the Eisenhower administration’s nuclear strategy to deal with unconventional threats like the Vietcong insurgency. The same year he retired as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1959), General Maxwell Taylor contributed to the debate, writing that

the strategic doctrine which I propose to replace Massive Retaliation is herein called the Strategy of Flexible Response. This name suggests the need for a capability to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge, for coping with anything from general atomic war to infiltrations and aggressions such as threaten Laos and Berlin in 1959 . . . . [T]he limited war which we cannot win quickly may result in our piecemeal attrition or involvement in expanding conflict which may grow into the general conflict we all want to avoid.23

President Eisenhower left office advising President-elect John Kennedy to defend Laos against the North Vietnamese, who were using the country to infiltrate South Vietnam.24 The strategic content of flexible response would be worked out along with the development of capabilities to implement it as a tool to protect American interests.

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24Kissinger, Diplomacy, 641.
Even before he was elected president, then Senator Kennedy had accepted both the need to develop flexible means of protecting American interests and the domino principle. Speaking in the Senate on February 29, 1960, Kennedy stated that:

"Events have demonstrated that our nuclear retaliatory power is not enough. It cannot deter Communist aggression which is too limited to justify atomic war. It cannot protect uncommitted nations against a Communist takeover using local or guerrilla forces. It cannot be used in so-called brush-fire peripheral wars. In short, it cannot prevent the Communists from gradually nibbling at the fringe of the free world's territory and strength, until our security has been steadily eroded in piecemeal fashion--each Red advance being too small to justify massive retaliation, with all its risks [of nuclear conflagration]."

By late November 1961, with the insurgency against the Diem regime worsening, President Kennedy had approved the commitment of military advisors to stabilize the situation in South Vietnam. President Kennedy fixed on the concepts of counterinsurgency and nation-building to counter the North Vietnamese threat, an expression of so-called Wars of National Liberation or People's War. At the same time, developments in South Vietnam continued to worsen. By October 1963, Kennedy had sent about 15,000 advisors to South Vietnam, even as it remained unclear what actual effects his administration's strategic innovations were

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having against the Vietcong. In particular, it remained an open question to what extent aid to the South Vietnamese could enable them to defeat the Vietcong and North Vietnamese infiltrators. On November 14, 1963, President Kennedy had still not answered the question for himself when he told reporters that his administration's objective was "to bring Americans home" and "permit the South Vietnamese to maintain themselves as a free and independent country."*

When President Johnson succeeded Kennedy, he pledged himself to achieve the goals set by his predecessor. "That meant seeing things through in Vietnam as well as coping with the many other international and domestic problems he had faced . . . . Our policy would be 'steady on course.'"** The immediate problem that President Johnson faced was the reliability of information pertaining to Vietnam. He realized that intelligence information was flawed and unreliable. He later stated his belief that two things were wrong with the reporting in 1963: an excess of wishful thinking on the part of some official observers and too much uncritical reliance on Vietnamese statistics and information. Many Vietnamese officials and officers in the field apparently reported

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*Hilsman, To Move a nation, 419-46, 517-26.


as fact what they thought their own government wanted to hear. Some of our officials in turn accepted many of those reports at face value.\textsuperscript{30}

Due to President Johnson's suspicions, he ordered Secretary of Defense McNamara to visit Saigon in early December 1963 to find out what was really the case in Vietnam. McNamara returned to Washington and reported to President Johnson that: "the situation is very disturbing . . . . Current trends, unless reversed in the next two or three months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely to a Communist-controlled state."\textsuperscript{31}

In his search for options to maintain the American commitment to South Vietnam without taking on excessive combat responsibilities, Johnson settled on a strategy of graduated response offered by an assistant to Secretary McNamara. Although a debate had been going on since the Kennedy administration "over whether to bomb" North Vietnam, a fundamental issue had remained "how" to do so at an acceptable cost. Informed by academic theories of bargaining, "civilian planners wanted to start out softly and gradually increase the pressure by precise increments which could be unmistakably recognized by Hanoi."\textsuperscript{32}

President Johnson's decision to implement graduated response was a compromise to support American interests

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 63.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{32}Summers, On Strategy, 72.
given the same dilemma faced by his predecessors, how to halt the spread of communism in Southeast Asia while decreasing the risks of a total war against China and the Soviet Union over South Vietnam. He wanted to convey the message that

we [Americans] are there [in South Vietnam] because we are trying to make the Communists of North Vietnam stop shooting at their neighbors . . . to demonstrate that guerrilla warfare, inspired by one nation against another nation, can never succeed . . . [and to make] the Communists in North Vietnam realize the price of aggression is too high—and either agree to a peaceful settlement or to stop their fighting . . . .

Ultimately, Johnson wanted to demonstrate that American interests were not in defeating the North Vietnamese but in denying them victory in the south.

Although strategically appealing, graduated response had an opposite effect than the one desired on North Vietnamese determination to continue their offense against the south. As Henry Kissinger has recently noted, theorists had originally conceived of graduated response as a strategy in nuclear war—incrementally escalating and thereby avoiding a total holocaust. When applied to guerrilla warfare, however, it ran the risk of inviting open-ended escalation. Each limited commitment involved the danger of being interpreted as inhibition rather than resolve, thereby encouraging the

\[33\text{President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1967), Lyndon Johnson, 1966, 720.}\]

\[34\text{Ibid.}\]
adversary to continue his climb along the ladder of escalation.\(^3\)

If incremental bombing did not strengthen North Vietnamese determination, the strategy at least failed to convince them to cease their offense and to deny them the means to continue it.

A major consequence of this failure was an increasing commitment of ground forces to South Vietnam, contributing to a reappraisal of the best means to continue to protect American interests in that nation. On September 29, 1967, President Johnson was beginning to lean towards unilateral concessions in order to achieve a negotiated peace with Hanoi. In San Antonio, Texas, he delivered a speech in which he said

> the United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Vietnam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.\(^3\)

By the spring of 1968, the commitment of ground forces and the bombing of North Vietnam had helped to divide the American public and ruined Johnson’s presidency, factors that Hanoi continued to exploit as part of its propaganda.

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\(^3\)Kissinger, Diplomacy, 652.

and strategy of "fighting and talking, talking and fighting."  

When President Nixon entered office in 1969, he inherited the idea of "peace with honor." In his first year as President, he formulated and enunciated a new approach to American foreign policy, the Nixon Doctrine. During informal remarks in Guam with newsmen, President Nixon began to enunciate his approach in Asia and elsewhere in the world, contrasting it with what he considered to be the past mistakes of foreign policy:

What will be its [United States] role in Asia and the Pacific after the end of the war in Vietnam? . . . I think that one of the weaknesses in American foreign policy is that too often we react rather precipitately to events as they occur. We fail to have the perspective and the long-range view which is essential for a policy that will be viable . . . . I believe that the time has come when the United States, in our relations with all of our Asian friends, be quite emphatic on two points: One, that we will keep our treaty commitments, . . . but, two, that as far as the problems of internal security are concerned, as far as the problems of military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, that the United States is going to encourage and has a right to expect that this problem will be increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves.  

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37George C. Herring, LBJ and Vietnam (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994), 176. This strategy was essentially a means of using negotiations to wear down American resolve during a prolonged war of attrition.

Nixon argued that from that point onward, the United States' role in Asia should be to "help them fight the war but not to fight the war for them." 39

A few weeks later, the president reaffirmed his doctrine more specifically.

---First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.
---Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.
---Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treatment commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense. 40

In applying the standards of his doctrine to South Vietnam, the president found it necessary to simultaneously strengthen the South Vietnamese army, continue bombing pressures to achieve a negotiated settlement, and assure the commitment of enough force to attain an orderly withdrawal. Ultimately, that withdrawal would be achieved; however, strategic guidance derived from limited war theory had helped to undercut the U.S. commitment to South Vietnam. It would not be possible to legitimize a continued commitment of resources to support the south after withdrawal.

39Ibid., 905.
40ibid., 905-06.
U.S. Objectives in Vietnam

As indicated above, the United States faced a strategic dilemma in Vietnam, how to prevent the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia without provoking a total war with the Soviet Union and China. In order to overcome the fundamental tension between these two goals, the Kennedy administration established the Military Assistance Command in South Vietnam. The command's basic objective was to assist that nation's government and armed forces "to defeat externally directed and supported communist subversion and aggression and attain an independent South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment."41

Following the assassinations of presidents Diem and Kennedy in November 1963, President Johnson signed National Security Action Memorandum 273 (NSAM 273). NSAM 273 restated the basic goal of assisting "the people and Government" of South Vietnam "to win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy." Assuming that the South Vietnamese would be capable of winning "their contest" with current levels of military and economic assistance, the memorandum estimated that the withdrawal of advisory forces would begin by

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December 1963 and the Vietcong insurgency would be suppressed by December 1965.\textsuperscript{42}

These latter estimates were modified during the spring of 1964 in light of South Vietnam's inability to suppress the Vietcong and the growing number of northern troops reinforcing them through Laos. As approved by President Johnson in March, a revised memorandum (NSAM 288) maintained the objective of assisting the South Vietnamese to defend themselves. In order to do so, NSAM 288 delayed the withdrawal of advisors and pointed out that the United States should "provide all the assistance and advice required to" defeat the Vietcong "regardless of how long it takes." In addition, the memorandum initiated advance plans and preparations for a graduated bombing campaign to pressure the north to discontinue its support of the insurgents.\textsuperscript{43}

In approving NSAM 288, President Johnson judged that graduated response would minimize the need for ground forces to support the south as well as the risks of confrontation with the Chinese and Soviets.\textsuperscript{44} In part, the president based his judgment on the experience of

\textsuperscript{42}Times Pentagon Papers, 238-39.


\textsuperscript{44}Johnson, Vantage Point, 119; Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 264.
Chinese intervention during the Korean War. At the same time, Johnson was relying largely on the advice of civilian strategists in the Defense Department (e.g., Secretary McNamara) whose views were shaped by limited war theory. They assumed that in virtually all cases, "the United States would be free to escalate or deescalate or make whatever adjustments in policy that the President and his advisors might think desirable."

Neither experience nor expert advice could provide unambiguous guidance in resolving the dilemma of how best to stem communist aggression while preventing a major confrontation over South Vietnam. As of June 22, 1964, President Johnson could only tell reporters

"It may be helpful to outline four basic themes that govern our policy in Southeast Asia. First, America keeps her word. Second, the issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole. Third, our purpose is peace. Fourth, this is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. On the point that America keeps her word, we are steadfast in a policy which has been followed for 10 years in three administrations."

Long-term credibility was at best only a broad standard for assessing what was to be or was being accomplished in

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"In February 1965, Johnson was advised by former President Eisenhower that the best deterrent to Chinese intervention was a secretly communicated threat of nuclear reprisal. Johnson, Vantage Point, 131.


Vietnam, one obscuring the means needed to assist the South Vietnamese to defend themselves.

This left open the possibility of an expanding commitment lacking a viable strategy to coordinate national policy objectives and military actions. On April 7, 1965, the president did not substantially clarify the situation when he told a national audience:

Our objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack. We want ... only that the people of South Viet-Nam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way. We will do everything necessary to reach that objective, and we will do only what is absolutely necessary.48

By late April, the emerging strategy to achieve that objective was "to break the will of" North Vietnam and the Vietcong "by depriving them of victory," leading "eventually to a political solution."49

The nation's policy and strategy had not undergone a significant test when the president announced the deployment of combat forces to South Vietnam on July 28, 1965. He stated that "we [Americans] intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power." When asked if the deployment implied a change "in the existing policy" of "using American forces to guard installations and to act as emergency backup," he announced, "It does not imply any

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48 Ibid., 730.
49 Ibid., 706.
What remained unclear to the president and all other participants in the political process was the amount of force that would eventually be exerted in the attempt both to convince the communists that they could not win and to secure South Vietnam.

One component of that force was the air campaign waged against North Vietnam. Designated Rolling Thunder, the campaign's primary operation underwent steady escalation (except for bombing pauses meant to promote negotiations) from its inception on March 2, 1965, until late 1967, when President Johnson began the process of deescalation. Rolling Thunder's strategic objective was to coerce Hanoi into abandoning the Vietcong. Tactically, the operation was intended to destroy the infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, industrial facilities) by which the north supported the insurgents.51

The other component of the force employed was the use of ground forces in South Vietnam. According to General William Westmoreland, head of the Military Assistance Command in the south, the ground war's strategic objective was pacification. Pacification meant the development of "an economically and politically viable society in which the [South Vietnamese] people could live without constant

50Tbid., 477.

fear of death or other physical harm." Tactically, such development depended on a variety of social, economic, and military instruments, the latter form being the most direct way of establishing internal security.

From the beginning of major air and ground operations in Vietnam, President Johnson and his civilian advisors, particularly Secretary McNamara, attempted to maintain restrictions on the military's conduct in accord with the strategic objectives of the war. Nevertheless, it was not until late 1967 and early 1968 that the gradually expanding tactical requirements of denying a communist victory in the south prompted the president to more actively reevaluate and limit operations. Faced with an increasingly public dispute between McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the destruction of the north's military and industrial base in August 1967, the president allowed air operations to continue but began assuming a more conciliatory approach in seeking negotiations with Hanoi. Moreover, although the president had not

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62 Westmoreland, Soldier Reports, 68.

53 Important examples of those restrictions included the number and variety of targets bombed in the north (e.g., bridges, oil storage facilities), geographic restrictions (e.g., the Chinese border), and the number of ground troops sent to South Vietnam.

54 Tilford, Setup, 141-146; Gravel Edition, vol. 4, 138-144. The debate between McNamara and the Joint Chiefs occupied hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee.
established a limit on the number of forces sent to Vietnam by late 1967, he had begun to redirect their tactical emphasis from attrition of the Vietcong towards the reestablishment of South Vietnam’s control over pacification efforts.  

By the time President Johnson left office, the objective of disengaging from Vietnam had significantly altered what was meant by denying a communist victory. In particular, the withdrawal of American forces meant that any possibility of a negotiated settlement would depend on a combination of South Vietnamese ground strength supplemented by the continued use of American airpower. As President Nixon observed, if the North Vietnamese feel that we are going to stay there long enough for the South Vietnamese to be strong enough to handle their own defense, then I think they have a real incentive to negotiate, because if they have to negotiate with a strong, vigorous South Vietnamese government, the deal they make with them isn’t going to be as good as the deal they might make now.

The best deal for the United States had become withdrawal under the most favorable conditions achieved through negotiations.

In order to achieve such conditions, the Nixon administration sought to simultaneously carry on a process

55Thomas W. Scoville, Reorganizing for Pacification Support (Washington, DC: GPO, 1982), ch. 5.

of Vietnamization and of negotiation. The president later wrote that the nation’s policy goals were to: Reverse the Americanization of the war . . . and concentrate instead on Vietnamization. Give more priority to pacification . . . to extend their [South Vietnamese] control over the countryside. Reduce the invasion threat by destroying enemy sanctuaries and supply lines in Cambodia and Laos. Withdraw the half million American troops from Vietnam in a way that would not bring about a collapse in the south. Negotiate a cease fire and a peace treaty. Demonstrate our willingness and determination to stand by . . . [South Vietnam] if the peace treaty was violated by Hanoi, and assure South Vietnam that it would continue to receive our military aid as Hanoi did from its allies, the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, China.  

Diplomatically, the administration recognized the possibility of escalating the air war against North Vietnam without risking Chinese intervention.  

It was in part due to that recognition that President Nixon escalated the bombing campaign against the north, reducing restrictions which had been imposed during the Johnson administration. (In particular, the president began by ordering the mining Haiphong harbor and expanded to targets throughout North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). The bombing campaign (Linebacker) initiated by the president on May 9, 1972, had two objectives: first, to blockade North Vietnam from Soviet and Chinese

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58 Kissinger, Diplomacy, 692.
59 Kissinger, White House Years, 1099-1100.
supply sources; and, second, to destroy the north's industrial means of supporting its forces in the south. "Taken together," these objectives were meant to compel the north "to negotiate a peace plan acceptable to the United States."60

Gradual bombing had contributed to the buildup of U.S. ground forces to assist South Vietnam. Now sustained bombing was being used to allow for the withdrawal of those forces while assisting the south to defend itself.

U.S. Mobilization

The gradual deployment of American combat forces to Vietnam beginning in 1965 reflected the Johnson administration's inability to develop a coherent strategy "to help the South Vietnamese build up their forces so that they could win the war."
61 When peace accords were signed in January 1973, the Nixon administration had managed to gradually withdraw combat forces while implementing the strategy of Vietnamization. The question remained open to what extent the South Vietnamese could defeat external aggression.

In answering this question, President Johnson faced an ambiguous situation. With the president's approval,

60Tilford, Setup, 234.

61Nixon, Real War, 106.
U.S. Marines began deploying to South Vietnam in early March 1965 to protect air bases needed to sustain the bombing campaign against the north.\textsuperscript{62} After the North Vietnamese refused to negotiate following a six-day bombing pause he ordered on May 12, 1965,\textsuperscript{63} the president decided to proceed with the deployment of over 30,000 reinforcements. Their primary purpose was "holding on and avoiding . . . a spectacular defeat of" South Vietnamese and American forces already engaged against the Vietcong.\textsuperscript{64} By early July, the president had committed about 75,000 troops to limited offensive operations against the Vietcong. President Johnson had accepted a "consensus" among his advisors "that a settlement in Vietnam would come as much or more from Communist failure in the South as from 'pain' [produced by bombing] in North Vietnam."\textsuperscript{65}

This consensus was more difficult to maintain after June 13, 1965, when the American commander in South Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, requested about 175,000 combat troops to compensate for South Vietnamese

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{63}Johnson, \textit{Vantage Point}, 578.
\textsuperscript{65}Johnson, \textit{Vantage Point}, 141.
\end{quote}
losses since the previous month. In their endorsement of that request on July 2, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a broad recommendation to deploy "such additional forces at this time as are required to insure that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese "cannot win in" South Vietnam "at their present level of commitment." With South Vietnamese losses as the clearest indicator of that commitment, General Westmoreland could not assure anyone in the chain of command (from the president down) that the number of requested troops "would persuade the enemy to desist."

After conferring with General Westmoreland in Saigon, Secretary McNamara met with the president and other advisors on July 21 to discuss Westmoreland's request. In that meeting, the secretary recommended that the 175,000 troops be deployed and that the president seek authorization from Congress to call up an additional 235,000 reserves and to increase regular forces by 375,000. McNamara noted, "It should be recognized that even" if such mobilization allowed the United States to deny victory to the communists, "it is not obvious how we will be able to disengage our forces."

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67 Ibid.
68 Westmoreland, Soldier Reports, 141.
By July 27, President Johnson had met with the National Security Council and congressional leaders. At both meetings, the president obtained a consensus that it was best not to mobilize reserves or to place the nation on a wartime footing. In a meeting held at General Westmoreland’s request, Johnson decided that the use of existing forces and resources would avoid a hostile signal to the Soviet Union and China as well as a loss of money and popular support for his Great Society programs. Moreover, the president was by now convinced that ground forces would provide diplomatic leverage against the Vietcong and the north which had not yet been provided by bombing.70

Citing the lessons of history regarding past failures to resist aggression (e.g., Munich), the president announced on July 28 that he had ordered the immediate deployment of 50,000 troops to Vietnam with more to "be sent as requested."71 Placing primary reliance on the draft and recruitment to meet future needs, Johnson deferred the decision to mobilize reserves for later consideration. Whether or not the decision to make such an open-ended commitment was derived from the lessons of history, the president’s decision to gradually commit


ground forces to combat at least reflected an underdeveloped strategy for fighting a limited war and a concomitant assumption of responsibility from the South Vietnamese. As he stated, "we intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated." 72

The indeterminate strategy for assisting the south manifested itself in the goals set by General Westmoreland after the decision was made to deploy combat forces. As an extension of the concept of graduated response only yet partially applied in the air campaign, 73 the general divided operations into three phases. First, his goal was to "commit those . . . forces necessary to halt the [South Vietnamese] losing trend by the end of 1965." Second, by 1966, the general called for the beginning of offensive operations "to destroy enemy forces and reinstitute pacification programs." Third, at some future date, the general envisioned that "if the enemy persisted, he might be defeated and his forces and base areas destroyed." 74

The lack of more explicit strategic objectives combined with an open-ended commitment of forces to produce a war of attrition. By the time the number of forces deployed to South Vietnam had reached 385,000 at the end of

72Ibid.

