THE PERFECT STORM:

HOW CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AFFECT POLICY AND
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

LA TEMPÊTE PARFAITE:

COMMENT LES RELATIONS CIVILO-MILITAIRES AFFECTENT LE DEVELOPPEMENT
DES POLITIQUES ET DES STRATÉGIES

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STATEMENT OF ETHICS APPROVAL

The research involving human subjects that is reported in this dissertation was conducted with the approval of the Royal Military College of Canada General Research Ethics Board.

DEDICATION

To Soldiers who are the ones that shoulder the burden of all decisions made by strategic leaders in civil-military deliberations

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ABSTRACT

The ability of United States leaders to develop sound national security policy and strategy has suffered greatly since the Vietnam War. The reason for this is that the relations between the senior political and military leaders in the US has been, with some notable exceptions, very poor since that time. This dissertation theorizes that the quality of national security policy and strategy is directly proportional to the tenor of US civil-military relations. This theory, called the civil-military relations strategy corollary, demonstrates that when relations between the main actors are poor, the expected strategic outcomes are correspondingly of low quality. Conversely, when relations are of higher quality characterized by close cooperation, diverse dialogue, and mutual respect – even during disagreements – the probability of positive strategic outcomes is greatly improved. Thus, it stands to reason that civilian and military senior leaders should apply themselves toward maintaining sound civil-military relations in order to achieve the best strategic outcomes for national security. This dissertation uses four case studies to demonstrate the theory in action. Further, it will distill the contributing factors that have caused civil-military relations to become strained over time. Finally, the dissertation will provide some recommendations to reverse the trend of declining civil-military relations in the United States.

ABSTRAIT

La capacité des dirigeants des États-Unis á élaborer une politique et une stratégie solides en matière de stratégie de sécurité nationale a beaucoup souffert depuis la guerre du Vietnam. La raison est que les relations entre les haut dirigeants politiques et militaires aux États-Unis ont été, á quelques exceptions notables près, tres mauvaises depuis lors. Cette thèse theorise que la qualité de la politique et de la stratégie de sécurité nationale est directement proportionelle á la teneur des relations civilo-militaires américaines. Cette théorie, appellée le corollaire de la stratégie des relations civilo-militaires, démontre que lorsque les relations entre les principaux acteurs sont mauvaises, les résultats stratégiques attendus sont en conséquence de faible qualité. À l'inverse, lorsque les relations sont de meilleure qualité, caractérisées par une coopération étroite, á dialogue diversifé et respect mutual – même en cas de désaccord – la probabilité de résultats stratégiques positifs est grandement améliorée. Ainsi, il va de soi que les hauts dirigeants civils et militaires devraient s'appliquer à maintenir de bonnes relations civilo-militaires afin d'obtenir les meilleurs résultats stratégiques pour la sécurité nationale. Cette thèse utilise quatre études de cas pour démontrer la théorie en action. En outre, elle distéllera les facteurs contributifs qui ont provoqué la tension des relations civilo-militaires á fils du temps. Enfin, la thèse fournira quelques recommandations pour inverser la tendance au déclin des relations civilo-militaires aux États-Unis.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

War is the most extreme form of political discourse and it results in either victory or defeat based upon the strategic decisions made by the opponents. It is a costly endeavor and leaders of states should not enter into conflict without a thorough consideration of those costs. If leaders do make the decision to go to war, then they should enter into the conflict with a sound strategy that can attain the intended national political objectives. This topic is of personal interest since I served in the United States Army for over thirty years and spent nearly my entire career engaged at various levels executing the policy of the United States government in conflicts across the globe. These wars were largely 'wars of choice' and they mostly failed to achieve national political objectives due to poor policy and strategy. Further, these so-called 'wars of choice,'[1] are not without controversy. Engaging in such war, especially when the outcome is negative, causes pundits and the public to question if such actions were worth the cost in blood and treasure. Recent experience in the United States demonstrates that the nation has entered into these conflicts intending to win, but it has failed to design strategy that can deliver victory. "The ability of the United States national security establishment to craft, implement, and adapt effective long-term strategies against intelligent adversaries at acceptable costs has been declining for decades," state noted national security experts Andrew Krepinevich and Barry Watts.[2] The most recent example of this diminishing strategic capacity is the miscalculation of policy and strategic possibilities that have in the last two decades mired the United States in small wars in the Middle East and Central Asia.[3] The recent chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan presents a recent poignant example of strategic incompetence. Against military advice, the Biden Administration executed a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan resulting in a rapid collapse of the Afghan government. Acrimonious accusations between political and military leaders that became public further demonstrate the fractured condition of American civil-military relations.[4] The question, then naturally arises, why has American civil-military relations reached such a low point? This dissertation intends to offer some answers to this question.

A key factor in winning and losing wars is based on a nation's ability to develop coherent strategic concepts and this ability derives from the dialogue carried out by the civilian political and military leaders. Since America's tragic experience in Vietnam civil-military relations have broken down resulting in an inability to develop sound policy and strategy. This appears to have become a pattern as the nation has struggled to win wars decisively over the past several decades. Further, this pattern has become exacerbated since the end of the Cold War. In the pages that follow, I will argue that a critical element in the quality of civil-military relations is the tenor of those relations, whether positive or negative. For the purposes of this study, the word tenor is defined as the basic quality of discourse between the actors in civil-military relations. This quality ranges from poor, described as argumentative and adversarial, to sound, which can be characterized as a partnership or collegial discourse. Chapter 3 will expand more fully on the definition of tenor in civil-military relations and conceptualize it as a spectrum – indeed a continuous variable – rather than a binary definition. The tenor of strategic dialogue in civil-military relations tends to predict the quality of the resultant policy and strategy.

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[1] Lawrence Freedman, "On War and Choice," *The National Interest*, vol. 107 (May-June 2010), 9-16.

[2] Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, *Regaining Strategic Competence* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009), viii.

[3] See Richard N. Haass, *War of Choice, War of Necessity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

[4] Dan Lamothe, "Declassified Afghanistan Reports Back U.S. Commanders who said Biden Team was Indecisive During Crisis," *Washington Post* (February 12, 2022) accessed 21 April 2022 at https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/02/12/afghanistan-evacuation-after-action-reports/; United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Minority Report, *Left Behind: A Brief Assessment of the Biden Administration's Strategic Failures During the Afghanistan Evacuation* (Washington, DC: United States Senate, 2022), 18; and George Packer, "The Betrayal," *The Atlantic* (February 9, 2022) accessed 21 April 2022 at https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/03/biden-afghanistan-exit-american-allies-abandoned/621307.

Prussian military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, identified the necessary first step to developing a successful strategy when he wrote that, "[T]he first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the commander and statesman have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking: neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something alien to its nature."[5] With this understanding, the leaders must carry on an intense dialogue to establish policy and then align strategic ends with ways and means to follow through on its strategy and achieve victory.

Although this sounds easy, it is a difficult prospect to develop policy and design strategy. Nations struggle with strategy formulation due to a variety of factors, and the most critical factor to successful strategic deliberations is the tenor of civil-military relations. The United States illustrates this point as it has struggled in recent decades with Clausewitz' first step to identify "the kind of war" that the nation is embarking upon. This is attributable to strained civil-military relations among its senior civilian and military leaders, in which military leaders fail to provide candid, direct advice to the political leader who in turn does not demand greater fidelity about the war they are considering. In spite of the fact that civil-military relations are difficult, the United States has, nevertheless fielded an outstanding military that won many tactical and operational victories. Despite that, history is replete with examples of countries that had militaries, which could function successfully across the range of conflict, yet had a debilitating inability to develop sound strategy. Germany in both World Wars stands out as the quintessential example of this phenomenon. Today the United States seems unable to develop war-winning strategy, as the withdrawal from Afghanistan tends to demonstrate, although the nation possesses a military that has demonstrated tactical and operational competence over a period of several decades. The fact remains that the United States has and is failing to develop sound policy and strategy over the past five decades – with notable exceptions like the First Gulf War – and at the heart of the problem is contentious civil-military relations.

A major reason the United States has struggled to win wars since the Vietnam War is due to a noticeable decline in the ability of America's political and military leaders to work together in developing sound policy and strategy. There are several underlying causes of this decline and it started before the conflict in Vietnam and accelerated thereafter. Though civil-military relations remained sound between World War II and the early 1960s, several events at the start of the Cold War, such as the "Revolt of the Admirals" and debate over the "New Look" defense policy portended the decline of relations during and after the Vietnam War. These events in the 1940s and 1950s witnessed senior military leaders engage in dishonest tactics to undermine a president's defense policy or present the administration with a direct and public challenge to policy that resulted in the dismissal of the military leaders from the service. These events foreshadowed the later decline of American civil-military relations during the Vietnam era. James Dubik, a retired general and ethicist, posits that the entire purpose of any civil-military relationship in a democratic government is "to identify the set of war aims, strategies, policies, and military and non-military campaigns that, when executed, have the highest probability of success."[6] If this is true and American leaders continue to struggle with the civil-military relationship, then it behooves both actors to determine the causes of the breakdown in relations in order to implement corrective action. The alternative is continued poor relations resulting in correspondingly poor policy and strategy that could represent an existential threat to the United States at some point in the future if not corrected.[7]

The decline in the tenor of civil-military relations began as American involvement in Vietnam grew and has led to proportional difficulties in the development of strategy to avert or win conflict. The first manifestation of this phenomenon was the defeat in Vietnam characterized by strained relations

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[5] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

[6] James M. Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky: 2016), 64.

[7] Richard H. Kohn, "Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security," in *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 268-269.

between political and military leaders as they struggled to find a viable strategy. These difficulties continued in subsequent decades as civil-military relations have suffered and the ability to develop policy and strategy became increasingly difficult. The decade of the 1990s immediately following the end of the Cold War and the success of the First Gulf War, stands out as a period in which civil-military relations reached a low point. This is due to a number of complex factors that converged immediately after the First Gulf War including a change of presidential administration, the rapid shrinking of the United States military to reap a "peace dividend", and a 300% increase in military operations tempo as United States forces intervened in conflict regions across the globe, such as Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans. Then, after 9/11, civil-military relations unexpectedly spiraled downward further causing many scholars to note that it was time to renegotiate such relations in the United States.[8] This continuing decline in civil-military relations was produced by three observable factors that threaten to make the development of policy and strategy in the future nearly impossible. Such factors include:

1. Academia's retreat from the study of war leading to inadequate strategic education and critical analysis of war and its causes

2. Differing military and political cultures that contribute to suspicions of the other and lack of trust

3. Using American military operational excellence in winning battles as a substitute for strategy leading to the belief that the military can solve all problems

Based upon these observations, institutional change may be required to reverse the inability to develop sound strategic concepts, and this starts with rethinking civil-military relations in the United States.

There is a school of thought from scholars, such as Rosa Brooks and Andrew Bacevich, who assert civil-military relations have become militarized and this caused a paralysis in the political sphere creating single-track strategic thought. Critics who offer this view believe that the high regard the American public holds for the military has caused political leaders to abdicate their responsibility to lead the strategic processes pertaining to military action. This is because politicians seek a perceived electoral benefit from associating with military leaders. As a result, when working through strategic questions political leaders are acquiescing to the opinions of the military leaders rather than asserting their constitutional authorities. Further, there is, according to these authors, the tendency to overuse the military element of national power to solve geopolitical problems. This marginalizes other instruments of national power.[9] As a result, policy becomes militarized, to the detriment of political leaders' ability to develop multifaceted strategic concepts addressing complex problems, particularly war.[10]

Another school of thought offers that Huntington's theory of civil-military relations embodied in his seminal book *The Soldier and the State* is outdated – if it ever was a valid construct. This requires the

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[8] The following influential books and their authors advocate for a new theory of civil-military relations in the United States. Mackubin Thomas Owens, *US Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2011); Rebecca L. Schiff, *The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations (*New York: Routledge, 2009); and Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003. These are examined fully in the Literature Review of this dissertation.

[9] Instruments of national power that political leaders can wield in advancing the interests of a state include the use of diplomacy, management of information, the military, and economic tools. These instruments are sometimes referred to by the acronym DIME.

[10] Rosa Brooks, *How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 306-307 and Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), ix and 1-2. Rosa Brooks is a legal scholar and served in the Department of Defense during the Obama Administration. Andrew Bacevich is a professor at Harvard University and a retired military officer.

development of fresh thought about how civil-military relations work in the United States and elsewhere. The most prominent of these critics is Eliot Cohen. According to Cohen civil-military relations in the United States has never resembled Huntington's theoretical conception known as objective civilian control. This concept, which Cohen calls the 'normal' theory, postulates that civil-military relations work best when the political and military leaders function in separate spheres. The politicians set national political objectives for conflict while the professional military receives this direction and formulates plans to achieve the objectives.[11] All this would mean that leaders should operate in separate arenas in Huntington's conception, which would lead to lack of integration and seems unrealistic. Cohen notes that this is not the way civil-military relations have historically worked. Rather, there is an "unequal dialogue" between civilian and military leaders in which the political leaders have the last word after "bruising" debate with the military leaders. These civil-military relations are characterized by tumultuous debate between civilian and military leaders and ever-evolving processes that started with the beginning of the American republic. They are led by larger-than-life personalities that have not always agreed on policy and strategy, but were able to work together to achieve success because of an abiding mutual trust and respect rather than from a position of power and control.[12] This discourse is missing in today's civil-military relations in America as adherence by military leaders to the 'normal' theory exacerbate the problem. Further, passage of Goldwater-Nichols in 1986 has done much to cement the bifurcation of civilian and military spheres. These are central reasons for critics from across the spectrum of national security policy thought to call for the development of an updated theory. This would help instruct current and future civil and military leaders, while leading the nation to greater strategic clarity.

Another major issue plaguing the nation in terms of national security strategy development is the paucity of education opportunities for civilian political leaders. The Vietnam War had a detrimental effect on military and war studies in the United States. In addition to the effect that this tragic war had on civil-military relations, it also caused academia to retreat from the study of war. The result is that there are fewer opportunities for the pursuit of scholarship in war limiting the professional growth of strategic leaders.[13] This begs a serious question: if strategic leaders do not have a thorough understanding of war, then how can they develop sound national security policy to prevent conflict, or when necessary, win wars?

The lack of strategic education is also noticeable in professional military education because it comes too late in a military leader's career. Though United States professional military education provides a sound education in strategy and policy development, it does not occur until a United States officer is a captain in the navy or colonel in the other services with twenty to twenty-three years' service and at the cusp of assuming strategic level responsibilities. Retired senior military leaders agree that this is inadequate contributing to issues of civil-military relations and difficulties in strategy development, and further, strategic education should occur sooner while adding more curriculum in human relationships and emotional intelligence.[14] Another effect of the embrace of Huntington's theory is that this isolated

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[11] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), 262.

[12] Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 237-243 and Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered*, 72-73.

[13] Thomas K. Lindsay, "Have Universities Seen the End of War?" *Real Clear Policy* online (May 5, 2015). Accessed 14 November 2016 at http://www.realclearpolicy.com/blog/2014/05/15/have_universities_seen_ the_end_of_war_944.html and Donald A. Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili, *Arms and the University: Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-Military Students* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20.

[14] Interviews with a number of retired general officers identified similar conclusions. These observations suggest that strategic education occurs too late in a military officer's career and requires focus on inter-personal relations among actors at the strategic level. Interview with General (Retired) John W. Nicholson, Jr., conducted 10 June 2020: Interview with General (Retired) Colin Powell, conducted 8 July 2020; and Interview with protected source, conducted 21 July 2020.

military leaders from strategy development, which Huntington identifies as the realm of political leaders.[15]

In the place of strategy development, military leaders embraced what is known as the operational art, which is the level of war between strategy and tactics. Its purpose is to bridge the political objectives of war with the actions that occur on the battlefield. Some, such as Australian observers Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, believe that, unfortunately, operational art in the United States military has become an end unto itself.[16] While military leaders have achieved excellence in winning campaigns and battles, they have failed in recent times to link these to the strategic level to win wars.[17] Much of the reason for this is that military officer professional education is decidedly focused at the tactical and operational levels of war in every staff college until officers attend a war college. These schools focus on the winning of battles and campaigns to rapidly defeat an enemy and then transition quickly to post-combat tasks, while the war colleges look at the phenomenon of war holistically at the strategic level and the officer's role as an adviser to political leaders. This means that it is not until the twentieth to twenty-third year of service that a senior officer gains exposure in education to the strategic level. By the time these officers become flag officers three years later, they lack the strategic and political acumen to provide informed advice to the political leaders. This is a major reason why civilian and military leaders concentrate heavily on planning military operations versus policy and strategy and, as a result, do not focus upon achieving the political objective because of the perceived need to win quickly and move on to post-combat as soon as possible. Therefore, once the battle or campaign is won, the focus turns to "immediate withdrawal" rather than securing the political objectives.[18] Carl von Clausewitz points out in his seminal work, *On War* that the conduct of war is inseparable from the political objectives and, as previously noted, strategic design starts with understanding "the type of conflict that a nation is embarking upon."[19] Further, as conditions change, so strategy must also adjust in terms of ends (objectives), ways (methods), and means (resources) to address the strategic issue,[20] but if the priority is to exit the situation quickly, then there is limited time to adapt to changing conditions. (Note the specific use of the phrase 'the exit' rather than using the term 'exit strategy'. A strategy denotes the linking of ends, ways, and means. However, an exit is an end unto itself.) Therefore, actions on the battlefield must facilitate the adaptation of strategy to ensure that the state can secure its political objectives.

Clausewitz and contemporary scholars such as Cohen, as well as strategists Hew Strachan and Colin Gray, note that both civil and military leaders must develop a solid foundation in military theory, history, and strategic studies to gain vicarious experience to enable leaders to think more clearly and

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[15] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 262.

[16] Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009), vii-viii. Justin Kelly retired is a brigadier from the Australian Army, while Dr. Mike Brennan works for the Australian Department of Defence.

[17] Donald Stoker's recent book *Why America Loses Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) contains an excellent discussion of this phenomena in which the United States military's operational excellence has become the substitute for strategy and securing political objectives. Hew Strachan's *The Direction of War* dissects this phenomenon with precision, arguing that operational art has "subsumed" strategy. However, the best discussion of the issue, in my opinion, is found in Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan's *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy* published in 2009 by the United States Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. This study thoroughly examines how excellence in operational art is overcoming strategic art.

[18] Francis G. Hoffman, "History and Future of Civil-Military Relations: Bridging the Gaps," in *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 259-261.

[19] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976) 88.

[20] Dubik, *Just War Revisited*, 64.

broadly about complex strategic problems.[21] This problem is yet another reason to update civil-military relations theory and to reexamine how the United States develops its political and military strategic leaders.[22]

Another contributing factor to America's strategic paralysis is friction created by differing political and military cultures. Service cultures are entrenched within the United States military, and attempts by politicians to force change upon the services meets stiff resistance. The Donald Rumsfeld-led Department of Defense effort to 'transform' the Army is a representative example of this phenomenon, as well as his pressure on the Air Force to divest of much of its bomber fleet in favor of unmanned aerial vehicles. Also, military leaders tend to believe that they are held to higher standards of moral conduct than their political counterparts. Conversely, many political leaders[23] view the military warily, concerned that while the military is competent as an instrument of national power, it is also capable of obstruction of policy initiatives. Specifically, political leaders tend to think that their military leaders are concerned for their services' self-interest to the detriment of national priorities. Further, they believe that military leaders engage in political partisanship, lack political perspective on problems, and that military leaders actually lack strategic experience.[24] Thus, cultural differences create suspicion and resentment between political and military leaders exacerbating issues of trust, which makes the process of developing policy and strategy problematic.[25]

In an effort to mitigate problems created by a lack of shared trust and common understanding, as well as the differing personalities of leaders, many organizations and processes were set up over the years to deliberate on issues of national security. By establishing prescribed ways to devise and promulgate both policy and strategy, it was thought that this could mitigate inconsistent results. However, there is evidence that the very processes designed to deliver consistent strategic concepts may actually inhibit their development.[26] Examples of processes that have created this effect include the National Security Act of 1947 that established the National Security Council and the Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986, which strengthened the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff. Both pieces of legislation were intended to ensure the integration of agencies and services for the purpose of improving strategic planning.[27] While these did succeed in creating sound processes for developing

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[21] Eliot Cohen, "The Historical Mind and Military Strategy," *Orbis* (Fall 2005) 575-579; Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 16-17; and Colin S. Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2015) 10 and 31.

[22] See Stoker, *Why America Loses Wars*, Chapter 1, "Are We at War? What Do We Want? And Do We Want to Win?" This chapter illustrates the strategic incompetence of United States political and military leaders since World War II, and in particular, since the end of the Cold War. Regaining strategic competence among United States leaders is critical to success in any future conflict.

[23] Political leaders include elected officials, political appointees, and senior executive service bureaucrats within the United States government.

[24] Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (May-June 2002) 26-28; John T. Correll, "Rumsfeld's List," Air Force Magazine (May 2002) accessed 26 May 2021 at https://www.airforcemag.com/article/0502edit/; and Harvey M. Sapolsky, et al., *United States Defense Politics: The Origins of Security Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2017) 35; Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesman, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002) 276 and 285-287; and William E. Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making," *Parameters*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Autumn 2015) 20-25.

[25] Mackubin Thomas Owens, *U.S. Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2011) 93-115.

[26] Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 2000) 294-296 and Dessie Zegorcheva, "Statesmen, Soldiers, and Strategy: The Influence of Civil-Military Relations on U.S. National Security Decision-Making," unpublished doctoral dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 2013) 8-14.

[27] Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, 74-77 and 121; United States of America, *The National Security Act of 1947* (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 1947) accessed 31 December 2018 at https://global.oup.com/United States/companion.websites/9780195385168/ resources/chapter10/nsa/nsa.pdf; and United States Congress, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* (Washington, DC:

policy and strategy, three problems also arose from their passage. First, the planning processes have become unoriginal and so prescribed that they provide little substance. In other words, the bureaucratic processes have become in and of themselves the goal versus the production of substantive strategy.[28] Conversely, the processes are easily side-stepped by leaders who find that they do not facilitate their preferred policies.[29] Finally, the power of combatant commanders, strengthened by Goldwater-Nichols, became a challenge to the executive authority while short-circuiting the statutory role of the Service Chiefs and Joint Chiefs of Staff in advising civilian authorities, thus exacerbating tension and suspicion between political and military leaders.[30] The resulting mistrust inhibits strategic planning.

These observations are phenomenon that occurred alongside inconsistent foreign policy success and erosion of a constructive tenor between military leadership and civilian decision-makers. They lead to a proposed theory that summarizes United States civil-military relations and the development of relevant policy and strategy. The underpinning premise is that the quality of policy and strategy in the United States corresponds to the tenor of civil-military relations. For example, when civil-military relations are argumentative or adversarial it is highly likely that the process of developing policy and strategy will result in decisions that fail to secure political objectives. On the other hand, civil-military relations characterized by a partnership with open, collegial dialogue – meaning politeness, respect, and courtesy in interactions – even when issues are contentious, are likely to produce better choices that facilitate the ability to secure geopolitical objectives. Since the Vietnam era civil-military relations have often been characterized by high tension and acrimony. The result of this friction is the inability of the United States to secure its political objectives because of the poor policy and strategy produced during the formulation process. Notable recent examples of this phenomenon are the strategies underpinning both the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. In each case disagreements over the ways and means needed to secure the strategic ends resulted in long, drawn out conflicts that failed to secure the political objectives. The strained civil-military relations produced an environment whereby the disagreements between the political and military leaders made it impossible to align the ways and means with the stated ends. Though rare since Vietnam, when civil-military relations are of high quality, the United States has succeeded in securing its political objectives. The most prominent example of this end of the civil-military relations and policy-strategy spectrum is the First Gulf War of 1991. In this case healthy civil-military relations produced a collegial debate that resulted in clearly stated ends and ways and means fully aligned to secure the political objectives.[31]

Furthermore, the previously mentioned lack of opportunity to study the phenomena of war, cultural differences between political and military leaders, and the substitution of battlefield success for strategy are all observations that contributed to the decline of civil-military relations. These factors emerged following the Vietnam War and contributed to the inability to develop sound policy and effective strategy to secure political objectives. As the research in this dissertation unfolded four variables emerged from the literature review and the theory proposed in this project. This study sets out to determine if these variables are indeed factors in the four case studies that examine civil-military relations and strategy development. These variables were consistent in all cases and tended to act as predictors of the effectiveness and outcomes of civil-military relations. These include:

United States Congress, 1986) accessed 27 December 2018 at file:///C:/United Statesers/micha/Desktop/PhD%20Application/Dissertation%20References/Govt%20Documents/Goldwater-NicholsDoDReordAct1986.pdf.

[28] Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, 294-296.

[29] Zegorcheva, "Statesmen, Soldiers, and Strategy," 8-9.

[30] Sapolsky, et al., *United States Defense Politics*, 44-45.

[31] The original policy and strategy developed to compete in the Cold War was derived in the late 1940s and early 1950s and successive administrations adhered to it over time with necessary modifications. Despite any changes, overall this policy and strategy remained remarkably durable and consistent. An example of adaptation of the strategy occurred in the 1980s with President Ronald Reagan's program to build up the capability of the United States military. He was able to do this while adhering to the original spirit of the policy of containment through good civil-military relations that accrued during his presidency.

1. The tenor of civil-military deliberations – ranging from a partnership with open, frank dialogue to adversarial characterized by tense, acerbic interactions – producing either trust or a lack thereof

2. The ability of political leaders to articulate clear and attainable national objectives

3. Political leaders lack of understanding the use of force to achieve political objectives

4. The ability of political and military leaders to translate battlefield success into political success

This dissertation develops a theory that will argue that these variables are critical to the ability to predict the effectiveness of policy and strategy emanating from civil-military relations. Following, the dissertation then proposes a set of case studies against which to test the validity of this theory.

Trust is at the heart of effective civil-military relations. Without mutual trust at the foundation of any working civil-military relationship it is difficult to conduct any substantive process requiring close collaboration. Researcher Richard Kohn notes "trust is the moral basis of any healthy human relationship" and civil-military relations are no exception.[32] Trust is the element of civil-military relations that fosters a sound tenor among the participants. A number of factors determine how and whether the strategic actors can build a mutual trusting relationship. These include: norms, values, and beliefs; legal and authority frameworks; bureaucratic cultures; experience and education; and perceptions of competence between the civil and military actors. When mutual trust dominates the relationship, it aids the planning processes that produce policy and strategy. The reason for this is that trust enables the exchange of ideas even if they tend to diverge. Thus, this mutually enabled free exchange provides for more courses of action in planning and offers decision-makers an array of choices in solving complex problems. By contrast, mistrust leads to suspicion and acrimony, which tends to inhibit the planning process producing limited courses of action as participants become reluctant to present ideas. Further, this mutual antipathy may lead the two sides to disregard each other. As a result, the decision-makers have fewer choices to meet difficult strategic challenges.