73Summers, On Strategy, 73.

74Westmoreland, Soldier Reports, 142.
1966, 75 General Westmoreland had long since begun
offensive operations to seek out and destroy communist
forces in the south, operations requiring continuous
reinforcements. The goals of pacification and negotiation,
both intended to provide for a viable political order in
the south, remained elusive as the war remained focused on
the tactical requirements of maintaining enough U.S. troops
"to destroy enemy forces at a rate higher than enemy
input." 76

This method of waging war was an adaptation of
limited war theory by the civilian strategists who had come
to dominate the Defense Department since the early 1960s
under McNamara. In particular, it was felt that

By using the numerical techniques of economics . . .
rationality could be assumed . . . Therefore, when
Hanoi appeared to be acting irrationally in not
accepting American terms and yet did not appear to be
near defeat, it could only be assumed that they were
bluffing, and a little more pressure would force
rationality upon them. 77

In August 1967, that pressure included an announcement by
President Johnson that he had approved a U.S. troop level
in South Vietnam of 525,000, 200,000 less than that
requested by the military. 78

75Department of the Army, Vietnam, 101.


77Gregory Palmer, The McNamara Strategy and the
Vietnam War (Westpoint, CT: Greenwood, 1978), 139-140.

78Department of the Army, Vietnam, 101.
As of December 1968, there were over 485,000 U.S. combat forces in South Vietnam, a number which would prove necessary to help the South Vietnamese defeat communist forces during the month-long Tet offensive, which began on January 30, 1968.\textsuperscript{79} Tet helped to finally convince the Johnson administration "that as an interdiction measure against the infiltration of men and supplies" as well as a means of "breaking Hanoi's will," "the bombing [campaign] had been a near total failure."\textsuperscript{80} The Vietcong were destroyed as an effective fighting force, leaving a vacuum of political control in large areas of the south.\textsuperscript{81}

In spite of this tactical success, the Johnson administration lacked time to fully implement plans to establish South Vietnamese control over those areas after President Johnson announced his decision not to seek reelection.\textsuperscript{82} In his announcement, he stressed that

The South Vietnamese know that further efforts are going to be required: to expand their own armed forces, to move back into the countryside as quickly as possible, to increase their taxes, to select the very best men that they have for civilian and military responsibility, to achieve a new unity within their constitutional government, and to include in the national effort all of those groups who wish to

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., 102.


\textsuperscript{82}Scoville, \textit{Pacification Support}, 82-83.
preserve South Vietnam's control over its own destiny.\textsuperscript{83}

In the context of stabilizing the American troop commitment and deescalating the air war to promote negotiations with Hanoi, the president had come to a belated understanding of the limits of American military capabilities to protect other countries.\textsuperscript{84}

The incoming Nixon administration inherited a troop commitment which had peaked at 543,400 by the spring of 1969.\textsuperscript{85} Complicating the task of beginning the gradual withdrawal of those forces was the absence of clear strategic guidance for the military. By June 1969, the administration had provided the new commander in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, with the tasks of "providing 'maximum assistance' to the South Vietnamese to strengthen their forces, supporting pacification efforts, and reducing the flow of supplies to the enemy."\textsuperscript{86}

Since the Tet

\textsuperscript{83}Gravel Edition, vol. 4, 598.

\textsuperscript{84}Four weeks before his resignation was announced by President Johnson on November 29, 1967, Secretary McNamara gave the president a memorandum recommending a stabilization of troop levels and a bombing halt. Johnson, Vantage Point, 372-73.

\textsuperscript{85}Department of the Army, Vietnam, 103. That number included 11,000 of the 20,000 reservists which President Johnson had finally decided to activate after the Tet offensive. Westmoreland, Soldier Reports, 359.

\textsuperscript{86}Kissinger, White House Years, 276.
offensive, that enemy consisted primarily of regular North Vietnamese forces."

As of December 1971, President Nixon had reduced U.S. troop levels to about 157,000, a figure which he announced would be brought to 69,000 by May 1972." In support of that withdrawal, the president had expanded the scope of air and ground operations to destroy North Vietnamese sanctuaries and infiltration routes in Cambodia and Laos beginning in March 1969."

Although those targets were not destroyed, Nixon gained time to strengthen South Vietnamese forces."

Ironically, it was the withdrawal of American forces and the defeat of South Vietnamese forces attempting to sever the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos" which helped convince Hanoi to launch a large-scale offensive against

"Having ordered the offensive by the Vietcong, Hanoi held its regular forces in reserve "in order to exploit success." Westmoreland, Soldier Reports, 332.

"Department of the Army, Vietnam, 104.

"Actually begun in 1964, air operations in Laos were steadily intensified after October 1968 in order to aid the process of Vietnamization. By January 1973, U.S. forces had dropped "over 3 million tons of bombs on Laos, three times the tonnage directed at North Vietnam." Tilford, Setup, 173.


"The invasion of Laos occurred in the spring of 1971. American forces did not participate, having been prohibited by Congress from doing so in December 1970 following the joint invasion launched with South Vietnamese forces against Cambodia. Ibid.

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the south in the spring of 1972. In response to that invasion, President Nixon ordered the bombing of North Vietnam to "destroy [its] war-making capacity" beginning in May 1972. Halted in October to permit negotiations, the bombing was renewed on December 18, 1972, to force the North Vietnamese to quit stalling those negotiations. Eleven days later, President Nixon ordered the bombing of the north to be halted again to permit the talks which would lead to the final withdrawal of American combat forces from South Vietnam.

"The Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam" was signed between the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Vietcong on January 27, 1973. Among its key provisions, the agreement provided for an in-place cease-fire, which left up to 160,000 North Vietnamese troops in control of southern territory seized since October 1972. In exchange for the release of American prisoners of war by Hanoi, the 24,200 American forces remaining in the south were to be withdrawn within sixty days. All four signatories were to refrain from violating Laotian and Cambodian territory. Elections were

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*Kissinger, White House Years, 1199.

"Details on the events leading to these negotiations are in Kissinger, White House Years, 1458-59; and Richard Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), 741.

*Kissinger, White House Years, 1458-59.
to be held in South Vietnam under an international commission's supervision, leading to a set of broader elections under an overall framework for Vietnamese reconciliation. Finally, the United States and North Vietnam were to be allowed to replace Vietcong and South Vietnamese equipment on a piece-by-piece basis, a provision not applying to Soviet and Chinese aid to the north's regular forces.95

When the terms of this cease-fire went into effect, U.S. forces had suffered a total of 58,022 deaths. Of these, 38,479 were killed in action, and 3,652 were listed as killed while missing or interned. By 1985, 745 prisoners of war had been accounted for, with only one officially recognized as still living under enemy control.96

Total estimated deaths among the Vietnamese between 1965 and the end of 1973 were 1,379,000. This figure included 430,000 civilian deaths in the south and 65,000 killed in bombing campaigns against the north. About 224,000 South Vietnamese troops were killed, and about

660,000 North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces died in combat.97

Casualties among the Vietnamese would rise even further as the north reorganized its forces and was resupplied by the Soviet Union and China after the cease-fire. Renewed communist aggression would soon demonstrate that South Vietnam, "which had no strategy of its own when the Americans were in the country, also failed to develop a real strategy after they had left" the country."98 The Americans themselves had lacked a clear plan, gradually increasing their commitment in order to wage a limited war and, subsequently, expanding those limits to gradually withdraw from the south. When Saigon fell in 1975, the difficulty of developing a limited war strategy under prolonged combat conditions had long since diminished prospects for U.S. assistance.

U.S. Public Support

The dilemma facing the Johnson and Nixon administrations was how to maintain the support of Congress and the American public over the period of time needed to assure South Vietnam’s continued existence. Under

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President Johnson, constraints on the use of force in Vietnam were intended to avoid Soviet and Chinese intervention, a risk leading to his acceptance of a protracted war of attrition. That risk was reduced by the diplomacy of the Nixon administration, enabling President Nixon to pursue a more aggressive war against North Vietnam. Even so, Nixon's determination to follow through with Vietnamization led to a prolonged settlement just as damaging to support for the war."

Congressional support for President Johnson's actions in Vietnam was not originally expressed in connection with a war, but with a series of incidents between August 2 and 5, 1964. In response to torpedo attacks against U.S. naval vessels patrolling the Gulf of Tonkin, the president ordered air strikes against naval and oil storage facilities in North Vietnam.100

Although the president consulted with the congressional leadership and announced his decision to the public prior to the air strikes, he used the incidents to achieve passage of legislation with much broader policy implications. Passing both houses with only two negative votes in the Senate, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution authorized

99Kissinger, Diplomacy, 692.

Johnson "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." Moreover, he was authorized "to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty."\textsuperscript{101}

President Johnson "hoped this strong congressional endorsement would help influence North Vietnam to refrain from accelerating aggression" (italics mine).\textsuperscript{102} A combination of a declaration of war and a bargaining instrument, the president took the resolution as a means of gradually entering the war in Vietnam. Because he had already decided by July 22, 1965, to deploy ground troops to South Vietnam,\textsuperscript{103} Johnson met with congressional leaders on July 27 primarily to establish a consensus that full national mobilization would create an unacceptable risk of Soviet and Chinese intervention.\textsuperscript{104}


\textsuperscript{102}Johnson, \textit{Vantage Point}, 119.


\textsuperscript{104}Gacek, \textit{Logic of Force}, 210. Of course, the president also saw gradual mobilization as a means of avoiding a political contest endangering his domestic political agenda. Johnson, \textit{Vantage Point}, 148-151. That consensus was established among the congressional leaders meeting with Johnson.
In keeping with his desire to signal American resolve while avoiding total mobilization, the president chose on July 28 to announce only half of the 100,000 troops actually scheduled for deployment to South Vietnam as part of an open-ended commitment (see discussion above). Eventually, the war of attrition resulting from that choice undermined the consensus needed to exercise influence over the North Vietnamese.

After the Tet offensive, the ability to achieve negotiations appeared less likely when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee opened hearings into the Tonkin Gulf incidents. Generally, the issue raised by the hearings was the need for more meaningful consultation between the president and Congress prior to the commitment of American combat forces.

That issue came to President Nixon's attention early in his first term. According to Henry Kissinger, the president refused to accept advice that he should seek a congressional mandate for his conduct of the war. Nixon had two main reasons for refusing to go before Congress:


106Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, The Gulf of Tonkin, The 1964 Incidents, 90th Cong., 2nd sess., 20 February 1968, passim. The specific issue was the adequacy of President Johnson's consultations after the fact of a broad Congressional authorization, itself granted after a single retaliatory action.

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First, he viewed it as an abdication of presidential responsibility. Second, having served for six years in the Congress, he was convinced . . . that the Congress would evade making a clear-cut choice and give him—at best—some ambiguous endorsement hedged by so many conditions as to magnify the problem.\textsuperscript{107}

This predisposition came ultimately to defeat the president's efforts to follow through with the protection of South Vietnam after four years spent in implementing Vietnamization and forcing the North Vietnamese to negotiate an end to the war.

By June 1973, Congress had cut funding for continuing air operations against Khmer Rouge and North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia. Seeking to further disengage from Southeast Asia, Congress sent the War Powers Resolution to President Nixon in October 1973.\textsuperscript{108} Among its key elements, the resolution required the president to make every effort to consult with the Congress in advance of any decision to introduce the armed forces of the United States into hostilities or into situations in which hostilities are imminent, unless there has been a declaration of war or specific authorization by Congress . . . . to report to Congress within 48 hours of the time that U.S. armed forces became involved in combat or of the time that the President becomes aware that hostilities involving U.S. forces are imminent . . . . [and] the Congress to authorize the deployment of U.S. armed forces within sixty days of the report's submission.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{107}Kissinger, \textit{Diplomacy}, 681.


\textsuperscript{109}Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, \textit{The War Powers Resolution}, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., May 1994, IV.
President Nixon vetoed the resolution on October 24, citing among his reasons that he believed it to be unconstitutional and a threat to the United States' ability to act decisively in response to international crises. On November 7, both the House and Senate voted by two-thirds majorities to override the veto, "the objections of the President notwithstanding." The president held that Congress "had laid to rest any fears Hanoi might have had that another invasion of South Vietnam would provoke an American response."

Enactment of the War Powers Resolution over the president's veto was in part a reflection of the long-term decline in public approval for the war. In particular, the war's duration coupled with its lack of clear progress to convince an increasing number of people that continued involvement was a mistake.

This trend was evident in responses given to the Gallup organization's question, "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" In August 1965, 61 percent of respondents

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110 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 181.

111 Congress, War Powers, V.

112 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 181.

113 Mark Lorell and Charles Kelley, Jr., Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy During the Vietnam War (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1985), 17.
to this question answered that they felt American involvement in Vietnam was not a mistake. President Johnson had managed to avoid a dramatic entry into the war. With nearly two-thirds of the country approving his policy, there was at least an indication that the president was "launching a war with strong popular backing."^{114}

Nevertheless, by May 1966, it was becoming clear that the war was not going to be over very quickly. Those expressing support for the war had fallen to 49 percent. Moreover, those asked if they expected a long war increased from 54 to 72 percent between the end of 1965 and the middle of 1966.\(^{115}\)

Between September 1966 and December 1967, support for the war stabilized at just over 48 percent, never falling below the level of 44 percent in October 1967. These levels were hardly a mandate for the original decision to send troops to Vietnam, much less the steady increase which had reached nearly a half-million by December 1967.\(^{116}\)

Following the Tet Offensive, those who felt that involvement in Vietnam was not a mistake fell below 50 percent. "Thereafter, a steady decline set in at roughly a constant rate until support declined to an all-time low of 28 percent in May 1971, at which time Gallup discontinued

\(^{114}\)Ibid., 20.

\(^{115}\)Mueller, War, 54, 56.

\(^{116}\)Ibid., 54-55; Department of the Army, Vietnam, 102.
the 'mistake' question." Without substantial popular support, the best President Nixon could do to achieve negotiations with the North Vietnamese was expand the war's scope in order to shorten its already considerable duration.

**Military and Nonmilitary Means**

The Johnson and Nixon administrations both followed policies of gradualism in regard to Vietnam, the first resulting in unilateral concessions to initiate negotiations and the second in unilateral escalation to force those negotiations to a conclusion. Where the policies diverged in the maintenance of limits, they converged in the establishment of desired outcomes. The problem with both approaches to the limited war in Vietnam was the inability to maintain a clear understanding that the North Vietnamese were waging a total war.

Having participated in negotiations under Presidents Johnson and Nixon, Henry Kissinger noted that "Hanoi bargained only when it was under severe pressure . . . . precisely what most inflamed the critics at home." The disadvantages accrued by both administrations were part of a basic difficulty in waging limited wars under a

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118 Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 684.
democratic system of government. The ability to make military decisions restraining the use of force requires extra attention to popular support.

In addressing this need, neither president could overcome another basic problem. The North Vietnamese, even when compelled to negotiate, did not limit their conduct to diplomatic moves. Hanoi did not define its war as a bargaining process, one in which threats and proposals, counterproposals and counterthreats, offers and assurances, concessions and demonstrations, take the form of actions rather than words, or actions accompanied by words.¹¹⁹

While Washington sought a rational outcome, the North Vietnamese were interested in negotiations only as a means of delaying until they could conquer the south.

Conclusion

Over a period of eight years, U.S. policymakers attempted to work out a strategy for fighting a limited war in Vietnam. Particularly during the Johnson administration, the strategy of graduated response (derived from limited war theory) was subjected to a test under combat conditions. The problem in applying the strategy was the ease with which administration officials adopted it as a means of simultaneously countering aggression in

¹¹⁹Schelling, Arms and Influence, 142.
Southeast Asia and avoiding war with the Soviet Union and China.

Improperly applied to the case of Vietnam, graduated response contributed to a growing commitment of ground forces lacking a fully coordinated purpose beyond the tactical goal of attrition. The lack of purpose had already weakened the domestic consensus needed to negotiate with the North Vietnamese when the Nixon administration took over the war's conduct. Although the new administration had a clearer strategic outlook in conducting the war, the expansion of limits needed to accomplish that strategy only further weakened remaining popular support for the South Vietnamese.

The war served to discredit limited war theory as a source of strategic guidance; nevertheless, the conditions in which the theory was meant to apply were not the same as those in which it was actually applied. As noted above, graduated response was a strategic concept developed in theory for nuclear warfare. Limited war theory retained relevance because it was not fully tested in Vietnam.

What was added to the concept of limited war after Vietnam was the political standard under the War Powers Resolution of maintaining consultations between the president and Congress over the use of combat forces. Like other standards, that one left room for selectivity in its application. Perhaps more significantly, the resolution
provided a time frame within which to judge military
decisions. In terms of the knowledge used by policymakers
in waging limited wars, the time frame of the War Powers
Resolution would soon become a major empirical standard of
limiting wars even when not applied by the Congress.
CHAPTER 5

U.S. INTERVENTION IN GRENADA

The U.S. intervention in Grenada on October 25, 1983 was code-named Urgent Fury. It resulted in what one participant has described as "a communist nutmeg" being "smashed by an enormous American sledgehammer." Indeed, Grenada is the only nation in which the United States has overthrown a communist government by direct military force. It is even more important from the perspective of this study that Urgent Fury set a precedent of using decisive military force to achieve victories in limited wars.

Historical Background

Urgent Fury was undertaken and later justified as a response to a crisis situation in Grenada. Events occurring there left only forty-eight hours in which to plan the intervention, according to President Ronald

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Reagan.² In order to understand the crisis beyond the scope of immediate events, however, it is necessary to examine earlier developments in Grenada’s history.

Among those developments was the formation of the People’s Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada following a coup against Prime Minister Eric Gairy in March 1979. The coup’s leaders, including Maurice Bishop, established themselves along the lines of a Leninist vanguard party. Reflecting principles inherent in such a structure, the PRG centralized power in its own hands (with both a Political Bureau and a Central Committee). The PRG came to rely on mass organizations and popular councils, neither of which had access to the secrets of included party members. Only PRG leaders were privy to the government’s goals. Popular support came to depend increasingly on indoctrination, a situation in which Grenadians grew more and more disaffected with PRG sloganizing (e.g., against U.S. imperialism) as a substitute for tangible benefits. Above all, Grenadians remained unaware of growing factional problems within the PRG.³


Bishop set aside the Grenadian constitution in favor of edicts issued as People's Laws. Admittedly, a commission was eventually appointed in 1982 to draft a "people's democracy constitution," but ongoing revolutionary processes forestalled its completion. The PRG seized control of all media, suppressing those mediums that it could not bring under its control. Arbitrary rule was further reinforced with aid from the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRAF) and agents of the Ministry of the Interior. By early 1982, these agents were relaying on large-scale permanent detentions to deal with public dissatisfaction, dividing the island's population into groups that reflected the degree of threat they posed to the revolution.

By mid-1983, Bishop and his associates came to be regarded as threats to the revolution because of personal and ideological differences with a more extreme faction in the PRG. Led by Bishop's deputy in the Political Bureau, Bernard Coard, this faction traced the PRG's increasingly precarious hold over state power to the party's failures to follow a stricter Leninist path.

The remedy sought by committee members was joint leadership between Bishop and Coard. Bishop would remain

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the popular head of the Political Bureau but would give his
chairmanship in the Central Committee to Coard, who was
deemed more competent in matters of organization and
ideology. Apparently, Bishop lacked the ideological
vocabulary and zeal of his opponents. On September 25,
Bishop pledged to the Central Committee that he would
exercise greater self-criticism and attempt to overcome
personal petit-bourgeois tendencies that had threatened the
revolution. Faced with an overwhelming vote by committee
members, Bishop further acceded to a position of joint
leadership with Coard.

Coard and his faction soon moved to make that
position one of single leadership. Bishop had called for
the issue of joint leadership to be reconsidered in a
meeting of the Central Committee scheduled for the morning
of October 12. Prior to the meeting, however, Coard and
his followers made their move to seize total control of the
PRG. Members of the PRA who were thought to be loyal to
the Central Committee were assembled at 1:00 A.M. on the
twelfth and instructed to accept no more orders from the
disloyal Bishop. A later meeting at 7:00 A.M. among PRA
members belonging to the party resulted in a call to expel
all those who would not accept "joint leadership." Once
the meeting had convened, a strong Bishop supporter named
George Louison was removed from the party for telling

"Ibid."
Grenadian students in Hungary that the issue of joint leadership remained unsettled. Another move against Bishop was the accusation that he, along with his security chief, had contrived a rumor of an assassination plot against himself by Coard. His security chief was arrested, and Bishop was forced to go on radio to try and quiet the rumor. The next day, October 13, Bishop was placed under house arrest.7

Following Bishop’s arrest, his supporters organized a number of popular protests to stage his release and reinstatement in power. Those protests climaxed on October 19 in the Grenadian capital, St. George’s. Thousands of Grenadians, many from outside the city, freed Gairy and proceeded to occupy the fort overlooking St. George’s, Fort Rupert. Armored cars and PRA troops arrived at the fort and began firing rocket grenades and machine guns at the fort and the crowd around it. From inside the fort, Bishop and several colleagues were forced to surrender. Soldiers lined them up and executed them.8 That "Bloody Sunday" launched the brief military rule of the Revolutionary Military Council (RMC).


U.S. Interests in Grenada

Having accounted for successive phases of political turmoil in Grenada's history, it may be asked how that island nation came to occupy such a prominent position in U.S. national interests. Why would a large power like the United States intervene in an island nation "just 133 square miles in size, with a mere 110,000 inhabitants, whose best-known export was nutmeg"?9

An important part of the answer to this question is Grenada's geopolitical situation as one of numerous small Caribbean nations emerging from the end of British colonialism. Grenada is the southernmost island in a chain extending 400 miles from just east of Puerto Rico to the north of Venezuela. Strategically, this chain controls passage between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.10

It was not until the Carter and Reagan administrations, however, that Grenada figured prominently in considerations of U.S. interests in the Caribbean. These administrations shared a number of broad goals for the region: discouraging the formation of governments with links to the Soviet Union and its proxies; enhancing regional security arrangements and capabilities; promoting

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9 Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, Grenada, 1.
10 Adkin, Urgent Fury, 1.
democracy and human rights; encouraging social reform; and promoting economic growth through both private and public sources.11

Initially, the PRG leadership did not seem to threaten U.S. goals in the Caribbean. Once in power, Bishop and other PRG leaders decided to seek friendly relations with their foreign neighbors. Initially pessimistic about the consequences of Grenada's revolution, regional governments extended recognition to the PRG once they had received reassurances of early elections on the island. Accepting PRG promises to respect electoral processes and human rights, the Carter administration expressed its desire for continued friendly relations with Grenada.12

Those relations ran into immediate diplomatic difficulties with the PRG. Following a Cuban mission to Grenada on April 7, the U.S. ambassador to the east Caribbean, Frank Ortiz, met with Bishop and PRG cabinet members. Offering $5,000 in aid from his discretionary funds, Ortiz warned the PRG not to pursue stronger links to Cuba. By April 11, Cuba and Grenada decided to exchange

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11One example of the Reagan administration's efforts to promote the last three goals was the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Robert Pastor, "U.S. Policy Toward the Caribbean" in American Intervention in Grenada, ed. Peter M. Dunn and Bruce W. Watson, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 21.

12Sandford and Vigilante, Grenada, 49-51.
ambassadors with each other. By April 13, Bishop announced on radio that no power would dictate Grenada's foreign policy, as if the island were in its "backyard." On April 14, arms and cement arrived in Grenada following a week-long journey by ship from Cuba.\textsuperscript{13}

In light of these developments, mid-level State Department officials expressed doubts that U.S. development aid by itself was sufficient to curb emerging security threats in Grenada. Consideration was given to increased military training, arms sales, and other measures to protect Caribbean allies. These considerations reflected a growing concern for the spread of revolution in the region; however, the administration never came to regard the PRG as a major threat. Continuing concern over the lack of elections under the PRG, as well as human rights violations, remained confined to the State Department.\textsuperscript{14}

The Reagan administration was to raise developments on the island to the status of a major security threat. Among the major concerns for administration officials was the construction of a 10,000-foot runway at Point Salines, Grenada. Ostensibly built for the tourist trade, the PRG construction project received funding from a range of


\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 113-116.
sources (i.e., Cuba, East Germany, the European Economic Community) in spite of U.S. efforts to block funds.

In two speeches in March 1983, President Reagan pointed out the geopolitical significance of Grenada. It was deemed a vital point along the southern underbelly of the United States, an area the Soviets would not hesitate to try to control in order to limit U.S. responses in other regions of the world. Moreover, connected in a triangle with Cuba and Nicaragua, Grenada was seen to threaten U.S. access to the Caribbean. Its airport could be used by both the Soviet Union and Cuba. According to Reagan, Grenada was becoming a base for both military and ideological aggression.15

Besides the Point Salines airport, there was other evidence to support the President’s concern over Grenada as a possible base of communist aggression. From documents seized following the U.S. intervention, it became known that Cuba and the Soviet Union had entered into secret arms agreements with the PRG. Between October 1980 and July 1982, agreements were signed that would have armed the PRG in increased increments. Under an agreement to cover the period between 1982 and 1985, Grenada was to receive a large shipment consisting of 50 armed personnel carriers,

60 mortars, 60 heavy guns, 50 portable rocket launches, and 50 light antitank grenade launches. Not only did Grenadian military personnel receive Soviet training, but interparty agreements also provided for Grenadian civilians to be trained in espionage.\textsuperscript{16}

If the Reagan administration's concerns over Grenada's military buildup were strong during the period of PRG rule, they became even more so during the rapid series of events following the Revolutionary Military Council's (RMC) takeover on October 19, 1983. RMC leaders established an immediate twenty-four hour curfew, giving orders to shoot violators on sight. Combined with the closure of Grenada's airports, an immediate problem for administration officials was the seizure of American hostages, as had happened in Iran.\textsuperscript{17}

On October 20, U.S. Marines bound for Lebanon were ordered to the Caribbean by President Reagan. On October 22, an urgent request was made by members of the Organization of East Caribbean States for U.S. assistance in restoring "order and democracy" in Grenada. Forty-eight hours later, President Reagan ordered Urgent Fury to commence.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
U.S. Objectives in Grenada

The day that Urgent Fury began on October 25, President Reagan spoke to reporters. He stated three objectives for the intervention:

First, and of overriding importance, to protect innocent lives, including up to a thousand Americans, whose personal safety is, of course, paramount concern. Second, to forestall further chaos. And third, to assist in the restoration of conditions of law and order and of governmental institutions to the island of Grenada.

Restating these objectives, Reagan asserted that Urgent Fury was intended "to protect our own citizens, to facilitate the evacuation of those who want to leave, and to help in the restoration of democratic institutions in Grenada."

In order to accomplish these political objectives, U.S. forces were expected to surprise and overwhelm enemy forces, seizing control of critical junctures on the island and paralyzing the enemy's command structure. Related objectives included the rescue of U.S. and other foreign nations, neutralization of enemy troops, and stabilization of Grenada's internal situation.

These strategic objectives provided for a number of related tactical goals. U.S. Marines were assigned to gain

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2 Adkin, Urgent Fury, 345.

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control of the northern portion of Grenada. U.S. army rangers were assigned with the southern portion of the island. Special forces and navy SEALs were assigned certain objectives in the capital, St. George's: protecting Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, capturing the government radio station, and freeing political prisoners from Richmond Hill Prison. In the final phase of Urgent Fury, army paratroopers were to relieve southern forces, carry out mopping-up operations, and provide a law and order role until Caribbean peacekeepers arrived on the island.21

U.S. Mobilization

In seeking to fulfill the objectives of Urgent Fury, military planners faced two primary obstacles: time and information. As the president later admitted, the "Joint Chiefs worked around the clock to come up with a plan. They had little intelligence information about conditions on the island."22

U.S. intelligence sources estimated that Grenadian forces consisted of 1,200-1,500 PRA members and 2,000-5,000

21Ibid., 141-143.

militia members. It was also estimated that there were 700 Cuban personnel on the island.\textsuperscript{23} Besides personal arms, it was believed that Grenadians and Cubans had up to twelve armored personnel carriers and six antiaircraft guns.\textsuperscript{24}

Not knowing what resistance to expect, U.S. forces faced a worst case scenario. The Pearls Airport and Grenville in the north of the island were assigned to a Marine Amphibious Unit of about 800 marines (battalion size). Point Salines and the medical school to its west were assigned to about 600 ranger paratroopers (two battalions, each at half strength). SEALs, special forces, and reinforcing army paratroopers (two brigades) brought the number of U.S. forces in Grenada to approximately 6,000 by October 28, when Urgent Fury had ended. U.S. forces had been joined by about 300 troops and police from the five OECS nations, as well as Jamaica and Barbados.\textsuperscript{25}

With the end of Urgent Fury, it became possible to account for casualties. It was estimated that 67 Grenadians were killed, at least 17 of which died from the bombing of a mental hospital and one of which was a boy killed by a U.S. soldier. About 350 Grenadians were

\textsuperscript{23}Cuban personnel consisted of approximately 40 military advisors and over 650 construction workers with reserve training. Adkin, \textit{Urgent Fury}, 159.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 344.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 143-144; Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, \textit{Grenada}, 159-160.
wounded. Cuban casualties included 24 dead as well as 59 wounded and 602 unwounded who were returned to Cuba. U.S. casualties included 19 killed.26

U.S. Public Support

Urgent Fury’s beginnings were marked by a scarcity of public information, except that which was either approved or provided by the Reagan administration. Direct media coverage from Grenada was not officially permitted until October 27. Yet, by that date, President Reagan had addressed the nation, raising public support for Urgent Fury.27

On October 24, before the main forces of Urgent Fury began combat, President Reagan informed five congressional leaders about the imminence of hostilities, but he did not ask their opinions.28 The next morning, the president

26Adkin, Urgent Fury, 308-09.


spoke to the entire leadership of Congress, telling them about the earlier commencement of hostilities.  

On October 26, Representative Clement Zablocki (D-Wis.) introduced H.J. Res. 402 in order to mandate that the sixty-day limit for troop involvement in Grenada had come in to effect the previous day under the War Powers Resolution. The House Foreign Affairs Committee voted 33 to 2 in favor of H.J. Res 402 on October 27. The measure was adopted by the whole House of Representatives on November 1, with 403 in favor of it (256 Democrats and 147 Republicans) and 23 against it.

Utilizing language identical to H.J. Res. 402, Senator Gary Hart (D-Col.) raised the sixty-day time limit before the Senate as an amendment to another bill. That bill, which increased the national debt limit, was approved on October 28 by a vote of 64 to 20. The amendment, however, was defeated and left out of the debt-limiting bill approved in conference on November 17. Because Congress adjourned the next day, no joint legislation was passed to limit the time for U.S. forces to remain in Grenada.

It was perhaps fortunate for those in Congress who wanted to invoke the War Powers Act that they were unable

\(^{29}\text{Ibid.}\)
\(^{30}\text{Ibid., 638.}\)
\(^{31}\text{Ibid., 638-39.}\)
to do so before adjournment. From the outset of Urgent Fury, before any on site press coverage, the public expressed its approval of the intervention. An ABC-Washington Post poll conducted on October 25 indicated the 58 percent approved of the "invasion," as against 32 percent who disapproved of it. A Gallup-Newsweek survey between October 26 and 27 gave 53 percent approval, to 34 percent disapproval, for U.S. military participation with Caribbean allies in the "invasion."\textsuperscript{32}

On October 27, President Reagan addressed the nation regarding the deaths of over 200 marines in Lebanon from a bomb attack on October 23, as well as discussing overall events in Grenada. Following that speech, public approval for Urgent Fury was given a boost. A Garth Analysis survey of registered voters on October 29 showed that 65 percent favored U.S. intervention, while only 25 percent opposed it. A Harris Survey on October 28 found 68 percent who thought the president was right to invade and take over Grenada, as opposed to 26 percent who thought it was not a correct action.\textsuperscript{33}

Following signs that Urgent Fury was a success, public approval again increased. On November 3, a third ABC-Washington Post poll showed 71 percent approval, to 22 percent disapproval for Urgent Fury. A Roper survey in

\textsuperscript{32}Public Opinion Online.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
early December showed 60 percent strongly to moderately in favor of the action, while 26 percent were moderately to strongly opposed to it.\textsuperscript{34}

**Military and Nonmilitary Means**

Given the rapid and decisive nature of Urgent Fury, the U.S. public had little time to express major disapproval of the intervention.\textsuperscript{35} Moreover, under the conditions that evolved between the time the RMC assumed power and the beginning of combat, the Reagan administration was either unwilling or unable to forestall military preparations in favor of nonmilitary efforts to achieve its objectives.

Before resorting to force, Reagan had used nonmilitary means (e.g., efforts to withhold international funds) in his efforts to isolate Grenada’s leaders even before the RMC came to power. Given its emphasis on security related interests, it was unlikely that the

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35}Urgent Fury demonstrates the "halo effect" of quick, successful operations very clearly. Public opinion under such circumstances must be regarded with caution. Jentleson, "Pretty-prudent Public."
administration would choose to negotiate with leaders demonstrably more violent than the preceding PRG.36

Conclusion

Probably the most important consequence of Urgent Fury was that it set a precedent for subsequent limited war efforts. That precedent was reflected in the behavior of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Initially cautious about the actual intervention, especially following the deaths of 200 marines in Beirut, Weinberger lent Urgent Fury his support only after he had determined that force was being used as a last resort and that such force was going to be decisive.37

In order to understand the secretary's insistence on a decisive use of force, it must be recognized that he and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were hesitant to intervene in Grenada based on the experience of Vietnam.38 It was in order to prevent another such prolonged conflict, that

36It would be difficult to overstate administration concerns for a potential hostage situation in Grenada. Of course, some might argue that U.S. citizens were not really in danger and served primarily as an added justification to overthrow a communist government. Schoenhals and Melanson, Revolution and Intervention in Grenada, 130-136.


38Gacek, Logic of Force, 260.
Weinberger enunciated six criteria to guide subsequent military actions (as detailed in chapter 1 and appendix 1).

Over a year after presenting those criteria, the secretary wrote

According to theories developed in the 1950s and early 1960s, limited war was essentially a diplomatic instrument—a total for bargaining with the enemy . . . . The gradual application of American conventional power, combined with the threat of incremental increases in the application of that power would, according to the theorists, persuade America’s opponents to accept a settlement while they avoided strategic defeat.39

In their assessment of the length of time needed to achieve such settlements, the secretary argued that the theorists neglected "the domestic political realities of American democracy."40

The question remained after Grenada, how can public support be gained and maintained over the course of a limited war. It became vital for the U.S. public to know what the objectives were to which it lent support. Even though conditions in Grenada were not favorable to lengthy discussion, communicated objectives were a vital political resource. The problem for the public was an inadequate period in which to debate the relative risks associated with intervention in Grenada. That was not the problem six


40Ibid., 684-85.
years later when the Bush administration intervened in Panama.
CHAPTER 6
U.S INTERVENTION IN PANAMA

Very early on the morning of December 20, 1989, U.S. forces engaged the regular and irregular forces of Panama in Operation Just Cause. About six and one-half hours later, President George Bush publicly announced the intervention, his reasons for ordering it, and his intentions to withdraw U.S. forces from combat as soon as possible. President Bush went on to point out that "key military objectives" had already "been achieved" and that "most organized resistance" had already "been eliminated."¹ With the surrender of Panama's President, General Manuel Noriega, on January 3, 1990, Bush announced the achievement of all U.S. objectives in Panama and the first withdrawal of combat forces from that nation.²

The relative speed with which what was called Operation "Just Cause" achieved its objectives in Panama


demonstrates a number of important issues with respect to the evolution of knowledge used in waging limited wars. First, the concept of limited war in Just Cause was the same as that in Operation Urgent Fury (i.e., the use of rapid and overwhelming force in order to prevent a prolonged conflict). Second, Just Cause reflected an escalation from unconventional to limited war. In this regard, both the Reagan and Bush administrations had previously attempted to achieve U.S. objectives in Panama through nonmilitary means (e.g., economic sanctions). Third, Just Cause demonstrated the familiarity of American decisionmakers with conditions favoring decisive military action (e.g., clear objectives, superior combat resources). Nevertheless, the intervention’s outcome demonstrated the limitations of such knowledge.

**Historical Background**

Operation Just Cause had antecedents in earlier efforts to influence Panama’s political development. Those efforts extended back to the late 1840s before Panama even existed as a nation (explained more fully below). Still, it was not until the late 1960s that the United States had to deal with a military government in Panama.

In 1968, the Panamanian national guard launched a 1968 coup which removed the country’s commercial elite from
power and led to a regime controlled by General Omar Torrijos. Torrijos relied on his charisma and the delivery of economic benefits to maintain support.\(^3\) In this regard, his regime was vulnerable due to its dependence on revenues from services (e.g., shipping, banking, warehousing) whose production was mainly under foreign control (e.g., the Panama Canal).\(^4\)

By the late 1970s, poor economic growth, along with rising foreign debt, threatened Torrijos' power base and provided President Jimmy Carter with diplomatic leverage to resolve the longstanding issue of control over the Panama Canal (as discussed below). In 1977, Torrijos and Carter concluded treaties providing for the gradual transfer of the canal to Panamanian control.

Torrijos died in 1981, enabling General Manuel Noriega to become commander in chief by 1983. Noriega transformed the national guard into a much larger and better equipped military/police force, the Panama Defense Force (PDF). The PDF rapidly took control of Panama's transportation network, along with customs and immigration services. Although outwardly necessary for the defense and operation of the canal, these actions enabled the Noriega


regime to extract increasing amounts of legal and illegal funds from the service economy to privately benefit regime members and insure regime survival.5

The PDF’s expansion and economic hold were paralleled by Noriega’s consolidation of political power. Following a 1984 election rife with allegations of fraud by the opposition, the pro-PDF coalition candidate, Nicolás Barletta, became Panama’s president.6 Unresponsive to civilian authority, Noriega removed Barletta from office nearly a year later.7

The Reagan administration had given official recognition to Barletta’s regime despite alleged electoral fraud.8 After limited efforts to prevent his removal, administration officials continued working with his

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6Evidence of electoral fraud is given by Ricardo Arias Calderón, "Panama: Disaster or Democracy?", Foreign Affairs 62(Winter 1987/88), 328-47.

7Noriega removed Barletta for several reasons: Barletta’s advocacy of economic austerity measures and Noriega’s need for an economic scapegoat, Barletta’s lack of popular support and Noriega’s need for a more easily controlled president, and Noriega’s need to prevent public awareness of crises facing the PDF (i.e., its role in the brutal 1985 murder of prominent Noriega opponent Hugo Spadafora and fragmenting leadership). John Dinges, Our Man in Panama (New York: Random House, 1990), 215-28.

8President Reagan received president-elect Barletta in the Oval Office in July 1986, and Secretary of State Schultz attended Barletta’s inauguration in October. Ibid., 194-198.
successor, Eric Delvalle. In its dealings with both presidents, the Reagan administration declared that stable democracy was the best means of securing long-term U.S. interests under the canal treaties and decided that Noriega’s growing political influence would not prevent Panama from developing such democracy.

A key reason why democratization was not actively pursued by the Reagan administration was that cooperation with Noriega and the PDF enabled American officials to combat communism in Central America through covert means. Officials in Washington compromised on democratization in order to avoid losing PDF security assistance and possibly creating new political instability that would disrupt implementation of the canal treaties.

Events in 1986 called into question the grounds for cooperating with Noriega and led to a growing consensus for his removal. In the spring, Senator Jesse Helms (D.-N.C.) chaired hearings which sparked further congressional

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9Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittees on Human Rights and International Organizations and on Western Hemisphere Affairs, Human Rights and Political Developments in Panama, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 29 April and 23 July 1986, 4-5, 30, 76.


investigations of corruption and repression under Noriega. Subsequent press coverage publicized Noriega's dealings with U.S. security and drug enforcement officials on one hand, and communists, terrorists, and drug traffickers, on the other. The Iran-Contra scandal in November could only provide additional publicity to the administration's dealings with Noriega.