Prominent examples of mutual trust creating sound relations and decisions include the little-known decision-making process that considered and disregarded intervention in Indochina, 1954 and the military action of the First Gulf War, 1991. Each resulted in sound policy and strategy built upon good civil-military relations all underpinned by trust among the actors. On the other hand, the struggles over Vietnam, 1964 and Iraq, 2003 are well-known examples of poor policy and strategy that were contextualized by acrimonious civil-military relations and mistrust.[33] The case studies in this dissertation illustrate the correlative relationship noted in this theory, as well as how the factors that influence the development of either mutual trust or mistrust affect the state of civil-military relations. It will conclude that the contentious civil-military relations experienced since Vietnam have led to the difficulties that the United States experiences today in developing sound policy and strategy to deal with complex situations of potential or on-going conflict.

This dissertation is about how civil-military relations affects the ability of a nation, specifically the United States, to develop effective policy and strategy during periods of conflict. For the purposes of this study, the term effective means the ability to articulate and produce the desired or intended political

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[32] Kohn, "Building Trust," in *American Civil-Military Relations,* Nielsen and Snider, eds., 70.
[33] Three books – among many – provide the best discussions of how poor civil-military relations produced correspondingly poor policy and strategy. The first is H.R. McMaster's quintessential overview of the issues surrounding civil-military relations and strategy in Vietnam, *Dereliction of Duty* published in 1997. Two that chronicle the Iraq War planning effort in 2003 are Thomas Ricks' *Fiasco* (2006) and Michael E. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor's *Cobra II* (2006). All three of these treatises provide an incisive look at how poor civil-military relations negatively affected policy and strategy deliberations and outcomes in each case.

objective. Therefore, in this context, it would mean that the political and military leaders, through civil-military relations, are able to develop policy and strategy that secures stated political objectives by the use of force or threat to use this instrument of national power.

The dissertation is organized in the following manner. This work offers a theory about how civil-military relations affects policy and strategy. In doing so, it first examines the relevant literature in Chapter Two focused on the major themes of civil-military relations. Chapter Three provides a discussion of the function of theory, expands more upon the theory used in this work, and discusses the methodology used in this study. The next part of the dissertation consists of four chapters that test the theory by examining case studies to determine if the tenor of civil-military relations correlates to the quality of policy and strategy produced from strategic deliberations among the actors. These four chapters examine the cases of the deliberations that considered and discarded intervention in French Indochina in 1954, the Vietnam War, 1964, the First Gulf War in 1991, and war planning for Iraq in 2002-03. These comparative case studies will demonstrate the validity of the proposed theory. The case studies of Iraq, 2003 and Vietnam, 1964 show that poor civil-military relations led to poor policy and strategy. This is due to consistent variables highlighted earlier in this chapter. Chapter Eight summarizes the findings, the implications of the findings vis-à-vis the need for positive civil-military relations, and makes recommendations about what the United States might do to reverse this current acrimonious situation.

The link between the tenor of civil-military relations and policy and strategy development is what makes this dissertation unique. Its purpose is to enable political and military leaders to understand that a sound civil-military relationship is critical to the development of successful policy and strategy for the United States. The ability of these leaders to develop an effective working relationship is critical so that they can in turn develop sound policy and strategy for the defense of the state. For an extended time, starting with the Vietnam era, the United States has struggled to develop sound policy and strategy while civil-military relations have suffered. This has not presented a serious threat to the state because the United States has not had a peer or near-peer competitor since the end of the Cold War, thus there was no existential threat to survival. However, since 2014 the world has entered a new period of Great Power competition. If the United States civil-military relations remain strained and policy and strategy development continue to struggle against the backdrop of such competition, then the survival of the United States could come into question. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the United States repair its civil-military relations, so that it can better develop policy and strategy that effectively addresses the peer and near-peer threats of an increasingly dangerous world. Thus, this topic matters because understanding the correlation of civil-military relations to the development of policy and strategy could facilitate a conversation among the American leadership and, potentially, improve the civil-military relationship. In turn, this could lead to effective strategic deliberations producing policy and strategy that ensure the national security of the United States. The hope is that the research findings contained in this dissertation may contribute to strategic dialogue, a discourse that will assist with generating the right policy and strategy at the right time and place.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews and assesses the literature concerning civil-military relations among senior political and military leaders, as well as policy and strategy development. The review provides a discussion of how this dissertation utilized the literature in building the theory and argument. There is a great deal of material pertaining to the topics of civil-military relations and strategy making. This body of literature ranges from historical narratives and theoretical treatises to social scientific analysis. Further, there is an entire branch of this literature dedicated to the civil-military relations of the United States.[34] Much of this writing chronicles the origins of civil-military relations in the United States, its tenor, ranging from positive to negative, and the influence of these relations upon the discourse between society and the military. Since the 1990s the literature on civil-military relations has decidedly focused on a so-called "gap," or lack of connection, between civil society and the United States military. Additionally, there is an acknowledgement that this gap is having a negative effect on relations of senior military leaders and civilian politicians.[35] Despite this breadth and depth, there is a relative silence on the connection between civil-military relations and the formulation of policy and strategy. Notable exceptions include recent works by Mackubin Owens in his book *U.S. Civil-Military Relations After 9-11* and Risa Brooks *Shaping Strategy*. This dissertation intends to add to the literature as it pertains to civil-military relations and its effect upon policy and strategy making and the literature review situates it within the larger body of works.

Civil-military relations research is a multidisciplinary endeavor, drawing from psychology, sociology, political science, and history. Within these fields, five themes, or perspectives, emerge constituting the bulk of the available literature. The first of these themes is the connection between the soldier and society. The next theme is that of human relationships and trust among the participants in civil-military relations. Third is the theme is the divergence of roles and responsibilities of civilian and military participants. The fourth theme is known as presentism, which is a lack of historical perspective among political and military leaders. The final theme is that of strategic considerations as it pertains to a misunderstanding of how to align ends, ways, and means. The ideas expressed in the research detailing these perspectives are essential to understanding civil-military relations and their criticality to national security. From these writings, we can make some observations that appear to contribute to poor civil-military relations introduced in Chapter 1 affecting the development of policy and strategy.[36] What is sparse in this literature is the connection between the tenor of civil-military relations and the development of policy and strategy making.[37] It is this disparity in the literature that this dissertation intends to fill by demonstrating that the development of policy and strategy is inseparable from civil-military relations.

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[34] Examples of research that the literature review includes are historical writings such as *Dereliction of Duty* by H.R. McMaster and *Cobra II* co-authored by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor; theoretical treatises like *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz, *The Direction of War* by Hew Strachan and multiple works by Colin Gray including *The Future of Strategy*. Further, the most important social science works include the anthology *Soldiers and Civilians* edited by Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn, which contains the Triangle Institute (commonly known as the TISS survey) survey of the United States military in 1999 and Heidi Urben's follow up study and dissertation titled "Civil-Military Relations in a Time of War" conducted in 2010.

[35] *Soldiers and Civilians* mentioned in the previous footnote is arguably the cornerstone text of this body of material, which also includes multiple writings by Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn. They are among many who have written on the topic of the so-called gap between American society and its military. Additionally, these authors have co-authored an important article titled "The Gap" that appeared in *The National Interest* in 2000.

[36] To reiterate, the three factors contributing to the poor state of United States civil-military relations are academia's retreat from the study of war; the contrast between political and military cultures; and the use of operational excellence as a substitute for strategy.

[37] To repeat from Chapter 1, tenor is defined as the basic quality of discourse between the participants in civil-military relations. This quality ranges from poor, described as argumentative and adversarial, to sound, which can

The Connection between the Soldier and Society

Interestingly, American civil-military relations research focused on the soldier and society – the first theme – began in earnest after World War II, and over the course of several decades, has shifted in thematic focus. The catalyst for this was the first-time existence of a large American standing military force. From the beginning of the Republic in the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the military in being was extremely small because of suspicions that Americans had concerning the existence of large standing military forces, or a discernable need. With the exception of periods of conflict when expansion was necessary, such as the American Civil War, the United States military did not make a large impact on American society. The forces that did exist were very small and organized for constabulary missions and coastal defense with a decidedly inward focus. Thus, the retention of civilian control of the military in the United States was never in question since a miniscule United States military had little real power or influence in the public arena. However, after World War II and the start of the Cold War, the United States standing military grew many times bigger than it had ever been, and with this growth came a great deal of political influence and leverage. Further, due to the large number of citizens who had served in the military during World Wars I and II, plus the Korean War, social interest in the military increased proportionately making military service a desirable and respectable career choice.[38]

With the unprecedented size of the United States military after World War II, many writers began to debate how best for the civilian political leaders to establish and retain political control of the military. Thus, the first thematic body of literature in civil-military relations to emerge concerned the connection between the soldier and society. The most prominent scholar to write about the soldier and society was political scientist Samuel Huntington who published his acclaimed theory of civil-military relations embodied in *The Soldier and the State* in the 1950s. This book was embraced by both civilian and military leaders and became – and remains – the standard for United States civil-military relations. It is a thorough survey of the environment of civil-military relations to provide political and military leaders with an understanding of the landscape of their relationship. This treatise established the roles and responsibilities of civilian and military leaders producing a problematizing bifurcation – a separate theme discussed later in the chapter – with civilians in charge of decision-making on policy and strategy, and military leaders designated with advising and then, implementing the strategy to achieve the policy objectives. In other words, Huntington describes an environment whereby it appears that political leaders make decisions on policy and strategy in isolation. Then, they pass the decision off to the military leaders to implement the strategy, which makes it appear that the participants operate separately in strategic deliberations. Recently, in light of observed difficulties in civil-military relations at the highest levels, calls have surfaced to develop a new theory that better reflects the reality of such relations. In contrast to Huntington's theory, political and military participants should have a great deal of interaction throughout strategic deliberations rather than operating in isolation so that they can develop effective policy and strategy. Leading scholars making such calls include Eliot Cohen, Peter Feaver, Rebecca Schiff, and the late Colin Gray. They collectively assert that a new theory must provide a more realistic articulation of actual civil-military relations in which the participants share responsibility for development of policy and strategy rather than splitting responsibilities as Huntington offers.

By the 1960s and 1970s sociologists began to contribute to the topic of the soldier and society by noting the distinction between the military and the society that produces the military. The major

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be characterized as a partnership or collegial discourse. Chapter 3 will expand more fully on the definition of tenor in civil-military relations and present it across a spectrum chart for greater clarity.

[38] Harvey M. Sapolsky, Eugene Gholz, and Caitlin Talmadge, *U.S. Defense Politics: The Origins of Security Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 34. To provide a data point, 40% of adult Americans in 1960 had served in the military in either World War I, II, or the Korean War. As of January 2021, only 7% of American citizens served in the military in any capacity. Statistics found in *Army Echoes: The Official Newsletter for Retired Soldiers, Surviving Spouses, and Families* (May-July 2021), 14.

contributors who researched and wrote about military culture were Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos.[39] What these researchers illuminated was the distinct perspective and orientation of those who serve in the military as compared to the society from which they emerge. Further, they looked into the aspects of specific sub-cultures within the military to determine how these affect the civil-military bargain. A major focus was the culture of the professional military officer as it pertained to civil-military relations. Such research proved foundational for the writing of this dissertation because the culture of military professionals has direct effects upon the relations with civilian leaders sometimes causing serious tension and clashes among the participants.

The estrangement of the participants is a soldier and society issue caused by the divergent cultures within which military and civilian participants grow up. Here again, there is a wide array of information that proved useful toward exploring how this lack of cultural sensitivity between civilian and military leaders contributed to the worsening of civil-military relations over the decades. The significant sources on culture come from sociologists, military scholars, and participants in particular events. Edgar Schein's *Organizational Culture and Leadership* provides an excellent point from which to commence inquiry. Schein's book defines culture and, culture in organizations, which provides a foundation for the concepts of United States political and military culture developed within this dissertation.[40] With this foundation established, the research needed to identify texts specific to political and military culture. Important texts in these fields include: Louis Hartz' *The Liberal Tradition in America*; James D. Hunter and Carl Bowman's *The State of Disunion*; Allan D. English's *Understanding Military Culture*; and the recently published *Culture and the Soldier*, edited by H. Christian Breede. These books advance the discussion further by identifying the characteristics of political and military culture, with emphasis on how they differ.[41]

The next body of sources further examines how the differences affect civil-military relations and these included the book by retired general Walter F. Ulmer, Joseph J. Collins, Charles Ulmer, and Thomas Owen Jacobs titled *American Military Culture in the 21st Century* and articles, the most important of which is Rapp's "Civil-Military Relations"; Weigley's "The American Civil-Military Cultural Gap"; military sociologist Karen O. Dunivin's "Military Culture: Change and Continuity"; and an article containing statistical analysis by journalists A.W. Geiger, Kristen Bialek, and John Gramlich titled "The Changing Face of Congress" that demonstrates how the United States political establishment's pool of military veterans has dwindled over the past five decades since Vietnam. These materials further expand on the estrangement of civil and military leaders since Vietnam leading to poor and at times uncivil strategic deliberations.[42] Ultimately, the cultural differences noted by these writers tend to lead

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[39] Among the critical texts consulted for this writing were Morris Janowitz's, *The Professional Military Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (*New York: Free Press, 1971) and Charles Moskos*, Public Opinion and the Military Establishment* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishing, 1971).

[40] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2nd Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992). Schein's book is considered the standard in understanding organizational culture and its effect on leadership and decision-making and it provided excellent insights when applied to civilian and military cultures.

[41] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution (*New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1955). While Hartz' book is an older work, it provides a solid foundation toward understanding political culture in America and how it affects society. Hunter and Bowman's *The State of Disunion*, Vol. 2. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996, is more up to date and highlights how political culture has evolved over time. Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004) provides a contrasting view of the culture within military's with emphasis on Canada and the United States militaries. Finally, the collection of essays edited by H. Christian Breede, *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019) provides a look into how military cultural norms affect military operations and the decision to use of forces. Juxtaposed against the works on political culture we can start to see how tensions arise in the civil-military relations of a nation.

[42] Walter F. Ulmer, et al., American *Military Culture in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2000). This study is an extensive work done by a team of respected researchers from

civilian and military participants to become suspicious of the others' motivations in civil-military deliberations. The suspicions harbored by political and military leaders, led to a lack of trust when they deliberated on the development and design of policy and strategy. The lack of trust raised tensions during discussions that led to low quality policy and strategy. Together this primary and secondary source material enables this dissertation to ascertain how cultural differences affected the evolution of civil-military relations since Vietnam and then, how they affect the discourse of strategic deliberations, either positively or negatively.

As the 1980s progressed toward the end of the Cold War the thematic focus shifted as scholars noted the decline of trust among the participants. Thus, historians and political scientists began contributing major works on the topic of civil-military relations. During the 1980s many of these zeroed in on the breakdown of civil-military relations during the Vietnam War. Their theme was to examine how this breakdown affected trust among the participants.[43] By the 1990s the focus shifted to the observed difficulties of civil-military relations that arose after the Cold War during the Clinton Administration. Such writings were concerned with the perceived separation of the United States military from the civilian society, particularly between the officer corps and society producing issues with trust among the participants. The leading researchers who contributed to such writings include Peter Feaver, Russell Weigley, Richard Kohn, and Don Snider. The commonality of their contributions is that civilian and military leaders must work together to repair the relationship by closing the separation that produces mistrust. Additionally, all these researchers made major contributions to the anthology *Soldiers and Civilians*, which concisely summarizes the issues of civil-military relations in the 1990s.[44]

At the start of the twenty-first century the shock of 9/11 and the entrance into wars in Iraq and Afghanistan caused scholars to give even greater focus on the issue of civil-military relations and trust. After initial successes in both conflicts, each stalemated into long, drawn-out insurgencies forcing an unexpected commitment of blood and treasure. The inability to win wars with long duration coincided with a breakdown in civil-military relations among the senior leaders of the United States military and political class. Scholarly observers took note of this breakdown and the result was a flurry of writings discussing the phenomenon, its origins, and effects of the civil-military relations struggles. Four writers in particular have made a critical connection between civil-military relations and the development of policy and strategy. These include retired United States Marine colonel and former Assistant Dean of Academics at the Naval War College Mackubin Owens, Professor Hew Strachan, journalist Thomas Ricks, as well as, Major General William Rapp who have all contributed some of the most poignant books and articles along these lines.[45] The authors all observe that civil-military relations witnessed a

the Center of Strategic and International Studies. It helps develop an understanding of the patterns of thought within the United States military based upon the cultural norms of the organizations. The articles reviewed, particularly Rapp's "Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making," *Parameters* Vol. 45, No. 3 (Autumn 2015), 13-26 goes into depth about how political leaders and their senior military advisers differ in views, actions, and perspective, which is linked to their cultural alignment and its effect on civil-military relations and strategy-making. This, in my opinion, is among the very best articles used in the research for this dissertation.

[43] Notably, the anthology *Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Co., 1987) edited by George K. Osborn, Asa A. Clark, IV, Daniel J. Kaufman, and Douglas E. Lute is representative of writings on civil-military relations and policy and strategy of the Vietnam War to emerge in the 1980s.

[44] See *Soldiers and Civilians*, edited by Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001).

[45] See Mackubin Thomas Owens, *US Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2011), Owens is currently a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He previously served as editor of *Orbis,* FPRI's *Journal of World Affairs*; Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War*: *Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Thomas Ricks, *The Generals* (New York: Penguin, 2013); and William E. Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making." *Parameters* Vol. 45, No. 3 (Autumn 2015) 13-26. All of these discuss at length the struggles to develop strategy in the context of civil-military relations.

serious breakdown after 9/11 due to mutual mistrust, particularly in the first decade of the twenty-first century. They all follow this thread noting various reasons for the decline such as Strachan's emphasis on a lack of historical perspective. What these contributions provide is the basis for determining if "there is a correlation between civil-military relations and the ability to develop policy and effective strategy." This latest set of writings represents the most recent evolution of the topic of civil-military relations. Thus, there is a rich trove of civil-military relations literature and writing that began in earnest after World War II.

The relatively unknown case involving the strategic deliberations that took place in 1954 concerning United States intervention in French Indochina provides another perspective of trust in civil-military relations. The strategic deliberations around the decision not to intervene demonstrates how the sound tenor of civil-military relations exhibited during the Eisenhower Administration set the conditions for the development of good policy and effective strategy to secure the political objectives established by the administration. There is a plethora of secondary and primary sources available documenting this strategic discourse, to include declassified government documents. Indispensable secondary sources are historians Melanie Billings-Yun's *Decision Against War* and Andrew Bacevich's article from the *Journal of Military History* titled "The Paradox of Professionalism." These accounts provide excellent, readable narratives of a strategic deliberation that few know much about. The authors offer that the robust and wide-ranging debate on the question of intervention in Indochina provided President Eisenhower with several perspectives of the problem. Further, because the president facilitated a dialogue as the competing sides laid out their options, Eisenhower's engagement produced informed decision-making. Therefore, the Indochina debate is significant because it demonstrates that civil-military relations grounded by mutual trust can result in sound policy and strategy. Using the positive case of Indochina, 1954 and the civil-military relations of the Eisenhower Administration these works establish a data point for assessing strategic deliberations.[46] This strategic civil-military debate serves as a contrast to the poor and mistrustful civil-military relations evidenced ten years later within the Johnson Administration at the start of the Vietnam War.

Risa Brooks and Dessie Zegorcheva produced significant works titled *Shaping Strategy* and "Statesmen, Soldiers, and Strategy" in which the theme of trust between the participants is a central focus. These propose theories of how preference divergence among civil and military participants affect strategic deliberations. Preference divergence "is the extent to which civilian and military preferences on key international security issues converge or diverge."[47] Zegorcheva developed a model that enables evaluation of the degree of preference divergence and actor dominance to determine strategic outcomes. This model proves particularly useful in understanding the perspective of the participants and their ability to advocate their strategic preferences as a political or military leader. Thus, it enables an assessment of the tenor of civil-military relations.[48] The research in this dissertation looks at the articulated factors that

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[46] Melanie Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Diem Bien Phu, 1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) and Andrew J. Bacevich, Andrew, "The Paradox of Professionalism: Eisenhower, Ridgeway, and the Challenge to Civilian Control, 1953-1955." *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1997) 303-334 are excellent complementary sources that provide narrative histories of the decision-making of the Eisenhower Administration about what to do in Indochina. Their glimpse into the civil-military relations of that administration, particularly between political leaders and Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway, is essential for establishing the foundational understanding of the situation in Southeast Asia and how the administration went about developing its policy and strategy.

[47] Dessie Zegorcheva, "Statesmen, Soldiers, and Strategy: The Influence of Civil-Military Relations in U.S. National Security Decision-Making," Doctoral Dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 2013), 59.

[48] Risa Brooks, Shaping *Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) and Dessie Zegorcheva, "Statesmen, Soldiers, and Strategy: The Influence of Civil-Military Relations in U.S. National Security Decision-Making," Doctoral Dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 2013). These works are very closely related in discussing the role of preference divergence, positional power leverage, and strategic assessments.

cause divergence of preference and can affect relations between primary participants in civil-military relations.

Human Relationships and Trust among the Civil and Military Participants

The next significant body of literature consulted pertains to the theme of trust – and is linked to concepts of the soldier and society – is written primarily by social scientists, like Feaver, Kohn, and Snider. A common thread across these writings advocates that since civil-military relations involves human interaction, the key to ensuring the best relationship is trust among the civilian and military participants. Feaver, Kohn, and Snider have published an array of books and articles and the most significant works include the previously mentioned anthology titled *Soldiers and Civilians*; Feaver's *Armed Servants*; and articles by Kohn such as, "The Erosion of Civilian Control" and "The Gap" co-authored with Feaver. Kohn and Snider offer a war and society perspective of trust in their contributions, which is important for two reasons. First, all military leaders come from the society that produces them, and yet military leaders become separated from society due to the wide differences between civil and military cultures, which tends to produce a lack of trust. Second, if trust is absent between the military and the society it serves, this absence will carry over to civil-military relations among political and military leaders. Snider contributed chapters to *Soldiers and Civilians* and articles such as "Dissent and Strategic Leadership in the Military Profession." Collectively, these works chronicle the civil-military gap in the US, with a focus on the military's separation from civil society. *Soldiers and Civilians* specifically, contains a mountain of survey data compiled by the Triangle Institute, which became widely known as the TISS survey.[49] Another significant source that discusses civil-military relations among senior leaders is an anthology, *American Civil-Military Relations*, edited by Snider and Suzanne Nielsen. This edited volume discusses the strategic level of civil-military relations and touches on the tension among civil and military leaders caused by the right to insist by military leaders. The main focus of the book though discusses the effect of the widening separation of the military from society.[50] The work in this dissertation further develops this idea and focuses on how the resulting lack of trust among political and military leaders affects policy and strategy development.

Divergence of Roles and Responsibilities of Civilian and Military Participants

The third theme noted is how the divergence of roles and responsibilities between political and military participants caused problems with strategy development. There is a rich trove of theoretical material by scholars in the field and it is through examination of these texts that we can see how the divergence came about. This bifurcation, by separating stakeholder roles and responsibilities, strained relations and affected strategic deliberations. Huntington's theory is central to the discussion because *The Soldier and the State* provides the framework for American civil-military relations. He advocated a model of civil-military relations called objective control. Huntington defined objective control as a means by which American political leaders can maintain control of the military by providing a professional, autonomous sphere to military leaders far removed from politics. Huntington developed this model in the 1950s to enable the United States to maintain solid civilian control of the military at a time

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[49] The TISS survey data and essays noted in the text are found in Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, Eds. *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. Feaver's book *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003 contains his agency theory of civil-military relations, which this dissertation discusses in more detail in subsequent chapters.

[50] Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, eds. *American Civil Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2009 is an excellent survey of the state of civil-military relations against the backdrop of the wars at the start of the 21st century. There are excellent articles by primary sources that have served in Iraq and Afghanistan discussion the state of relations among America's senior leaders as well as how America's military is becoming disconnected from the society that produces it.

when the United States military establishment had greatly expanded to meet the demands of the Cold War. Thus, to maintain civil control over the military this theory outlines distinct and separate spheres of responsibility for politicians and military leaders. This divergence of responsibilities amongst political and military leaders exacerbated the poor health of United States civil-military relations by creating the belief that there is a dissociation of roles and responsibilities.

A second aspect of divergence is clearly articulated in *Alien* by Australian defense experts Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan. The American emphasis on operational art as a separate level of war from strategy exacerbated the Huntington notion of separation of roles and responsibilities. United States military leaders enthusiastically pursued operational competence as separate from the political and strategic sphere in accordance with Huntington's model of civil-military relations and this caused a loss of strategic competence. This dissertation argues that one of the reasons for the loss of strategic competence is directly attributable to adherence to Huntington's theory. The author's illustrate that this provided an autonomous sphere of military expertise and seizing on operational art made this convenient while contributing to the decline of strategic competence.[51] Such competence is the ultimate purpose of civil-military relations in a republic founded on democratic principles.

In the arena of strategic competence, two authors and their writings are of particular significance to my research. These authors are Hew Strachan and Colin S. Gray who have both written numerous books and articles on strategic theory. Two examples frequently cited in this dissertation are Strachan's *The Direction of War* and Gray's *The Future of Strategy*. Both scholars use historical analysis of the era that started with the collapse of the Soviet Union to demonstrate how the bifurcation of civilian and military responsibilities led to the loss of strategic competence since that time. Their combined long experience in the field leads them to the conclusion that this loss is due to myriad factors across multiple civil-military relations thematic perspectives. These factors include: the division of roles, presentism due to a lack of appreciation for history, and a failure to understand how to use the military instrument to achieve political outcomes. This, they note, leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of how the ends of strategy align to policy objectives. From these writings and those previously noted, one can identify the elements that produced this decline in competence such as, lack of strategic education opportunities, cultural differences among the civilian and military participants, and embracing battlefield success gained through the application of operational art in lieu of strategy.[52] The work of Strachan and Gray expand on these causal factors to illustrate how they contributed to produce mediocre civil-military relations, which in turn leads to correspondingly inadequate policy and strategy. From this argument, it seems evident that the factors that led to poor civil-military relations correlate to political and strategic outcomes. This in turn, supports the theory that the positive or negative climate, or tenor, of those relations acts as a predictor of the quality of policy and strategy.

Presentism, the lack of Historical Perspective

Historical studies in civil-military relations are both fascinating and descriptive of all aspects of the field. They create an emphasis on the need for a historical perspective instead of a presentism

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[51] Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* is the American standard on civil-military relations and because of this much of the discussion in the dissertation is devoted to understanding its effect on policy and strategy making. A critical component of Huntington's theory provides the military with its own sphere of professional knowledge and the embrace of the operational art enhanced the separation of the military from the political sphere of action. Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan's *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009), vii-viii, 64-68.

[52] Both Strachan and Gray have contributed a mountain of outstanding writings on strategy in books, articles, and essays, which this dissertation cites throughout in addition to the two books noted in the text. Two such examples are Gray's "National Style in Strategy." *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1981) and Strachan's "The Lost Meaning of Strategy." *Survival* Vol. 47, No. 3 (Autumn 2005) to name two among several. Without these scholars the availability of treatises on strategy would be much less rich and informative, especially as it pertains to the current environment.

viewpoint, which provides the fourth theme. The authors of these perspectives are among some of the foremost American historians including Eliot Cohen, Russell F. Weigley, and Donald Stoker and each has published foundational histories in the form of books and articles relevant to the topic of civil-military relations.[53] Thus, each author emphasizes in their writings that there is a disturbing lack of historical perspective among political and military leaders who are mired in current problems. Together these scholars note a decline of strategic competence due to adherence to the Huntington model, rather than the past examples of shared responsibility for policy and strategy development. Many historical cases demonstrate that mutual accountability for policy and strategy is the cornerstone of civil-military relations, and in fact, is the very purpose of those relations. Yet contemporary civilian and military leaders fail to heed this historical precedent. These researchers also touch on the importance of trust in civil-military relations, while at the same time stressing that civil-military relations involve close cooperation between political and military leaders in developing policy and strategy. For example, Eliot Cohen's *Supreme Command* is a critical analysis of Huntington's theory of United States civil-military relations. Using four historical examples, Cohen demonstrates how Huntington's theory is not valid when analyzed using a historical perspective of past practices. Weigley's *The American Way of War* and his numerous articles on civil-military relations, such as "The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell," chronicle how United States civil-military relations evolved. Weigley's writings show that trust underpins civil-military relations and that the participants work closely on issues of national security.

Political scientists Richard Kohn and Peter Feaver co-edited an anthology titled *Soldiers and Civilians*, which examines how the attitudes of contemporary military officers are shaped by historical and cultural experiences that in turn, affect civil-military relations. Donald Stoker, a former professor at the US Naval Postgraduate School, recently published *Why America Loses Wars* and in this work he uses historical analysis to demonstrate why the United States has lost competence in conflict termination. Finally, Canadian scholars Joel Sokolsky and Albert Legault, co-edited a volume titled *The Soldier and the State in the Post-Cold War Era*, which contains an outside look at the challenges of civil-military relations in the United States and other states since the end of the Cold War.[54] The integrating theme among them all, and the focus of this dissertation, is that a healthy civil-military relationship characterized by mutual trust is the central ingredient to the success of strategic deliberations necessary to develop national security policy and strategy. This dissertation builds upon this work and adds to the

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[53] Dr. Eliot Cohen is on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University and is the author of many books and articles. In addition, he has served as a senior adviser to United States political leaders. The late Dr. Russell F. Weigley was an esteemed military historian whose book *The American Way of War* is a standard text at military staff and war colleges. Dr. Donald Stoker served as professor of strategy and policy at the US Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California before taking a position as Fulbright Visiting Professor of International Relations at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, Austria in 2017.

[54] Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime.* (New York: The Free Press, 2002). This book is one of several works referenced in this dissertation by Cohen, which includes books, articles, and essays such as those he contributed to the anthology edited by Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001). Works by Weigley include his book *The American Way of War*: *A History of Unites States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1973), plus numerous articles like "The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell." *The Journal Military History*, Special Issue 57 (October 1993) and essays he also contributed to *Soldiers and Civilians*. Donald Stoker's *Why America Loses Wars: Limited War and US Strategy from the Korean War to the Present.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) is very recent and relevant to the topic. In addition, he has several other contributions cited in this dissertation such as his book titled *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Albert Legault and Joel Sokolsky, eds., *The Soldier and the State in the Post-Cold War Era* (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's Quarterly Press, 2002). This research is critical to setting the foundation for discussions across the dissertation.

existing literature by demonstrating the effect of civil-military relations on the ability to develop policy and effective strategy.

A lack of historical perspective, or presentism, results from the lack of opportunity to study war topics. This, combined with the lack of trust and bifurcation of responsibilities advocated by Huntington, are major reasons for strategic ineffectiveness. As work on this study continued, it became quickly apparent that the research would require a deeper examination to make the connection between these three issues and the difficulties of strategic deliberations among civil and military leaders.

To examine these factors, this study looked at research that investigates the root causes of declining civil-military relations and other material chronicling the difficulties with strategy development to demonstrate the relationship between them. A causal factor of the decline is that academia in the United States has de-emphasized studies of war by canceling programs in colleges and universities. This led to a corresponding decline in civilian opportunities to study war, which makes it difficult for political leaders to gain sufficient education to understand the use of force to attain political objectives. The significant texts consulted in unfolding the effect of academia retreating from the study of war include: a study by Donald A. Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili titled *Arms and the University*; an anthology edited by military historians Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott titled *Palgrave Advances in Military History*. In addition, there is a host of scholarly articles, the most significant of which were authored by Cohen, "The Historical Mind and Military Strategy"; Professor Edward M. Coffman's "The Course of Military History in the United States Since World War II"; classicist Victor Davis Hanson's "Why Study War?"; and historian Vincent Davis' "The Vietnam War and Higher Education."[55] These books and articles chronicle how senior leaders lost a historical perspective following the Vietnam War when academia disavowed the study of war as militaristic. This handicapped future leaders by failing to offer the opportunity for study in this critical area of political discourse. In addition, several authoritative websites were critical in analyzing the lack of military and war studies education in the United States and these are the US Department of Education's website containing statistics on institutional offerings in the study of war and the Society for Military History's website that lists institutions that offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in the study of war.[56] This listing of American education institutions and their offerings in studies of war demonstrate the paucity of education opportunities for civilians to gain vicarious experience in strategic thought through the study of war.

Misunderstanding of How to Align Ends, Ways, and Means

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[55] Donald Alexander Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili, *Arms and the University: Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-military Students* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott, eds., *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2006). These texts are well-researched works that chronicle how the study of military history has ebbed since the Vietnam War and how that academia can restore it to its proper place within higher education. Downs and Murtazashvili from the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, Madison emphasize the need for civilians to study military history and how this might produce a greater societal connection to the military. The articles listed above are only four of many that provide an overview of how academia retreated from the study of war and, in the case of the pieces by Cohen, Hanson, and Coffman, they emphatically demonstrate why it is important for leaders to understand history in order to enable better strategic intelligence in future situations.

[56] U.S. Department of Education. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2014*. Chapter 2. Accessed 14 November 2016 at https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=84. The US Dept. of Education website was a wealth of information on programs available in institutions the over 6,000 higher education institutions in the United States. The website provides a stark glimpse into the sheer number of institutions and the paucity of programs of study in military history and related topics. The Society for Military History's website found at Society for Military History. "Graduate Programs in Military History." SMH website March 15, 2020. Accessed 21 March 2020 at https://www.smh-hq.org/grad/gradguide/degree.html was instrumental in discovering the exact institutions and types of degrees offered in the United States and as with the Dept. of Education statistics, it provides an excellent contrast to the number of institutions and the very few opportunities available for study.

The lack of education opportunities leads to a failure to understand strategy in war, specifically the development and alignment of ends, ways, and means, the fifth theme in civil-military relations literature. Strachan and Gray expand on this phenomenon in detail in *The Direction of War* and *The Future of Strategy*. Both authors anchor their discussion in theory and starting with Clausewitz. Clausewitz's *On War*, translated and edited by historians Peter Paret and Michael Howard provide two ideas of particular importance to this dissertation pertaining to our fifth theme, the misunderstanding of how to align the ends, ways, and means of strategy. The first is Clausewitz' discussion of the need for civilian and military leaders to fully understand the nature of any war that they intend to undertake. The understanding of the nature of war – gained through study and experience – produces in civilian and military leaders an appreciation for the need to align the ends-ways-means of military strategy in order to attain political objectives. This is critical because not understanding the conflict in which one is about to engage can mean defeat through formulation of poor policy and strategy.[57] This is why civil-military relations matter because the development of a shared understanding about the kind of conflict requires honest, objective discussions to assess the environment and identify the problem war intends to solve. Clausewitz touches upon civil-military relations with his insights about deliberations between political and military leaders. In his time of the Napoleonic Wars, the political leader was a sovereign monarch who was often the military leader, thus embodying both leaders in one person. Or, the sovereign traveled with the army and senior military commander to connect military actions with political objectives.[58] There is a lesson for today's leaders. That is, how to ensure that a connection is made between military action and political objectives when the roles are separated. Kelly and Brennan examine this necessity at some length in *Alien.*

The research that chronicles preparations for the Iraq War in 2002 and 2003 also illustrates the fifth theme in the literature of civil-military relations, which is how leaders failed to appreciate the ends-ways-means of strategy. Further, it demonstrates how poor civil-military relations can correspondingly result in poor policy and ineffective strategy. Significant secondary sources consulted include defense experts Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, Keith Crane, Richard Brennan, and Heather Gregg, *After Saddam: Pre-War Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*; scholar James Lebovic's *Planning to Fail*; journalist Thomas Ricks' *Fiasco*; and historian Michael Gordon and retired Marine Corps lieutenant general Bernard Trainor's *Cobra II*. These studies were invaluable for examining the planning prior to the Iraq War and identifying the monumental difficulties in the civil-military relations evidenced through well-documented clashes between political and military leaders.[59] More importantly, a number of primary

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[57] Carl von Clausewitz, On *War*, translated and edited by Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87. It is important to note the context in which Clausewitz wrote his theory. In many cases, the political and military leader was the same person acting in both roles. Thus, Clausewitz is cautioning military leaders to understand the nature of war in cases where the military leader is advising the political leader. However, the cautionary note is applicable today for both political and military leaders involved in deciding the need to use force or advising about such a decision.

[58] *Ibid*. See Book 1, Chapter 3, 100-112 for Clausewitz' discussion on military genius.

[59] Nora Bensahel, et al., *After Saddam: Pre-War Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 2008) is an excellent study by Rand Corporation researchers that chronicles the flawed planning for the Iraq War and demonstrates issues with planning and tensions among the participants and agencies. James H. Lebovic, *Planning to Fail: The US Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). This book provides a window into the planning processes that developed the policy and strategy for the Iraq War, in addition to the Vietnam War and Afghanistan. It also provides a good discussion of the civil-military tensions that impacted the planning. Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006). Ricks' is a well-respected journalist who provided a contemporary history view of the planning and initial phases of the Iraq War. This book is especially good at providing a perspective of the inter-workings of the Bush Administration's effort to plan and execute the war with emphasis on the civil-military relations and the serious tensions that arose during the planning for the war. Michael E. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006). This book from contemporary historians is the best narrative of the planning and preparation for the Iraq War and includes interviews with participants in the war, some of whom were interviewed for this dissertation.

sources proved invaluable in distilling the tenor of civil-military relations during the 2001-2003 time-period and assessing the policy and strategy produced from the deliberations. Among the most critical are Ali Allawi's *The Occupation of Iraq* and Tommy Franks' memoir *American Soldier*, both of which provide differing perspectives on the difficulty of civil-military relations, which affected planning to prosecute the Iraq War.[60] Additionally, a published interview in the multi-disciplinary journal *Prism* with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Air Force general Richard B. Myers, as well as retired Marine Corps general Anthony "Tony" Zinni's co-authored memoir, *Battle Ready,* proved invaluable sources. These materials provided insight into the civil-military relations and the potential effect on strategic planning.[61]

In addition to these historical works that illustrate the loss of strategic competence, there is a major sub-component that chronicles the Vietnam War and the difficulty with strategy development that is an enduring legacy of that war. It is essential to include Vietnam War studies to establish the foundation of America's modern decline in the development of sound policy and strategy. Among the materials consulted is H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*, which assesses the poor state of civil-military relations and national strategic decision-making during the conflict in Vietnam. McMaster argues that the political and military leaders utterly failed in their collective responsibility to align strategic ends with ways and means to secure political objectives. Publication of *Dereliction of Duty* caused shock waves among senior United States civilian and military leaders due to its frank critique of their predecessors' strategic shortfalls during the Vietnam War. One can argue in light of recent conflicts that the problems identified by McMaster continue, and have worsened, following the Vietnam War.[62] Other important writings that provide background information and critical assessments of the strategic difficulties of this period include journalist Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam*, Lebovic's *Failing to Plan*, Lewis Sorley's *A Better War*, and Graham Allison's *Essence of Decision*. Collectively, these sources provide a perspective of how a deep-seated mistrust developed among the civil and military participants during Vietnam, which poisoned strategic deliberations and set the tone for sour civil-military relations for decades.[63]

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[60] Ali Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) and Tommy Franks, *American Soldier (*New York: Regan Books, 2004). These books present a contrast in that Mr. Allawi's book focuses upon how the planning process for Iraq was flawed leading to the inability of the military to secure the political objectives following a highly successful campaign to defeat the Iraqi military. Franks' biography discusses the successful campaign, but ignores the aftermath, which is the critical component. Failure to secure the political objectives is the factor that counts in this war. Though the United States military won the battle, it did not secure victory in the war because of the failure to plan adequately for the stabilization phase of the complete campaign. Thus, these books provide an excellent view of contrasting perspectives, as well as how difficult civil-military relations affected the planning processes.

[61] Richard B. Myers, "An Interview with Richard B. Myers." *Prism*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (September 2011) 150-155 and Tom Clancy, Tony Zinni, and Tony Koltz, Battle *Ready* (New York: Random House, 2005).

[62] H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998). This book is a necessary start point for discussing the topic of this dissertation since Vietnam marks the place from which strategic difficulties began within the United States and have continued to deteriorate since then. Therefore, this is a pivotal text to set as the foundation for subsequent discussions.

[63] Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997) is the standard for study of the Vietnam War in a holistic manner and in this book, he touches upon the civil-military relations that characterized all deliberations about the war. Noted political scientist and regional expert Graham Allison's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1971) is included because his history of the Cuban Missile crisis is essential to understanding the genesis of mistrust that characterized civil-military relations later in Vietnam since it was during this time that the seeds were planted that led future president Lyndon Johnson and his defense secretary Robert McNamara to later disregard or ignore military advice provided by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. James Lebovic's *Planning to Fail: The US Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) and Lewis Sorley's *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Books, 1999) both dig

In addition to these outstanding secondary sources there are many pertinent accounts that illuminate the strategic difficulties, as told by those involved. These include Robert S. McNamara's *In Retrospect*, Colin Powell's *My American Journey*, and *The Pentagon Papers*, which contains selected official records and documents from the Vietnam War. The significance of these arises from the candid telling of how those involved on policy and strategy decision-making began to slide down a slippery slope that resulted in extremely poor civil-military relations. The relationship was characterized by mistrust and lack of respect resulting in political and military leaders avoiding difficult strategic discussions.[64] From this historical material the dissertation establishes a foundation to discuss how civil-military relations worsened in the aftermath of the Vietnam War's and illustrates the factors, like education, that caused this situation. As a body, this material notes the downward slide of both civil-military relations and strategic competence that started during the Vietnam War and continued unabated following the end of the Cold War.

Another group of writings explore restoring civil-military relations to regain strategic competence to align the ends, ways, and means of strategy. Previously mentioned texts such as Rapp's "Civil-Military Relations" and Strachan's *The Direction of War* provide poignant suggestions about how to educate future leaders to avoid common pitfalls of civil-military relations and resultant policy and strategy difficulties. This helps to enable civilian and military leaders to gain a common frame of reference to facilitate deliberations. Other references containing recommendations about how to build trust, including: Clark Murdoch and Richard Weitz' article in *Joint Forces Quarterly* titled "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols" and a Center for Strategic and International Studies Report by the same title and authors; Owens' book *US Civil-Military Relations after 9/11*; political scientist John Garafano's article "Deciding on Military Intervention"; Christopher Gibson and Don M. Snider's essay "Civil-Military Relations and the Potential to Influence"; and Kohn's "Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security." Together, these works identify possible remedies to problems in civil-military relations and policy and strategy development.

There is an abundance of available resources on the topic ranging from historical narratives, theoretical texts, and social science analysis. The literature review demonstrated that five themes emerge from the current body of literature on civil-military relations and strategy. They are: the connection between the soldier and society, human relationships and trust among civilian and military participants, divergence of roles and responsibilities of civilian and military leaders, presentism, and the misunderstanding of how to align ends, ways, and means. What is missing from the existent literature is the connection between the tenor of civil-military relations and its effect upon policy and strategy development. This study intends to stimulate a conversation that could lead to an improvement of civil-military relations and corresponding increase in the effectiveness of strategy.

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into the extreme difficulties that resulted in strategy development during the war and its effect on the outcome. Of note, Sorley is a veteran of the Vietnam War having served as a field grade staff officer on the staff of Creighton Abrams, commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

[64] Former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's memoir *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996) is an enlightening text for demonstrating the deterioration of civil-military relations and strategic competence during the war. In this candid account the former secretary shoulder's much blame for the situation. Colin Powell's best-selling memoir co-authored with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group. 1996) provides the perspective of how poor relations affected the military in the field and how this would shape how Powell would lead as the future Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Finally, *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*. The Senator Gravel Edition, Vol. 1. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) are well-known for the unvarnished look at discussions of national security during the Vietnam era. These papers bring to light the flaws in the decision-making process, highlighting the difficulties experienced among the participants at the time.

Chapter 3

Theory and Methodology

       Civil-military relations in the United States are inherently challenging because of the form of government constituted by the country, which is a republic based on democratic principles. Though civilians control the military in the US, this does not mean that military leaders lack a voice. In fact, they are expected to offer candid advice on matters of national security regardless of the climate of communication established by the political leaders. This means that all matters of national security policy and strategy come under intense debate and the decision-making process is often fractious even in the best of conditions. Because of this, strategic deliberations can become contentious and difficult, requiring trust, patience, and empathy among the actors to develop sound and effective relations. Contentiousness ultimately leads to poor decisions manifesting as ineffective policy and strategy, which can have catastrophic consequences. This chapter will present a form of set theory[65], which is a method of analysis using established conditions and variables. In this case the theory focuses on the possible conditions of civil-military relations and conducts the analysis using a set of variables to assess the outcomes – policy and strategy. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first section will discuss the theoretical concept, how it was derived, and the variables that the study uses to test the theory through case studies. The second part on methodology will present how the pertinent data was gathered and how this document tests the theory through comparative historical analysis.

       Why do we need a theory connecting civil-military relations with strategic outcomes? Sociologist Robert Merton says that "one function of theory is to explore the implications of the seemingly self-evident."[66] Another researcher James Schneider said that "the role of theory is to tell us how things work."[67] Finally, political scientist Giovanni Sartori describes theory as "a body of systematically related generalizations of explanatory value."[68] In other words, theory helps to explain the observable environment. Theory tells us how things work by attempting to make sense of that which is complex. It starts by identifying the outlines of the environment and then defining the concepts to gain understanding. Theory provides a sort of "conceptual map" to the world[69] - or in our case, that of civil-military relations and the development of policy and strategy. To sum it up, "theory then becomes a guide to anyone who wants to learn."[70] Thus, theory facilitates our learning.

       For the past several decades, the US has struggled to win conflicts due to poor policy and strategic decision-making. Multiple books and articles are published annually noting these difficulties.[71]

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[65] John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, 2nd Edition. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 165.

[66] Robert K. Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 139.

[67] James J. Schneider, "How War Works: The Origins, Nature, and Purpose of Military Theory," Unpublished School of Advanced Military Studies paper (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2001), 2. Dr. Schneider was a founding faculty member at the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies and professor of military theory at the school for over 25 years.

[68] Giovanni Sartori, "Guidelines for Concept Analysis," in *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*, David Collier and John Gerring, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 143.

[69] Schneider, "How War Works," 2.

[70] Clausewitz, *On War*, 141.

[71] Within weeks of this writing, the book by David Barno and Nora Bensahel, *Adaptation Under Fire: How Militaries Adapt During Wartime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); Bing West, "Three Wars, No Victory – Why?" *National Review* online (February 18, 2021), accessed 21 February 2021 at https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2021/03/08/three-wars-no-victory-why; Brett Boudreau, Howard G. Coombs, and George Petrolekas, "Learning Lessons from Canada's Foreign (and Domestic) Engagements: Time to Get Serious," *Canadian Global Affairs Institute* (September 2021); and Lawrence Korb, "The Real Reasons Why the U.S. Can't Win Wars Anymore," *National Review* online (March 21, 2021), accessed 22 March 2021 at

The authors of these works note the problems with policy and strategy development while providing their thoughts on potential solutions based upon their observations. This is the point at which theory could provide a "conceptual map" to first, understand the problem and then, work toward solutions. If political and military leaders and those of the future can understand the environment in which strategic deliberations take place, then they can clarify concepts that will enable them to explain the challenges, anticipate what can happen, and analyze and synthesize concepts to overcome these obstacles.[72] Therefore, a theory can facilitate the solving of real-world problems through the provision of a conceptual map.

The theory presented in this dissertation is not the initial hypothesis developed when the project began. At the start of the research the hypothesis was that political over-centralization of decision-making had created an environment whereby military leaders' opinions were dismissed in strategic deliberations, which inevitably resulted in poor strategy and negative outcomes in war. However, this premise required revision as the research deepened. As the study delved further into the subject matter it soon became apparent that strategic difficulty emanated from an unexpected origin. The problem centered on civil-military relations and the issue boiled down to the ability of political and military leaders to work together in developing policy and strategy to secure political objectives by use or threat of force. The ability to work together revolved around the characterization of the relationship among the actors and, specifically, the tenor of their deliberations, which I will define fully shortly. Thus, the hypothesis changed with the continued research resulting in the formulation of a theory based upon empirical observations. This is what Robert Merton terms *post factum* sociological interpretation, which more simply put, is the process of induction. In other words, the observations made during the process of conducting research led to a proposed interpretation or a theory.[73] The researched observations form patterns and correlations that allows for generalization. The generalization of the patterns forms the basis for theory, which enables prediction of cases.[74] So, what is the theory presented in this dissertation?

Notably, through historical research the efficacy of civil-military relations in policy and strategy-making surfaced over and over again. As the research deepened it was noted that beginning with the Vietnam era – which started in the 1950s with the debate about intervention in French Indochina – the US began to struggle with winning conflicts characterized as interventions. Further, this is the point at which civil-military relations broke down ushering in a long period of difficult interactions between political and military leaders. Policy and strategy in war from that time until the present also exhibit less than satisfactory characteristics. The question then arose, is there a correlation between civil-military relations and the product of strategic deliberations among the actors, which is policy and strategy?

It appears that the answer is yes and the nature of civil-military relations depends on the tenor of the human relationship between these important actors. So, what do we mean by tenor? For the purposes of this study, tenor is defined as the basic quality of discourse between the actors in civil-military relations, which can be either poor or sound. From a quantifiable standpoint it is appropriate to depict tenor graphically across a spectrum in order to see the differences between sound and poor relations. Figure 3.1 is a graphical depiction of the concept of tenor in civil-military relations and treated as a simple Likert scale[75] with both quantitative scores and qualitative descriptions or 'word pictures' to fully operationalize the concept. For example, number one on the sound side of the spectrum is described as collegial debate among the actors. This term is further defined as an amicable atmosphere involving shared responsibility among colleagues for collective development of courses of action to produce decisions during strategic deliberations. As one moves from right to left across the spectrum the tenor

https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/03/the-real-reasons-the-u-s-cant-win-wars-anymore/ were published noting the strategic difficulties of the US in using the military instrument of national power.

[72] Schneider, "How War Works," 10.

[73] Robert K. Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 147.

[74] *Ibid*., 148-149 and Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 173.

[75] Chava Frankfort-Nachimas and David Nachimas, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences, 4th Edition* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1992) 436-438.

line steadily moves from sound to neutral to poor relations with associated descriptor terms that represent the quality of the discourse. This figure with its numerical spectrum and word descriptors can provide clarity about the quality of civil-military relations as the study focuses on the effect of those relations on policy and strategy development.

While conducting the research a varying level of quality in the climate of civil-military relations became apparent. In some cases, the participants established an excellent atmosphere for the exchange of ideas and debate of issues. In others the environment became strained making the quality of civil-military relations and associated communications quite difficult. This tenor of relations is best represented as the spectrum described in the previous paragraph and depicted in Figure 3.1. The tenor of civil-military relations ranges from argumentative on the left side of the spectrum to collegial debate on the right. Each term on the spectrum has a precise definition derived from the observation of several cases of civil-military relations. Starting on the left side of the spectrum, which denotes a poor tenor, an argumentative tenor is an atmosphere of uncomfortable tension with widely divergent views and entrenched opinions among the actors who are not open to other viewpoints. Moving to the right along the spectrum, the characteristics of an adversarial tenor is an environment of fierce confrontation or opposition in which the actors doggedly adhere to preconceived notions unwilling to countenance other opinions. In the center of the spectrum there is a neutral atmosphere in which the participants in civil-military relations are uncommitted. This is defined as an environment devoid of strong opinions or personalities with minimal emotional influence in decision-making processes. Moving to the right side of the spectrum on finds the characteristics of a sound tenor of civil-military relations. A partnership is a tenor of relations defined by an environment that produces robust dialogue among the partners who bear conscientious, collective responsibility for strategic decision-making. Finally, on the far right side of the spectrum we find a tenor that is a collegial debate. This is defined as a tenor that is amicable involving shared responsibility among colleagues focused on development of courses that lead to effective decisions. The tenor of most civil-military relationships fall within this range and the spectrum provides both a graphic and word picture for understanding the environment in which strategic deliberations take place.