Relations with Noriega were still favorable enough to allow President Reagan to certify on March 1, 1987, that Panama had "fully cooperated" with U.S. drug enforcement efforts over the past year. Yet, three events in June 1987 would prompt the Reagan administration to decide to remove Noriega from power. When Noriega forced his Chief of Staff, Colonel Roberto Diaz Harrera, to resign, Harrera publicly accused Noriega of involvement in assassinations, electoral frauds, and drug trafficking. These accusations served as a rallying point for the Panamanian National Civil Crusade, a broad coalition of civic, business, and

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12Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, Situation in Panama, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 10 March and 21 April 1986.

13Seymour Hersh, "Panamanian Strongman Said to Trade in Drugs, Arms, and Illicit Money," New York Times, 12 June 1986, 1 and 6. This article was the first in an influential series by the author.

14Margaret E. Scranton, The Noriega Years (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991), 105. The Iran-Contra scandal undercut covert support for the Contras as a viable policy, removed officials stressing the need to cooperate with Noriega, and placed a premium on the need to refurbish the Reagan administration's public image.
religious groups, to launch major demonstrations calling for a return to democracy. In response to these development, the Senate passed S.Res. 239 by a margin of 84-2. Expressing support for human rights and the evolution of democracy in Panama, the resolution called for Noriega to step down until charges against him were investigated.15

As will be discussed below, S.Res. 329 marked the beginning of a two-year crisis in which Noriega became an increasing threat to U.S. interests in Panama. Viewed as a period of escalating unconventional war, the crisis involved efforts by both the Reagan and Bush administrations to employ various means for removing Noriega from power and thereby promoting stability and democracy in Panama. It was hoped that the Panamanians themselves (both civilians and PDF members) would join in achieving the objective. This combination of means did isolate Noriega but, in so doing, further increased his reliance on force to stay in power; in turn, this created a volatile political situation. By late December 1989, President Bush had determined that conventional war against the PDF was necessary to effect political change in Panama.

15Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Restricting United States Assistance to Panama, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 15 December 1987, 2-3.
U.S. Interests in Panama

American efforts to influence Panama's political development stemmed in large part from that nation's location. Panama occupies the narrowest portion of the isthmus connecting North and South America and separating the Caribbean Sea from the Pacific Ocean. Panama's location has made it a site of military and commercial transit where the United States has retained treaty interests since the late 1840s.16

Those interests were clearly demonstrated by President Theodore Roosevelt. In August 1903, Colombia refused to grant U.S. rights to construct a canal across the isthmus. Roosevelt provided U.S. naval forces to help Panama gain independence from Colombia in November 1903, leading to the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty between the United States and a newly independent Republic of Panama. In return for $10 million outright, and a $250,000 annuity to begin in 1912, Panama granted the United States the use, occupation, and control in perpetuity of a zone ten miles wide through which to construct a canal. As the guarantor of Panama's independence, the United States gained the right to intervene anywhere in Panama to maintain political

16The Bidlack-Mallarino Treaty, signed with Colombia, gave the United States rights to use military force to protect transit across the isthmus. David N. Farnsworth and James W. McKenney, U.S.-Panama Relations, 1903-1978 (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1983), 15.
stability. Within a year of the beginning of canal construction, Roosevelt interpreted the Monroe Doctrine to provide a policing role for the United States among its southern neighbors. According to the Roosevelt Corollary, U.S. intervention was justified when the "chronic wrongdoing" or inefficiency of governments to the south threatened to provide a pretext for European intervention. 17

The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty remained the primary statement of U.S. interests in Panama for nearly three-quarters of a century. In January 1964, Panamanian frustration with the treaty led to mob violence in which there was widespread property damage and casualties, including the loss of four U.S. soldiers. After his reelection later that year, President Lyndon Johnson called for new treaties to replace the 1903 treaty. Along with Panama’s President Robles, Johnson announced in late 1965 that new treaties would more firmly establish Panamanian sovereignty over the Canal Zone and fix the time period during which the United States would continue to defend and operate the canal. Treaty drafts produced with the Panamanians in June 1967 contained two main provisions for U.S. interests. First, American control of the canal would not be given up until 1999. Second, the United States

would retain military bases in Panama until 2004, beyond which date base leases were open to renewal.  

These provisions were rejected by the Torrijos regime in December 1970. When treaty negotiations resumed in June 1971, the regime was still unable to exact concessions from the Nixon administration that would significantly alter control of the canal and surrounding territory. Thereafter, the regime moved to internationalize negotiations. Working through the United Nations and the Organization of American States, the regime was able to gain the support of various nations by portraying U.S. control of the canal as imperialism, similar to Britain's former control of the Suez Canal. In March 1973, the United States vetoed a resolution by the U.N. Security Council meeting in Panama City. The resolution referred to a new canal treaty guaranteeing Panama control of its entire territory. Apart from communist nations, the Torrijos regime was supported in this and later instances by non-aligned Third World nations, especially in Latin America.  

International support for the Panamanian government on the canal issue served primarily to reinforce earlier

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18Ibid., 108-115; Department of State, Department of State Bulletin 53 (18 October 1965), 625.

19Farnsworth and McKenney, U.S.-Panama Relations, ch. 7; Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, A Chronology of Events Relating to Panama Canal, 95th Cong., 1st sess, December 1977, 9.
attempts by President Nixon to establish a realistic balance between U.S. interests and the costs of supporting them (explained more fully in the discussion of the Nixon Doctrine in chapter 4). Seeking to decrease the role of U.S. combat troops in a changing global order, the President had encouraged the efforts of Third World nations to secure their own political futures and to assume responsibility for their own defense.

In February 1974, the need to open a "new dialogue" with Latin America, and considering the limits of U.S. power to direct political events in the Third World, the Nixon administration agreed to a joint "Statement of Principles" with the Torrijos regime. The statement called for a new canal treaty

with a fixed expiration date . . . , with provision for phased termination of U.S. jurisdiction in the Canal Zone, increasing Panama's share of the economic benefits, and growing participation by Panama in the operation and defense of the Canal during the life of the new treaty, after which Panama would assume sole control.

Continuing through the Ford administration, concern about the duration of U.S. control over the canal and

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20 The Nixon administration had a major "need for economic cooperation with Latin America: and confronted "a growing anti-United States bloc among the southern nations," according to LaFeber, Panama Canal, 144.


22 Congress, Chronology, 10.
military base leases dominated public debate in the United States and stalled implementation of the joint statement’s principles. The terms of the debate were reflected by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in September 1975. Even as he worked to give Panama a greater economic and military stake in the canal, he remarked that "the United States must maintain the right, unilaterally, to defend the Panama Canal for an indefinite future."23

President Jimmy Carter came into office with ten general foreign policy goals. One of these goals was to improve relations with the nations of the Third World and, thereby, to achieve certain subsidiary objectives: to promote economic growth and stability among Third World nations, to lessen the Soviet Union’s ability to influence those nations, to decrease the anti-American attitudes and diplomacy of those nations, and to provide them with tangible incentives to cooperate with the Western democracies.

President Carter saw new canal treaties as a particular opportunity to demonstrate America’s commitment to cooperation with Third World nations in resolving their economic and political problems. The Panama Canal was a focal point of the President’s efforts to reorient the

23Ibid., 12-23. The Kissinger quote is from page 13 of this source.
international order and U.S. interests from Cold War security concerns, towards human rights.24

With resolution of the canal issue as a top priority, Panama’s internal situation remained a salient factor in the Carter administration’s consideration of American interests. Seeking to prevent violence over the canal, while assuring continued U.S. access, the Carter administration sought one treaty which would provide an increasing role for Panama in the canal’s operation and defense until the year 2000. The administration called for another treaty to assure the permanent neutrality of the canal beyond that date. Under both treaties, the administration sought to maintain the U.S. right to transit and defend the canal.25 As the President noted in March 1977, negotiations with the Torrijos regime were intended "to phase out our [U.S.] military operations in the Panama Canal Zone, but to guarantee that even after the year 2000" the United States "would still be able to keep the Panama Canal open to" U.S. and other ships.26

The Carter administration made a number of assumptions about U.S. interests in pursuing treaty

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negotiations with the Torrijos regime. These assumptions were based on the Johnson and Nixon administrations' negotiating experiences. First, the United States had interests in assuring the continued neutrality, security, and operation of the canal, but those interests no longer required its continued operation and control by American personnel. Second, the political costs of controlling the canal (e.g., Panamanian and Latin American resentment, communist exploitation of the canal issue, and potential sabotage by Panamanian nationalists) had increased, while its strategic value had decreased. Third, U.S. interests were better served by granting Panama a growing economic and military role in the canal's security than by strict reliance on U.S. military force.27 Fourth, while U.S. treaty and base rights in Panama ought to reflect similar arrangements with other nations, the United States could not abandon the right to take actions considered necessary to protect its interests in Panama.28 Based on these assumptions, the 1977 canal treaties left open the

27In July 1976, a joint U.S. and Defense Department report was released containing a worst-case scenario in which 100,000 U.S. soldiers would be needed to defend the canal against a Cuban-backed Panamanian attack. Even against more probably, less severe threats, the "continuous operation of the canal could not be ensured," according to the report. Ibid., 20.

28Department of State, The Panama Canal Treaties—in the National Interest (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services, 18 October 1977), 1-5; LaFeber, Panama Canal, 158; Scranton, Noriega Years, 20-21.
possibility of U.S. intervention, and they led General Torrijos to promise to reinstate democratic institutions in Panama.

The Reagan administration accepted similar promises in its dealings with Noriega until June 1987. Relations with his regime fit a general pattern in which the Reagan White House deemed such authoritarian regimes less threatening to U.S. interests than the expansive totalitarianism of communist regimes in the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Demands on authoritarian regimes to protect human rights through the development of democratic institutions were thought mainly to create instability exploitable by communists. In this view, communists used "human rights less as a standard and a goal than as a political weapon; ... to expand the scope of their hegemony." The administration would continue only to declare its support for the efforts of those seeking democracy under regimes such as Noriega's.

These measures included economic, security, and diplomatic assistance rather than a direct combat role for

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29Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," Commentary, November 1979, 35-44. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this article on the Reagan administration's subsequent treatment of human rights.

U.S. forces in Latin America. This reflected in part the views of American military leaders who were "opposed to committing U.S. forces to the region unless" public opinion supported "it and [military] commanders" were "given a freer hand in waging war than they had in Vietnam." Moreover, the Reagan administration faced an uneasy compromise between respect for Latin American sovereignty in resolving regional concerns and a need to be actively engaged in the region.

The Reagan Doctrine was issued in part as an answer to the above concerns. Essentially a means of waging unconventional war against communism, the doctrine relied primarily on indigenous forces "to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure [democratic] rights" enjoyed by the U.S. public. As long as communism remained the main threat to global democracy, support even for authoritarian regimes remained a matter of "self-defense" for the United

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In this regard, Washington believed that cooperation with the Noriega regime provided certain benefits to the Reagan administration’s efforts in Latin America: protection of the Panama Canal; maintaining regional military bases and facilities from which to "covertly" train, fund, and supply anti-communist forces; and preserving significant intelligence sources.

These benefits were beginning to be reevaluated in the spring of 1986. Public attention was drawn to questionable activities by Noriega and the Panama Defense Force (PDF) (i.e., drug trafficking, political repression, and cooperation with communist regimes) which threatened U.S. interests. A statement of these interests by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams revealed the increasing difficulty of working with Noriega, while at the same time it reaffirmed reasons for doing so. As Abrams explained, the United States had to do the following: continue treaty obligations for the operation and defense of the Panama Canal and use of military bases, assure long-term commercial and military transit across Panama; insure legal financial, commercial, and trade access to Panama by U.S. firms (as opposed to illicit financial and

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35Scranton, Noriega Years, 8-14.
transhipment activities by drug traffickers); cooperate with Panama to deny use of that nation by those hostile to the United States; and to protect U.S. citizens and assets in Panama. To insure these interests for the remainder of the century and beyond, it was necessary to encourage Panamanians to develop democratic institutions, while minimizing U.S. interference which would jeopardize that development.\textsuperscript{36}

The Reagan and Bush administrations maintained this position as part of an unconventional war begun against the Noriega regime in July 1987. In an adaptation of the Reagan Doctrine, both administrations relied predominantly on Panamanians (whether civilians or PDF members) to end Noriega’s rule and set Panama on a path to stable democracy.\textsuperscript{37}

Until negotiations broke down in late May 1988, the Reagan administration used various means (e.g., economic sanctions and offers to drop federal indictments for drug trafficking) to try to talk Noriega out of power. Thereafter, the best scenarios American officials could project for Noriega’s removal involved a prolonged crisis

\textsuperscript{36}Congress, \textit{Situation in Panama}, 98-109.

\textsuperscript{37}Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, \textit{Recent Developments in Panama}, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 18, 24, and 25 June 1987, 17-18; Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, \textit{Developments Concerning the National Emergency with Respect to Panama}, message from the President, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 10 April 1989, 1-2.
in which pressures would continue, effective civilian or PDF opposition would remain unlikely, and Washington's military options would remain open.3

This proved to be an accurate scenario. In response to a victory by U.S.-assisted political opponents, Noriega annulled Panama's May 1989 elections, used paramilitary forces to repress opposition members violently, and installed a caretaker president.39 Previously, President Bush had ranked Noriega's regime along with the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua as leading threats to Latin America democracy and had refused to recognize any Panamanian government elected by fraud.40 In October 1989, Noriega purged the PDF after its members failed to depose him in a coup partially aided by U.S. forces. With little likelihood remaining that the PDF might be reformed, the Bush administration stepped up planning efforts to include conventional operations to destroy the PDF as an effective fighting force.41

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3Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, *The Political Situation in Panama and Options for U.S. Policy*, 100th Cong., 2nd sess., 20 April, 4 May, and 1 June 1988, 133-142.


41Scranton, *Noriega Years*, 185-96.
President Bush publicly justified his decision to initiate conventional operations against the PDF with the point that he had "no higher obligation than to safeguard the lives of American citizens." The President's concern stemmed from the fact that on December 15, 1989, the National Assembly of Representatives (a new body created by Noriega after the October PDF coup) passed a resolution stating that Panama is declared to be in a state of war while the aggression [by the United States] lasts . . . . To confront this aggression, . . . Manuel Antonio Noriega is designated . . . as Maximum Leader for national liberation.

The next day, PDF troops short and killed a U.S. soldier, wounded a second, beat up a third, and threatened the third's wife "with sexual abuse." Although similar threats had faced U.S. military and canal personnel for the past two years, the "state of war" convinced President Bush of "an imminent danger to the 35,000 American citizens in Panama." In effect, it did not matter whether that danger was intentional or reflected Noriega's lack of control over the PDF.

Other interests affected President Bush's decision to intervene against the PDF. First, Panamanians had been unable to establish stable democratic institutions with


"Dinges, Our Man, 306.

earlier U.S. assistance. Second, Noriega was an indicted drug trafficker who could not be apprehended like other such persons and he has an individual with whom Bush had refused to negotiate since running for president. Third, since President Bush withheld recognition from the government installed by Noriega, treaty provisions calling for a Panamanian canal administrator by January 1, 1990, could only be implemented with a recognized government. In any case, the Bush administration would not deal with a "political system other than a functioning democracy" in Panama. No other system was deemed able to "provide the political stability and the economic strength which" was "indispensable for the Canal's continuing safe and efficient operation" into the next century.

U.S. Objectives in Panama

In his national address on December 20, 1989, President Bush indicated that there were four long-standing reasons for ordering American intervention. After a crisis of "nearly 2 years," Washington's goals remained "to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in

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"Ibid., 1974-75; Congress, Political Situation, 143-44; Congress, House, Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Subcommittee on Panama Canal/Outer Continental Shelf, Strategic Importance of the Panama Canal, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 2 November 1989, 37.

"Ibid., 54."
Panama, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal treaty [sic]." In a written communication to Speaker of the House Thomas Foley, the President reiterated these goals and noted that the intervention was "an exercise of the right of self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations charter." As the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell had to provide strategic content to the nation's political objectives. General Powell held that the intervention's strategic objectives were to provide continuing freedom of transit through the Panama Canal, freedom from PDF abuse and harassment, freedom to exercise U.S. treaty rights and responsibilities, the removal of Noriega from power in Panama, the removal of Noriega's cronies and accomplices from office, the creation of a PDF responsive to and supportive of an emergent democratic government in Panama, and a freely elected GOP [government of Panama] which is allowed to govern.

Powell associated certain principles with these objectives, including the use of maximum surprise, unity of command, minimization of collateral damage, use of minimum


"Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Deployment of United States Forces to Panama, communication from the President, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 23 January 1990, 1.

necessary force, and plans for post-combat operations to support Panama's democratic authorities.\textsuperscript{50}

Based on these objectives and principles, General Powell assigned General Maxwell Thurman (the new commander in chief of U.S. Southern Command) the mission to conduct joint offensive operations to neutralize the PDF and other combatants, as required, so as to protect U.S. lives, property, and interests in Panama and to assure the full treaty rights accorded by international law and the U.S. Panama Canal treaties.\textsuperscript{51}

This mission was to be accomplished in three phases. In the first phase, operations were to be conducted such that the PDF would be neutralized and held in place, Noriega would be captured, government officials elected by Panamanians in May 1989 would be installed, and U.S. citizens and facilities would be protected as close to the onset of combat as possible. The second phase called for operations to establish law and order and provide transitional support for the newly-installed government. The third phase was to consist of nation-building activities, which would eventually be turned over to civilian agencies of the U.S. government. "These phases were intended to and in fact did overlap, with no clear breaks between them."\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50}Edward M. Flanagan, Jr., \textit{Battle for Panama} (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1993), 40.

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 41.
A key objective of the above operations was removing Noriega from power in Panama and bringing him "to justice in the United States." At the tactical level, Noriega’s apprehension could be accomplished by any U.S. forces but was assigned specifically to special operations forces. Even without specific attention, planners estimated that the concentration of forces against the Panama City-Canal complex would essentially clamp down on the city. The effort was likened to casting a net over the city, prohibiting any movement. If any of the initial raids failed, planners thought the net would capture Noriega.

In practice, conventional operations would deny Noriega freedom of movement and the means of waging war.

An explicit objective of tactical operations was to move as rapidly as possible toward strategic and then political conditions in which the "freely elected" Panamanian government could govern effectively. Within the primary area of operations, the commander ordered that in all cases, PDF forces which display no hostile intent will be offered the opportunity to surrender. I do not want to force PDF units into a fight when they might otherwise either support U.S. actions or wish to avoid [sic] engaging U.S. forces.

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54Flanagan, Battle for Panama, 81.
56Ibid., 3.
Outside Panama City, airborne forces were told that

a measured application of force will be used, when possible, to minimize collateral damage to non-combatants, limit economic hardship to the Panamanian populace, and facilitate rebuilding the PDF.58

As at the political and strategic levels, command decisions at the tactical level had to weigh the costs of offensive action against those of limiting such action. At all three levels of authority, it was decided that the prolongation of hostilities represented the greatest threat to life and property.

U.S. Mobilization

An important step in American efforts to avoid prolonged conflict was the push to normalize U.S.-Panamanian relations from the outset. Generally believed to have won Panama's May 1989 election, presidential candidate Guillermo Endara and his two vice-presidential running mates were sworn into office at a U.S. military base north of Panama City less than an hour before U.S. forces began offensive operations. Still under American protection, President Endara called on PDF members to offer no resistance to U.S. forces. In his announcement of the intervention, President Bush acknowledged the resumption of diplomatic ties with Panama and steps undertaken with the

58Ibid., 220.
Endara government to help restore Panama's economy following prolonged U.S. sanctions.\textsuperscript{59}

The main effort to avoid a prolonged conflict involved conventional operations against the PDF and irregular Panamanian forces known as Dignity Battalions. President Bush "ordered the deployment of approximately 11,000 additional [stateside] U.S. forces to Panama" to carry out offensive operations simultaneously "with the 13,000 U.S. forces already present" in Panama.\textsuperscript{60}

According to the Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the decision to send 11,000 reinforcements from the United States to participate in initial operations reflected the requirements of overwhelming and surprising opponents. (Of the 13,000 U.S. forces in Panama, 6,000 did not have combat as their main function).\textsuperscript{61}

The PDF threat was estimated to include the following: 3,500 combat personnel at thirteen objective areas in Panama City and around Panama, twenty paramilitary Dignity Battalions with between 25 and 250 members each, and 11,500 police, customs, and administrative personnel maintaining control of the Panamanian infrastructure.

\textsuperscript{59}Scranton, \textit{Noriega Years}, 202-03; President, "Military Action in Panama," 1974-75.

\textsuperscript{60}Congress, \textit{Deployment of Forces}, 1.

\textsuperscript{61}Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services and Select Committee on Intelligence, \textit{1989 Events in Panama}, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 6 and 17 October and 22 December 1989, 121-122.
Apart from the conventional threat posed by the PDF, their neutralization would deny Noriega the means to carry on an unconventional resistance from Panama's interior (likely involving U.S. hostages) or to escape from Panama.62

By the third day of U.S. operations (December 22, 1989), military officials admitted that they had underestimated PDF resistance and that it would take from five to ten days to stabilize Panama City. The extent of PDF resistance required the deployment of between 2,000 and 3,000 additional forces from the United States. The result of this planning failure was an extended period of looting (with uninsured losses over $400 million) and instability in Panama City and Colon. In fact, some Panamanians (those whose homes burned in the Chorillo neighborhood around PDF headquarters) were more concerned with economic aid than casualties. By January 3, 1990, Noriega was persuaded to surrender to U.S. authorities outside the Papal Nunciature in Panama City (where he had taken refuge on Christmas eve).63

According to an investigative report by the House Committee on Armed Services, it was not found that there was necessarily a conscious effort to minimize civilian casualties during fighting; rather

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62Ibid., 58, 123-125; Planagan, Battle for Panama, 24, 41; Bennett, "Just Cause," 3.

63Congress, 1989 Events, 118-131; Bennett, "Just Cause," 4-5; Scranton, Noriega Years, 204-05; Zimbalist and Weeks, Crossroads, 154; Congress, Invasion of Panama, 8.
there was a conscious effort to minimize fighting that might cause any casualties—civilian, PDF, and American lives and property.\(^4\)

Because of actions by both U.S. and PDF/Dignity Battalion forces, between 230 and 330 Panamanian civilians were killed and about 1,500 wounded over the duration of the intervention (Dignity Battalion members, looters, and innocent bystanders). About 70 PDF members were killed and 124 were wounded. Twenty-three U.S. troops died and 324 were wounded. All U.S. citizens taken hostage were rescued.\(^5\)

**U.S. Public Support**

Among its unique features, the U.S. intervention in Panama was preceded by a prolonged crisis or state of unconventional war and was concluded fairly rapidly. In this regard, members of Congress and the U.S. public had a lengthy period in which to consider the relative costs of large-scale military action. More particularly, the efforts of Presidents Reagan and Bush to seek options for Noriega's removal short of conventional force at least allowed Bush to claim some legitimacy for his decision to use such force as a last resort.

\(^4\)Ibid., 10.

\(^5\)Ibid., 5; Flanagan, *Battle for Panama*, 229; Congress, *1989 Events*, 119-120.
President Bush did not carry on prior consultations with congressional leaders immediately before deciding on conventional operations in Panama. As Bush told the American public on the morning of the operations, "I contacted the bipartisan leadership of Congress last night and informed them of this decision." Along with this announcement, the President reported to Congress "consistent with the War Powers Resolution."

Congressional leaders made no significant effort to challenge the president's decision, nor did other members of the legislature. Among the reasons for congressional inactivity were the overwhelming popularity of the intervention, the intervention's rapid termination, the intervention's coincidence with a long congressional recess, and the President's "working relationship with Congress on foreign policy issues."

To this list must be added a period of congressional activism which contributed to the Reagan administration's original efforts to remove Noriega from power. Upon assuming office, President Bush inherited a declared


"Congress, Restricting Assistance, 3. Apart from investigations conducted by various congressional subcommittees, examples of congressional activism include measures enacted by both houses to pressure Noriega."
national emergency, entailing statutory requirements for economic sanctions against the Noriega regime and periodic reports to Congress. President Bush’s decision to intervene in Panama was shaped by the failure of prior means employed to remove Noriega.

The public was hesitant to support an escalation to overt military intervention against the Noriega regime, reinforcing the tendency for the Reagan and Bush administrations to explore alternatives to remove him. According to an NBC-Wall Street Journal poll in June 1988, 38 percent of those interviewed favored using U.S. troops to remove Noriega if he continued to refuse the Reagan administration’s calls to leave power, while 46 percent opposed using U.S. troops. Similarly, following Noriega’s annulment of the Panamanian elections in May 1989, a Gallup-Newsweek poll showed 32 percent favoring a U.S. invasion to overthrow Noriega and 59 percent opposing such a move. After the failed coup attempt against Noriega in October 1989, a Time-CNN poll showed that only 28 percent thought that military force should be used to remove him, while 59 percent thought it should not be used.

Once President Bush had intervened in Panama, the public rallied to support the action. Separate polls

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70Congress, Developments Concerning National Emergency, 1.

71Public Opinion Online.
Today, 20 December 1989; ABC—Washington Post, 11 January 1990) showed that just over 80 percent of those interviewed continued to approve of the intervention, while those disapproving remained around 15 percent. In an ABC poll on December 21, 1989, about 65 percent of respondents rated the intervention more of a success than a failure and would support an extended troop commitment.  

Public support previously denied for military intervention in Panama was extended for decisive action to end a prolonged state of unconventional war.

Military and Nonmilitary Means

The period of unconventional war against the Noriega regime was prompted by the Senate’s passage of S. Res. 239 on June 26, 1987, calling for Noriega to step down as head of the PDF. In response, Noriega organized protests that destroyed U.S. embassy property. U.S. economic and military assistance to Panama were frozen in July 1987. By December, Congress moved to cut off all assistance to Panama.

Until May 1988, when negotiations broke down, the Reagan administration tried to talk Noriega into relinquishing power. It was questionable whether pressures

72Ibid.

73Congress, Restricting Assistance.

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exerted against Noriega (e.g., drug indictments, economic sanctions) were sufficient to exact desired results. As the administration's negotiator, Michael Kozak, stated, "pressure alone is not a policy." When President Reagan froze Panamanian assets in April 1988, as part of a declared national emergency, he acted to deny funds to the Noriega regime, while minimizing economic damage that would hinder Panamanian development.75

With economic sanctions in place, the primary emphasis in the Reagan and Bush administrations remained on a Panamanian solution to the Noriega problem. The Panamanian elections of May 1989 would provide the next opportunity to achieve such a solution. Continuing an operation reportedly begun under President Reagan, President Bush authorized "covert" actions to support Noriega's opponents. For example, "Bush personally lobbied congressional committees and gained their support for $10 million for the opposition campaign."76

After Noriega annulled the election, President Bush made a public statement on May 11, 1989. The President pointed out that in order to secure certain objectives

74Congress, Political Situation and Options, 122.

75Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Emergency with Respect to Panama, communication from the President, 100th Cong., 2nd sess., 11 April 1988, 1-4.

76Scranton, Noriega Years, 157.
(such as protecting U.S. citizens and establishing democracy in Panama) in consultation with congressional leaders, he was taking a number of steps:

First, the United States . . . will cooperate with initiatives taken by governments in this hemisphere to address this crisis through regional diplomacy . . . . Second, our Ambassador . . . has been recalled, and our Embassy staff will be reduced to essential personnel only. Third, U.S. Government employees and their dependents . . . will be relocated out of Panama or to secure U.S. housing areas within Panama . . . . Fourth, the State Department, through its travel advisory, will encourage U.S. business representatives resident in Panama to arrange for the extended absences of their dependents wherever possible. Fifth, economic sanctions will continue in force. Sixth, the United States will carry out its obligations and will assert and enforce its treaty rights in Panama under the Panama Canal treaties. And finally, we are sending a brigade-size force [2,000] to Panama to augment our military forces already assigned there. If required, I do not rule out further steps in the future."

While the augmentation forces had an active role to play in curbing increased harassment of U.S. personnel, they also clearly signaled the intent to protect America’s interests in Panama. A more subtle signal was given to PDF members when President Bush remarked that "a professional Panamanian defense force can have an important role to play in Panama’s democratic future.""
Whatever influence this signal had on the PDF officers who seized Noriega at PDF headquarters on October 3, 1989, they asked for and received U.S. military support in blocking reinforcement routes into Panama City.80 That support came in spite of high-level uncertainty as to whether or not the coup was a ruse by Noriega to embarrass the United States.81 What became more certain after the coup failed was that the PDF was unlikely to remove Noriega and was capable of flexibility in reinforcing PDF headquarters.

Washington's decision to remove Noriega using overwhelming force came about largely due to his regime's public recognition of an existing state of unconventional war on December 15, 1989. What Noriega and the PDF failed to recognize were preparations begun earlier by U.S. forces in case conventional combat became necessary.82

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80 Some evidence suggests that the coup plotters cared less for democratization than for a chance at self-advancement within a system that continued only formal democracy.

81 Congress, 1989 Events, 9.

82 Bennett, "Just Cause," 10.
Conclusion

Like Operation Urgent Fury six years earlier, Operation Just Cause was a limited war in which rapid and overwhelming force was applied to control any unforeseen consequences arising from a prolonged conflict (i.e., loss of life among Panamanian civilians and American personnel). Just Cause met with mixed success in avoiding a prolongation of hostilities. The superiority of American capabilities helped to overcome the inadequacies of plans initially developed and approved by political and military decision makers to achieve their objectives. Nevertheless, the ability to apply such force with any measure of control would not have been possible without prior plans and preparations.

That the public and Congress supported the operation was due in large part to its relatively rapid implementation. Given the two-year period during which the operation's objectives were developed, the public and their representatives were given considerable exposure to the reasons for intervention. That exposure at least favored the possibility that popular consensus obtained after the intervention began was derived from some level of understanding of its purposes and costs.

Less tentatively, Operation Just Cause reflected the experience of political and military decisionmakers in the
Bush administration with conditions favoring the decisive use of force (e.g., clear objectives, superior combat resources). In particular, the Bush administration’s conduct in Panama was based on the strategic influence of the Weinberger criteria. Even with that influence, the intervention had consequences (i.e., a large number of civilian casualties and property damage) revealing that experiential knowledge cannot guarantee the success of strategic outcomes. This issue would prove no less difficult in the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq.
CHAPTER 7
THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

Operation Desert Storm began on January 17, 1991, as a coalition of American and other national forces, acting under United Nations authority, launched a massive air campaign against strategic Iraqi targets. On February 24, coalition ground forces began the "final phase" of operations to liberate Kuwait from occupying Iraqi forces.¹ With the rapid collapse of Iraqi resistance, the decision was made to end Desert Storm as "a hundred-hour war."²

Three years after one of the most decisive victories in American military history, members of the Senate conducted hearings to inquire into the implementation of lessons learned from the overall conduct of the Persian Gulf War. Among the lessons in question, the point was made by an Assistant Secretary of Defense that although we are intent on learning lessons from the past, we are not simply preparing to refight the last


war. We know that there were certain advantages that we gained, there were certain circumstances associated with that war, and technology itself has progressed since that war was fought, now several years ago.\footnote{Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittees on Coalition Defense and Reinforcing Forces and Military Readiness and Defense, \textit{Implementation of Lessons Learned from the Persian Gulf Conflict}, 103d Cong., 2nd sess., 18 April 1994, 10.}

The outcome of Operation Desert Storm was based on decades of experience (lessons derived from previous limited wars) as well as more immediate plans and preparation.

Given its unique context, what were the consequences of the Persian Gulf War for America's conduct of limited wars? First, although extensive, American objectives and means in Iraq did not include "unconditional surrender, military occupation of the entire country, and replacement of the existing regime with a military government."\footnote{George, \textit{Bridging the Gap}, 89.} In this regard, the Persian Gulf War demonstrated that the concept of limited war continued to involve the use of rapid and overwhelming force to achieve objectives without becoming involved in prolonged conflict. Second, the Persian Gulf War (like intervention in Panama) demonstrated that efforts to achieve objectives through unconventional means provided additional time in which to mobilize for conventional war. Third, although providing a clear example of a major military success, the Persian Gulf War
demonstrated the importance of not drawing too many lessons from a single case of limited war.

**Historical Background**

Saddam Hussein's decision to invade and occupy Kuwait on August 2, 1990, was the result of a number of historical factors. Among these, a long-term factor was the absence of "an effective system for the peaceful resolution of conflicts over the borders drawn" by the Britain and France after World War I.\(^5\) Formed in 1945, the Arab League depended on the voluntary cooperation of member nations to reconcile the ideology of Arab unity and the sovereign rights claimed by those members whose boundaries remained essentially as the British and French had drawn them. The Arab League Charter provided no mechanism, and none was subsequently developed, to deal with the hegemonic aspirations of a regional aggressor such as Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein.\(^6\)

A more proximate factor contributing to Saddam's decision to invade and occupy Kuwait was the end of his regime's eight-year war with Iran in 1988. The regime


\(^6\)Ibid.
emerged from that war with a standing army of about one million and a foreign debt of $70-$100 million, half of which was owed to other Arab nations including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. His decision not to demobilize his combat-tested army only added to Iraq's economic difficulties. Gradually, those difficulties increased preexisting tensions between Iraq and Kuwait over the issues of low oil prices, rights to oil produced from the Rumalia field straddling the Iraq-Kuwait border, Iraqi access to the Gulf, and the large Iraqi debt to Kuwait.7

By the summer of 1990, the tensions between Iraq and Kuwait were such that the Iraqi foreign minister openly accused the Kuwaitis of stealing oil and conspiring to decrease his regime's oil revenues by violating OPEC's production quotas. Saddam Hussein threatened military action if Kuwait did not abide by its quotas. On July 24, Iraq deployed the first troops to Kuwait's northern border, after having assured the leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia that his demands could be met through negotiations. By August 1, when Iraq's representative walked out on those

7Ibid., 10; Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittees on Arms Control, International Security and Science, Europe and the Middle East, and on International Operations, The Persian Gulf Crisis, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 8 August, 18 and 25 September, 17 October, 28 November, and 11 December 1990, 45.
negotiations, about 100,000 troops had been sent to the Kuwaiti border.\footnote{"Chronology," 65; Caryle Murphy, "Mubarek Says Iraq, Kuwait Will Begin Talks This Weekend," \textit{Washington Post}, 26 July 1990, sec. A, p. 34.}

After invading and occupying Kuwait, Iraqi forces began deploying along the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia border. President Bush warned Baghdad not to invade Saudi Arabia and offered forces to defend the Saudis. On August 8, 1990, the President told the American public that "a line [of some 50,000 troops] has been drawn in the sand."\footnote{"Chronology," 66.}

Over the next five months, the President conducted an unconventional war in which economic, diplomatic, and military sanctions were used to try to obtain an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. These sanctions were backed up by the threat of conventional war, as defensive mobilizations were used to prepare for any necessary offensive operations. Throughout this period, the President sought a national and an international consensus around certain objectives (as discussed below). A key difficulty was to establish and maintain agreement on the forces needed to accomplish those objectives. As will be noted, it was necessary for President Bush to explore alternatives to conventional war, while simultaneously preparing for its occurrence in order to legitimize what was essentially a limited victory.
President Bush's commitment of forces to the Persian Gulf was only one expression of the region's importance to the security of the United States. Generally, security policies towards the Middle East (of which the Persian Gulf region is a part) have stressed the requirements for arranging stable conditions on behalf of all parties [groups or nations], for strengthening moderate states in the region, for protecting ties to the West, for preserving U.S. access to oil, and for assuring the survival of Israel as a democracy.10

Involving tradeoffs among various interests, these requirements have evolved, as the United States has assumed ever greater responsibilities in and around the Gulf, particularly since World War II.

Reflecting the inability of the British to maintain their commitments after that war, the United States moved to contain Soviet aggression. With communists waging a civil war in Greece and the Soviet Union threatening Turkey, President Harry Truman included the Middle East, with Europe, as primary areas to be protected by the United States. According to the Truman Doctrine (1947), aid to

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Greece and Turkey was necessary to prevent the spread of instability that could be exploited by the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{11}

President Truman did not view U.S.-Middle East interests solely in terms of Soviet hegemonic aspirations, as evidenced by his support for Israel. Truman made that support official through several steps: exerting pressure to reduce British restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine, working through the United Nations to partition Palestine and help create Israel in May 1948, and extending recognition to the newly created nation.\textsuperscript{12}

Besides concern for Israel, expressions of American interests in the Middle East have been dictated by the importance of the area’s oil reserves. According to the State Department, the Middle East was "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history, probably the richest economic prize . . . in the field of foreign investment."\textsuperscript{13} President Dwight

\textsuperscript{11}President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1972), Harry Truman, 1947, 176-180.

\textsuperscript{12}Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, vol. 2, 132-169. Truman’s motives reflected a mixture of realistic and idealistic concerns. In particular, he shared his immediate predecessor’s disdain for British colonialism but was also concerned to prevent the Soviets from filling vacuums created by the decreasing British presence in the Middle East.

Eisenhower called the Middle East the most "strategically important area in the world."\(^1\)

President Eisenhower took several steps to protect the area and curb Soviet influence. One move was covert action to undercut Soviet intervention and install pro-Western leaders (most notably, the Shah of Iran in 1953).\(^2\) Such measures were part of larger diplomatic efforts, as represented by the organization of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 and the prevention of wider hostilities over Gamal Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956.\(^3\) Eisenhower demonstrated his willingness to back diplomacy with force in 1958, when he sent forces to Lebanon to help the Chamoun regime remain in power.\(^4\) By the summer of that year, a military coup deposed the Iraqi monarchy and led to the loss of Iraq as the Baghdad Pact's most powerful member.\(^5\) After the coup, the Eisenhower

\(^1\) Ibid.


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administration concluded that Israel was "the only strong pro-Western power left in the Middle East" (italics mine).  

This merely restated a commitment, albeit an informal one, shared by all presidents since Truman. An indicator of that commitment was the portion of military aid devoted by the Nixon administration to the Middle East, where Israel was the primary recipient. Prior to 1970, about 75 percent of all such aid was going to Asia. Thereafter, reflecting efforts to disengage in Vietnam and to counter Soviet military aid (especially to Egypt and Syria), the Middle East’s share of U.S. military aid was boosted to about 60 percent between 1971 and 1975.  

This aid was consistent with the Nixon Doctrine (detailed in chapter 4), according to which the United States would maintain its diplomatic commitments by supplying other nations so they could defend themselves. A crucial test of the doctrine came during the Yom Kippur war in 1973. American forces conducted what was at the time the largest airlift in military history to help the

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19 Chomsky, "After the Cold War," 81.

Israelis defeat the Soviet-equipped Egyptians and Syrians.\textsuperscript{21}

Aid to the Israelis was viewed by the Nixon administration as an extension of diplomacy. In particular, Secretary of State Kissinger engaged in "shuttle diplomacy" to try to stabilize and bring peace to the Middle East. Kissinger's attempts continued through the Ford administration, laying the groundwork for the diplomacy of the Carter administration. Under President Carter, the Camp David accords were concluded by which a formal peace treaty would be signed between Egypt and Israel in the spring of 1979.\textsuperscript{22}

The peace treaty marked Egypt's move towards becoming one of the United States' most important security partners (eventually ranking second only to Israel as a recipient of military aid).\textsuperscript{23} That partnership was itself a culmination of Egypt's increasingly hostile relationship with the Soviet Union following the Yom Kippur war. Even


\textsuperscript{23}As of fiscal year 1993, Israel and Egypt remained the top recipients of U.S. military assistance, accounting for 40.7 percent and 29.4 percent, respectively, of all requested funds. Joint Chiefs of Staff, \textit{Joint Military Net Assessment}, 8-11.
though the Soviets had helped Egyptian president Anwar Sadat recover from that war, Sadat recognized the economic, political, and military advantages of cooperation with the United States.2

Two events in 1979 would place a premium on such cooperation for President Carter. Coinciding with the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks, the Iranian revolution led to a vehemently anti-western regime under the Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini’s regime took American hostages, supported terrorism, threatened access to oil, and consolidated all political power under the fundamentalist Shi’ite sect. Given the circumstances, it was difficult to justify Carter’s emphasis on human rights as an important aspect of U.S. interests.25 The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 cast even further doubt on the president’s stress on the importance of human rights. Having moved to attain greater geographic proximity to the Persian Gulf, it was unclear how willing the Soviet Union was to carry out aggressions beyond Afghanistan.26


26Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, U.S. Interests in, and Policies Toward, the Persian Gulf, 1980, 96th Cong., 2nd sess., 24 March, 2 April, 5 May, 1 and 28 July, and 3 September 1980, 3.
In order to counter the Soviet threat, President Carter stated that
an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.\(^\text{27}\)

To support what came to be known as the Carter Doctrine, the administration undertook several steps: developing a Rapid Deployment force, repositioning materiel, and undertaking regional base negotiations.\(^\text{28}\) Although they met with mixed success, these steps were important to the subsequent organizational development of U.S. forces capable of defending the Gulf.