Figure 3.1. Civil-Military Relations Tenor Spectrum

5	4	3	2	1
Poor		Neutral		Sound

| Argumentative | Adversarial | Uncommitted | Partnership | Collegial Debate |
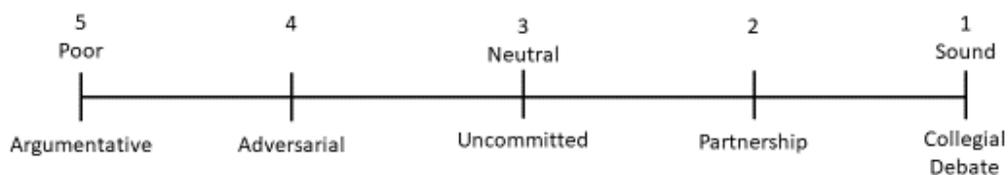
- Definitions:
  - Partnership – an environment producing robust dialogue among partners who bear conscientious, collective responsibility strategic decision-making
  - Collegial Debate – an amicable atmosphere involving shared responsibility among colleagues focused on development of courses that lead to effective decisions
  - Uncommitted – an environment devoid of strong opinions or personalities with minimal emotional influence in decision-making processes
  - Argumentative – an atmosphere of uncomfortable tension with widely divergent views and entrenched opinions among the actors who are not open to other viewpoints
  - Adversarial – an environment of fierce confrontation or opposition in which the actors doggedly adhere to preconceived notions unwilling to countenance other opinions

So how is it that tenor drives particular outcomes? A pattern developed as the research proceeded that is clearly observable and led to the development of the theoretical premise. During the Vietnam era there was a noticeable decline in the ability of America's political and military leaders to work together in developing sound policy and strategy. This represented a break from the sound civil-military relations

that prevailed during World War II and the satisfying strategic success of that conflict. Though a handful of incidents between World War II and the Vietnam War, such as the "Revolt of the Admirals" and the MacArthur firing, were troublesome, civil-military relations and policy and strategy development remained sound and coherent.[76] The Vietnam War during the administration of Lyndon Johnson represented a departure from this trend. Civil-military relations became acrimonious and strategy delivered poor outcomes that failed to secure political objectives. This persisted after the Vietnam War and even worsened after the end of the Cold War during the Clinton and Bush administrations. The Reagan-Bush era of the late 1980s and early 1990s is the lone exception since the Vietnam era as the US achieved success in Grenada, Panama, and the First Gulf War. What makes this era stand out is the collegial relations among the military and civilian leaders that was fostered by individuals with wide experience in national security. This enabled development of a partnership in national security affairs characterized by shared responsibility in contrast to the antagonism that kept the participants separate for most of the post-Vietnam era. Following the events of 9/11, civil-military relations arguably reached their lowest point. James Dubik, a retired general and ethicist, posits that the entire purpose of any civil-military relationship in a democratic government is "to identify the set of war aims, strategies, policies and military and non-military campaigns that, when executed, have the highest probability of success."[77] If true, then civil-military relations are irrevocably linked to the development of policy and strategy.

In the course of this research it became apparent in case after case the civil-military relations of the US uniformly worsened after the Vietnam War, with the exception of the time period before the First Gulf War of 1991. Further, strategy designed to secure political objectives was also problematic during the same period, usually resulting in failure as in the cases of Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan during the Clinton and Bush administrations. This led to the question, is there a correlation between the health of the civil-military relationship and the development of policy and strategy? More precisely, is the tenor of the relationship an indicator of the soundness of policy and strategy?

It appears the answer is yes, and the pattern that began in the 1960s during the Vietnam era continued through subsequent conflicts of intervention. Vietnam is the point at which civil-military relations and policy and strategy outcomes declined precipitously. During the course of the research there were multiple similar cases whereby the United States intervened around the world using force and subsequently bogged down due to poor policy and strategy. Correspondingly, it seemed that poor civil-military relations accompanied these strategic outcomes. Thus, the research revealed a pattern from which we could form a hypothesis. This is the origin of the theory presented in this dissertation and it is derived from empirical observations in existing literature noted in the literature review.

The hypothesis offered in this study states that the quality of policy and strategy is directly proportional to the tenor of civil-military relations, which is the dependent variable bearing on the theory derived from this research. Thus, if civil-military relations among the actors are poor in tenor characterized by an argumentative or adversarial relationship, then it is likely that the policy and strategy developed from strategic deliberations will correspondingly suffer from poor quality resulting in failure to secure political objectives (the dependent variable). On the other hand, if civil-military relations are of sound tenor represented by a partnership and collegial debate, then the policy and strategy will likely have good quality producing the ability to secure political objectives.

If the theory holds up to testing, then the understanding of the relationship between civil-military relations and policy and strategy development becomes essential to facilitate the work of US political and

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[76] For further reading on these two events see Harvey M. Sapolsky, Eugene Gholz, and Caitlin Talmadge, *U.S. Defense Politics: The Origins of Security Policy, 4th Ed*. (New York: Routledge, 2020). Chapters 3 and 6 discuss these events in the context of how they affected civil-military relations. Also, see Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1995) and H. W. Brands, *The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Doubleday Publishing Group, 2016).

[77] James M. Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 64.

military leaders. The reason is that the actors must labor together to create a healthy, trusting civil-military relationship of sound tenor while subordinating personal interest and opinion. This can ensure that strategic deliberations serve national security interests to produce policy that achieves what it sets out to do. Failure to create a healthy relationship could have the opposite effect manifesting as poor policy and strategy, making national security failure more likely. This is the potential usefulness of the theory laid out in this dissertation for leaders. Awareness of the correlation between civil-military relations and policy and strategy could facilitate a better relationship that produces good policy and sound strategy to secure political objectives.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the correlation between the tenor of civil-military relations and the probability of sound policy and strategy emanating from those relations. The tenor spectrum from Figure 3.1 is superimposed onto a graph with a horizontal and vertical axis. The horizontal axis represents civil-military relations with the left side denoting poor to neutral relations, while the right side shows neutral to good civil-military relations. The vertical axis represents policy and strategy that result from civil-military relations. The bottom of the axis denotes poor to neutral policy and strategy, while the top represents sound policy and strategy outcomes. This theory postulates that sound strategic outcomes and policy in the upper right hand quadrant result when civil-military relations have a sound tenor underpinned by trust, civility, and open dialogue. The 1991 First Gulf War illustrates this outcome as well as the 1954 strategic deliberations by the Eisenhower Administration about whether or not to intervene in French Indochina. By contrast, poor policy and strategic outcomes depicted in the lower left quadrant result when there is poor tenor in the relationship. This sub-optimal relationship is characterized by mutual mistrust, enmity, and parochialism. The strategic deliberations that resulted in the Vietnam War, 1964 and those of Iraq, 2003 illustrate this outcome. The upper left and lower right quadrants represent special situations in civil-military relations that could produce unexpected outcomes. The upper left suggests that even with poor relationships among the actors, strong political or military leadership could overcome difficult relations to produce a positive strategic outcome. Finally, the lower right quadrant depicts a situation whereby sound civil-military relations could produce groupthink – a situation in which a group reaches consensus without critical reasoning of assessment of consequences – and result in disastrous policy and strategic outcomes. The purpose of the figure is to provide a simple graphic depiction of the correlation of the tenor of civil-military relations with policy and strategy as one explores the topic throughout this dissertation.
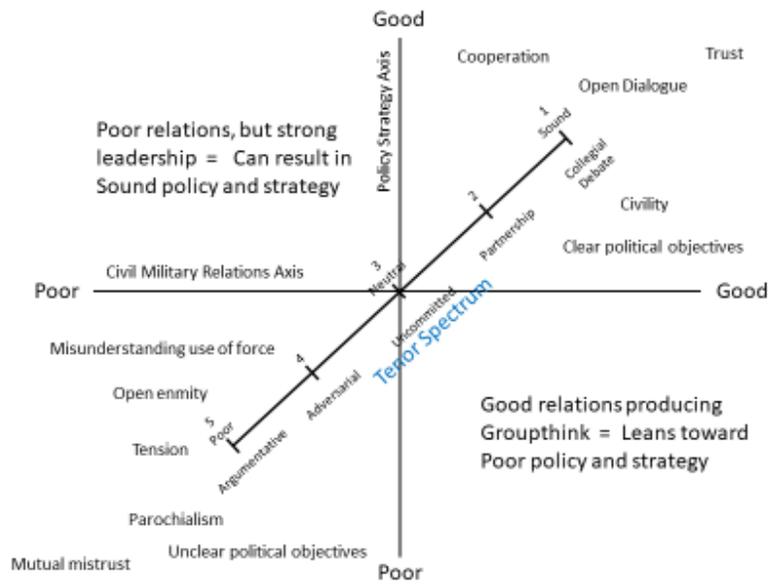
Figure 3.2. The Civil-Military Relations policy & strategy relationship.

This dissertation will evaluate the four case studies using the four variables that follow. These include:

1. The level of trust among the actors produced by the tenor of relations (See Figure 3.1)
2. The ability of political leaders to articulate clear and attainable political objectives
3. Understanding how the use of force can secure political objectives
4. The ability to translate battlefield success into political success

These factors represent the independent variables that provide the explanation as to why sub-optimal strategic outcomes occur due to the poor tenor civil-military relations and vice versa.[78] These variables represent the proximate causes for strategic incompetence (and competence) and are observable in every case examined in this study. Each of these variables has a direct effect on strategic deliberations influencing the quality of the final product, which is policy and strategy.

The first variable, trust, links directly to the tenor of civil-military relations – the dependent variable. As noted in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 the tenor of the relationship ranges from poor – adversarial or argumentative – to sound – a partnership or collegial debate. When the tenor is poor it tends to produce a lack of trust in civil-military relations emanating from the confrontational nature of deliberations. In Figure 3.2 this means that the relationship is characterized by mistrust as depicted in the lower left hand quadrant. Thus, it is likely to result in acrimonious deliberations on questions of national security delivering a poor policy and strategy involving the use of force. By contrast, if the tenor is sound, as in the upper right quadrant, the relationship tends to have an element of trust. This delivers a sense of partnership in national security deliberations with an open dialogue because of the trust that underpins the discussions. Therefore, the expectation is that policy and strategy regarding the use of force will have higher quality. So, the tenor spectrum links to the level of trust and acts as an indicator about how healthy the civil-military relationship is and the ability to have a civil debate to produce policy and strategy.

The next variable noted revolves around whether or not political leaders can articulate clear and attainable political objectives. As Clausewitz noted, the first step in making the decision to use force is to

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[78] Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 392-393. The authors provide an in-depth discussion of the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables.

"establish the kind of war on which they [political and military leaders] are embarking."[79] This should involve a candid discourse between military and civilian leaders with a sober assessment of the security environment and situation. If the actors can develop a shared understanding, then it is possible that the political leaders can develop and articulate clear and attainable political objectives since there is agreement on the type of conflict upon which they are embarking. However, when there is disagreement on this key point of departure – the planning for Iraq in 2003 stands out as an example – then there will likely be difficulty in articulating clear, attainable political objectives. This variable is manifest in every case examined and is dependent upon the tenor of the civil-military relationship.

The next variable relates to the use of force and whether force can secure political objectives. This variable, as in the previous one, requires a degree of shared understanding between military and political leaders. This shared understanding means that the actors must listen to each other in an open dialogue during strategic deliberations about the use of force. The military leaders must have astuteness to recognize the primacy of policy when considering the problem. Also, the political leaders must receive military advice about use of force with an open mind. When shared understanding about the kind of war combines with a civil and open dialogue among the actors who are listening to each other in an unbiased manner, there is greater understanding about the capabilities and limits in the use of force. However, if military leaders do not have political savvy to understand the policy issues or political leaders fail to listen to and accept logical limits on what force can achieve, a misdirection of force can occur. The tenor of relations has great bearing on what occurs in strategic deliberations about the use of force. Thus, when the start point is poor tenor in an argumentative or adversarial relationship, the actors will likely not listen in an empathetic manner. This leads to a separation of views and misunderstanding on what use of force can achieve leading to costly consequences in terms of policy and strategy.

Finally, military and political actors must convert successful battlefield actions into securing political objectives. This requires a high degree of close collaboration among military and political leaders. An artificial separation between the actors due to tension or parochialism will reduce the likelihood of shared understanding about defeat mechanisms and military and political conditions at a given time and place. Therefore, the absence of understanding of the conditions can lead to a poor assessment of the situation, which could cause lost opportunity to secure the political objectives. This means that leaders could prematurely declare success leading to a hasty exit that only worsens the security environment rather than securing the political objectives. When the tenor of relations, such as in an adversarial climate, produces an artificial separation of the actors then they will not communicate well concerning strategic conditions thus missing the opportunity to secure the political objectives. By contrast, close collaboration in civil-military relations with sound tenor enables strategic deliberations and civil, candid discussions of conditions. The deliberations of the US National Security Council in 1991 during the First Gulf War illustrate how the actors in that case converged in their understanding of conditions for political success. These variables are notable in all cases and provide a gauge through which to determine whether policy and strategy produced during strategic deliberations among military and political leaders is effective.

There are two reasons why these four variables were chosen for use in testing the cases. First, these four variables are related to each other.[80] Each of the variables flowed sequentially from the first variable of trust in the relationship. For example, a lack of trust in civil-military relations leads to tensions and difficult deliberations about what the state wishes to achieve from use of force. When deliberations are difficult, defining the political objectives can become problematic. Further, when the actors find their interactions strained from mutual mistrust the discussions about whether force can secure political objectives will likely result in disagreement. Finally, when military force has achieved battlefield success discussions of how to convert the military victory into satisfactory conflict termination can become distorted when the actors disagree over conditions so that forces are unable to consolidate gains made in battle. This, in turn, can lead to premature withdrawal of forces before political objectives

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[79] Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.
[80] Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 128-129.

are secure. All of these are inter-related and directly affect the quality and outcome of policy and strategy developed during strategic deliberations.

The second reason for use of the variables is that they have a causal relationship whereby changes in one brings about changes in others.[81] An example of this second reason for the use of these variables is how trust affects any of the other three variables. When mutual trust underpins civil-military relations a candid discussion of how the use of force can secure political objectives takes place producing a shared understanding of capabilities and limitations in the use of force. Thus, when deciding to use force to achieve political objectives the actors can ensure the ways and means are linked to secure the ends. The debate during the First Gulf War on appropriate force structure and size illustrates how trust enabled candid discussion concerning the use of force to secure political objectives, which occurred following a bruising dialogue in the Bush Administration. Every one of these variables are observable across all cases involving civil-military discussions of policy and strategy.

Theory can provide us with a conceptual map to understand a given environment and in this study that is the world in which civil-military relations exist. This study developed a theoretical framework[82] through empirical observations leading to the derivation of the theory. This is an inductive process that Robert Merton calls a *post factum* sociological interpretation.[83] The observations come from historical research of cases of civil-military relations and decision-making about the use of force. Each case had the previously mentioned four variables in common. These variables provide the ability to make predictions about the effectiveness of policy and strategy developed through the strategic deliberations that take place as part of civil-military relations. This enables the theory to become "generalizable" for testing and facilitating greater understanding of the effect of civil-military relations on development of policy and strategy.[84] Thus, the purpose of the dissertation in presenting the theory is to produce greater understanding among political and military actors about the effects of their relationship on the critical task of formulating policy and strategy. The civil-military relations and policy-strategy relationship theory states that the tenor of the civil-military relationship is directly proportional to the quality of policy and strategy produced in strategic deliberations. When these relations are poor, characterized by argumentative or adversarial tenor, then it is likely that the quality of the policy and strategy produced will also be poor. By contrast, if the tenor of civil-military relations is sound, as in a partnership, then the quality of policy and strategy will also have sound quality. The next section of this chapter will turn to discussing the methodology used to develop and test the theory to determine its utility.

Methodology

According to Gerring there are two stages of research design starting with theory formation and then proceeding to theory testing, or in other words "discovery and appraisal." The process of forming a theory is that of discovery and its intent is "to contribute something novel to our understanding of a topic." Such an innovative discovery requires broad research to form the model or concept that underpins the theory. Once the theoretical model is formulated the process of testing or appraisal begins. As Gerring notes, the mark of a good theory is its "falsifiability" or the ability to test the proposition. A poor model is one that is not confirmable. This means that "virtually any conclusion we please can be derived from it."[85] Therefore, a good theory is general allowing for wide empirical testing and is coherent and well-bounded, which is to say that they theory is clear and defensible.[86] This section will discuss the process of formulating the civil-military relations and policy-strategy development relationship theory.

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[81] *Ibid*., 129.

[82] *Ibid*., 59.

[83] Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology*, 147.

[84] Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 61-64.

[85] *Ibid*., 31.

[86] *Ibid*., 27-31.

Then, the section will discuss how the dissertation tests the theory to ensure it is generalizable, coherent, and clear as noted by Gerring, and others.

In order to test the proposed civil-military relations, policy-strategy corollary theory this dissertation uses a "small-n" approach leveraging comparative historical analysis of select case studies. Small-n studies quite simply involve analysis of a limited number of cases, usually from two to four units. The reason for studying a small number is related to the small available sample size rather than limiting the number of cases. As noted, the dissertation is bound by the Vietnam era through the present. During that period, which begins in the 1950s when the debate over Vietnam started, there is a small number of strategic civil-military relations cases, involving war, from which to compare.[87] It is from this small sample size that the cases in this study were selected. These cases are then compared and contrasted to parse out the common variables that tend to predict the outcomes. This is the means of testing the theory. The specific method of the small-n study is a comparative design known as comparative historical analysis. Comparative design is the most common form of research design in political studies. It enables the comparison of cases by type, timeframe, or both to discover causes and mechanisms that lead to outcomes.[88] Giovanni Sartori says that the purpose of comparing is to control, and through control the researcher can "verify or falsify whether generalizations hold across the cases to which they apply."[89] For this dissertation the use of history is appropriate for the formation of generalizations and making predictions about outcomes.

Historical research describes "structures in contemporary societies;"[90] with the understanding so gained, a researcher can recognize and conceptualize emergent patterns. From that point, one can use that framework to articulate a general theory. History can also provide the vehicle through which we can test such inductive theoretical concepts. The method in this study uses comparative historical research in a number of case studies to test the implications of the formulated theory. Put in another way, this dissertation uses comparative historical analysis to "identify causal configurations that produce major outcomes of interest within historically delimited contexts." Comparative historical analysis examines how events unfolded in a given time period and compares them in a systematic way.[91] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers identify three types of comparative historical analysis, which are parallel demonstration of theory, contrast of contexts, and macro-causal analysis. For the purposes of this dissertation a parallel demonstration of theory is appropriate for testing. This is because the method allows for the demonstration of application of a theory across several cases. In other words, this method shows how a theory applies to historical cases in order to make predictions about future events. Therefore, by comparing actual historical events we are able to identify the patterns and infer what might occur in the future.[92] To do such comparative historical analysis the researcher then has to select the appropriate cases.

There are two methods of case selection and their utility is dependent upon the similarities or differences among the cases. This study uses a "most similar systems design" in selecting cases. This means that the cases "share many important characteristics, but differ in one crucial respect." Thus, the selection of cases center around the dependent variable (tenor) with the independent variables acting as the control. In this dissertation the tenor of civil-military relations – previously defined and depicted in Figure 3.1 – acts as the dependent variable. The four component independent variables noted earlier provide the control set for each case in testing.[93] So, for this study the following cases were selected for

[87] Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 217-218.
[88] *Ibid.*, 153-154.
[89] Giovanni Sartori, "Comparing and Miscomparing," *Concepts and Methods in Social Science*, David Collier and John Gerring, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2009) 151-152.
[90] Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 217-218.
[91] *Ibid.*, 241-242.
[92] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History and Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 176-177. Accessed 10 March 2021 at https://doi.org/10.1017%2Fs0010417500009282.
[93] Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 218-221.

use in testing the theory. The cases are, Iraq, 2003 and Indochina, 1954, as well as Vietnam, 1964 and the First Gulf War, 1991. These cases share many similar characteristics. The first is that these are all US strategic decision-making events that considered the use of force. Second, all cases involve limited wars, which became prevalent following the end of World War II. Third, all US national security decision-making institutions were in place and functioning, such as the National Security Council and Department of Defense. Fourth, all cases occurred at the point when the military had achieved a highly visible and important status in American society ushering in a new era of civil-military relations. Fifth, all cases occur at a point in time when discernable struggles in civil-military relations appeared. Sixth, each case is a so-called war of choice (or not) in which the US had the option of whether to enter into conflict rather than having a war forced upon it, like World War II. Finally, the comparative cases occurred in like regions with two cases taking place in the Persian Gulf and two in Southeast Asia. The critical difference is in the outcomes of the studies with two having favorable strategic outcomes and two ending in failure to secure political objectives. Therefore, the cases meet the criteria for most similar systems design because the cases share closely related characteristics, such as common institutions, wars of choice, and similar geography. Further, they allow for the examination by comparing outcomes based upon the dependent variable, the tenor of civil-military relations. This dependent variable is the characteristic that changes based upon context providing the ability to test the cases. Thus, use of most similar cases as described by Halperin and Heath is the best method of testing the civil-military relations, policy-strategy correlation theory.

In conducting research on the case studies it capitalized on the preliminary study that already occurred in the formulation of the theory, but in a fashion that went deeper for further insight. Whereas the initial research embarked upon a general review of the history of strategic deliberations in civil-military relations, war and strategy theories, civil-military relations studies, and sociological theories that led to the derivation of the theory. This research systematically looked into several aspects of each case to understand them in breadth, depth, and context. In researching the cases, the study assessed the following aspects of policy and strategy development. First, the cases assess the state of civil-military relations in terms of tenor (the dependent variable), based upon the observed interactions of military and civilian leaders. The research next reviewed the strategic deliberations of the participants examining what options were under consideration and how the participants interacted during those deliberations. The research then examines war planning because it reveals the thought processes of military and civilian leaders. The execution of the plans reveals the friction and difficulty that leaders encounter in carrying out plans. Next, the outcomes demonstrate the efficacy of plans and processes. Finally, this leads to assessment using the variables, which facilitates the determination of causation so that we can generalize the theory for predictive purposes. The research, using these aspects for assessment expands upon the initial examination that led to formulation of the theory. The in-depth case studies research provides evidence that the theory has merit and is generalizable across many cases. This satisfies the need for falsifiability of a theory so that other scholars can test it in examining future cases of civil-military relations and the outcome of policy and strategy.[94]

To gain the breadth and depth required for the comparative analysis, the research used a variety of sources. The most important of sources is the primary source material. This consists of documents, books, and articles written by the participants in a given event that provide personal accounting of what happened. The literature review discussed and enumerated many of these previously. Notably, primary sources are inherently biased. Therefore, the researcher must approach these materials with the eye of a skeptic and evaluate them on their merit, context, and viewpoint while comparing with other views for a balanced assessment of what really happened. The process of determining the accuracy of primary sources is known as "internal criticism."[95] The use of secondary sources, or "interpretive narratives," assists the researcher in understanding historical events. Many secondary sources provide competing narratives based on interpretation and the amount of time removed from the event. Thus, it is best to

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[94] *Ibid.*, 30-31.
[95] *Ibid.*, 254-255.

obtain the latest secondary sources written about an event and work backwards. The narrative will change and become more descriptive and nuanced over time as more is learned about the event. The researcher must take care to avoid "selection bias," which is those texts that most fit the argument proposed.[96] This dissertation has sought to avoid this by consulting a wide swath of primary and secondary sources as noted in Chapter 2. The primary sources include official government documents, both published and archival, memoirs from political and military leaders from all services and interviews. The secondary sources follow the model offered by Halperin and Heath by starting from the most recent publications and working backward. The sources are written by writers from across a wide spectrum of professional observers and leaders including journalists, politicians, scholars, and military leaders. This widely diversified group of writers provide a correspondingly broad spectrum of views that enables the study to avoid selection bias.

Before moving on to coding and graphic depiction of the variables used in testing, there is a need to provide further discussion on the utility of the human subject interviews conducted as part of the research. The interviews took place during the appraisal phase of the construction of the dissertation and after the formation of the hypothesis, or discovery phase. Thus, the purpose of the interviews was to gain additional insights from select participants in the events or information already uncovered in the discovery phase of the research. Further, the interviews sought additional information and insights into the causal factors that soured civil-military relations. Therefore, the primary purpose is to understand how events occurred from participants in the most recent cases, Iraq, 2003 and the First Gulf War, 1991. These supplemented available published interviews, such as one conducted with former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Air Force General Richard B. Meyer, and memoirs like that of former Central Command commander, Marine General Anthony Zinni.

The interviews done in support of this dissertation consisted of semi-structured face-to-face or telephonic interviews. Semi-structured interviews are designed for a small pool of interview subjects and they combine a list of structured questions with open-ended conversation to allow the author to guide the thematic discussion and unfold those of interest.[97] The subjects chosen for interview had expertise or first-hand knowledge of the areas of assessment used to evaluate the case studies, such as in the area of strategic planning and deliberations. These supplemented to a great extent the research conducted through primary sources and provided a more nuanced understanding of events. Further, several of those senior leaders provided insights on the origins of the poor tenor of relations such as, academic attainment, culture, and operational, as opposed to strategic competence. In this fashion, the interviews enhanced the appraisal phase of the research for the case studies and the subsequent understanding the causal factors.

The next element of the appraisal phase consists of coding the data gained from the research. According to Halperin and Heath coding means "breaking down material and assigning data to different categories according to the variable to which they relate." This allows the research to take on an orderly framework and facilitates assessment of the data to verify or falsify generalizations.[98] The coding of the information contained in this dissertation falls into two categories. The first category of coding mirrors the independent variables identified earlier. (See Table 3.1) These variables are those that the study uses to test the proffered theory. In accordance with Table 3.1 the variables are listed in the left hand column. Across the top of the figure are the cases used in the study. The bottom row is labeled strategic outcomes that will summarize the outcome of conflict based upon the variables. As the study progresses the blank rows and columns will be completed as cases are examined and an aggregated assessment will be provided in the findings of this dissertation.[99]

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[96] *Ibid*., 255-256.
[97] *Ibid*., 286-289.
[98] *Ibid*., 305.
[99] The aggregated assessment provides the data in graphic form and verifies or falsifies the theory.

Conflict/Variables	Indochina, 1954	Vietnam, 1964	Persian Gulf War, 1991	Iraq, 2003
Trust				
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives				
Understanding of the Use of Force				
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives				
Strategic Outcome				

Table 3.1. Independent Variable Comparison Chart for all case studies.

The second category of coding is the three causal factors that led to the decline in the tenor of civil-military relations – the dependent variable – over time. To reiterate, these causal factors are the retreat of academia from the study of war, the divergent cultures of political and military leaders, and the substitution of operational art for strategy. These factors are the causal aspects that affected the dependent variable, which in turn influences the independent variables to predict the strategic outcomes of policy and strategy. This is the linkage between the health of civil-military relations and the ability to develop policy and strategy. The dissertation will closely examine the factors that caused the tenor of civil-military relations to decline in the case studies to demonstrate first, some reasons why this decline happened, and second, to show how that decline is reversible.

The organization of the remainder of the dissertation begins with four chapters that use the independent variables to assess cases. These case studies determine the efficacy of the theory in terms of support and falsification. Thus, it provides the ability to generalize past and future circumstances and events in strategic deliberations among political and military leaders. The dissertation then concludes with a chapter discussing the findings of the study, its implications, and what the US can do to repair civil-military relations to regain strategic competence.

Chapter 4

Indochina, 1954

  The challenge of civil-military relations is to develop national security policy and strategy in order to ensure the survival of the state. It is a persistent challenge and is a central feature in the relations among civilian political and their military advisers. In the aftermath of World War II this challenge became more difficult and complex with the emergence of limited wars during the Cold War period. In the first half of the twentieth century the US used military forces to prosecute total wars on an industrial scale characterized by attrition. World War II was such a war and as it ended it ushered in the nuclear age and competition between the US and USSR as superpowers. Each side had nuclear weapons by the late 1940s and US national security policy had to walk a fine line between securing the state while not provoking a clash between the superpowers. Friction between the two sides arose frequently during the course of their relations with other nations as in Korea, Vietnam, and in the Middle East. The potential for conflict was ever-present and political and military leaders had to work closely together to support allies and partners around the world, ensure the security of the country, and avoid actions that could result in a clash among the superpowers. Thus, an era of limited wars emerged.

  Korea was the first of these conflicts during the Cold War and it had lasting effects on the US because it did not result in a clear victory or defeat in the public mind. The clarity of victory in World War II was now illusory. This required political and military leaders to develop a working relationship that facilitated honest dialogue in order to understand the new environment that they were operating within. A sound relationship could then ensure that the civilian and military leaders were able to evaluate issues of national security in order to develop policy and strategy in this ambiguous environment. Soon after Korea another challenge arose in Southeast Asia in the remote jungles of Indochina. The US ally, France, found herself mired in combating an insurgency as it tried to re-impose colonial rule in Indochina after World War II. The question for the US was, should the country intervene to help its struggling ally or not? This first case study examines the strategic deliberations among US political and military leaders. In so doing, it will evaluate the deliberations and resultant policy and strategy using the theoretical variables identified in Chapter Three. The focus of the case study is the tenor of the civil-military relationship and how it affected the quality of policy developed and strategy implemented to secure the policy.

  Despite the fact that there are and will continue to be tensions and disagreements in civil-military relations, it does not mean that these should lead to acrimony and dubious policy and strategy. During a little-known incident in the 1950s civil-military relations worked as they should to produce sound policy and strategy for the United States, though tension and disagreement among the actors was a staple of the event. The incident occurred in the spring of 1954 when the US was considering intervening in Vietnam on behalf of the French to save the garrison at Dien Bien Phu from the Viet Minh communists. The events of that spring demonstrate how civil-military relations can work to produce positive results and provide us with applicable considerations for future interactions.

  The French had returned to Indochina at the end of World War II in order to reassert control of the region through their colonial administration. The region was a colonial possession of France since the mid-nineteenth century and valuable to the French economy. The French government had lost control of Indochina during World War II as Germany had defeated France in 1940 and Germany's Japanese ally took possession of the region thereafter as part of its territorial expansion in the Far East. At the end of the war the Japanese withdrew and the Vietnamese led by Ho Chi Minh hoped to gain independence from France. However, the French had other plans and began reinstituting its colonial administration in 1946. Ho Chi Minh rejected this and, as a result, began an insurgency against the French colonial government in late 1946. Since Ho was aligned with the communist movement, US leaders feared that Vietnam could fall to communism and come under the orbit of the new People's Republic of China along with the Soviet

Union. Thus, in spite of US opposition to continued colonial policies worldwide, the US supported French efforts in Vietnam in order to prevent the spread of communism.[100]

In 1953 the French developed the Navarre Plan to defeat Ho's Viet Minh and secure France's position in Indochina. Up to this point the insurgency had stalemated French forces' ability to re-impose colonial rule in Vietnam. The French held the urban centers and a few enclaves in the vicinity, but the Viet Minh held the countryside. The moment scattered French forces left the relative safety of their bases for a routine patrol or to move supplies the elusive enemy would use hit and run guerrilla tactics to harass their movements. This had the effect of exhausting regular French forces. To counter this the Navarre Plan would first, avoid any major fighting in 1953. Instead, a pacification campaign would begin while the French forces received reinforcements.[101] Further, the plan aimed to consolidate the scattered forces into a solid whole and occupy a position of strength in the Red River Delta enticing the Viet Minh to come into the open to fight a pitched battle in 1954-1955. The French were convinced that the Viet Minh could not stand up in a decisive conventional battle against their regular forces. Therefore, a pitched battle in the Vietnamese heartland would lead to a decisive victory for the French and full re-imposition of colonial rule. However, an unexpected Viet Minh offensive in 1953 forced General Navarre to react sooner than the proposed timeline and he massed available forces to halt the Viet Minh. The site chosen for the decisive showdown was Dien Bien Phu.[102]

The fight would prove decisive, but not in the manner the French had anticipated. Rather, the French troops, an elite force of the best in the French Army, found themselves trapped in a valley surrounded by high hills outnumbered at least five to one. Although the French fought with tenacity, the situation was dire in March 1954 and there was a sense among French leaders that Dien Bien Phu could fall without help. At this point, the French government sent their chief of the general staff, General Paul Ely, to Washington to seek assistance from the United States.[103] Ely would find a sympathetic ear in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford.

Against this backdrop was the upcoming Geneva Conference planned for late April 1954. There were many agenda items on the table for this conference between East and West and the French were set to begin negotiations with the Viet Minh for a settlement in Vietnam. The original plan was that the intended victory in Vietnam would strengthen their hand. Instead, with the reversal in fortunes, it appeared they would come into the conference from a position of weakness. One National Security Council staffer noted that "if the French were completely honest, they would get out of Indochina."[104] US officials like the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles were concerned that a defeat at Dien Bien Phu would result in driving the French out of the region and could lead to the fall of the entire Indochina region to the communists.[105] So, when Ely arrived in Washington many officials were watching the situation closely and prepared to help if possible.

Ely arrived on 20 March 1954 and immediately met with Admiral Radford. Ely was visibly distressed by the negative reports coming from Dien Bien Phu and Radford was genuinely interested in assisting his counterpart. The Admiral had for some time believed that American assistance to the beleaguered French should go further than just material aid. In his mind he was already mapping out

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[100] Melanie Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 1-8.

[101] Louis Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. XV (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 892-893. Top secret cable from President Eisenhower to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, February 10, 1954.

[102] Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, 31-33 and George C. Herring and Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: "The Day We Didn't Go to War" Revisited," *The Journal of Military American History*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (September 1984), 344-346.

[103] *Ibid*., 345.

[104] Report of Special United States Mission to Indochina, February 5, 1954 known as "Project Cleanup, 'Indochina'." Records of the White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas. Hereafter cited as Eisenhower Papers.

[105] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu," 345.

what this should consist of. Radford was in what was known as the "Asia First" group of senior leaders in Washington. These leaders believed that US foreign policy should prioritize Asia first over Europe because they believed that the entire continent was vulnerable to a communist takeover.[106] Therefore, Radford believed the US must prepare to offer the French material aid, air support, possibly ground troops, and even the use of nuclear weapons to stop the march of communism in Asia.[107]

Admiral Radford was a participant in a debate in which he felt comfortable airing his views. The level of trust or mistrust in the civil-military relationship was a critical element that underpinned the upcoming debate over what to do about the Indochina situation. This first variable of the theory set the conditions for that debate. There was a great deal of trust within the Eisenhower Administration among the players on the national security team. Though there was a wide range of opinion concerning the Indochina question, the debate always had the overtones of a group of partners working through a thorny problem. The trust and relationship among the partners facilitated a dialogue in which every member had a voice that the team respectfully listened to. Thus, the tenor of the relationship, founded on trust, was sound and enabled the national security team to develop a series of courses of action for the president to consider. These options were logical and represented the full range of ideas. Due to the sound tenor, the Eisenhower Administration developed a policy and supporting strategy that enjoyed success for the better part of a decade.

Radford was not alone in his belief that the US should, if necessary, intervene in Asia and specifically, Indochina. The Eisenhower Administration was fairly evenly split between those who believed intervention was necessary and those who opposed intervention. Lining up on the pro side was Vice President Richard M. Nixon along with the chairman of the joint chiefs, Admiral Radford. On the con side was Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway and the other service chiefs.[108] The Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, seemed to lean pro-intervention, although with qualifications, while the president was non-committal in public and private, though he appears to have leaned for intervention, but under the auspices of a western coalition.[109] In a top secret cable to Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 4 April 1954 Eisenhower stated that to stop the communists in Indochina required "the whole free community: to meet aggression by united action and not passively accepted." Further, if the West could form a coalition "the United States Government would expect to play its full part in such a coalition."[110] The bottom line is that the president's key advisers were fairly evenly split into intervention and non-intervention camps, with each side passionate in its reasoning. This set the conditions for the policy and decision-making process.

As the crisis unfolded the Secretary of State developed a plan that became known as "United Action." Central to the plan was that any intervention in Indochina should occur as a collective security arrangement with a coalition of partners. The partners included what was known as the Associated States (Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia) and Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the Philippines. These would commit to stopping communist expansion in Southeast Asia and if necessary, using force to do so. Dulles believed that the latter was probably not necessary because "such a coalition accompanied by stern warnings to the Communists might be sufficient to bolster the

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[106] Memorandum for Record of Conversation at Quarters of Admiral Arthur Radford, 20 March 1954, Box 17, Folder 10, The Papers of General Matthew B. Ridgway, U.S. Army Historical Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as Ridgway Papers.

[107] Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, 34-35 and Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense from Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford dated 31 March 1954, Box 18, Folder 5, Ridgway Papers.

[108] Series of Memorandums for Record from each of the service chiefs contained within Ridgway Papers in following locations: Box 16, Folder 5, Box 17, Folder 10, Box 17, Folder 12, and Box 18, Folder 1.

[109] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu," 347-350; *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 100; and Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1963), 340-341. President Eisenhower in his memoir of his presidency suggests that several conditions had to be met before he would support any intervention.

[110] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 1003. Top secret cable to Churchill dated April 4, 1954.

French will to resist and to deter Chinese intervention, thus making outside intervention [by the coalition] unnecessary."[111] While this policy proposal seemed reasonable, it was never adopted for external and internal reasons.

While those who the US invited to join such a coalition were in general agreement that they had to act in tandem, one nation did not "appreciate the gravity of the situation."[112] The British received the "United Action" policy proposal with coolness. The reason is that as a colonial power themselves, the UK had decided that in the wake of World War II they should divest their colonial empire since it was no longer practical or palatable. Therefore, Britain was busily granting independence to all of their former colonies and frowned upon becoming involved in any effort to help another state, like France, retain their empire. Finally, they disagreed with the premise that the loss of Indochina would mean the loss of all Asia to communism.[113] This meant that the coalition would lose a critical partner and thus, "United Action" was dead on arrival as a policy. As a result, intervention on behalf of the French would mean a US commitment as the primary contributor rather than a major partner in a coalition.

Internally, one of the strongest voices of opposition to intervention – be it air, ground, or nuclear – was Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway.[114] General Ridgway was the highly respected leader of the US Army. He was a veteran of operations along the volatile US-Mexican border during World War I, commanded the 18th Airborne Corps in World War II, and as 8th Army commander in Korea, reversed a dire situation on the peninsula to restore the South Korean border with the North in the vicinity of the 38th Parallel before replacing MacArthur as United Nations commander.[115] Now, as chief of staff, he was highly concerned about the possible adoption of a policy in "United Action" that would result in a strategy for which force could not attain the political objectives.

Well before the siege at Dien Bien Phu Ridgway sensed that the "Asia Firsters" were seeking some manner by which to intervene in Vietnam, particularly since it appeared that the Navarre Plan was ill-conceived. In light of this, Ridgway, on his own initiative, deployed a fact-finding team from the Army staff to Indochina to study the problem, assess courses of action, risk, and probability of successful intervention. The fact-finding team then made recommendations to Ridgway to arm him for the inevitable discussions that would occur within the National Security Council.[116] Ridgway remembered that "it was essential therefore that all who had any influence in making the decision [about intervention] on this grave matter should be fully aware of all the factors involved. To provide these facts, I sent out to Indo-China an Army team of experts."[117] The Ely visit would enable Ridgway to give full expression to his views.

Ridgway's researchers returned in spring of 1954 and compiled a thorough report that assessed the military situation, political environment, and potential use of US forces. Further, there was a full articulation of the risk involved and the probability that intervention could succeed in reversing a decidedly poor situation in Vietnam. The team's consensus was that intervention would fail at inordinate cost to the US in treasure, blood, and prestige. Therefore, the recommendation made to Ridgway

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[111] *Pentagon Papers,* Vol. 1, 93-95 and 98-101 and Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dien Bien Phu," 350

[112] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 1030. Top secret cable from President Eisenhower to Secretary of State Dulles dated April 23, 1954.

[113] *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 1, 101-103 and Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dien Bien Phu," 355.

[114] Ridgway recorded his opposition in multiple memorandums for record including one to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford dated 2 April 1954, Box 17, Folder 10, Ridgway Papers. In this memo Ridgway states that his answer when asked about whether to intervene in Indochina "was an emphatic and immediate "no"."

[115] Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1989), 8.

[116] John Garafano, "Deciding on Military Intervention – What is the Role of Senior Military Leaders?" *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring 2000), 19; Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, 172; and Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, 56-57.

[117] Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 276.

discouraged intervention.[118] When Ely arrived in Washington, Radford had invited Ridgway, Vice President Nixon, and CIA Director Allen Dulles (the secretary of state's brother) to his quarters for dinner to socialize and discuss matters in Vietnam. Armed with the assessment of the situation in Vietnam, Ridgway expressed skepticism at Ely's request for intervention believing that no proffered aid could rescue the situation in Vietnam. As Ely's visit continued over the next week, Ridgway was shocked that certain leaders in the administration were considering "some hare-brained tactical schemes which would cost the lives of thousands of men."[119] With this weighing on his conscience, Ridgway determined to give expression to his views directly to the president.

After hearing the views of others in the administration, Ridgway sensed that those considering the use of force were doing so in the absence of clear political objectives. What was the use of force supposed to achieve in Indochina? This is the second variable of the model and the perceived lack of consideration for political objectives is what drove Ridgway to air his views. The ability to articulate clear, attainable political objectives is necessary to determine what instruments of national power are appropriate to secure the objectives. Ridgway was determined to shape the political objectives so that the administration could make a logical assessment of the ability of the military to secure the objectives. Since there was a foundation of trust, this enabled the administration and all the players to engage in a full dialogue about what they wanted to achieve in Indochina. The sound tenor of the civil-military relationship, built on trust, which is the first theoretical variable in the model, facilitated the conversation about the political goals for an intervention in Indochina.

After informing Admiral Radford of his intent, Ridgway met with President Eisenhower to review analysis from the Army about the situation in Indochina and present his views and recommendations, which he also recorded later in his memoirs. Ridgway told the president that the US needed to have a clear political objective before deciding to intervene in Vietnam. Also, he proffered that intervention should be for the protection of some vital interest and that if this were not the case the US should ensure that the forces available could secure the political objectives. Short of clear answers, any intervention would amount to pure folly.[120] It is interesting to note that these criteria enunciated by Ridgway have the distinct ring of the Powell Doctrine. The general also expressed his belief that intervention "was a dangerous strategic diversion" of the limited capacity available for non-vital interests. Further, the nature of the terrain, the distances involved, and force ratios required for successful use of force made a decision to intervene a far-fetched proposition. If the administration decided on airstrikes Ridgway argued that this would inevitably lead to commitment of ground forces, which would require high numbers of troops, a long logistical tail, and a long-term commitment to defeat the Viet Minh. Would the American people tolerate such a commitment and could force actually secure the stated political goals? Ridgway did not believe so and he concluded by recommending against intervention.[121] As Ridgway would later note in his writings, intervention in Vietnam in 1954 was "theoretically noble," but it was also "realistically disingenuous and pragmatically fallacious."[122] He was quite "proud . . . that I fought against, and perhaps contributed to preventing, the carrying out of some hare-brained tactical schemes."[123] Eisenhower listened intently and at the conclusion of the meeting thanked Ridgway for his

[118] *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. I (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 127; Ridgway, *Soldier*, 276; and United States Operations Mission, "Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam: Activity Report," dated June 30, 1954 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combined Arms Research Library), 2-5 and 9-11.

[119] Ridgway, *Soldier*, 278 and General Ridgway, Memorandum for Record of Conversation at Quarters of Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Box 17, Folder 10, Ridgway Papers.

[120] *Ibid*.; *Pentagon Papers*, I, 462-471 and 474; Ridgway, *Soldier*, 277; "What Ridgway Told Ike: War in Indo-China Would be Tougher than Korea," *U.S. News & World Report*, No. XXXVI (25 June 1954), 30-32; Jonathan M. Soffer, *General Matthew B. Ridgway: From Progressivism to Reaganism, 1895-1993* (Westport Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 198-199; and Jonathan M. Soffer, "General Matthew Bunker Ridgway: Postwar Warrior, 1946-1986," Unpublished Dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 1992), 330-331.

[121] *Pentagon Papers,* I, 462-471 and 474.

[122] Matthew Ridgway, "Indochina: Disengaging," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July 1971), 586.

[123] Ridgway, *Soldier*, 278.

input. While he may have leaned toward intervention, the fact remains that Ridgway's cogent argument and well-documented study by Army experts provided the president with hard data to influence his decision. In his memoirs Ridgway stated his belief that "the analysis which the Army made and presented to higher authority played a considerable, perhaps decisive, part in persuading our government not to embark on a tragic adventure."[124]

Ridgway's request for clear political objectives inevitably led to discussions about how the use of force could secure them. The use of force is the third variable of the theory and the Eisenhower Administration contained many civilian leaders who understood how use of force could achieve political objectives. The president himself understood the use of force and employment of forces quite well having served as the supreme allied commander in Europe during World War II. Further, most of his civilian advisers had also served and had a foundational understanding of the implications of using force. Thus, when Ridgway presented his views, informed by the study he commissioned on the Indochina problem, it had a sobering effect on the president and others. The sound tenor of relations allowed this debate to take place and it resonated because administration leaders listened. Thus, the new information placed against potential political goals facilitated critical thinking about the choice of intervention in Indochina.

The debate continued for several days before the administration announced a decision. The president conducted a number of meetings of the National Security Council from late March through April 1954. President Eisenhower was fearful that "the French cannot see the thing through without intervention on their behalf." This, of course, would lead to "Indochina passing into the hands of the Communists."[125] There was a full and passionate airing of views in these sessions ranging from arguments for full intervention to stave off the march of communism in Indochina to those who vehemently opposed intervention. Additionally, Eisenhower consulted congressional leaders to gauge their support for or in opposition to intervention since he knew that he could not move unilaterally on the Indochina question.[126] Within the executive branch competing studies produced by the National Security Council reviewed what it might require to achieve victory through force, while another countered that use of force was out of the question.[127]

At the same time the Security Council was debating intervention, the president was engaging congressional leaders on the question. Eisenhower had slim Republican majorities to work with in both houses, so to ensure consensus on a policy, the president needed bi-partisan support. As the crisis in Vietnam deepened, the administration committed material aid and Air Force mechanics to assist the French. This latter gesture angered the Congress, and in particular Republican Senator Leverett Saltonstall, chairman of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator Saltonstall was miffed at the lack of consultation on the decision to send Air Force technicians to aid the French and he insisted that consultation was a requirement before any military personnel deployed to a potential hostile area, especially if ground forces were introduced.[128] In light of this and the potential that his policy could face congressional repudiation, Eisenhower sought congressional advice. The administration sought wide latitude from Congress to take action if a crisis situation developed in which time to act was limited.[129] The Senate leaders from both parties agreed, but with a critical stipulation. Before Congress would

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[124] *Ibid*., 277.

[125] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 1002. Top secret cable to Prime Minister Churchill dated April 4, 1954.

[126] *Ibid*., 886 and 1030-1031. Memorandum for record from Eisenhower recording telephone conversation with Senator Saltonstall dated February 8, 1054 and a top secret, eyes only cable from President Eisenhower to Secretary of State Dulles dated April 23, 1954.

[127] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu," 354-355 and *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 1, 100-101.

[128] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 886-887. Memorandum for record of telephone conversation between Eisenhower and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

[129] Memorandum for Record by Secretary of State Dulles recording conference with President Eisenhower dated April 2, 1954, "Meetings with the President, 1954," Dulles Papers contained with Eisenhower Papers.

provide this wide berth, intervention would be dependent upon full "United Action" coalition participation. Plus, congressional leaders wanted the French to accept greater military advice on operations and strategy before offering any further assistance.[130] Up to this point the French were very reluctant to allow any help or advice on the Indochina question for fear of losing control of what they believed was their sovereign territory and exclusive sphere of influence. Further, the British were not amenable to joining a coalition in an attempt to reverse the dire situation in Vietnam.[131] These restrictions effectively tied the hands of the administration. Nevertheless, the president dispatched the secretary of state upon a European diplomatic blitz to gain the support of the British and French to meet congressional conditions.[132] The president also wrote a personal letter to Prime Minister Churchill to address the "grave threat to the whole free community:" and plead for his support for "united action."[133]

   Meanwhile, the National Security Council debate continued with the two sides advocating their positions. The Chairman and Vice President Nixon strongly pressed for intervention, while the skeptics urged caution. The National Security Council considered a number of options and the discussions apparently became quite heated at times. Among the options was bi-lateral action with the French, coalition action with some of the "United Action" partners, or unilateral intervention by the US to stop the march of communism. In adopting any of these courses of action the means ranged from an airstrike only, introduction of ground forces following an airstrike, and even the use of nuclear weapons – all of which appalled leaders like Ridgway. Nevertheless, other participants, such as Admiral Radford and Harold Stassen, who administered the Foreign Operations Administration, went so far as to advocate for unilateral action using ground troops. Though he was a hawk, Vice President Nixon insisted upon forming a coalition to intervene.[134] The discussions were essentially stalemated until the president made a decision. This was forthcoming on 29 April 1954.

   Dulles – now joined by Radford in Europe – failed to move the UK closer to supporting intervention, which was now out of the question. The British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden reiterated that his government was "opposed to any type of collective military action" and believed that it would not have a "decisive effect" in reversing French fortunes in Indochina. Dulles concluded that "the British were writing off Indochina."[135] In fact, the British were preparing "to press earnestly for a 'cease-fire' in Indo-China."[136] The French, on the other hand, had softened their tone with reference to allowing greater American input on the course of events in Vietnam. Yet, the French were not necessarily on board with "United Action" because they feared that a "coalition arrangement would lead to internationalization of the war and take control of it out of their hands." This resistance by the French to any outside influence thoroughly frustrated President Eisenhower who was actively searching for a viable way to help them in Vietnam.[137] The only reason the French were willing to allow the Americans to assist was that the situation at Dien Bien Phu had gone from bad to worse. The Viet Minh was tightening its grip on the garrison and Navarre noted that to save the French position would require immediate reinforcement.

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[130] *Pentagon Papers,* Vol. 1, 94-95 and 100-101 and Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu," 352-353.

[131] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 739, 742, and 1030. Diary entry from President Eisenhower dated December 10, 1953 and top secret cable from President Eisenhower to Secretary of State Dulles dated April 23, 1954.

[132] *Ibid*., 1005 and 1030. Minutes from National Security Council meeting on April 3, 1954 and top secret cable from President Eisenhower to Secretary of State Dulles dated April 23, 1954.

[133] *Ibid*., top secret cable to Prime Minister Churchill dated April 4, 1954.

[134] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dien Bien Phu," 361 and *Pentagon Papers*, I, 463-465 and 473-474.

[135] *Ibid*., 101-103 and 477-478.

[136] Galambos, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. XV, 1041. Entry from Eisenhower's Diary dated April 27, 1954.

[137] *Ibid*., 953. Memorandum from President Eisenhower to Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith dated March 15, 1954.

Otherwise, the French would have to call for a cease fire, which to Dulles would represent a disaster.[138] Intervention from the US was now essential.

Having listened to the arguments of both sides, Eisenhower now arrived at a decision. He stipulated:

> . . . that the United States military participation be formally requested by France and the three Associated States, that the ANZUS powers [Australia, New Zealand, and the United States] be invited to help also. We insisted that the United Nations be brought in to form a peace-observation commission; that France guarantee complete independence to the Associated States, including an "unqualified option to withdraw from the French Union [similar to the British Commonwealth] at any time"; that France keep its forces in action, with United States assistance – "principally air and sea" – as supplements, not substitutions; and that agreement be reached on our participation in training native troops and working out a command structure for united action. Further, we require that all these decisions not only be accepted by the French Cabinet (in view of its shaky nature), but also be authorized or endorsed by the French National Assembly.[139]

In other words, the US would not intervene in Vietnam for three reasons, although he left the door open that it could still happen. First, he believed that any successful effort to save Dien Bien Phu required a coalition effort of which the most important partner was Great Britain, without them success was questionable. Further, the French had not managed their affairs well contributing to the ugly situation they now found themselves in. Finally, Eisenhower, himself a former soldier who served at the strategic level, understood the extreme risk of employing a force halfway around the world. Against a determined enemy supported by a sponsor in China, military force would likely not achieve the political objective and to do so would require massive commitment of US forces and treasure. Plus, this would require support of the American people, which leading senators told the president was contingent on British support. Therefore, the president decided against intervention.[140]

The result of these deliberations was a policy that included the following: an effort to make the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) a viable alliance along the lines of NATO; provide aid to the Associated states of Indochina; provide economic aid to South Vietnam to enable it to stabilize; and provide military aid and advice to South Vietnam to stand as a bulwark against further communist encroachment in Southeast Asia.[141] Dien Bien Phu would fall on 7 May 1954. With this development the policy of the administration was to support the negotiations at the Geneva Conference with a strategy advocating for a non-communist state in Indochina that the US could back as a breakwater against communism. This came to pass as a result of the negotiations in 1954.[142]

The strategic deliberations that occurred in 1954 are instructive and when compared against the four variables they tend to provide evidence of the validity of the proposed civil-military relations and policy-strategy correlation theory. (See Table 4.1) The national security team in the Eisenhower Administration enjoyed sound civil-military relations and was able to produce a policy and strategy for Indochina that worked for several years. Trust, the first variable, underpinned all interactions among the civil and military actors throughout the deliberations considering intervention in Indochina. Strategic decision-making processes exhibit some level of civilian or military dominance during the deliberations along with the degree of preference divergence among the participants.[143] In 1954 the Eisenhower

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[138] *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 1, 103 and 474-479.

[139] Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 359.

[140] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dien Bien Phu," 359-362; Soffer, *General Matthew B. Ridgwa*y, 199; and *Pentagon Papers*, I, 106 and 502-503.

[141] *Ibid*., 106-107, 587-588, and 604-605.

[142] *Ibid*., 531-533 and 570-573.

[143] Zegorcheva, "Soldiers, Statesmen, and Strategy," 21-23.