The Reagan administration built on President Carter's experiences, most notably by increasing the U.S. defense budget and aid to Middle Eastern nations. Among those nations, Egypt assumed prominence as a moderate ally against the Soviets.\(^\text{29}\) Given the Iranians support for terrorism, President Reagan also found common cause with Iraq against Iran, providing Saddam Hussein's regime with substantial economic assistance and large amounts of indirect military aid to prevent Iran from achieving a hegemonic position in the Gulf and spreading its radical islamic fundamentalism.\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 4.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., 64-65.


\(^{30}\)George, \textit{Bridging the Gap}, 33.
In effect, the "Great Satan" was helping a lesser devil to fight Iran.

Besides Iraq's role as a counterweight to Iran, assistance to Saddam Hussein reflected the attempts of the administration and its allies to reform his regime as a cooperative, non-aggressive member of the Gulf region.\textsuperscript{31} An additional motive for aiding Baghdad was the Reagan administration's growing estimation during the late 1980s of the Soviet Union's declining strategic threat to the Persian Gulf in relation to the overt threat still posed by Iran.\textsuperscript{32}

Whatever its capacity or intentions to carry out overt aggression against the Gulf, the Soviet Union was still viewed as having diplomatic means for establishing a physical presence in the Gulf.\textsuperscript{33} A clear indication of Soviet intentions was Mikhail Gorbachev's positive response to a Kuwaiti request for help in protecting oil tankers from Iraqi attacks. The Reagan administration reacted to that response, moving rapidly to extend protection to Kuwaiti tankers under the U.S. flag. By committing forces


\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 1-6. In particular, the Soviets might have obtained base rights.
to protect the tankers, in effect the Reagan administration involved them in open warfare against the Iranians, denied the Soviet's diplomatic access to the Gulf, and demonstrated that the United States would maintain open passage through the Gulf. A significant result was the demonstration of the U.S. commitment to protect its regional allies.\footnote{William J. Crowe, Jr., with David Chanoff, \textit{The Line of Fire} (New York: Simon \& Schuster, 1993), 174-181, 202. The most serious combat with the Iranians came in April 1988 when U.S. forces attacked and destroyed about fifty percent of Iran's naval vessels.}

With the end of the Iran-Iraq War and Iranian threats to Gulf shipping, the Reagan administration retained ties with Saddam's regime as a regional balancer and in order to try to moderate his behavior. The incoming Bush administration followed this pattern. In October 1989, President Bush signed a National Security Directive (NSD-26) stating that

\begin{quote}
normal relations between the U.S. and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests in both the Gulf and the Middle East. The U.S. government should propose economic and political incentives for Iraq to moderate its behavior and to increase our influence with Iraq. As a means of developing access to and influence with the Iraqi defense establishment, the U.S. should consider sales of non-lethal forms of military assistance, eg training courses and medical exchanges, on a case-by-case basis.\footnote{Freedman and Karsh, \textit{The Gulf Conflict}, 26.}
\end{quote}

The directive assumed that Iraq would be reformed by positive inducements and that there would be sufficient
time to gain influence with his war-weary army. These assumptions were based on tentative evidence that Saddam was moderating his behavior (e.g., discussing a new constitution to protect human rights, and participating in disarmament conferences).

Yet, by April 1990, the administration was openly acknowledging a deterioration of relations with Iraq. Saddam had criticized the U.S. naval presence in the Gulf and called for its removal as well as threatened Israel with missiles from western Iraq. Iraqi efforts to smuggle nuclear components into the country had been detected; and, human rights abuses remained common in Iraq. While the administration opposed efforts by the Congress to impose sanctions on Iraq at this time, there was continuous review of "the entire range of options available" to protect U.S. interests.

In mid-July 1990, the first Iraqi troops began to deploy towards Kuwait, and Saddam threatened military action. On August 1, Iraq broke off talks supposedly meant to settle economic and territorial controversies with Kuwait. During this period, the Bush administration, along with Arab leaders, continued to hold out the possibility of negotiations, but they promised military action to protect

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36Ibid., 26-27.

37Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, United States-Iraqi Relations, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 26 April 1990, 16.
U.S. interests. After the Iraqi invasion on August 2, the question would remain of the degree to which military force could have prevented aggression against Kuwait without further provoking Saddam.

President Bush soon responded to and moved to control events in the Gulf region. On the morning of the invasion, Bush told reporters that "there is no place for this sort of naked aggression in today's world." Beyond the immediate context of liberating Kuwait, Bush came to link Iraqi aggression to a number of threats.

Among these, it was recognized that Baghdad's actions were a threat to security and stability, both regional and global. As Bush told congressional members during a briefing on August 28, 1990,

Iraq threatened Kuwait, lied about its intentions, and finally invaded. In 3 days, Iraq had 120,000 troops and 850 tanks in Kuwait, moving south toward the Saudi border. And it was this clear and rapidly escalating threat that led King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to ask for our [previously offered] assistance. We knew that an Iraq that had the most powerful military machine in the Gulf and controlled 20 percent of the world's proven

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3For more detailed information on the inability to prevent the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, see Ambassador April Glaspie's testimony in Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, United States-Iraqi Relations, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., 21 March 1991. Also see Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and Compellance in the Gulf, 1990-1991: A Failed or Impossible Task?", International Security 17 (Fall 1992).

reserves of oil would pose a threat to the Persian Gulf, to the Middle East, and to the entire world.40

In further elaborating the Iraqi threat, Bush told the nation on January 5, 1991, that

Saddam already poses a strategic threat to the capital cities of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, and Syria, as well as our own men and women in the Gulf region. In fact Saddam has used chemical weapons of mass destruction against innocent villagers, his own people. Each day that passes brings Saddam Hussein further on the path to developing biological and nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them. If Saddam corners the world energy market, he can then finance further aggression, terror, and blackmail. Each day that passes increases Saddam’s worldwide threat to democracy.

The struggling newborn democracies of Eastern Europe and Latin America already face a staggering challenge in making the transition to a free market. But the added weight of higher oil prices is a crushing burden they cannot afford. And our own economy is suffering, suffering the effects of higher oil prices and lower growth stemming from Saddam’s aggression.41

This assessment of the Iraqi threat contained obvious references meant to mobilize opinion for the possible onset of conventional war. That fact did not detract from the validity of the threats identified by President Bush nor from public consideration of evidence of Saddam’s aggressive potential. For example, having seized American citizens and other nationals in Iraq and Kuwait, Saddam’s regime announced on August 20, 1990, that they were being


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moved to key installations to serve as human shields against any outside attack." President Bush stated his deep concern about the American and other foreign nationals held hostage by Iraq. As I've said before, when it comes to the safety and well-being of American citizens held against their will, I will hold Baghdad responsible."

(It was not until December 14, 1990, that the last group of American hostages were allowed to leave Iraq.)

More generally, Bush portrayed Iraqi aggression as a threat to the "new world order" emerging in the wake of a declining Soviet threat." Consistently, the President stressed that Iraq's conflict was not just with the United States. On August 22, 1990, nearly a month before he mentioned a new world order, Bush said as the deployment of the forces of the many nations shows and as the votes in the United Nations show, this is not a matter between Iraq and the United States of America; it is between Iraq and the entire world community, Arab and non-Arab alike. All the nations of the world lined up to oppose aggression."

On January 5, 1991, Bush stated

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"Chronology," 67.

"President, "Remarks at a Briefing," 1301.

""Chronology," 70.


Eleven days from today, Saddam Hussein will either have met the United Nations deadline [January 15] for a full and unconditional withdrawal, or he will have once again defied the civilized world. This is a deadline for Saddam Hussein to comply with the United Nations resolution, not a deadline for our own Armed Forces."

The credibility of the United States was approaching a deadline to test its leadership in influencing international events.

As Bush told Congress on September 11, 1990, Iraqi aggression is the first assault on the new world that we seek, the first test of our mettle. Had we not responded to this first provocation with clarity of purpose, if we do not continue to demonstrate our determination, it would be a signal to actual and potential despots around the world."

In the United Nations coalition assembled against Iraq, the President held that there is no substitute for American leadership. In the face of tyranny, let no one doubt American credibility and reliability. Let no one doubt our staying power. We will stand by our friends."

U.S. Objectives in the Persian Gulf

Like the nation’s interests, its political and military objectives were linked to the United Nations and the establishment of a new world order. As they were

"President, "Radio Address," 15.

"President, "Address Before Congress," 1359-60.

Ibid., 1360.
originally stated, those objectives were sufficiently open-ended to require an expanding commitment of forces and a gradual shift from defensive to offensive operations. In this regard, the conduct of the Persian Gulf War involved the expansion and elaboration of objectives in relation to "the specific diplomatic and military actions necessary to achieve them" at any given point in time.\textsuperscript{50} Ultimately, however, objectives were not expanded so as to prolong the war.

A fundamental objective of the war was spelled out in Resolution 660, adopted by the U.N. Security Council on August 2, 1990. The resolution demanded "that Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located" on August 1. The possibility of future Security Council meetings was left open "as necessary to consider further steps to ensure compliance with the present resolution."\textsuperscript{51}

President Bush announced the first deployments of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia on August 8, 1990. He said

\begin{quotation}
Four simple principles guide our policy. First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete
\end{quotation}

\textsuperscript{50}Thomas R. Dubois, "The Weinberger Doctrine and the Liberation of Kuwait," \textit{Parameters} 21 (Winter 1991-92): 30. The author's assertion that political and military objectives were expanded "beyond the liberation of Kuwait to the destruction of Iraqi warfighting capability and the political castration of Saddam" is an overstatement.

withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwait’s legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime [installed on August 4]. And third, my administration, as has been the case with every President from President Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad."

The President went on to point out that "the mission of our troops is wholly defensive."52

Addressing Congress a month later, Bush reiterated the four reasons for initial deployments and added a fifth, creation of a "new world order." Apart from that order’s ideal content (e.g., international harmony and justice), its immediate purpose had to do with the maintenance of a U.S. led coalition against Iraq.

At the same time, elaboration of this fifth objective was accompanied by a more subtle expansion of the U.S. military role. According to the President,

long after all our troops come home--and we all hope it's [sic] soon, very soon--there will be a lasting role for the United States in assisting the nations of the Persian Gulf. Our role then: to deter future aggression . . . to help our friends in their own self defense . . . to curb the proliferation of chemical, biological, ballistic missile and, above all, nuclear technologies.54

53Ibid., 1218.
54President, "Address Before Congress," 1359, 1361.
Although mentioned in the context of a post-war environment, this American role would figure prominently in the development and execution of massive offensive operations against Iraq.

Until early November 1990, the United States' strategic objectives remained primarily defensive. As Secretary of Defense Cheney had told the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 11, 1990, the President ordered the deployment of forces to deter further aggression by Iraq against other nations in the region; second, to defend Saudi Arabia and others should deterrence fail; and third, to use military forces we have deployed to enforce the sanctions voted by the United Nations and basically, to enforce the interception or embargo or quarantine, if you will, on economic activities with Iraq [detailed more fully below in section on military and nonmilitary means].

Deployments were continuing "specifically to make certain that" there would be "sufficient forces in the region to be able to deal with any contingency." On November 8, President Bush announced that "our forces, in conjunction with other coalition forces now have the capability to defend successfully against any further
Iraqi aggression."57 He went on to say that he had directed an increase in the "size of U.S. forces committed to Desert Shield to ensure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve our common goals."58

By November 29, American influence on the U.N. Security Council had resulted in the passage of Resolution 678. The resolution demanded Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait by January 15, 1991, and authorized coalition members to "use all necessary means" to achieve that withdrawal and "to restore international peace and security in the area" after that date.59

Although planning for offensive operations had been going on since August 25, 1990, the deployment of additional forces and establishment of a "deadline" for Iraqi withdrawal intensified planning and preparation efforts. By the latter half of December 1990, the President had been briefed on and approved plans for a combined air and ground campaign against Iraq forces. When the plans were approved,

it was decided that if Saddam Hussein refused to withdraw from Kuwait and it became necessary to use force, the offensive would begin with the air campaign.

58Ibid.
59Brown Wells, American Foreign Policy, 544.
While the ground campaign was approved, its start would be a separate and subsequent decision also requiring Presidential approval.60

While the air and ground campaigns could only be initiated with presidential approval, their conduct was under the direct command of General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. Central Command. Within the Persian Gulf theater, Schwarzkopf promulgated a number of key military objectives: attacking Iraq’s political-military leadership and command and control; gaining and maintaining air superiority; severing Iraqi supply lines; destroying known nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) production, storage, and delivery capabilities; destroying Republican Guard forces in and around Kuwait; and, liberating Kuwait City.61

In fulfillment of these objectives, Schwarzkopf assigned several missions to his air and ground forces. Operating throughout the entire offensive campaign, air forces were to destroy the Iraqi command and control structure,62 NBC capabilities, and forces opposing any subsequent ground campaign. Given sufficient attrition of

61Ibid., 74.
62Although Hussein and his top commanders were primary targets, "it was sufficient to silence" them if they could not be killed. Schwarzkopf, It Doesn’t Take a Hero, 318–19.
Iraqi forces, coalition ground forces were to conduct two attacks: a primary one to envelop forces around Kuwait from the west and a supporting one to occupy forces in Kuwait and to capture its capital. Having approved execution of the ground campaign, President Bush told the nation on February 23, 1991, that he had "complete confidence in the ability of the coalition forces swiftly and decisively to accomplish their mission."  

U.S. Mobilization

The president's professed confidence stemmed in large part from evidence of the comparative advantages enjoyed by coalition ground forces after the month-long air campaign. Having lost over half of their armor and artillery, most of the 450,000 Iraqi troops thought to remain in and around Kuwait "were in poor condition with heavy desertions, low morale, and a severely degraded capability to coordinate an effective defense." Against this force, President Bush

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63Department of Defense, *Persian Gulf War*, 75-76.


authorized the attack by a better equipped, highly mobile force of about 620,000 members (one-third non-American).\(^6\)

The massing of this force (especially after November 1990) was an important indication of the administration's determination to avoid a prolonged war. As General Colin Powell told Senators on December 3, 1990,

General Schwarzkopf, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I believe strongly that if the Armed Forces of the United States are asked to go into combat to achieve a decisive, political objective [victory], we must implement a decisive military strategy that seizes the initiative, one that is designed to win . . . . We do not over-estimate or under-estimate the capability of the Iraqi armed forces. We have studied them very closely. We understand their strength; we understand their vulnerabilities . . . .

Based on our analysis of the mission, the enemy, other factors, we recommended and the President approved a force buildup capable of accomplishing the mission which seizes the initiative and which forces the Iraqis to consider the consequences of a combined, overwhelming campaign against them.\(^7\)

As asked about the possibility of a prolonged war two weeks later, President Bush told reporters that he thought "some believe this will be another Vietnam. And the agony of Vietnam is still with us. People remember a protracted war." He added, "one of the reasons that I moved this additional force, or had it moved, was because . . . if there had to be some" military confrontation, "I would want

\(^6\)Department of Defense, Persian Gulf War, 387.

\(^7\)Congress, Crisis in the Persian Gulf Region, 663.
to be able to assure ... there is enough force there to minimize the risk" to coalition troops."

The success of the allied ground campaign was sufficient to force Iraq to accept the terms of a cease-fire, which went into effect February 28, 1991, one hundred hours after the beginning of the campaign. Estimates of Iraqi military casualties ranged from 10,000 to 115,000 killed during the war."

Over 85,000 enemy troops captured or surrendered. Iraq lost between 50 and 65 percent of its armor and 65 to 90 percent of its artillery. Of the coalition's casualties (about 1,000), 613 were American. Of these, 146 were killed in action (35 by friendly fire)."

The war against Iraq achieved its military objectives. Kuwait was liberated and its government restored. Although the Republican Guard was not destroyed, the Iraqi army was severely damaged. In a related vein, Saddam's capacity to rebuild and maintain an offensive

"President, "The President's News Conference with Regional Reporters," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (24 December 1990) vol. 26, no. 51, p. 2050. An important incentive to avoid a prolonged war was the strain of maintaining the troop commitment, which by February 11, 1991 included the second largest call up of reserves since the Korean War. "Chronology," 78.


"Ibid., Department of Defense, Persian Gulf War, 313, 577-78, 589; Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, 408-09."
force was significantly degraded. Given the intensity and duration of the air campaign as well as the magnitude of the ground campaign, these achievements came about rapidly and with comparatively low coalition losses.

In a communication to House Speaker Thomas Foley on March 19, 1991, President Bush summarized the post-war situation. He stated

On February 27, I ordered a suspension of offensive combat operations. On March 2, the Security Council adopted Resolution 686, which demanded compliance by Iraq with the 12 resolutions previously adopted by the Security Council. Diplomatic efforts continue to achieve such compliance . . . U.S. forces have already begun to withdraw from the region, . . . However, we will continue efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region as contemplated by Security Council Resolution 678.

Working through the UN Security Council, the Bush administration obtained passage of a series of resolutions to force conditions on Iraq, satisfying resolution 678's requirement for the restoration of "peace and security" in the Gulf. Among these resolutions, the Council adopted 687. Along with subsequent resolutions, 687 was unique for "the extent to which the Council imposed obligations and duties that directly infringed on Iraq's internal affairs." Saddam's regime was held accountable for settling outstanding issues with Kuwait (repatriation, boundaries,

71George, Bridging the Gap, 91.

72Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Report on Kuwait, communication from the President, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., 20 March 1991, 1.
reparations). In addition, the regime was obliged to allow for the inspection and destruction of its unconventional weapons capabilities as well as for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Shi’ites and Kurds. Economic sanctions imposed after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait were left in place but were moderated to allow for a limited export of Iraqi oil. "These resolutions were considered significant . . . as possible precedents for U.N. efforts in any future peace and security situations."\(^3\)

The resolutions compromised between the costs of more aggressive intervention (risking additional loss of life, fragmentation of the allied coalition, and creation of a regional power vacuum) and the need to curb new threats by Saddam’s regime to the peace and security of the Gulf. As President Bush told Congress on March 6, 1991,

we’ve learned the hard lessons of history. The victory over Iraq was not waged as "a war to end all wars." Even the new world order cannot guarantee an era of perpetual peace. But enduring peace must be our mission."\(^4\)


In pursuit of this "mission," what guidelines did the Persian Gulf War provide for Americans to use in evaluating possible involvement in and conduct of other limited wars?

U.S. Public Support

Among these guidelines, the war provided an important demonstration of the need for presidents to build and maintain a domestic consensus in support of military actions. In particular, President Bush had to mobilize Congress and the public to support large-scale offensive operations against Iraq. Without having faced that task, the president could not have legitimately claimed that such operations were undertaken only after diplomatic and economic sanctions (discussed more fully below) had proven ineffective in gaining Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. Neither could he have maintained legitimacy for the buildup of forces needed to carry out those operations decisively and swiftly.