Administration clearly had solid civilian control of the military. However, due to the trust among the participants, the control exercised had an air of partnership that facilitated a collegial debate during strategic deliberations. Further, while there was a disagreement in preferred options, this did not manifest as the military preferring one option while the civilian leaders backed another. Some military leaders supported intervention while others did not favor such action. Likewise, some civilian political leaders favored intervention while others were against intervention. This led to a willingness to adjust positions when presented with information that changed strategic calculation such as Ridgway's study about the situation in Indochina. The collegial discussions and flexibility demonstrated during strategic deliberations further solidified trust among the actors resulting in a clear, attainable policy and effective strategy. Upon implementation, the policy and strategy worked for nearly a decade. Though there was a clear split within the administration about what to do in Indochina, the ability to conduct cordial and substantive discussions continued throughout because the participants shared a healthy respect for each other founded in trust. This trust provided the foundation for a sound tenor in the civil-military relationship.

Conflict/Variables	Indochina, 1954
Trust	Sound
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Political objectives achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Conflict averted and objectives achieved by other means*
Strategic Outcome	Secured political objectives

Table 4.1. The Indochina Crises, 1954 summarized by variable.
*The Eisenhower Administration decided against the use of force in favor of a three-pronged policy using other instruments of national power.

The atmosphere of trust enabled the team to advise the president and facilitate his ability to articulate clear and achievable political goals – the second variable to test the theory. The initial political objective considered by the administration involved an open-ended commitment to help France retain its colonial possession while halting the spread of communism. The study that Ridgway commissioned demonstrated that intervention to stabilize the situation in Indochina would require several hundred thousand ground troops in sustained combat against insurgents for many months, if not years. Further, there was risk of suffering several thousand casualties, which constituted a high bar of commitment for securing the political objectives. Faced with this prospect, Eisenhower narrowed the political goals so that the US could supply the commitment required to secure them.

The third variable involves the level of understanding that the actors have for the use of force to attain the political objectives. President Eisenhower, a former soldier, certainly knew the limitations of the use of force, as well as the capabilities to secure political goals. When presented with Ridgway's

argument, backed by the Army study, the president realized the risk posed by intervention in Indochina. Further, he saw the enormous commitment required in terms of ground troops involved in a counter-insurgency effort to attain the political objectives. Therefore, Eisenhower decided to back away from intervention because he realized that the use of force to intervene in Indochina might not secure the political goals to stabilize the situation in Indochina without an enormous commitment of resources. Instead, the team narrowed the political objectives and used all instruments of national power to attain the pared down objectives. The final variable is whether the team attempts to substitute battlefield success for strategy. In 1954, Eisenhower decided to not even engage in battle, seeking instead to implement a nuanced strategy that leveraged all instruments of national power, rather than relying solely on the military instrument in the form of use of force. For eight years the policy and strategy worked by stabilizing the region at low cost to the US. This is the essence of sound strategy according to Sun Tzu, who noted that the best strategy is to win without fighting.[144]

Based on an assessment using the four variables we may conclude that the tenor of civil-military relations within the Eisenhower Administration was sound because of the positive strategic deliberations that took place among the participants. The actors had trust between each other, could articulate clear, attainable political objectives, understood how to use of force to obtain those political objectives, and knew that reliance on battlefield success did not constitute a strategy. Because of this Eisenhower and his national security team developed a sound policy and strategy that was successful for several years until changed by a future administration. The examination of the case considering intervention in Indochina in 1954 provides evidence of the validity of the civil-military relations and policy-strategy correlation theory. But, before drawing a definitive conclusion using only one case study, it is appropriate to examine another similar case from a different time period to further test the theory. The next case study will examine the strategic deliberations that took place in 1964 to determine if the tenor of civil-military relations affects the quality of policy and strategy. This case deals with the deliberations ten years later within the Lyndon Johnson Administration over whether or not to intervene in Vietnam to halt the march of communism in Southeast Asia. The case provides an interesting contrast to the events that took place in 1954 by considering a case that took place in the same geostrategic region under similar circumstances.

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[144] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Yuan Shibing (New York: Sterling Publishing: 2007), 34.

Chapter 5

Vietnam, 1964

Ten years after the Eisenhower Administration successfully navigated the crisis in Indochina, the situation in South Vietnam was quickly becoming untenable for the government. Following a period of relative stability in the late 1950s when the Viet Minh was effectively wiped out, a new insurgency began germinating due to dissatisfaction with the corrupt government of South Vietnam. The insurgency in the South, fomented by the communist north, was gaining steam and seriously destabilizing the Republic of Vietnam's government. The policy and strategy that the Eisenhower Administration had implemented in 1954 was overturned in 1962 by the new Kennedy Administration and in its place a policy of flexible response was implemented. As a part of this policy the Kennedy Administration had provided greater military support to the south in the form of thousands of advisers embedded with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam or ARVN. One reason for the perception of a crisis in Vietnam in the early 1960s is that this period represents the height of the Cold War. It seemed that communism was on the march and many US leaders adhered to what was known as the "domino theory," which meant that if one country in Asia fell to communism it would lead to several more falling in succession.[145] Thus, US leaders believed they must back the Republic of Vietnam to prevent the dominoes from falling throughout the region. Then, in the summer of 1964, an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin seemed to force US leaders to make a decision about the future of Southeast Asia. The question facing senior US leaders was should the US intervene with force to assist South Vietnam in stabilizing the situation? And, to what purpose? This section will examine this case using the same variables to test the civil-military relations and policy-strategy corollary. It will conclude that the poor tenor of civil-military relations in the Johnson Administration resulted in strategic deliberations that produced the policy and strategy that failed in Vietnam, thus validating the theory with a second case.

In 1964, the situation in Vietnam was becoming critical in terms of its security and stability. Between 1954 and 1962 Ngo Dinh Diem served as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam. A staunch nationalist, Diem had come to power following the Geneva Accords. He was considered a man of integrity, although he was also uninspiring.[146] Upon coming to power Diem worked hard to purge South Vietnam of remaining insurgent elements of the Vietminh. In this endeavor he was largely successful for by 1958 the insurgency was mostly wiped out by the ARVN and South Vietnamese police.[147] To many observers, including leaders in the US, South Vietnam led by Diem was becoming a stalwart partner in the effort to halt the march of communism in Southeast Asia. However, this optimism was unfounded.

In spite of the success in consolidating power and destroying the residual communist cells in the south, Diem and his government was its own worst enemy. South Vietnam, despite the efforts of its primary backer, the US, was not a democratic state. It was governed more as an oligarchy wherein Diem doled out prime government positions and favors to his family and closest friends. Such nepotism led to corruption and the adoption of policies favorable to Diem's allies. This began to alienate a large swath of the population, especially the agrarian peasants, and offered an opening for the resurrection of the insurgency. Further, heavy-handed police tactics in quelling the insurgency and poorly executed agrarian projects provided potential recruits to support the reborn insurgency.[148] Therefore, by 1960, after the hard-won effort to extinguish the communists in the previous decade, a new and stronger brand of insurgency began to threaten the South Vietnamese government in Saigon.

The incarnation of the new insurgency was led by what was now called the Vietcong, also known as the National Liberation Front (NLF). This group was considered liberators of the people because the

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[145] Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. I, 54-55.
[146] Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 229.
[147] *Ibid.*, 228 and 243.
[148] *Ibid.*, 246-248.

South Vietnamese government had come to represent corruption and oppression. Sponsored by agents from North Vietnam, the Vietcong quickly drew a large following, and within months of its rise it began to challenge the South Vietnamese government. Adept at guerrilla tactics and selective terrorism, the Vietcong began destabilizing wide swaths of South Vietnam to the extent that the ARVN and police were struggling to maintain control of the countryside. By 1962 US officials who had so confidently supported Diem in the mid to late 1950s, were now questioning his future viability as the prime minister of South Vietnam.[149] Their concern was if South Vietnam began to falter, so too could the rest of Southeast Asia in accordance with the domino theory.

As the new Kennedy Administration came to office his national security team began to debate what to do about Diem and South Vietnam. Part of the discussion concerned whether or not the US should intervene with combat troops in South Vietnam, much as the Eisenhower Administration had debated eight years earlier. However, in 1962 officials of the Kennedy Administration generally opposed direct American involvement in combat. Yet, in accordance with the new defense policy of flexible response, Kennedy's team did agree to send several thousand advisers to South Vietnam for the purpose of training the ARVN and provide a "symbolic presence."[150] Therefore, in late 1961 the first US troops arrived to begin providing this support. This left open the question of what to do about Diem.

When the debate began concerning what to do about Vietnam, the level of trust among the civilian and military leaders was on the decline in the Kennedy Administration. When President Johnson came to power following Kennedy's assassination, mistrust between political leaders and their military advisers became palpable. The first variable of the theory, the level of trust or mistrust, was so bad in the Johnson Administration that it created a tenor in the civil-military relationship whereby the participants were barely on speaking terms. Much of this downward spiral is due to difficulties between the actors that manifested during the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the Cuban Missile Crisis, which made the civilian and military leaders wary of each other. The adversarial relationship established by the mistrust between the leaders led to poor strategic deliberations. These deliberations produced policy and strategy that failed miserably and created a "Vietnam syndrome" that haunted future political and military leaders for decades.[151]

Initially as strategic deliberations began, US officials of the Kennedy Administration favored working with Diem as the only real alternative for leadership in a country seemingly bereft of a unifying figure to lead it. Multiple administration officials thought that the US would "sink or swim" in South Vietnam with Diem heading the country.[152] But, by 1963 as the insurgency continued to grow and present a serious threat to the survival of the Republic of Vietnam, Kennedy's national security team cast about for an alternative to Diem. What transpired is among one of the worst decisions any US administration has made with respect to another state. Although his National Security Council was fairly evenly split in opinion in late August 1963, the president gave the go ahead to back a CIA facilitated coup by ARVN generals against the Diem regime.[153] What happened next was not only a tragic event, it initiated a spiral downward in South Vietnam that actually strengthened the insurgency. On 1-2 November 1963 a group of dissident ARVN generals staged a successful coup toppling Diem. In so doing, Diem and some of his associates were assassinated much to the dismay of President Kennedy who, ironically, would also die by an assassin's bullet three weeks later.[154]

Rather than stabilizing the situation with new, stronger leadership, the loss of Diem created a revolving door of incompetent generals as head of state who only exacerbated the poor conditions. Their

[149] *Ibid*., 250-251 and 254-255.

[150] *Ibid*., 268-269.

[151] E.J. Dionne, Jr., "Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome," *Washington Post* (March 4, 1991). Accessed online 18 November 2020 at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/03/04/kicking-the-vietnam-syndrome/b6180288-4b9e-4d5f-b303-befa2275524d/.

[152] Karnow, *Vietnam*, 267.

[153] *Ibid*., 304-306 and Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, II, 253-236.

[154] *Ibid*., 264-270 and Karnow, *Vietnam*, 320-321 and 324-327.

mishandling of everything from managing affairs in Saigon to combatting the insurgency, encouraged North Vietnam to step up its efforts to topple the government of South Vietnam and reunify the country under communist rule. As a result of their assessment that there was an opportunity at hand, the communists redoubled their support of the Vietcong and began sending elements of the regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) south to expand the reach of the conflict. Thus, in 1964 South Vietnam was desperately struggling to fend off a renewed communist onslaught and US officials believed that the South could collapse without greater support from the US, including the introduction of combat troops. President Lyndon Johnson, having succeeded Kennedy after his assassination, was unsure of what to do next. Hanging over his head was the belief that losing South Vietnam would cause the rest of the dominoes in Southeast Asia to fall before a monolithic communist onslaught.[155]

In 1964 the Cold War was at its height. As historian and US Army general H.R. McMaster has noted, "Vietnam can only be understood in relation to the Cold War."[156] This is because Vietnam became the focal point for the US in its competition with the Soviet Union and communist China. The USSR was rapidly reaching parity with the US in nuclear armaments, which meant that if a direct confrontation between the superpowers occurred, it could result in catastrophic loss, and nobody in the administration wanted this to come to pass. Thus, the competition between the two powers took the form of action through proxies such as North and South Vietnam. With US leaders wedded to the domino theory, there was a belief among them that communism had to be confronted. Since this could not happen everywhere, critical geostrategic locations took priority. After President Kennedy took office multiple crises had occurred in such places as in the divided city of Berlin, the Bay of Pigs disaster, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and a deterioration of conditions in Indochina in Laos and South Vietnam. As President Kennedy noted before his death, "Vietnam is the place" where communism required a strong challenge from the US.[157] As this series of incidents unfolded, Kennedy and his national security team lost confidence in the military leaders of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all of whom were holdovers from the Eisenhower Administration.[158]

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an especially challenging time for the Kennedy Administration. Based on the advice received from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Kennedy Administration officials assessed that the military leaders lacked creative thinking and were decidedly wedded to the use of overwhelming force in every situation. Kennedy believed that they lacked political sensitivity, while conversely, the chiefs saw the administration as overly sensitive to such political considerations to the detriment of what they considered military imperatives. As the crisis progressed and other problems around the globe arose, the chiefs were excluded from National Security Council deliberations with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara speaking for them. Civil-military relations and trust among the actors declined accordingly. Sensing this as a problem, Kennedy sought to and did replace the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with handpicked military leaders who were expected to be less problematic and more pliable.[159] With a new group of military leaders, McNamara began to tighten civilian control of the military. This did not improve already strained relations among the actors.[160]

McNamara had famously come to his job with an agenda to reform the hidebound Pentagon and their military leaders. A highly educated former president of Ford Motor Company who had served in World War II as an analyst of air operations, his reforms sought to make the Pentagon more efficient through the implementation of what was then a new concept called systems thinking. Prior to McNamara's arrival at the Pentagon the services used a disjointed process to develop budget priorities and solutions to military problems, often in competition with one another. No single process linked the services as a unified whole in the development of plans and priorities. Instead, the services, led by World

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[155] *Ibid*., 335-336 and 343-350 and Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, II, 272-276.
[156] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 23. Robert Divine quoted in text.
[157] Karnow, *Vietnam*, 265.
[158] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 22-23.
[159] *Ibid*., 23-29.
[160] *Ibid*., 17-23.

War II veterans, provided direction based upon their deep operational experience. With no background in military history or the study of national security, McNamara and his subordinates', known as the "whiz kids", demanded systematic thought about military problems and this caused great friction with military leaders. When McNamara shrugged off his military advisers as they presented objections to his policies that were not backed by systems analysis, it only deepened the feelings of mistrust between the two. Eventually, McNamara's distrust and disdain for the new set of military leaders led him to simply exclude them from strategic deliberations.[161] Further, President Johnson shared McNamara's distrust of the military. Johnson was part of the principals of the National Security Council during the strategic deliberations over the Cuban Missile Crisis. Johnson had assessed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff leaders were single track thinkers who had offered no viable courses of action to reasonably solve the crisis in Cuba.[162] He continued to shun the chiefs when he became president and he carried these issues with trust among the civil-military leaders into the office of president to the detriment of the US as it considered action in Vietnam. With the Cold War and situation in South Vietnam seemingly demanding a response from the US, and deteriorating civil-military relations among the senior leaders, conditions were not promising for sound strategic decision-making.

The mistrust between the civilian and military leaders of the Johnson Administration negatively affected discussions of policy. As the National Security Council set about drafting the political objectives, the military leaders were left out of the process. The second variable is the ability of leaders to articulate clear, attainable political objectives. Without input from military leaders due to the poor tenor of relations, there would be little discussion among the civil-military leaders about the attainability of the political goals using the military instrument. Though the stated goals were clear enough, they were not attainable based on resources available and domestic political constraints. Therefore, the poor tenor led to one-sided discussions of the objectives which the military could not secure. A more inclusive process of strategic deliberations among trusted partners might have reached a different conclusion as to what was possible in Vietnam in 1964 as the Eisenhower Administration discovered ten years earlier. However, the poor tenor of relations in the Johnson Administration made the discovery of a different course of action impossible.

By mid-1964, pressure to do something to save South Vietnam and confront the march of communism in Southeast Asia was building on American officials. The question was, what was appropriate based upon the circumstances in the region in the context of the Cold War? In March 1964, the Johnson Administration promulgated its political objectives with reference to South Vietnam in National Security Adviser Memorandum (NSAM) #288. It stated that the US sought to ensure "an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam" and that the US would assist with "not only economic and social measures, but also police and military to help to root out and control insurgent elements."[163] Further, in acknowledgement of the domino theory, the document stated that "unless we can achieve this objective in South Vietnam, almost all of Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance."[164] It concludes by noting that "the stakes are high" and "[T]hey are increased by domestic factors.[165] With political objectives established, how then would the US pursue achieving these broad and open-ended objectives?

The Johnson Administration was now seriously considering the use of force in Vietnam to secure these political goals. The third variable, the understanding leaders have concerning the use of force to secure political objectives, is highlighted in this case. Though the Joint Chiefs of Staff certainly understood the implications of the use of force, they failed to assert their convictions in strategic deliberations. The poor tenor of relations was a factor that influenced this lack of assertiveness. Further,

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[161] *Ibid*., 29-31 and 208-210 and Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 445-455.

[162] Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 6, 12, 21-22, and 127-132.

[163] National Security Adviser Memorandum #288, "Subject: South Vietnam," 16 March 1954 (Washington, DC: Secretary of Defense, 1964) 1-2.

[164] *Ibid*.

[165] *Ibid*.

Secretary McNamara sidelined the Joint Chiefs, limiting the courses of action that the president would consider. This meant that McNamara minimized the military advice leading to poor decisions when the administration decided to use force. The Johnson Administration clearly did not understand how to use force nor the employment of forces to secure political goals.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1964, Johnson's National Security Council debated what to do in Southeast Asia. The team mulled three courses of action during this period. The first was to continue the current course, which included economic and social assistance, plus the military advisers training the ARVN forces. Second, the council considered what they called the "hard, fast squeeze," which meant beginning direct attacks on North Vietnam with rapidly increasing tempo and intensity. The third option was known as the "slow, controlled squeeze" focused on fending off the North in a sort of graduated response.[166] These courses of action all had a clear military force component that President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara seemed to favor. However, other voices in the administration argued in favor of less belligerent approaches. Led by Under Secretary of State George Ball, the anti-intervention faction produced a lengthy report that laid out why intervention could not work – much as Ridgway had noted a decade earlier – and that discussion of military intervention was "getting out of hand." At the urging of McNamara, Johnson discarded any option that did not contain a use of force component.[167] The extensive debate over how to achieve the political objectives continued inconclusively due to domestic concerns and the upcoming presidential election until August 1964 when an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin added a sense of urgency to the decision-making process.[168]

On 1 and 4 August 1964 a US destroyer, the USS *Maddox*, came under attack from North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. This incident "reportedly outraged" President Johnson. Although he was not keen on escalating to military action in Vietnam in order to protect his domestic agenda, the situation seemed to demand some appropriate reaction. A step in that direction would give the president some room to maneuver was a congressional authorization. The congressional action he sought was an open-ended resolution that would allow Johnson to act at a time and with a force of his choosing. This meant that he could postpone immediate action until after he had secured his reelection in November, and thus, his domestic agenda.[169] On 7 August 1964, Congress obliged the president with what became known as the "Tonkin Gulf Resolution." The language of the resolution gave the president the ability to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the US and to prevent further aggression."[170] This allowed President Johnson to gradually implement measures to prop up the South Vietnamese government to arrest the growing success of the insurgency in accordance with a timeline that would allow him to implement his domestic agenda first.

The civilian and military actors involved in the strategic deliberations were lined up in three camps in 1964. The first group headed by McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and the special assistant to the National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy wanted graduated military action to deal with the situation in South Vietnam, the so-called "slow, controlled squeeze." The non-intervention faction, led by Deputy Secretary of State George Ball pressed for the president to back away from the precipice of war. Finally, there was the Joint Chiefs of Staff who believed that if a military response was required it should be more forceful than graduated pressure, meaning they advocated for a high intensity effort to win military victory. However, they failed to produce a clear statement of how much force to use or what type of forces would enable the securing of the political objectives outlined in NSAM #288.[171] Thus, there was a great deal of preference divergence among the civil-military actors. Since there was already

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[166] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 22 and Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, II, 319.

[167] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 22 and 195.

[168] Phillip Bennett, "Gulf of Tonkin Case Study," Command and General Staff College Curriculum Case Study (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Command and General Staff College, 1983) 1.

[169] *Ibid*., 5-6.

[170] Public Law 88-408. "Tonkin Gulf Resolution." 88th Congress, Second Session. August 7, 1964. Accessed 28 February 2021 at https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=98.

[171] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 62-63 and 144-147.

an undertone of mistrust among them, the divergence of opinion, combined with the failure of the Joint Chiefs to clearly state their position, only exacerbated the mistrust and made strategic deliberations more difficult.

One reason for the Joint Chiefs' lack of assertiveness is that the level of civilian dominance in the civil-military relationship was very high. Secretary of Defense McNamara assumed office intent on strengthening the level of civilian control. Then, after Johnson became president, McNamara increased his level of positional power over the military leaders.[172] As the national security team debated what to do about this situation in Vietnam there was a wide divergence of preference between the civilian and military leaders. The civilians in the camp of George Ball actually wanted the president to back away from intervention in Vietnam. The other civilian group led by McNamara, Rusk, and Bundy advocated for military intervention, but in a gradual manner in order to protect the president's domestic agenda.[173] Finally, the military leaders in the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that if military action was the decision of the president, then it should be swift and decisive, though they failed to clearly communicate this to the president.[174] The combination of strong civilian dominance and wide preference divergence produced tension and mistrust during the decision-making process.[175] The poor tenor of civil-military relations set the tone in strategic deliberations leading to the development of the decidedly poor strategy of attrition embodied in the "slow, controlled squeeze" course of action. Such difficult and contentious strategic deliberations continued for the duration of America's involvement in Vietnam.

The biggest problem with the strategic deliberations in 1964 is that the actors failed to properly identify the kind of war that the US would encounter in South Vietnam, which is a stark contrast to 1954.[176] NSAM #288 actually provided a lengthy assessment of "The Present Situation in Vietnam" and it quite accurately noted all of the major aspects of the insurgency then raging in South Vietnam. It discussed Vietcong tactics, use of sanctuaries in other countries, and the critical support provided by North Vietnam.[177] However, the document ascribed much credit to the communist movement and missed the fact that the war had deep nationalist overtones.[178] Yet, the suggested approaches to prosecute such a conflict were inappropriate to the problem either because those offering the solutions didn't understand the implications of becoming involved in an insurgency or believed that their proffered solution would bend the conflict to their will. For example, the advocates of graduated pressure, which included McNamara, Rusk, and Bundy, believed that through a process of gradual escalation the cost to the Vietcong and North Vietnam in fighting the US would eventually exceed their willingness to persevere.[179] The Joint Chiefs of Staff options also fell short of what could achieve the political objectives because even though they advocated for a higher degree of force, the chiefs admitted that their own proposals "would not be decisive."[180] Therefore, the failure to properly identify the war as one of nationalist determination combined with the use of graduated pressure to force the adversary to conform to US conceptions of the war, ensured that the US national security actors would fail to find viable solutions to the problem in South Vietnam. Thus, the US would not achieve the stated political objectives outlined in NSAM #288.

The choice for graduated pressure meant that the US chose a strategy of attrition to prosecute the Vietnam War. Success in such a conflict required continuous tactical success in the field combined with overwhelming firepower and steady logistical support to wear down the adversary materially. The hope was that the strength and tactical proficiency of US forces would convince the communists to give up.[181]

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[172] *Ibid*., 29-31.
[173] *Ibid*., 144-145.
[174] *Ibid*.
[175] Zegorcheva, "Soldiers, Statesmen, and Strategy," 21-23.
[176] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 32.
[177] National Security Adviser Memorandum #288, "South Vietnam," 2-5.
[178] Karnow, *Vietnam*, 109-110 and 133-134.
[179] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 62-63.
[180] *Ibid*., 147.
[181] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 190 and Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, 185.

In other words, the political leaders would depend on the tactical proficiency of the deployed forces to secure the political goals. The fourth variable is whether leaders can translate battlefield success into securing of the political objectives. In Vietnam US forces performed quite well, especially early in the war before public opinion turned against the conflict. Yet the excellent performance of US troops before 1969 and the abundance of resources committed could not deliver either military victory or secure the political goals.[182] Only a realistic strategic assessment of the type of war the US was embarking upon and a coherent strategy that committed appropriate resources to achieve the ends could achieve the political objectives. Day-to-day disparate tactical actions focused on "grinding down the enemy" would never deliver military or political success as Secretary McNamara admitted later in his memoirs.[183]

A recap of the variables clearly reveals that in this case the negative tenor of civil-military relations in 1964 affected strategic deliberations to produce poor policy and strategy. The first variable in examining the correlation between civil-military relations and policy-strategy is trust. As noted, the deterioration of trust between the senior political leaders of the Johnson Administration and the Joint Chiefs of Staff started well before the crisis in Vietnam came to a head in 1964. The issues began during the Kennedy Administration over the course of contending with a series of crises within the first two years of Kennedy taking office. Kennedy and his advisers were unimpressed with the Joint Chiefs' leadership as they dealt with the problems with Cuba, the USSR, and the mushrooming insurgency in South Vietnam. The initial solution to the problem of trust was to replace the military leaders who were holdovers from the Eisenhower Administration. Yet even with this step, the level of trust in the relationship among the civilian and military leaders failed to improve.[184]

When the issue of Vietnam began pressing on the new Johnson Administration, little had changed in terms of the delivery and consideration of military advice, nor the opinion of the civilian leaders with reference to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The president was quite unimpressed with the quality of advice he was receiving from his military leaders on the Vietnam problem.[185] One of the reasons for the poor advice was that Secretary of Defense McNamara was deliberately suppressing that advice by cutting the members of the Joint Chiefs from strategic deliberations. McNamara and his team of "whiz kids" had a low opinion of military advice that was not backed by statistical analysis. Therefore, when the Joint Chiefs provided options on Vietnam based upon experience without the requisite statistical analysis, McNamara rejected it without providing it to the president. This contributed to the frustration of military leaders with the secretary of defense and exacerbated the problem with trust while limiting the available options from reaching the president for consideration.[186] Thus, the initial strategic deliberations were negatively affected by the variable of trust and contributed to the limitation of the full range of advice from reaching the president. The result of this was to deny consideration of all perspectives bearing on the problem and a corresponding low level of quality when the decision was made to apply graduated pressure in Vietnam.

The second variable affecting the civil-military relationship that caused policy and strategy to have poor quality is the ability of the actors to articulate political objectives. The political goals that the Johnson Administration articulated with reference to South Vietnam were codified in NSAM #288. It stated that "[W]e seek an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam."[187] As Russell F. Weigley points out "[T]he American objective in Vietnam was clear enough and specifically stated."[188] This is true, so the follow-up question is, why did the US not achieve such a clearly stated objective? The reason is that

[182] Karnow, *Vietnam*, 19-20 and 450.

[183] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 182.

[184] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*., 17-23.

[185] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 165.

[186] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 19-21 and 208-210.

[187] National Security Adviser Memorandum #288, "South Vietnam," 1-2.

[188] Russell F. Weigley, "The American Civil-Military Cultural Gap: A Historical Perspective, From Colonial Times to Present," in *Soldiers and Civilians*, Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 239.

the objective is too broad if the political and military leaders do not understand what kind of war they intend to embark upon. Associated with the issue of proper identification of the type of conflict is the dedication of the resources required to deal with the problem to achieve the political objectives. Weigley further notes that, "the trouble [with the political objective] was not in lack of clarity, but in the impossibility of achieving the objective by military means, given the weak indigenous foundation of the South, the Republic of Vietnam."[189] In other words, establishing political objectives is about more than just the words in a statement. The articulation of political goals also contains implications about requirements for prosecuting a war. The broader the political objectives, the greater the resource requirements in terms of people, materiel, and commitment to achieve them. If the civil-military leaders are not willing to commit the needed resources when considering a set of objectives, then it should consider narrowing the objectives to something more achievable based upon what the leaders are willing to commit. When the Johnson Administration articulated this broad political goal, it had no intention of committing the resources needed to achieve it as graduated pressure would demonstrate. Therefore, the administration should have narrowed the objective. The failure of the Johnson Administration to do this demonstrates the lack of understanding and appreciation the civilian and military leaders had for the implications of articulating broad political objectives and what it would take to secure them in Vietnam.

The third variable that tests the validity of the theory is the level of understanding the civilian and military leaders have for the use of force to attain the political goals. This variable is linked to the variable that examines the ability to articulate attainable objectives. In 1964 the Johnson Administration decided to intervene in Vietnam to secure the political goal stated in NSAM #288 to ensure an independent, non-communist South Vietnam. Just how to do this was the focus of strategic deliberations throughout the year and led to a difficult discourse among the national security team. As discussed, Johnson's advisers seriously considered three different courses of action for intervening in South Vietnam. First, was to continue to stay the course in South Vietnam with advisers and various forms of aid, but increasing them to assist the government of the Republic of Vietnam in prosecuting the war. This course of action had the backing of those led by George Ball. The second course considered was to intervene with combat forces rapidly with high intensity to turn the tide of the insurgency so that the South Vietnamese government could gain the advantage needed to defeat it. This was the option preferred by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The final option was to intervene gradually with slowly increasing force to convince North Vietnam and the Vietcong of America's resolve in backing South Vietnam so that they would agree to the Republic's independence.[190] Secretary of Defense McNamara advocated for this position and it was the course of action that was recommended to the president, which he accepted.

As history demonstrates, the chosen strategy in Vietnam, graduated pressure, failed miserably in Vietnam. However, graduated pressure is not really a strategy because it did not link to definable ends, instead it is an expectation. In other words, the administration believed that by ratcheting up the pressure gradually that the Vietcong and their North Vietnamese sponsors would realize how weak they were in the face of the building and overwhelming power of the US, convincing their leaders to acquiesce to US demands. This is an option calculated to limit domestic "political costs" not to win a war.[191] However, the enemy did not conform to US demands and the graduated pressure ironically, exacted tremendous domestic political costs by 1968. These problems link back to the initial failure to identify what kind of war the US was embarking upon. The Vietcong and their North Vietnamese sponsors were engaged in a civil war of national liberation and for them to concede in such a war would require decisive, overwhelming force directed at the political heart of the struggle. The civilian leaders, in particular Secretary of Defense McNamara, supported "a fundamentally flawed strategic concept that permitted American involvement in the war without consideration of its long-term costs and consequences."[192] In other words, the course of action chosen was completely divorced from the reality facing the US in

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[189] *Ibid*.

[190] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 22 and McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 144-147.

[191] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 30.

[192] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 62.

deciding to intervene and could not achieve the political objectives. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff never found its voice to argue for the greater force they advocated for to secure the political objectives. All this demonstrates that the civil-military actors failed to understand the use of force and how it is used to attain political objectives. As McNamara admitted in his memoirs, "I, as secretary, should have been more forceful in developing a military strategy and long-term plan for the force structure required to carry it out."[193]

The final variable to examine in testing the theory is the ability to translate battlefield success into securing the political objectives. The US military had tremendous military success in Vietnam on the battlefield. From the time the US combat troops arrived in March 1965 until the final withdrawal in January 1973, no battalion-sized organization ever lost a battle of the hundreds of engagements conducted throughout the war. Yet, as one North Vietnamese leader noted, winning all the battles was, in the end, "irrelevant."[194] Battles are supposed to be used as part of a larger campaign that is linked to a strategy calculated to achieve the political objectives. But, when battles are fought in a vacuum without the linkage back to the political objectives, winning delivers only pyrrhic victory. By endorsing a policy of graduated pressure "the administration placed tactics ahead of strategy."[195] Graduated pressure meant that the two sides would become engaged in a war whose strategy was attrition and, as both Robert McNamara and General William Westmoreland would both later admit, this was neither a strategy nor a way to win the war in South Vietnam.[196] Nevertheless, US leaders held out hope that as losses among the Vietcong and NVA mounted, resulting from lost battles, that they would finally give up the fight. In actuality, embracing graduated pressure and attrition had the opposite effect in that it was the US that threw in the towel admitting defeat.

There is some evidence that an alternative option in Vietnam could have worked if the US was willing to make the required commitment to resource the alternative policy and strategy. When General Creighton Abrams became the military commander in South Vietnam, he completely revamped the military strategy and had a hand in reshaping the policy on the war. With a new administration in the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, no longer would the US rely on attrition in an attempt to outlast the adversary. After 1968, the US implemented a pacification policy characterized by what Abrams called a "one war" concept. This meant that rather than placing emphasis on military operations to destroy the enemy, the concept focused equal effort on building the competence of the indigenous forces and its government, and on the pacification of the population.[197] As the Nixon Administration and Abrams implemented the program there is evidence that it was having great success by 1970. However, the attitude of the American people was so against the war by this time that regardless of any success the US had, the country was already defeated. Within another year the preponderance of US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam.[198] What this demonstrates is that a thoughtful policy and strategy backed with the proper resources and commitment might have achieved the stated political objectives. Instead, the Johnson Administration, acting upon the recommendation of Westmoreland, came to rely on tactical battlefield victory to deliver a successful conclusion to the war and secure the political goals. As history demonstrates, this option failed miserably as victory on the battlefield did not deliver secured political objectives.

The experience and strategic deliberations of the US in 1964 stand in stark contrast to the deliberations that took place in 1954. A review of the four variables helps to parse out how the poor tenor of civil-military relations produced correspondingly poor policy and strategy. (See Table 5.1) In 1964 there was a deep mistrust among the civilian and military actors as they considered intervening in

[193] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 182.

[194] Summers, *On Strategy*, 1.

[195] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 30.

[196] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 182 and Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, 185-186.

[197] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 1999), 17-19.

[198] *Ibid.*, 221-227.

Vietnam. The lack of trust developed over three previous years of turbulent deliberations as a series of crises confronted the Kennedy Administration. Having observed their military advisers during that time, the president and his secretary of defense simply did not trust the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, nor did he accept their recommendations. This created an acrimonious and adversarial relationship between the secretary and the joint chiefs. As the administration began strategic deliberations Secretary McNamara shut the Joint Chiefs out of the debate limiting their input on setting political goals and considering strategic options to achieve them. Though the Johnson Administration identified a clear political goal, it proved too broad and the administration was unwilling to make the commitment required to secure the political objectives. The Johnson Administration officials did not seem to understand the scale of force needed in Vietnam nor how to employ it to secure the political objectives. Finally, the Johnson Administration implemented graduated pressure, which was dependent on winning tactical actions to win the war and secure the political objectives. Such a strategy of attrition was an empty expectation as no amount of tactical success could deliver military victory nor secure the political goals.

Conflict/Variables	Vietnam, 1964
Trust	Poor, Mistrust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Stated Political objectives not achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders fail to understand of use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Unable to translate success in battle into victory
Strategic Outcome	Failed to secure political objectives

Table 5.1. The Vietnam War, 1964 summarized by the variables.

The examination of the case against the four variables provides additional evidence that the civil-military relations and policy-strategy correlation theory has validity. In 1964 the tenor of civil-military relations were strained to the point that Secretary of Defense McNamara would not even allow the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reach the president and he blocked their participation in key National Security Council meetings. Thus, in 1964 the political objectives produced by the team were too broad for the resources the administration was willing to commit making them unachievable. Thus, the tenor of civil-military relations had direct effects on the quality of policy and strategy and the outcomes of the Vietnam War.

This dissertation has now examined two distinct cases of strategic deliberations in various US administrations. Both incidents took place following World War II. This time period is characterized by the rise of limited wars which became the dominant form of war after World War II, with a few notable exceptions. The US had mature national security institutions for developing policy and strategy during challenging times. The two cases demonstrate that the tenor of civil-military relations has a direct correlation to the quality of policy and strategy produced by strategic deliberations the actors engage in. The next chapter will review another case, the Persian Gulf War, 1991, providing more data to determine

how the civil-military relations and policy-strategy relationship theory holds up to scrutiny. Additional cases will offer more evidence of the theory's validity and develop confidence in its predictive qualities.

Chapter 6

The Persian Gulf War, 1991

The era of the Vietnam War had stark and lasting consequences on civil-military relations that lasted for several years after the final combat troops left Vietnam in January 1973. For the rest of the decade and into the early 1980s political and military leaders remained wary of each other in national security deliberations. Further, failed military operations like the DESERT ONE mission to rescue American hostages in Tehran did not help the situation. However, by the mid-1980s gradual improvement in the civil-military relationship became detectable. A new administration under President Ronald Reagan facilitated a temporary recovery in the relationship as the political and military leaders focused on the common threat of the Soviet Union. By the 1990s a new president, George H.W. Bush, inherited a much-improved state of civil-military relations grounded in trust as political and military leaders worked closely together toward common national security goals. When the crisis in Kuwait emerged in 1990 the political and military leaders were able to engage in a civil debate about the kind of war this might become. This led to the development of political objectives that the use of military force could secure. When American political leaders decided upon the political goals with the advice of their military advisers, they took the next step to decide what forces were needed to secure them. In so doing, the political leaders listened intently to the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and commanders and, with minor modifications, accepted the advice. The reason for this is the perceived lesson from Vietnam that the political leaders of that era obstinately failed to listen to the advice of the joint chiefs.[199] Thus, when the war unfolded US forces won a spectacular military victory that set the conditions for the American politicians to secure their political goals. Therefore, one can easily discern that the tenor of civil-military relations affected strategic deliberations in a positive manner in 1990-1991. This chapter will review these events to demonstrate that a sound tenor of civil-military relations contributed to positive strategic outcomes in this conflict.

In August 1990, as the Cold War was coming to an end, an unexpected challenge presented itself to the US demanding a response. Iraq, with a military organized along the Soviet model, invaded and overran Kuwait. The purpose of Iraq's invasion was to obtain debt relief and secure the small state's large oil reserves. In the wake of the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, 1981-88, Iraq emerged with crushing debt to its neighbor, Kuwait, and sought to have the liability forgiven. When Kuwait refused, Saddam Hussein moved to take over the smaller emirate to forgive this debt through force, secure the oil, and make Kuwait Iraq's nineteenth province. This gave Iraq power over twenty percent of the Middle East's oil reserves and the fear at the time was that Hussein could continue to move south into Saudi Arabia.[200] This would give Hussein control of half the world's oil and provide Iraq with enormous geostrategic leverage. Iraq's actions demanded a response because of the President and his advisers' belief that Iraq might continue its aggression by invading Saudi Arabia gaining control of the oil and impeding freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, a US vital national interest. At that time the key question for American policymakers was "what could and would the US do to persuade Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait?"[201] Further, did the US have the will to devise a viable policy and effective strategy and act to expel Iraq, particularly in the wake of the Vietnam experience, which still haunted Americans? Despite the recent failure in Vietnam, the US did act decisively to intervene. This case study provides an interesting contrast to the events that would follow over a decade later, in 2003. While the circumstances and political situation were different, the commonalities include the region, states involved, and threat of instability. Thus, these two cases provide an interesting comparison for demonstrating that civil-military relations correlate to policy and strategy outcomes.

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[199] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 52-53, 63, 84, and 117.

[200] Andrew Hardy, Jesse McIntyre, III, and Bill Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," Unpublished Faculty Case Study (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Command and General Staff College, 2016) 1 and 3.

[201] Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, 459-463.

As with the later Iraq case study explored in the next chapter, the examination of the First Gulf War follows each previously postulated variable to evaluate the efficacy of the civil-military and policy-strategy correlation theory. The level of trust or mistrust within this relationship is the first variable. In 1990 there was a positive tenor in the civil-military relations of the George H.W. Bush Administration. The relationship was partially attributable to the efforts of the previous Reagan Administration and the excellent working relationship that manifested early on in the Bush Administration. This latter aspect of this interaction was because most of the leaders in this administration had worked together before and had broad experience in national security. Also, this national security team shared common views on defense and security producing a unity of effort that enhanced trust in the relationship. Therefore, when strategic deliberations began concerning what to do about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, there could be an open dialogue underpinned by trust. This trust made the process of developing political objectives productive and amicable because the political and military leaders involved could weigh options against potential benefits and drawbacks as partners rather than rivals. This trust facilitated the development of the second theoretical variable – clear, attainable political objectives. The sound tenor of this civil-military dialogue, founded on trust, produced a clear, bounded set of mutually agreeable objectives achievable through use of military force.

By 1990 Cold War tensions were relaxing due to the Soviet Union's steady decline and a warming of relations between the US and USSR. Thus, there was hope that the world was entering a future that was more peaceful, prosperous, and stable. At this point, US forces were still organized and equipped for large scale war on the open plains of Europe against the USSR and its satellite states, which made them well-suited for combat on the open desert against Iraq, a Soviet equipped and trained opponent. With the nation poised to reap the post-Cold War peace dividend and focused on European affairs, the US was somewhat surprised by developments in the Middle East. The George H.W. Bush Administration had to consider what a response to the Iraqi invasion should look like. The decision would not take long for, as President Bush noted in an interview soon after the invasion, that "this will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait."[202] Bush believed he had to act to protect commerce flowing in and out of the Persian Gulf and to act against an illegal invasion of a sovereign nation and US partner. Iraq seized Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and within 96 hours the administration had decided on an initial response that included deploying advance military forces to deter further Iraqi designs on Saudi Arabia and a combination of diplomatic and economic pressures to convince Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait. Thus, the initial policy generated by the National Security Council was multi-tiered. First, to apply pressure on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait in order to restore the legitimate government, second, to deter further aggression directed against Saudi Arabia, third, to ensure the stability of the Persian Gulf region, and last, to protect American citizens abroad.[203] To accomplish this, US forces began deploying to Saudi Arabia on 7 August to establish a defense of the kingdom while US diplomats began a blitz at the United Nations and around the world demanding Iraq reverse course. This resulted in the UN ratifying Resolution #660 calling for the "immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait." Within four days the UN passed another Resolution, #661, placing a trade embargo on Iraq.[204] In addition, the US enacted a host of economic sanctions to put pressure on Iraq in an effort to convince Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait. The next question for US leaders was, how long should they wait to

[202] George H.W. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." 5 August 1990, Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed 19 February 2021 at https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110704.
[203] Hardy, McIntyre, and Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 4 and National Security Directive #45. "U.S. Policy in Response to the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." 20 August 1990, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Accessed 19 February 2021 at https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/nsd/nsd45.pdf
[204] UN Security Council, United Nations Security Council Resolution 660, 2932nd Meeting. "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait." Accessed 11 February 2021 at https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/94220?ln=en and United Nations Security Council Resolution 661, 2933rd Meeting. "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait." Accessed 11 February 2021 at https://digitallibrary.un.org/reocrd/94221?ln-en.

see if these measures would work?[205] This problem led to a spirited debate among American civil and military leaders. The discussion among the leaders was civil and productive underpinned by trust because this generation of leaders had learned the value of relationship building from the experience of their predecessors during the Vietnam War.[206]

Civil-military relations had seriously deteriorated during and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. However, by the 1980s a civil-military rapprochement had taken place due to a number of underlying causes. First, the monumental threat of the Soviet Union had united the political and military leaders toward a singular purpose, which was defense of Western interests and deterring Soviet aggression. Second, military leaders worked diligently to produce military excellence within the force that had emerged from Vietnam battered and lacking in confidence. This pursuit of excellence included developing new doctrine focused on the concept of operational art and embodied in the AirLand Battle doctrine published in 1982.[207] Along with this doctrine, military leaders coupled equipment development and a training revolution. Having observed the success of Soviet equipment in the 1973 Yom Kippur War in the Middle East, US military leaders realized that their equipment required modernization. They set about doing this with an aggressive program to develop a new generation of equipment for the Army that became known as the "Big 5". The Air Force and Navy worked diligently to develop stealth and precision weapon technology to facilitate gaining access to remote theaters using resources economically. A new methodology for training also emerged with Army leaders establishing training centers in California (the National Training Center) and Arkansas (the Joint Readiness Training Center) for all forces to rotate through to practice the new doctrinal concepts with the new equipment. The Air Force and Navy established their Red Flag and Top Gun programs in Nevada and California to apply the concepts for greater combined arms integration. Plus, a new Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) was established to train large joint organizations, commanders, and their staffs in applying the operational art in large scale combat operations. Finally, the military education system was completely overhauled to develop the thinking and skills needed to compete on a complex battlefield.[208] Together all this meant that a new generation of politically astute, professionally competent military leaders emerged, led by Colin Powell. These generals and admirals could manage the relations with civilian leaders in a way that allowed them to provide best advice with a credible voice.

The Reagan Administration provided the initial resources for this program and many of the civilian officials like Caspar Weinberger came to their political positions with wide military experience. Further, these political leaders had all previously served in the military and held critical positions in

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[205] National Security Document #26, "U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf." 2 October 1989, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Accessed 19 February 2021 at https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/nsd/nsd26.pdf. NSD#26 outlined the diplomatic, economic, and military measures the US would take in support of UN Resolution #660 and 662. Also, see Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 469-471 and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 7-9.

[206] Powell interview, 10 July 2020.

[207] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 252-252; Scales, *Certain Victory*, 25-27; and Kelly and Brennan, *Alien*, 63.

[208] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 254-255 and Scales, *Certain Victory*, 19-28. The Army's "Big 5" consisted of the following systems: the Apache attack helicopter; the Blackhawk utility helicopter; the Abrams main battle tank; the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle; and the Patriot air defense system. The Air Force and Navy developed such systems as the F117 Stealth fighter and the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) to carry out deep strikes with greater protection and precision. These systems were all integrated to facilitate the ability to decide, detect, and deliver munitions and forces effectively on adversary targets and objectives and represented the key enabling technologies of the AirLand Battle doctrine. The reforms of the military education system included joint professional education as dictated by the Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986, an overhauled non-commissioned officer education system, and the development of officer schools focused on the study and practice of the operational art such as the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, the US Air Force School of Advanced Airpower Studies (now known as the School of Advanced Airpower and Space Studies) at Maxwell Air Force Base, and the Navy's Maritime Advanced Warfighting School at Naval Station Newport.

government involved in the development of national security policy. Thus, these leaders had a firm understanding of military affairs and ably engaged in a dialogue with military leaders focused on the common threat of the USSR. The combination of politically astute military leaders and political leaders with a solid grasp of the use of military force set the conditions for a significant improvement in civil-military relations a decade after Vietnam. These improved relations carried through the 1980s and into the early 1990s with the Bush Administration. Bush, who had served as Reagan's vice president, thus inherited a much improved national civil-military relationship as he took office. Military structure and procurement aligned with the administration's objectives and remained consistent in the transition between the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Therefore, through the experience and maturity of individuals like Cheney and Powell, the national security team supporting the president had an uncanny ability to arrive at sound decisions during particularly challenging times, such as a crisis in the Philippines,[209] the invasion of Panama,[210] and later, the crisis in the Persian Gulf. In November 1989 dissident Filipino officers threatened a coup against the Aquino Administration and Powell deftly navigated the crisis with a bloodless show of force that quelled the coup and propped up the legitimate Filipino government. Later, in December 1989, the US successfully replaced the regime of Manuel Noriega that threatened the security of the canal zone as well as other US interests in Central America.[211] These twin crises facilitated the development of confidence in and among the political and military leaders dealing with national security and President Bush came to trust this team led by Cheney and Powell. Shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the National Security Council debated a number of potential policy and strategy courses and there was an array of opinions about what to do. Though there was a vigorous debate, it never became heated, and a consensus was reached among the members of the Council to help the president make decisions.[212] This shared trust enabled the group to overcome frictions and disagreements to reach the needed consensus, and it facilitated the development of policy and strategy that conformed to the kind of war the leaders were embarking upon. The trust among the political and military members of the National Security Council helped bring about the policy and strategy that delivered victory in the Persian Gulf War.

The Bush Administration included a plethora of outstanding politicians, as well as general and flag officers who would lead US forces during the crisis in the Persian Gulf in 1990. Starting at the top, President Bush had experience during multiple crises in the Reagan Administration, as a former diplomat, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and he was a World War II veteran. Already as president, Bush had directed an American military intervention in Panama to secure the canal zone and remove President Noriega from power. Dick Cheney, the Secretary of Defense, had served in Congress as the Republican minority whip and was a former White House chief of staff. Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, was a retired Air Force lieutenant general, a former deputy National Security Adviser, and military assistant to President Gerald Ford. Arguably, the critical player, was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell. A Vietnam veteran, Powell was an experienced military leader who had the rare combination of military competence and political acumen derived from a career that offered unique opportunities and employment in both military and political spheres.[213] This would prove beneficial as the civilian and military players entered strategic deliberations to determine the policy and strategy to deal with the situation in the Gulf. Finally, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of Central Command and also a Vietnam veteran, was a military leader of wide experience and a hard driving commander. The combination of this team and its supporting cast's broad experience, their understanding of the use of force, and ability to work together to articulate policy and strategy would

[209] *Ibid*., 120-128.

[210] *Ibid*., see Chapters 15 and 16 for a synopsis of the crisis in Panama during the Bush Administration.

[211] Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, 422-434 and 440-444.

[212] Powell interview, 10 July 2020.

[213] Powell and Perisco, *My American Journey*, see chapters 9-12 in which Powell describes his varied education and on-the-job experiences in Washington that developed his unique political acumen. General Powell also described his unusual career path in the interview provided to the author on 10 July 2020.

produce one of the few examples of strategic success following the Vietnam War. This achievement derived from mutual trust developed through candid exchange of ideas and respectful dialogue characterized by "total openness." As General Powell would later recall, the discourse achieved by this team was the standard and "I was in the DoD (Department of Defense) at a senior level at a time when we were allowed to speak openly." The sound state of civil-military relations in the early 1990s was due to a solid relationship that facilitated this candor and Powell summed it up simply as, "great."[214]

Making the decision for the initial response to the invasion of Kuwait was fairly straightforward and linked to the important national interest of maintaining the free flow of commerce in the Persian Gulf region. On 5 August 1990 President Bush stated four clear political objectives that together would constitute the policy of the United States in response to the crisis embodied in National Security Document #45.[215] These were (1) a demand for the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait; (2) restoration of Kuwait's government; (3) security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region; and (4) the safety and protection of American lives abroad.[216] The military would support this policy by rapidly deploying troops to defend Saudi Arabia in conjunction with the diplomatic pressure and sanctions. However, the question of what to do next was the difficult decision that administration officials would have to grapple with in the waning months of 1990. From August through October 1990 the US managed to deploy over 200,000 troops to Saudi Arabia to defend the kingdom. When this deployment, as part of Operation DESERT SHIELD, was complete General Schwarzkopf believed he had enough troops on hand to conduct a credible defense. But, for how long? Since the American build up began, the Iraqis had shown no inclination to move south into Saudi Arabia. Further, they had no intention of leaving Kuwait as the Iraqi Army was preparing defensive positions and stripping Kuwait of anything of value. Thus, the situation in the Persian Gulf was stalemated with the Iraqis and Americans staring at each other down across the Kuwaiti border. It is against this backdrop that the strategic deliberations of the Bush Administration began in earnest.

The National Security Council discussed what to do next in September and October 1990, but made little progress. Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, was unable to keep the Council focused on a clear agenda and so the discussions had not yet determined a recommended policy for implementation after the defense was set to deter the Iraqis from moving south into Saudi Arabia.[217] The team was struggling with the next step, which consisted of three possible courses of action. The first was that the US, with a growing coalition of partner nations, could wait to let the economic sanctions take their full effect as a means to convince Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. Second, the US could deploy more forces over the course of two additional months in order to take the offensive when this capability was fully deployed. Last, the US and its partners could set a precise moment for the Iraqis to withdraw after a reasonable amount of time to allow sanctions to take hold. The amount of time some believed was needed for sanctions to have their effect was from twelve to eighteen months. Then, if the Iraqis failed to retreat, the coalition could launch an offensive operation to expel them from Kuwait. Though all these courses of action were reasonable, the discussions failed to reach a consensus on the details for a recommendation to the President.

Bush was becoming impatient. So, at this point, General Powell, a former National Security Adviser himself, interjected to provide the strategic deliberations the focus they needed.[218] Bush was becoming somewhat agitated at the slow pace of the deliberations and was anxious for a recommendation so that he could communicate US policy to a wide audience. The president was leaning toward pushing Iraq out of Kuwait by force at the earliest possible moment. Powell expressed preference for giving time for sanctions to work before committing to an offensive. Other members of the council were lining up on

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[214] Powell interview, 10 July 2020.

[215] National Security Directive #45. "U.S. Policy in Response to the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." 20 August 1990,

[216] Hardy, McIntyre, and Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 4.

[217] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 286.