Congressional responses to that buildup reflected a growing concern for the application of the War Powers Resolution. Having previously reported to Congress on his declaration of a national emergency with respect to Iraq, Bush sent a letter to Speaker Foley on August 9, 1990, regarding the initial deployment of forces to Saudi Arabia. The president stated, "I am providing this report on the
deployment and mission of our Armed Forces in accordance with my desire that Congress be fully informed and consistent [not in compliance] with the War Powers Resolution." The further point was made that it was "not possible to predict the precise scope and duration of this deployment." All along, the president refused to recognize the constitutionality of the resolution.

It was not until the next month, when Congress reconvened, that members began to focus greater attention on the resolution. By that time, it was becoming clear that the deployment "would not fall within the" resolution's "sixty-day period, and that support for the initiative and the President’s popularity, at least temporarily, had declined." On October 1, 1990, the House passed H.J. Res. 658 "to support actions the President has taken with respect to Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and to demonstrate United States resolve." As to compliance with the War Powers Resolution, the resolution found that "the President has consulted with the Congress and has kept the Congress informed with regard to the deployment" of forces to the Gulf region.

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77Congress, Gulf Crisis: Documents, III, 14, 23.
On November 16, 1990, President Bush sent another letter to Speaker Foley noting that on November 8, after consultations with our Allies and coalition partners, I announced the continued deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to the Persian Gulf region . . . .

I want to emphasize that this deployment is in line with the steady buildup of U.S. Armed Forces in the region over the last 3 months and is a continuation of the deployment described in my letter of August 9.78

Rather than an action undertaken solely on presidential authority, the deployment was undertaken as part of consultations with congressional leaders "throughout the past 3 months."79 Still, the president did not seek Congress’ permission for the deployment.

After November 1990, congressional attention focused increasingly on the possibility of offensive operations and the effects of diplomatic and economic sanctions. The ensuing discussion and debate culminated with the passage of H.J. Res. 77 on January 12, 1991, three days before the deadline set by U.N. Security Council Resolution 678 for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Authorizing the use of force against Iraq, H.J. Res. 77 passed the House by a vote of 250 to 183 and the Senate by a vote of 52 to 47. The joint resolution required the president to certify that


79Ibid., 1835.
diplomatic and economic sanctions would not be effective before beginning offensive operations against Iraq. Thereafter, the president was required to report on the status of those operations every sixty days in compliance with the War Powers Resolution. The Gulf War would only last forty-two days.

Like Congress, the public had reservations about the necessity of war against Iraq but was still willing to support the president's actions. An ABC-Washington Post poll repeated between August 20 and January 9, 1990, showed an average of over 67 percent approval for Bush's handling of "the situation caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait." The highest level of approval was 78 percent on September 8. By November 15, one week after the president announced the deployment of additional forces to the Gulf, approval reached its lowest level of 59 percent.

These results were consistent with those of a Wall Street Journal poll which found approval of the president's overall conduct falling from 82 percent on August 20 to 51 percent on November 13. When asked specifically about the decision to send more troops to the Gulf region, only 51 percent approved.

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81Jentleson, "Prudent Public," 65; Public Opinion Online.
82Dubois, "The Weinberger Doctrine," 32.
Between the passage of Security Council Resolution 678 on November 29, 1990, and the January 15, 1991, deadline it established for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, the public remained committed to war as a last resort. After talks broke down between Secretary of State Baker and the Iraqi foreign minister on January 9, 1990, President’s Bush’s approval rating rose to 69 percent, "the highest it had been since back in September." At the same time, an ABC-Washington Post poll showed that the public was nearly evenly split between those favoring offensive operations immediately after the deadline (49 percent) and those favoring a longer wait for diplomatic sanctions to prompt an Iraqi withdrawal (47 percent). In the same poll, 62 percent favored going to war at an unspecified date after January 15, while only 32 percent favored not going to war at all. Though the public was still willing to pursue other options, it was unwilling to give up the option of war against Iraq.

When that option was finally carried out, the public rallied to support it. A Gallup poll conducted during the first two weeks of the air campaign (January 17 to January 31, 1991) showed an average of 81 percent in favor of the operations. That support remained high throughout the

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""Ibid.
""Schwarz, Public Opinion, 18.
remainder of the war, including the decisive defeat dealt to Iraqi troops during the hundred-hour ground offensive.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Kurds and Shi'ites rebelled against Saddam, only to be suppressed by Iraqi forces. Where a Gallup-Newsweek poll (April 4-5, 1991) showed a clear majority of 78 percent favoring the provision of humanitarian aid to the rebels, another majority (63 percent) opposed using U.S. ground troops to intervene on the rebels' behalf. Having been cautious about the buildup of forces and the onset of major war against Iraq, the public remained cautious of involvement in Iraq's internal conflicts.

Military and Nonmilitary Means

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1991, the Bush administration undertook several immediate steps to deal with the aggression. Working through the UN Security Council, Ambassador Thomas Pickering obtained emergency passage of Resolution 660 condemning Iraqi actions and demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Acting under authority of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the president froze Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets in the United States and prohibited transactions with Iraq. The State Department

"Jentleson, "Prudent Public," 70.
began diplomatic efforts to form an international coalition against Iraq.87

From that date until November 8, 1990, the administration achieved a number of diplomatic successes. Secretary of State James Baker was able to convince "thirty-three countries to contribute financially or militarily to the anti-Iraq coalition."88 In maintaining the coalition, the administration countered Saddam’s efforts to link the occupation of Kuwait with Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories.89 By the end of October, U.S. influence on the Security Council had contributed to the passage of ten more resolutions expanding on Resolution 660. Among these, Resolution 661 established an international trade embargo on Iraq, and Resolution 665 approved the use of naval force to support that embargo.90

With these sanctions proving ineffective and over 200,000 troops committed to the defense of Saudi Arabia,

87President, "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters," 1184.


89Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, ch. 11. The ability to counter Hussein on this issue stemmed in large part from the president’s willingness to bring the Israeli-Palestinian issue before the United Nations after Iraq withdrew from Kuwait.

90Brown Wells, American Foreign Policy, 466-67, 487.
the president announced additional deployment to the Gulf on November 8, 1990. Although the president wanted to assure adequate means of carrying out any necessary offensive operations, he also wanted to increase pressure on Iraq to comply peacefully with all Security Council resolutions. As he told reporters,

I think it [fielding an offensive force] sends a very strong signal--another strong signal--to Saddam Hussein that we are very, very serious about seeing the United Nations resolutions complied to in their entirety, without any kind of watering down."

Given the substantial dangers of allowing Saddam Hussein to profit by his aggression (e.g., encouraging further aggression), President Bush's decision reflected a need to avoid a prolonged crisis while still exploring alternatives to conventional war.

The passage of Security Council Resolution 678 established a time frame for Iraqi compliance, one which the president could not associate with specific operations." As Secretary Baker told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,

economic sanctions and military preparations are not alternatives, but we are really reinforcing and escalating steps of the same strategy. Notwithstanding our desire for peace, from the outset we have proceeded with the full realization that if these objectives

"President, "President's News Conference," 1792.

"Setting an exact time frame for the commencement of hostilities would have weakened domestic and international support for war as a last resort. Moreover, Hussein might have initiated offensive actions or reinforced his defensive position if he had such foreknowledge.
cannot be achieved peacefully, then we really must be prepared to use force, given the vital interests that we have at stake."  

War was possible, but not inevitable.

On January 5, 1991, the president informed the nation that

This week, we’ve taken one more step [to force Iraqi compliance short of conventional war]. I have offered to have Secretary of State James Baker meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq, ‘Aziz in Switzerland. Yesterday, we received word that Iraq has accepted our offer to meet in Geneva. This will not be secret diplomacy at work. Secretary Baker will restate, in person, a message for Saddam Hussein: Withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally and immediately, or face the terrible consequences."  

Those consequences remained up to Saddam’s choice.

When Baker met with ‘Aziz on January 9, he gave him a letter from Bush to Saddam. The letter stated

You may be tempted to find solace in the diversity of opinion that is American democracy. You should resist any such temptation. Diversity ought not to be confused with division. Nor should you underestimate, as others have before you, America’s will."

Whether or not Saddam would have been impressed with this part of the letter, ‘Aziz refused to deliver it.

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"President, "Radio Address," 15.

Conclusion

Among the wars discussed in previous chapters, the Persian Gulf War was unique for the scale of its execution and the extensive policy objectives it imposed on Saddam's regime. The war provided a further demonstration that Americans have come to expect limited war to involve the application of rapid and overwhelming force to avoid prolonged conflict. An important part of that expectation is that such force will be preceded by the application of unconventional or nonmilitary means (e.g., naval blockades, economic sanctions), especially since such means provide an extended opportunity for conventional mobilization. The war also demonstrated the importance of caution in its outcome and to expect similar outcomes in future limited wars.

The Gulf War's outcome was affected by four decades of American exposure to the problem of limited war. Based on that exposure, experiences have accumulated and been rearticulated through political processes. Reflected in the public statements of political leaders and in security policies, general empirical knowledge has been gained of those factors (i.e., interests, objectives, mobilization, public support, nonmilitary means) influencing the outcomes of previous limited wars (even if most Americans have not necessarily acquired such knowledge for themselves).
For example, shortly before leaving office in 1993, President Bush commented on the uses of military force. He said,

Using military force makes sense as a policy where the stakes warrant, where and when force can be effective, where no other policies are likely to prove effective, where its application can be limited in scope and time, and where the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifice . . . .\(^6\)

Without public debate, lessons derived from the use of force in one war may be misapplied by policymakers in the next. Even with such debate, knowledge will remain partial. Debate can only facilitate the accumulation of knowledge needed to pursue successful strategic outcomes.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Over forty years since the Korean War, Americans continue to face limited war as a fundamental challenge to their security. In order to help to more effectively deal with the problem, this study has sought to develop a pragmatic understanding of limited war (i.e., one in which it is possible to judge in retrospect the cumulative results of previous limited wars). In fulfillment of that task, this study has pursued two simultaneous goals: first, to model and critically evaluate two types of knowledge of relevance to policymakers in waging limited wars; and, second, to detail the development of that knowledge from its antecedents in the Korean War.

Reassessing the Two Models

In chapter 1, two models of knowledge were identified as having relevance to policymakers' conduct of limited wars. The first model, the deductive theory of limited war, addressed four questions. First, what basic framework did the theory provide for designing an effective strategy?
Second, what critical variables were identified to which policymakers had to give strategic content? Third, what general logic was associated with a successful limited war strategy? Fourth, what strategic use did policymakers make of theory?

These questions were answered in chapter 2 and elaborated in chapter 4. Based on those chapters, a number of tentative conclusions can be drawn regarding the deductive model’s policymaking impact.

In terms of the basic framework provided for an effective limited war strategy, the Eisenhower administration’s emphasis on massive retaliation led to two theoretical positions which would have major consequences for United States’ involvement in Vietnam. First, conventional and unconventional military capabilities were needed to compensate for overemphasis on nuclear armaments. Second, the United States economy was robust enough to support a conventional war of attrition. President Kennedy’s decision to expand conventional and unconventional forces as well as President Johnson’s acceptance of a strategy of attrition helped involve the

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3Halperin, Limited War, 2-3.

2Brodie, "Unlimited Weapons," 16-21; Brodie, Missile Age Strategy.

United States in a massive ground war without a clear withdrawal strategy.

This situation was compounded by strategic choices made in the Johnson administration in relation to a key variable identified by limited war theory. Based on the single case of the Korean War, it was argued that the U.S. public was prone to support only total wars. Civilian advisors to President Johnson seized onto that idea. Determined to keep the war in South Vietnam from escalating into a total war, Johnson misinformed the American public about troop deployments in order to decrease the potential for popular mobilization.

The generally accepted logic of the deductive model was that the primary use of force was to achieve bargains rather than to defeat the enemy. Among the advisors to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, this logic suggested an additional means (e.g., graduated response) of preventing total war with the Soviet Union or China while resisting communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

As noted in chapter 2 and detailed in chapter 4 of this study, the effort to adapt limited war theory to the Vietnam War served to call into question the logical grounds upon which the theory was based. In particular, the deductive model of limited war was misapplied in trying

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to achieve a negotiated settlement with the North Vietnamese. It must be remembered that there are two main limitations on

the usefulness of such models for policymaking . . . .
First, the abstract model is not itself a strategy but merely the starting point for constructing a strategy. The usefulness of an abstract model of policymaking is limited to providing the basic framework for understanding the general requirements for designing and implementing a strategy . . . .[T]he policymaker has to tailor the abstract model into a specific strategy for the particular situation at hand and for the behavioral characteristics of [a] particular adversary.6

The inability of policymakers to develop an adequate strategy with respect to North Vietnam was more an indication of their lack of understanding than of the deductive model’s lack of validity.

The second model in chapter 1 was derived from a speech by then Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger (see Appendix). The use of the criteria contained in that speech as comparative standards has demonstrated that they contain generic knowledge, knowledge based on the "study of past experience that identifies the uses and limitations" of strategies "and the conditions on which" their "effective employment depends."7 In addition, the criteria have presented an opportunity to make certain generalizations about limited war that apply under specific conditions.

6George, Bridging the Gap, 118.
7ibid., xvii.
The first question derived from the Weinberger criteria was, what were the interests used to justify the commitment of troops to combat? In all the cases examined in this study, there were doctrines which played a role in the commitment of troops to combat (e.g., containment, the Carter doctrine). At the same time, there are strong reasons to avoid allowing doctrine to become the predominate guide in the decision to commit troops to limited wars.

As will be recalled from chapter 1, short of total war, the primary standard for judging the success or failure of a policy decision is its consistency with the rules governing democratic discourse and participation. In the cases of Korea and Vietnam, the doctrinal bases for commitment (i.e., containment, the domino principle) were insufficient to maintain public support over the course of American involvement. The problem should be resolved by building a consensus prior to the commitment of troops (as far as possible given emergencies). In any event, "there

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8 The Nixon Doctrine was enunciated within the context of withdrawing combat forces.

9 The communication of interests to the public allows for their translation from abstract, nonoperational goals into concrete, operational objectives whose costs can be assessed (i.e., troop levels).

10 Nincic, Democracy, 166-168.
is a need to avoid overarching doctrines and to seek more particular, more adaptive, and more conditional ones.\textsuperscript{11}

The second question derived from the Weinberger criteria was, what were the political and military objectives to be accomplished? The evidence was clear in the cases of Korea and Vietnam, that objectives were not sufficiently worked out prior to the commitment of forces. Admittedly, in Korea, President Truman was responding to an emergency when he ordered the deployment of troops to halt the communist advance. Nevertheless, the decision to reunify Korea by force stemmed from a lack of prior consideration that the war's original objectives had already been achieved.

The lack of clear objectives in Vietnam was most apparent in the failure to move ahead with the process of pacification (see chapter 4), a strategic objective, rather than devoting primary attention to attrition, a tactical objective. A principle cause for the confusion of objectives, apart from the civilian management of military strategy, was the effort to develop strategies from theory meant primarily to deal with nuclear war.

As indicated by the case of Grenada, although not primarily a conventional operation, the decision to commit enough forces to overwhelm the opposition can prove decisive enough to compensate for a lack of time to

\textsuperscript{11}Gelb and Betts, \textit{Irony of Vietnam}, 367.
establish clear objectives. Yet, when there was a prolonged period in which to plan for operations in Panama, it remained necessary to reinforce from the United States in order to make up for planning inadequacies.

The Persian Gulf War served as a primary example of the difficulty of translating political objectives into military objectives. As evidenced by the decision to halt ground operations prior to the destruction of Iraqi armored units, there are limits beyond which even decisive military force cannot achieve larger political concerns (i.e., maintaining a regional balance in the Middle East).

The third question derived from the Weinberger criteria was, what were the main decisions regarding and consequences of mobilization for combat? A primary basis for comparison between the three larger cases (Korea, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf) in this study was the ability to refrain from committing troops to combat until an optimum number had been massed to affect combat. In Korea, President Truman committed ground forces to combat in an emergency and at a time when the U.S. reserves were insufficient to maintain other commitments (i.e., Europe, the Middle East). Moreover, he accepted a prolonged stalemate while building reserves and maintaining negotiations, which President Eisenhower concluded with a nuclear threat against China.
President Johnson's decision to commit ground forces reflected a similar concern for the situation in South Vietnam. It was not until the commitment of American forces had begun to strain the ability to maintain other commitments that he mobilized a small reserve force. Johnson also accepted a prolonged stalemate to maintain negotiations. It was not until President Nixon expanded the air and ground war against the North Vietnamese that negotiations were achieved which allowed for the final redeployment of ground forces from the South.

Although President Bush faced an emergency when he deployed forces to protect Saudi Arabia, he waited until sufficient force was massed to decisively defeat Iraqi ground forces before ordering the commencement of offensive operations. The president was still willing to place forces in a situation of imminent hostilities. The advantages of massing troops were to retain the initiative for withdrawal and to impose sanctions on Iraq, an advantage compounded by the ability to avoid attrition.

The fourth question derived from the Weinberger criteria was, what were the levels and timing of public support relative to combat? In terms of congressional support, the pattern established by President Truman of circumventing that body's war making authority was not greatly altered by the passage of the War Powers Resolution. Presidents have consistently refused to
compromise on their position as commander-in-chief. What has changed is the former tendency for presidents to involve troops in situations subject to prolonged commitments. The practical limit in war has become time, a problem President Bush overcame in Iraq without compromising on the War Powers Resolution.

Time has a similarly problematic aspect in relation to popular support over the course of limited wars. Between the five cases presented, a number of situations developed which have potential applications as scenarios in future limited wars. At the extreme, a president might find himself in a situation like President Nixon who, after a prolonged attempt to negotiate a cease fire, was unable to maintain U.S. commitments because of a climate of retrenchment among the public. Similarly, President Nixon had long faced the problem of public pressure to withdraw from South Vietnam, a situation which finally occurred after considerable damage to national policy objectives. In Korea, President Eisenhower escalated the war to include nuclear threats against the Chinese in order to stem the possibility of a prolonged negotiation process. In the Persian Gulf War, President Bush faced the politically difficult decision of halting the ground war before it had achieved all its objectives. President Bush also delayed supported to rebel groups in Iraq at a time when the public was unwilling to intervene on their behalf.
Such public concern is closely related to the fifth question derived from the Weinberger criteria; what combination of military and nonmilitary means were used to achieve political objectives? The most obvious contrast between the five cases in regards to this question is that the first two involved negotiations during combat, and the last three involved the imposition of political conditions. A fundamental issue raised by this distinction is the shift that occurred in U.S. defense policy.

In the use of combat force as an instrument of negotiations, those who waged the Korean War, particularly President Truman, were exploring new territory in seeking to negotiate an end to the war. Those who did so in Vietnam had come to share a view held primarily by theorists and civilian defense strategists that war could be waged rationally, without mobilizing public opinion.12

After Vietnam, the shift occurred in U.S. defense policy towards the use of decisive force.13 As part of that shift, greater emphasis was placed on domestic consensus. The experts who had proceeded to build up a body of work on the theory of limited war before the Vietnam War had forgotten to include the public in their inquiries.

For a fuller discussion, see Gacek, Logic of Force.

Ibid.
Pragmatism seeks the meanings of concepts in their empirical consequences and truth in empirical consensus achieved under conditions of continuous inquiry. How do these definitional criteria relate concepts to the consequences of policy decisions?

Drawing on Dewey, several assumptions are made in answering this question. First, those who carry on scientific inquiries are experts to the extent that the knowledge they produce has technical applications with consequences affecting and accessible to various contextually defined publics. Second, those generalizations whose applications are incorporated into policy by decision makers serve as working hypotheses rather than absolute programs of action. Third, in assessing the interests served in testing hypotheses, it is necessary to give the widest possible publicity to results. Fourth, any consensus achieved in publicity will include expert inquirers as well as publics with common interests in controlling the consequences of particular inquiries.14

The concerns behind these assumptions are warranted by the number of experts who seek or are sought to provide knowledge to decision makers in all areas of government. Growth in the number of ministries and agencies performing

new tasks indicates the increased importance of regulation as a function of bureaucracy. Moreover, public issues and problems are becoming more technical. Governmental needs for expertise draw on an increasing range of disciplines.\textsuperscript{15}

For pragmatism, the issue becomes one of the degree to which experts remain responsive to the interests of various publics making up society. In any divisible measure of authority between technical and political experts, lack of responsiveness is a basic \textit{political} problem. Broadly speaking, this problem entails decision making that is deficient to cope with the other problems (i.e., social, economic, and legal) by which interests are subject to aggregation. Among the sources of deficiency, a partial list includes lack of information, poor problem comprehension, unequal power among participants, and too much or not enough centralization of decision-making authority.\textsuperscript{16} What is needful is "the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion," an improvement that "depends essentially upon


freeing and perfecting the processes of inquiry and of dissemination of their conclusions.17

This assertion of the primacy of political problems is not to be confused with an assertion of the primacy of politics. Rather, the assertion is only of the need for expertise to be informed by public interests through direct social contact. It would not be pragmatic to aim for political forms in which inquiry could not guide public interactions and moderate conflicts of interest between associations. It is accepted that knowledge "is created by experts in a social context, thus it is not necessarily true or complete; it often is political."18 Politics informs inquiry and vice versa. Pragmatism entertains the possibility that over time the meaning of intersubjectivity can be expanded beyond scientific inquirers to include those who commonly experience the consequences of inquiries. Even when communication between the two groups is optimized, however, there is only relative certainty as to the meaning of truth.

Another way of expressing this proposition is with reference to the concept of intelligence, "the observation of consequences as consequences, that is, in connection


with the acts from which they proceed." Over time, the goal of practical action is increasingly intelligent political decisions, a political order capable of framing, articulating, and answering increasingly complex problems. Science, particularly that designated as social, is involved in politics in that it provides information, diagnoses, and techniques to decision makers. Such involvement makes for intelligent politics to the extent that it helps improve society’s ability to cope with its own problems, to regulate public consequences itself. Democracy obtains in this process to the extent that all persons and organizations affected by problems participate in their solution. Fixed solutions arrest the development of intelligence.

How does this methodological position differ from others, particularly those grounded in logical empiricism? It is helpful to remember that pragmatism argues for the use of intelligence in promoting consensus. Truth is regarded as consensus achieved in the practical application and improvement of theoretical knowledge. Concentration is on knowledge within historical contexts and on its fallibility. In seeking to reduce appeals to relativism and arbitrariness, objectivity is translated into a

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retrospective judgment rendered of theoretical knowledge after accumulating some level of practical results.\textsuperscript{21}

It is through this translation that pragmatism seeks also to judge the progress and continuity of science. Without accepting inevitability or precluding access to sources of knowledge, it is possible to speak of new knowledge in terms of theory's technological manifestations. The products of applied scientific knowledge can be sufficient for judging its effectiveness. In a sense, despite any semantic or ideational incommensurability between a scientific theory and its latter-day replacements, there remains the crucial pragmatic commensurability of a constellation of problem-solving tasks that can (by and large) be formulated in the ordinary everyday language that antedates scientific sophistication. The fundamentally pragmatic aspect of its applications in problem solving and control at the level of everyday life manifests those continuities of the scientific enterprise with reference to which the idea of progress can be invoked.\textsuperscript{22}

Science is not inevitably progressive, but the artifacts of its physical activities are deemed in some measure to indicate its progress.

More broadly, the possibility of progress presupposes a scientific process capable of successful operation and improvement without need of transcendent reason. Provided that the process is ongoing, inquiry develops criteria by which to judge future inquiry. Methodological assertions

\textsuperscript{21}Prado, \textit{Limits of Pragmatism}, 158-159.

\textsuperscript{22}Rescher, \textit{Methodological Pragmatism}, 188.
with varying histories of success inform subsequent assertions. In other words, the logical principles that guide inquiry are presumed to emerge from methods already employed in science. Improvement of those methods is to proceed as a matter of history rather than a reflection of knowledge derived outside science.23

A fundamental aspect of this position is in its redirection of inquiry as a process. Truth or falsity would only block attempts at new directions reflecting discrepancies between data and expected results. Pragmatically, it stands irrelevant to debate the relative importance assigned to "confirmation, disconfirmation, corroboration, and verisimilitude" by philosophers. Essentially, pragmatism reverses the logical-empiricist "assertion that the logic of science deals solely with testing and that discovery is a creative act following no rules."24

The main pragmatic grounds for confronting logical empiricism is its mistaken search for universal laws of causality and a unitary scientific method. Pragmatism accepts a plurality of methods and treats generalizations as relative matters subject to context. Of identifiable methods, those involving case studies and formal (non-


24Diesing, Social Science, 87.
empirical) theorization are furthest from acceptance by logical empiricism. Quantitative methods, if disregarding universality, are closest to logical empiricism. Pragmatism, as a methodology, can utilize all three methods. To the extent that the methods interfere with or constrain the methodology of pragmatism, they can be regarded as potentially improvable.

A Step

Just as methods are improvable, so is the knowledge of those who employ them. Having referred to American pragmatism as little more than improvisation, Henry Kissinger wrote that doctrine "is the mode of survival of a society," enabling it to reserve "creative thought for unusual or unexpected situations." Thirty-seven years later, Kissinger wrote

First, before the United States commits itself to combat, it should have a clear understanding of the nature of the threat it will be confronting and of the objectives it can realistically reach. It must have a clear military strategy and an unambiguous definition of what constitutes a successful political outcome.

Second, when America commits itself to military action, there can be no alternative to victory, as General Douglas MacArthur advised. Qualms cannot be stilled by hesitant execution; prolonged stalemate will sap the endurance and hence the will of the American public. This requires a careful elaboration of

26ibid., 91.


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political goals and the military strategy to achieve them before the decision is made to go to war. Third, a democracy cannot conduct a serious foreign policy if the contending factions within it do not exercise a minimum of restraint toward each other.27

This was hardly a rousing endorsement for participatory democracy, but it was a gradual step in that direction.

27Kissinger, Diplomacy, 700.
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APPENDIX

TEXT OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

CASPAR W. WEINBERGER

TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

- November 28, 1984 -

"The Uses of Military Power"

Thank you for inviting me to be here today with the members of the National Press Club, a group most important to our national security. I say that because a major point I intend to make in my remarks today is that the single-most critical element of a successful democracy is a strong consensus of support and agreement for our basic purposes. Policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve will never work. And you help to build that understanding among our citizens.

Of all the many policies our citizens deserve--and need--to understand, none is so important as those related to our topic today--the uses of military power. Deterrence will work only if the Soviets understand our firm commitment to keeping the peace . . . and only from a well-
informed public can we expect to have that national will and commitment.

So today, I want to discuss with you perhaps the most important question concerning keeping the peace. Under what circumstances, and by what means, does a great democracy such as ours reach the painful decision that the use of military force is necessary to protect our interests or to carry out our national policy?

National power has many components, some tangible—like economic wealth, technical preeminence. Other components are intangible—such as moral force, or strong national will. Military forces, when they are strong and ready and modern, are a credible—and tangible—addition to a nation’s power. When both the intangible national will and those forces are forged into one instrument, national power becomes effective.

In today’s world, the line between peace and war is less clearly drawn than at any time in our history. When George Washington, in his farewell address, warned us, as a new democracy, to avoid foreign entanglements, Europe then lay 2–3 months by sea over the horizon. The United States was protected by the width of the oceans. Now in this nuclear age, we measure time in minutes rather than months.

Aware of the consequences of any misstep, yet convinced of the precious worth of the freedom we enjoy, we seek to avoid conflict, while maintaining strong defenses.
Our policy has always been to work hard for peace, but to be prepared if war comes. Yet, so blurred have the lines become between open conflict and half-hidden hostile acts that we cannot confidently predict where, or when, or how, or from what direction aggression may arrive. We must be prepared, at any moment, to meet threats ranging in intensity from isolated terrorist acts, to guerrilla action, to full-scale military confrontation.

Alexander Hamilton, writing in the Federalist Papers, said that "it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them." If it was true then, how much more true it is today, when we must remain ready to consider the means to meet such serious indirect challenges to the peace as proxy wars and individual terrorist action. And how much more important is it now, considering the consequences of failing to deter conflict at the lowest level possible. While the use of military force to defend territory has never been questioned when a democracy has been attacked and its very survival threatened, most democracies have rejected the unilateral aggressive use of force to invade, conquer or subjugate other nations. The extent to which the use of force is acceptable remains unresolved for the host of other situations which fall between these extremes of defensive and aggressive use of force.
We find ourselves, then, face to face with a modern paradox: The most likely challenge to the peace—the gray area conflicts—are precisely the most difficult challenges to which a democracy must respond. Yet, while the source and nature of today's challenges are uncertain, our response must be clear and understandable. Unless we are certain that force is essential, we run the risk of inadequate national will to apply the resources needed.

Because we face a spectrum of threats—from covert aggression, terrorism, and subversion, to overt intimidation, to use of brute force—choosing the appropriate level of our response is difficult. Flexible response does not mean just any response is appropriate. But once a decision to employ some degree of force has been made, and the purpose clarified, our government must have the clear mandate to carry out, and continue to carry out, that decision until the purpose has been achieved. That, too, has been difficult to accomplish.

The issue of which branch of government has authority to define that mandate and make decisions on using force is now being strongly contended. Beginning in the 1970s Congress demanded, and assumed, a far more active role in the making of foreign policy and in the decision-making process for the employment of military forces abroad than had been thought appropriate and practical before. As a result, the centrality of decision-making authority in the
executive branch has been compromised by the legislative branch to an extent that actively interferes with that process. At the same time, there has not been a corresponding acceptance of responsibility by Congress for the outcome of decisions concerning the employment of military forces.

Yet the outcome of decisions on whether—and when—and to what degree—to use combat forces abroad has never been more important than it is today. While we do not seek to deter or settle all the world’s conflicts, we must recognize that, as a major power, our responsibilities and interests are now of such scope that there are few troubled areas we can afford to ignore. So we must be prepared to deal with a range of possibilities, a spectrum of crises, from local insurgency to global conflict. We prefer, of course, to limit any conflict in its early stages, to contain and control it—but to do that our military forces must be deployed in a timely manner, and be fully supported and prepared before they are engaged, because many of those difficult decisions must be made extremely quickly.

Some on the national scene think they can always avoid making tough decisions. Some reject entirely the question of whether any force can ever be used abroad. They want to avoid grappling with a complex issue because, despite clever rhetoric disguising their purpose, these people are in fact advocating a return to post-World War I
isolationism. While they may maintain in principle that military force has a role in foreign policy, they are never willing to name the circumstance or the place where it would apply.

On the other side, some theorists argue that military force can be brought to bear in any crisis. Some of these proponents of force are eager to advocate its use even in limited amounts simply because they believe that if there are American forces of any size present they will somehow solve the problem.

Neither of these two extremes offers us any lasting or satisfactory solutions. The first—undue reserve—would lead us ultimately to withdraw from international events that require free nations to defend their interests from the aggressive use of force. We would be abdicating our responsibilities as the leader of the free world—responsibilities more or less thrust upon us in the aftermath of World War II—a war incidentally that isolationism did nothing to deter. These are responsibilities we must fulfill unless we desire the Soviet Union to keep expanding its influence unchecked throughout the world. In an international system based on mutual interdependence among nations, and alliances between friends, stark isolationism quickly would lead to a far more dangerous situation for the United States: We would
be without allies and faced by many hostile or indifferent nations.

The second alternative—employing our forces almost indiscriminately and as a regular and customary part of our diplomatic efforts—would surely plunge us headlong into the sort of domestic turmoil we experienced during the Vietnam War, without accomplishing the goal for which we committed our forces. Such policies might very well tear at the fabric of our society, endangering the single-most critical element of a successful democracy: a strong consensus of support and agreement for our basic purposes.

Policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve would also earn us the scorn of our troops, who would have an understandable opposition to being used—in every sense of the word—casually and without intent to support them fully. Ultimately this course would reduce their morale and their effectiveness for engagements we must win. And if the military were to distrust its civilian leadership, recruitment would fall off and I fear an end to the all-volunteer system would be upon us, requiring a return to a draft, sowing the seeds of riot and discontent that so wracked the country in the '60s.

We have not restored high morale and pride in the uniform throughout the services. The all-volunteer system
is working spectacularly well. Are we willing to forfeit what we have fought so hard to regain?

In maintaining our progress in strengthening America's military deterrent, we face difficult challenges. For we have entered an era where the dividing lines between peace and war are less clearly drawn, the identity of the foe is much less clear. In World Wars I and II, we not only knew who our enemies were, but we shared a clear sense of why the principles espoused by our enemies were unworthy.

Since these two wars threatened our very survival as a free nation and the survival of our allies, they were total wars, involving every aspect of our society. All our means of production, all our resources were devoted to winning. Our policies had the unqualified support of the great majority of our people. Indeed, World Wars I and II ended with the unconditional surrender of our enemies . . . the only acceptable ending when the alternative was the loss of our freedom.

But in the aftermath of the Second World War, we encountered a more subtle form of warfare--warfare in which, more often than not, the face of the enemy was masked. Territorial expansionism could be carried out indirectly by proxy powers, using surrogate forces aided and advised from afar. Some conflicts occurred under the name of "national liberation," but far more frequently ideology or religion provided the spark to the tinder.
Our adversaries can also take advantage of our open society, and our freedom of speech and opinion to use alarming rhetoric and disinformation to divide and disrupt our unity of purpose. While they would never dare to allow such freedoms to their own people, they are quick to exploit ours by conducting simultaneous military and propaganda campaigns to achieve their ends.

They realize that if they can divide our national will at home, it will not be necessary to defeat our forces abroad. So by presenting issues in bellicose terms, they aim to intimidate Western leaders and citizens, encouraging us to adopt conciliatory positions to their advantage. Meanwhile they remain sheltered from the force of public opinion in their countries, because public opinion there is simply prohibited and does not exist.

Our freedom presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is true that until democratic nations have the support of the people, they are inevitably at a disadvantage in a conflict. But when they do have that support they cannot be defeated. For democracies have the power to send a compelling message to friend and foe alike by the vote of their citizens. And the American people have sent such a signal by re-electing a strong chief executive. They know that President Reagan is willing to accept the responsibility for his actions and is able to
lead us through these complex times by insisting that we regain both our military and our economic strength.

In today's world where minutes count, such decisive leadership is more important than ever before. Regardless of whether conflicts are limited, or threats are ill-defined, we must be capable of quickly determining that the threats and conflicts either do or do not affect the vital interests of the United States and our allies... and then responding appropriately.

Those threats may not entail an immediate, direct attack on our territory, and our response may not necessarily require the immediate or direct defense of our homeland. But when our vital national interests and those of our allies are at stake, we cannot ignore our safety, or forsake our allies.

At the same time, recent history has proven that we cannot assume unilaterally the role of the world's defender. We have learned that there are limits to how much of our spirit and blood and treasure we can afford to forfeit in meeting our responsibility to keep peace and freedom. So while we may and should offer substantial amounts of economic and military assistance to our allies in their time of need, and help them maintain forces to deter attacks against them--usually we cannot substitute our troops or our will for theirs.
We should only engage our troops if we must do so as a matter of our own vital national interest. We cannot assume for other sovereign nations the responsibility to defend their territory—without their strong invitation—when our own freedom is not threatened.

On the other hand, there have been recent cases where the United States has seen the need to join forces with other nations to try to preserve the peace by helping with negotiations, and by separating warring parties, and thus enabling those warring nations to withdraw from hostilities safely. In the Middle East, which has been torn by conflict for millennia, we have sent our troops in recent years both to the Sinai and to Lebanon, for just such a peacekeeping mission. But we did not configure or equip those forces for combat—they were armed only for their self-defense. Their mission required them to be—and to be recognized as—peacekeepers. We knew that if conditions deteriorated so they were in danger, or if because of the actions of the warring nations, their peace keeping mission could not be realized, then it would be necessary either to add sufficiently to the number and arms of our troops—in short to equip them for combat . . . or to withdraw them. And so in Lebanon, when we faced just such a choice, because the warring nations did not enter into withdrawal or peace agreements, the President properly withdrew forces equipped only for peacekeeping.
In those cases where our national interests require us to commit combat forces, we must never let there be doubt of our resolution. When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must support them, as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits. When we commit our troops to combat we must do so with the sole object of winning.

Once it is clear our troops are required, because our vital interests are at stake, then we must have the firm national resolve to commit every ounce of strength necessary to win the fight to achieve our objectives. In Grenada we did just that.

Just as clearly, there are other situations where United States combat forces should not be used. I believe the postwar period has taught us several lessons, and from them I have developed six major tests to be applied when we are weighing the use of U.S. combat forces abroad. Let me now share them with you:

1. **First**, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.

2. **Second**, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so
wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all. Of course if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broker treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.

3. Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intended to conduct it."

War may be different today than in Clausewitz’s time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job—and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.
4. **Fourth**, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed--their size, composition and disposition--must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: "Is this conflict in our national interest?" Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?" If the answers are "yes," then we must win. If the answers are "no," then we should not be in combat.

5. **Fifth**, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.

6. **Finally**, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.

I believe that these tests can be helpful in deciding whether or not we should commit our troops to combat in the
months and years ahead. The point we must all keep uppermost in our minds is that if we ever decide to commit forces to combat, we must support those forces to the fullest extent of our national will for as long as it takes to win. So we must have in mind objectives that are clearly defined and understood and supported by the widest possible number of our citizens. And those objectives must be vital to our survival as a free nation and to the fulfillment of our responsibilities as a world power. We must also be farsighted enough to see when immediate and strong reactions to apparently small events can prevent lion-like responses that may be required later. We must never forget those isolationists in Europe who shrugged that "Danzig is not worth a war," and "why should we fight to keep the Rhineland demilitarized?"

These tests I have just mentioned have been phrased negatively for a purpose—they are intended to sound a note of caution—caution that we must observe prior to committing forces to combat overseas. When we ask our military forces to risk their very lives in such situations, a note of caution is not only prudent, it is morally required.

In many situations we may apply these tests and conclude that a combatant role is not appropriate. Yet no one should interpret what I am saying here today as an abdication of America's responsibilities—either to its own
citizens or to its allies. Nor should these remarks be
misread as a signal that this country, or this
Administration, is unwilling to commit forces to combat
overseas.

We have demonstrated in the past that, when our vital
interests or those of our allies are threatened, we are
ready to use force, and use it decisively, to protect those
interests. Let no one entertain any illusions—if our
vital interests are involved, we are prepared to fight.
And we are resolved that if we must fight, we must win.

So, while these tests are drawn from lessons we have
learned from the past, they also can--and should--be
applied to the future. For example, the problems
confronting us in Central America today are difficult. The
possibility of more extensive Soviet and Soviet-proxy
penetration into this hemisphere in months ahead is
something we should recognize. If this happens we will
clearly need more economic and military assistance and
training to help those who want democracy.

The President will not allow our military forces to
creep—or be drawn gradually—into a combat role in Central
America or any other place in the world. And indeed our
policy is designed to prevent the need for direct American
involvement. This means we will need sustained
congressional support to back and give confidence to our
friends in the region.
I believe that the tests I have enunciated here today can, if applied carefully, avoid the danger of this gradualist incremental approach which almost always means the use of insufficient force. These tests can help us to avoid being drawn inexorably into an endless morass, where it is not vital to our national interest to fight.

But politics and principles such as these require decisive leadership in both the executive and legislative branches of government—and they also require strong and sustained public support. Most of all, these policies require national unity of purpose. I believe the United States now possesses the policies and leadership to gain that public support and unity. And I believe that the future will show we have the strength of character to protect peace with freedom.

In summary, we should all remember these are the policies—indeed the only policies—that can preserve for ourselves, our friends, and our posterity, peace with freedom.

I believe we can continue to deter the Soviet Union and other potential adversaries from pursuing their designs around the world. We can enable our friends in Central America to defeat aggression and gain the breathing room to nurture democratic reforms. We can meet the challenge posed by the unfolding complexity of the 1980s.
We will then be posed to begin the last decade of this century amid a peace tempered by realism, and secured by firmness and strength. And it will be a peace that will enable all of us—ourselves at home, and our friends abroad—to achieve a quality of life, both spiritually and materially, far higher than man has even dared to dream.
VITA

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Major Field: Political Science

Title of Dissertation: Limited Warfare as a Pragmatic Concern: The Bounds of Domestic Consensus, the Controlled Use of Force, and United States Security

Approved:

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Major Professor and Chairman

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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