[218] *Ibid*., 283-286 and Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 478.

one side or the other in the discussions. General Powell and Secretary of Defense Cheney at one point in October, realized that they needed to put more details on these courses of action and present them to the president. One of the critical details that Powell noted was that each course of action required a clear political objective. Then, each required a timeline and advantages and disadvantages of each so that the president, as the decision-maker, could weigh them logically. In late October the National Security Council, minus Secretary of State James A. Baker, met in the Oval Office to discuss the recommendations.[219]

Throughout the process of strategic deliberations, the civilian administration controlled the civil-military relationship, ably and assertively, assisted by Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf. As Secretary of Defense, Cheney noted early on in his relationship with Powell that a "hallmark of his [Cheney's] Pentagon would be increased civilian control" to which "Powell made no argument."[220]

At that time, the National Security Council considered three courses of action with reference to the question as to how to compel Saddam Hussein's army to leave Kuwait. Though the actors lined up in support of the various courses of action, there was not a great degree of preference divergence. The reason for this is that the real consideration was not if force should be used if Saddam refused to withdraw, but how much time to allow before going forward with the use of force. Each course of action proposed that if the Iraqi dictator did not leave voluntarily, then the coalition would have to intervene to drive him out. In essence, the choices were to either (1), allow sanctions and diplomacy to work in an open-ended manner (2) drive Saddam out immediately when sufficient offensive combat power was on hand, or (3) set a hard deadline that would allow some time for sanctions to work. Since all three courses of action focus on the element of timing before using force, there was little in the form of preference divergence separating the political and military leaders. One way or the other, any chosen course of action reserved the right to use force to expel the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. During the deliberations leading up to Operation DESERT STORM there was strong civilian dominance in the relationship with the military leaders. Yet, with a common vision of the need to confront Iraqi aggression there was a low level of disagreement among these leaders.[221] This agreement solidified trust between the political and military leaders leading to the development of a sound tenor of civil-military relations leading to a decision-making process of good quality.

President Bush made the decision for war in early November 1990. As deliberations continued, the civilian and military leaders were all in agreement about the type of war required to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. Such a conflict would require taking conventional military action using heavy armor, offensive airpower, large quantities of artillery, and unfettered access to the maritime lines of communication to support a massive force. Thus, in addition to the 250,000 personnel already in Saudi Arabia to defend the kingdom, another 200,000 were required to provide the ability to take the offensive with land, air, and maritime forces.[222] Given the US force structure and training at that time this was achievable. The next question to consider was, what was the political objective?

General Powell was adamant that a clear statement of attainable political goals was necessary before any decision for war. The debate as to that objective revolved around whether the US should simply conform the objectives to the UN resolution of a limited war to re-establish Kuwait's autonomy, or seek something more, such as the complete ouster of Saddam Hussein as the leader of Iraq? Such an objective would, it was believed by some, assure future stability in the Persian Gulf region.[223] As these deliberations proceeded, the civilian and military leaders were able to crystallize exactly what they believed was achievable as political objectives with available means. Though it was thought that the

[219] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 287-298 and Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 478-480.

[220] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 81-82 and Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 405-406. General Powell confirms this in his memoir and alludes to this in the interview I conducted with him on 10 July 2020.

[221] Zegorcheva, "Soldiers, Statesmen, and Strategy," 21 and 132-139.

[222] Richard M. Swain, *Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Command and General Staff College Press, 1994) 3 and Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 488-489.

[223] *Ibid*., 490.

ousting of Saddam Hussein could lead to greater stability in the region, focusing upon Hussein's removal could fracture the coalition, which included regional partners, making it difficult to carry out any offensive.[224] Further, toppling Hussein would cause grave political issues in that the overthrow of his government would mean that the US and coalition would then have to govern the dismembered country until another legitimate government could replace the previous regime. Finally, another element that stood against such a course was that no UN resolution had specified the removal of Hussein or the occupation of Iraq. Therefore, the civil-military actors within the Bush Administration discarded the option of regime change from the discussion of political objectives.[225] The political objectives that were constructed in accordance with the intent of the UN resolutions, to liberate Kuwait and restore its legitimate government back into power. This would leave Iraq intact with regional military power, but this was seen as a positive counterbalance to Iran in the region.[226] Subsequently, the President set the political objectives, made the decision for war, then, went public in clearly and unambiguously communicating the conflict goals to the American people, the coalition aligned against Iraq, and the rest of the world.[227] The Bush Administration also made a strong statement of these political objectives and how they would be achieved upon publication of National Security Document #54. This document codified the President's announcements.[228]

   It is clear from reviewing the dynamics of the strategic deliberations that within the context of the first theoretical variable there was a high degree of trust in the civil-military relations of the Bush Administration. In support of this argument, Richard Kohn points out that the key element of civil-military relations is "personal relationships" that grow through trust among the actors.[229] In the case of the Persian Gulf War strategic deliberations, there was a high degree of trust among the actors who had developed strong personal relationships. Author Bob Woodward, a journalist and longtime chronicler of presidential politics, notes that the National Security Council deliberations during the Bush Administration were highly cooperative and amiable, to the point that sometimes the meetings went off-course, frustrating some participants who wanted focused agendas to produce clear decisions.[230]

   The second variable is analyzing the conflict, available resources and forces, in order to articulate clear and attainable political objectives. In the case of the Persian Gulf War the leaders constructed a set of political objectives with precision based upon the specific situation, type of conflict, and capabilities of the US. The most important consideration in civil-military relations for General Powell was, if force was to be used, to determine the political objective, which became embodied in the Powell Doctrine.[231] In

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[224] Hardy, McIntyre, and Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 5. The coalition included the United States, several European members such as the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, and a wide range of states from the Middle East including Turkey and the Arab states Egypt, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Further, the states of Israel and the USSR agreed to remain on the sidelines, which enabled the coalition to proceed with offensive plans without thorny political difficulty, though in Israel's case this required delicate diplomacy. Keeping this disparate coalition together provide a monumental task for US diplomats and military leaders.

[225] Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 490 and Stoker, *Why America Loses Wars*, 192-`98.

[226] Hardy, McIntyre, and Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 5; Woodward, *The Commanders*, 304-307; and Stoker, *Why America Loses Wars*, 192-198.

[227] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 307 and 330-332.

[228] National Security Directive #54. "Responding to Iraqi Aggression in the Gulf." 15 January 1991, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Accessed 19 February 2021 at https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/nsd/nsd54.pdf.

[229] Richard Kohn, "Building Trust: Civil-Military Behaviors for Effective National Security," in *American Civil Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, Suzanne Nielsen and Don M. Snider, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 265.

[230] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 286.

[231] Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 464-465. In my interview with General Powell he stated that "if ultimately, the use of force becomes necessary, then figure out what your objective is by the use of force." This is a critical element of his doctrine, which he emphasized to connect strategic ends to the decision to use force. Failure

August, the president laid out the four political objectives in a clear statement. At this early stage only two were feasible. These were the security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf region and the safety and protection of Americans abroad. They became the focus of US efforts and resulted in a deployment of American force postured for the defense of Saudi Arabia and security of American citizens. However, as August progressed into November and the deployment of defensive forces was nearing a conclusion, the administration had to consider what should come next.

The other two objectives laid out by the president demanding the "immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait" and "restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government." These goals were not nearing fulfillment in November. Iraqi forces were well-ensconced in Kuwait with no intention of leaving. To achieve these political objectives would require another round of decisions, refinement of the objectives, and identification of the requirements and resources needed to secure the political objectives. Thus, deliberations that started in August evolved into discussions about subsequent actions. Diplomatic and economic actions taken against Iraq had not worked so far. Further, the forces deployed to Saudi Arabia were insufficient to expel the Iraqi Army from Kuwait.[232] So, deliberations turned to how to achieve these political objectives. The discussions focused on three courses of action, all of which revolved on the timing of the use of force. Meanwhile, the Secretary of State James Baker worked the UN and diplomatic circuit to secure the UN authorization for the use of force to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait and solidifying the international and regional partners in the coalition needed to isolate Iraq. Once these were secured, the president was able to articulate refined political objectives that nested with the UN Resolution #678 calling for the liberation of Kuwait and restoration of its government by the use of force if necessary. On 8 November the president announced that the US would now begin building the capability to take the offensive to force Iraqi forces out of Kuwait to secure those political objectives and this was later codified in National Security Document #54.[233] For the preparation of this latter policy document, Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf provided the options to support the securing of the political objectives, which they delivered.[234] Thus, in marked contrast to what would happen in 2003, the national security team – which included the National Security Council, joint chiefs, and regional combatant commander – worked together in a partnership to draft mutually agreed upon political objectives that were clear, appropriate to the kind of conflict, and attainable with available resources. The outcome was realized in March 1991 when the war ended with the political objectives secured. This seems to validate the efficacy of the civil-military relations and their ability to develop sound policy and strategy, but there are still two other variables to consider.

The next variable is the degree of understanding those involved in formulating military strategy have for the use of force to attain political objectives. It is expected that military leaders should have a complete understanding of the use of force and employment of forces. Further, their professional education includes instruction at the strategic level of war such as how the use of force should link to political objectives. This is mandated by Goldwater-Nichols through legislated joint professional military education. Further, the joint staff, working for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, continuously updates curriculum objectives and requirements necessary to fulfill this law.[235] American political

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to identify a clear objective should eliminate consideration of the use of force, which would represent a waste of lives and resources to no purpose. Powell was adamant about this point in his interview conducted on 10 July 2020.

[232] Schwarzkopf and Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 359-260.

[233] United Nations Security Council Resolution 678, 2963rd Meeting. "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait." Accessed 11 February 2021 at https://digitallibrary.un.org/reocrd/102245?ln-en; National Security Directive #54. "Responding to Iraqi Aggression in the Gulf." 15 January 1991; and Swain, *Lucky War*, 3.

[234] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 304-305.

[235] US Congress, "Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986," Section 663. Joint strategic education begins at the intermediate level of an officer's career, meaning when he or she is a major. It continues as they progress to the senior levels of leadership at the war colleges and beyond in the senior education programs for general officers. CJCS Instruction 1800.01F, Appendix A to Enclosure A, "The Joint Learning Areas," 15 May 2020. This Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff instructional memo is updated frequently and governs the areas of joint education emphasized in the staff and war colleges.

leaders however, may or may not share this understanding. Optimally, senior political leaders, like the president or secretary of state, will have either practical or academic experience in national security matters. In the case of the Persian Gulf War, many of the political leaders had a solid background in national security either in uniform, politics, or both. President Bush had a wealth of strategic experience along with many of the leaders on his national security team. In addition, the Bush Administration's military leaders were led by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, an astute professional with uncommon political acumen. Although President Bush leaned heavily toward the use of force in the Gulf from the beginning, he exhibited patience by listening to his national security team. At the same time, he demanded feasible courses of action on the use of force to secure the political objectives. When he appeared to get ahead of himself with public pronouncements, as with his "line in the sand" speech,[236] Bush had the humility to step back when his advisers, like his Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, suggested that he not become too aggressive.[237]

As the crisis in the Gulf continued and the defensive forces were set in Saudi Arabia, the president looked for a faster way to convince Saddam to leave Kuwait rather than diplomacy and sanctions. Thus, he asked for military options to use force. Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf presented the President and the National Security Council with the revised options including forces required, time, and cost. Their assessment called for an additional US Army corps of 200,000 troops with support personnel consisting of heavy armor and mechanized forces to expel the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Further, an offensive campaign would require a Marine Expeditionary Force with supporting maritime assets for amphibious operations. Deploying such a force from Europe and the continental United States would require at least two more months and a shift in transportation resources to execute the movement. Based upon their assessment he committed to use force with a curt statement saying, "okay, do it."[238] In addition to deciding to use force, President Bush provided what the military advisers had said was necessary for success, the forces, time, and resources. In Powell's words, the president provided "decisive force, enough to get the job done,"[239] and the forces, under Schwarzkopf's command, accomplished the mission. American political leaders had been well supported with astute advice from their military leaders, and consequently understood the use of force, as well as its potential cost. Huntington argues that political leaders should provide their military leaders with a defined space of professional expertise, which implies they must trust the advice of the military advisers and Bush Administration officials demonstrated that they subscribed to this notion. Had the political leaders doubted or refused approval of all the expressed needs of the military leaders or attempted an offensive without adequate resources, the results might have been different from the decisive defeat of the Iraqi Army in February 1991. The common trust and understanding between the political and military leaders allowed the decision-makers to arrive at a properly resourced strategy that was able to secure the political objectives. Thus, the evidence reveals that the civil-military leaders appreciated how the use of force could be directed toward political objectives during the Persian Gulf War.

The final variable concerns the ability to translate battlefield success into strategic achievement of the assigned political objectives. In this regard, the joint force campaign known as Operation DESERT STORM was successful beyond all expectations. Before the war the Iraqi army was thought to be a formidable opponent. It was large, well-equipped, and experienced following the long Iran-Iraq War that

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[236] George H.W. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." 5 August 1990, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed 19 February 2021 at https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110704. In this exchange with reporters at the White House, made three days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President Bush categorically stated that Iraq would advance no further when he said that the border with Saudi Arabia represented "a line in the sand" that Saddam Hussein must not cross or risk bringing on a war with the United States. These remarks seemed to commit the US to the defense of Saudi Arabia and several members of the National Security Council, including General Powell, were uncomfortable with this statement.

[237] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 241-245, and 291; Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 462-463 and 469-471; and Schwarzkopf and Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 298-302 and 309-310.

[238] *Ibid*., 487-489 and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 306.

[239] Powell interview, 10 July 2020.

ended in 1989. Further, Iraq had a sizeable air force and chemical weapons that it had used in offensive operations against the Iranians.[240] Because of this, many leaders believed that the war could become a bloodbath and the negative legacy of Vietnam would continue to hang over the US military.[241] So, when President Bush made the decision for war there were no guarantees of assured victory. Yet his advisers had provided the needed information to make an informed decision about going to war and then the president ensured the recommended resources were on hand to execute the campaign. Operation DESERT STORM began on 17 January 1991 with an air campaign designed to paralyze Iraqi command and control systems, isolate Iraqi forces in Kuwait, cut lines of communication and logistic support, and cause attrition among the frontline Iraqi units. This air operation was followed by a ground campaign a month later designed to sweep into the Iraqi desert to cut off Iraqi forces in Kuwait from the elite Republican Guard in order to defeat them separately and in detail.[242] Operation DESERT STORM was designed to secure the political objectives to expel Iraq from Kuwait, restore the legitimate government of Kuwait, and maintain the security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf region.

The air war began on 17 January 1991 and the dominating performance of the air component, highlighted by the use of precision weaponry, provided the coalition a distinct advantage prior to the land forces moving into Iraq and Kuwait. The ground phase began on 24 February 1991 and gained spectacular results far ahead of the planned timetable. Within 100 hours US forces, leading a coalition of multinational partners, moved into Iraq and Kuwait and "utterly crushed the Iraqi military machine."[243] In one "Great Wheel"[244] the coalition forces drove everything before them and successfully split the Iraqi forces. As they isolated the Iraqi army, the various coalition corps then defeated the Iraqi regular army in Kuwait and the Republican Guard Corps in Iraq. Iraqi forces streamed from Kuwait to avoid getting trapped as coalition forces wheeled behind them.[245] On 1 March 1991, as the destruction of the Iraqi army was in progress, the senior leaders of the US civil-military team met to decide the next step. By 27 February the flight and destruction of the Iraqi forces was turning into a slaughter and 24-hour news outlets were highlighting this with stories like that of the route known as the "Highway of Death." With such scenes appearing on the news and the political objectives seemingly in hand, General Powell recommended to the president that the fighting cease on 1 March. President Bush agreed and the war ended with a cease fire on that day 100 hours after the ground assault began.[246]

Indeed, the military victory was won, and two of the three political objectives were secured. Kuwait was now liberated and the Kuwaiti Emir was already moving to reinstall his government to power in the liberated capital. The tremendous military victory had plainly secured these two objectives. The other objective, to secure Saudi Arabia and ensure the future stability of the kingdom and the entire Gulf region was only partially secured.[247] Saudi Arabia was now protected in terms of the removal of the immediate threat, but stability was not assured. For a stable future in the region the US would need to use the leverage of the military victory at the negotiating table to force the Iraqis to agree to establishing a more secure environment in the Gulf. In this, the US failed to fully secure the political objective. Rather than force Iraq to formally surrender or sign a binding peace treaty laying out the auspices of what security and stability in the Gulf would mean, the US instead declared a cease fire followed by a military parley "limited to military matters" between General Schwarzkopf and an Iraqi military leader.[248]

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[240] Scales, *Certain Victory*, 116-118 and Hardy, McIntyre, and Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 5-6.

[241] Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 478-480 and 493 and Schwarzkopf and Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 379-382, 384-385, and 408.

[242] Scales, *Certain Victory*, 145-149 and Hardy, McIntyre, Knight, "Desert Shield/Desert Storm Case Study," 9-10.

[243] Scales, *Certain Victory*, 316.

[244] *Ibid.*, 108. Additionally, Chapter 5 of this book is titled "The Great Wheel."

[245] *Ibid.*, 314-316.

[246] Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 519-522.

[247] J. Travis Moger, "The Gulf War at 30," Army History (Winter 2021), 23.

[248] Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 519-522 and Schwarzkopf and Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 480. Among the military matters discussed was Iraq's request to use helicopters in the aftermath of hostilities.

Therefore, the US fumbled this political objective because it did not reach a durable political settlement specifying the new security arrangements Iraq must accept following the military victory.[249] While the US may not have fully secured the last political objective, the fact remains that it did win a thorough military victory that drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and restored its government, which remains intact today. Operational excellence had been connected to strategy to fulfill US political objectives.

The First Gulf War, 1991, when compared to the four variables, provides evidence that the tenor of civil-military relations correlates to the outcome of implemented strategy. (See Table 6.1) The tenor of relations in 1991 was based upon a solid working partnership with civil debate underpinned by trust among the senior leaders. In 1991 the civil-military leaders engaged in measured strategic deliberations that produced clear, attainable objectives. Also, in 1991 civilian leaders, with the assistance of their military leaders, developed a clear appreciation of the capabilities and limitations of the use of force and employing forces. Finally, the political and military leaders did a far more competent job in translating battlefield success into secured political objectives.

Conflict/Variables	Persian Gulf War, 1991
Trust	Excellent, Trust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Political objectives achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Battlefield success partially translated into victory*
Strategic Outcome	Secured most political objectives

Table 6.1. Persian Gulf War of 1991 summarized by the variables.
*Though military victory was achieved, the success was fumbled because there was not a negotiated settlement.

Based upon these observations of the four variables we can make a preliminary conclusion that the civil-military and policy-strategy corollary theory is valid. But, before drawing such a definitive conclusion, we need to take a look at another case study to test the theory. In the next chapter, we will examine a very different campaign, the Iraq War of 2003, along with the strategic deliberations that preceded that conflict. This case provides an interesting contrast and additional evidence to validate the civil-military and policy-strategy relationship theory.

Schwarzkopf, unfortunately, acceded to this request and the Iraqi military proceeded to use attack helicopters to suppress uprisings among the Shiite and Kurdish populations in the country.
[249] Stoker, *Why America Loses Wars*, 199-202.

Chapter 7

Planning for Iraq, 2003

The events surrounding the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 demonstrates why the tenor of civil-military relations is so critical to the generation of policy and strategy. The poor tenor of civil-military relations between military and political leaders during planning for Iraq in the early 2000s affected strategic deliberations in a negative manner producing correspondingly poor policy and strategy as exhibited by the common variables. This can be discerned through a systematic examination of the war in Iraq known as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF).

George W. Bush became president on 20 January 2001. Among the factors that delivered the election in his favor was the public's weariness with the continued use of force to reshape the internal institutions of other countries. President Bush had campaigned with a promise to put an end to "nation-building," and this resonated with the American public. Additionally, Bush seemed friendly to the military as he promised to rebuild it for the 21st century.[250] The military had had a very contentious relationship with the Clinton Administration in large part due to disputes over policy, such as the fight over gays in the military, the use of force in places like the Balkans, and a stagnating defense budget. Therefore, the joint military leadership welcomed the change of administration. It appeared to military leaders that the promised changes would bode well for the future of the force, which had just undergone a decade of shrinking budgets, force cuts, and heightened operational tempo. To implement the changes discussed on the campaign trail, Bush chose Donald Rumsfeld as his Secretary of Defense. This was considered an inspired choice at the time. Rumsfeld had served as secretary of defense previously, was a former congressman, and was a senior executive in the defense industry prior to taking the reins at the Pentagon in 2001.[251] However, the military's optimism for the future was quickly disabused when Rumsfeld took charge as his forceful personality became manifest in his effort to tighten civilian control of the military. Rumsfeld believed that civilian control had seriously eroded during the Clinton Administration and he was determined to reassert that control. Rumsfeld believed that the military successfully shirked or obstructed Clinton Administration initiatives and he aimed to put a halt to such insubordinate behavior.[252] Further, he introduced a program to transform the military with radical new ideas like reducing the size of the conventional forces while expanding the size of special operations forces to increase its effectiveness in the new century.[253] Rumsfeld's actions set the negative tone for the American civil-military relationship and, in so doing, established a poor tenor that had harmful effects upon policy and strategic planning over the course of the George W. Bush Administration's tenure in office.

The first variable, the level of trust or mistrust in the civil-military relationship, manifested within the first year of Bush's tenure as president. A series of incidents took place that rapidly destroyed any sense of confidence between the administration, particularly Secretary Rumsfeld, and military leaders. The new Secretary had a reputation for blunt language and bold action, combined with a penchant to force his will upon organizations and individuals. Subsequent events proved this perception of Rumsfeld's

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[250] The joint force anxiously awaited the arrival of the Bush Administration. After a decade of budget cuts and a difficult relationship with the Clinton Administration, joint military leaders looked forward to better relations and increased funding to meet perceived 21st century challenges.

[251] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 46-47 and General(R) John W. Nicholson, Jr. Interview, former strategist for General Eric Shinseki July 2001 – July 2002 and military aide to the Secretary of the Army, July 2002 – July 2003, conducted 10 June 2020. Hereafter cited as Nicholson interview. General Nicholson noted this optimism in the Pentagon as the Bush Administration prepared to take charge in 2001.

[252] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 47.

[253] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 47 and 63-66 and Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 22-24.

leadership style as clashes over force transformation, defense acquisitions, budget priorities, and military missions fractured civil-military relations.

A military directed "transformation" was already in progress when Rumsfeld took over at the Department of Defense in 2001. For example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had issued *Joint Vision 2020* in 2000 following the lead of the Army and Air Force, which had promulgated *Army Vision* and *Global Engagement* previously. These documents recognized that the operating environment was rapidly changing in the post-Cold War world and that the services needed to adapt to the new conditions. Specifically, the joint and service statements ushered in a cultural shift in thinking about warfare. Previous approaches and doctrine were decidedly conventional in nature. All of these statements recognized that there was a "full spectrum" of potential forms of war and the services needed to transform to meet the wide array of threats. [254] The reason the Army was working toward transforming itself to confront the challenge of war in the 21st century was that General Eric Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, believed that "the drawdown of the 90s had lacked a coherent vision." This reduction, intended to reap the post-Cold War peace dividend, resulted in haphazard cuts to force structure and the lack of a transformative idea. The Army and all the services were poorly positioned to confront the challenges of war in the new century. Upon assuming office Shinseki was determined to pull the Army into the 21st century and to naysayers he would say, "you may not like change, but you'll like irrelevance even less." [255] Similarly, the Air Force issued its own statement of how it would transform to meet the security issues of a new century well before Rumsfeld took over as Secretary of Defense. As early as 1997 the Air Force began focusing upon establishing an expeditionary capability to contend with "unpredictable opponents" rather than the Cold War priority of "forward-basing" to meet the Soviet threat. [256] Thus, when the Bush Administration took the reins, the services were already working on changing direction entering the new century and transforming themselves.

Though the services were leaning forward to take a new approach to warfighting to meet the needs of the 21st century, Secretary Rumsfeld believed that this transformation was not moving quickly enough and that the services were still clinging to old approaches and technologies. This clashed with the leaders of the services unexpectedly raising tension and suspicion between the secretary and military. The first clash between the secretary and the military came with the issuance of the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Before the document was published the Secretary floated the idea of cutting the Army to eight divisions and reorienting the Navy toward the littorals versus the open ocean by suggesting it cut two carrier battle groups so that it could focus on the development of the new littoral combat ships. The Army and Navy successfully argued for the retention of their forces at current levels because these services were stretched from multiple, worldwide missions during the 1990s and this continued into the new century. Therefore, the Congress re-authorized the previous force structure. [257] Losing these battles with the Army and Navy made Rumsfeld "furious" and civil-military relations began to decline. [258]

The next clash between the administration and the services resulted from the cancellation of the Army's Crusader howitzer program and the attempt to cancel the acquisition of the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. These incidents exemplify rising tensions among civil and military leaders early in the Bush Administration. The Army was seeking to upgrade its cannon artillery, which was forty years old by 2000. The material solution offered was the 100-ton Crusader 155mm self-propelled howitzer. Such a weapon was antithetical to Rumsfeld's conception of the future force because its weight precluded

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[254] Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2000), 3-4; Department of the Army, *The Army Vision: Soldiers on Point for the Nation, Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1999), 1-2; and Department of the Air Force, *Global Engagement: A Vision of the 21st Century Air Force* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1997), 4-5.
[255] Nicholson interview, conducted 10 June 2020.
[256] Department of the Air Force, *Global Engagement*, 4.
[257] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 64-65 and U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 2001* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2001), 22-23.
[258] Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020.

rapid deployment to a crisis region of the world. According to Rumsfeld, the military should have expeditionary characteristics in order to rapidly deploy to crisis situations. Therefore, Rumsfeld "abruptly cancelled the project in 2002," and set off a clash between the Army and Secretary of Defense.[259] A casualty of this incident was Secretary of the Army Thomas White, a retired brigadier, who attempted to side-step the Secretary of Defense to keep the project alive. This had the effect of setting the relationship between Rumsfeld and the Army – in particular the Army Chief of Staff Shinseki – on edge for the coming years and made "it clear that dissent would not be tolerated."[260]

The other battle ensued when Rumsfeld attempted a similar effort to cancel the V-22 Osprey aircraft. This Marine Corps program had a long record of cost overruns and failed milestone tests. The V-22 was considerably late in its acquisition and delivery schedule making the viability of the system an open question. However, the Marines successfully lobbied Congress for retention of the troubled program much to Rumsfeld's chagrin. This clash placed Marine leaders in a difficult position similar to the experience of the Army.[261]

These incidents telegraphed to all the services that their prized programs were all under scrutiny and injected a strong current of mistrust between the secretary's office and military leaders. This mistrust began to weaken the tenor of relations and would have a negative effect on the effort to plan and build strategy for the upcoming challenge in Iraq.[262]

Less than eight months after he was inaugurated, President Bush was confronted by the horrific events of 9/11. In response, by November of the same year US forces had driven the Taliban, which had harbored Al-Qaeda, from power in Afghanistan and was actively pursuing terrorists worldwide. Though it is difficult to pinpoint when the Bush Administration decided to intervene in Iraq, it is clear that 9/11 provided a pretext to begin planning for the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. As early as 15 September 2001 the National Security Council began discussing the possibility of attacking Iraq based upon the dubious assertion by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz that Iraq was a state sponsor of Al-Qaeda terror activities.[263] By determining to attack Iraq, the US was implying that Saddam's regime was connected to and supported terrorism. Further, its suspected possession of weapons of mass destruction could find their way into the hands of terrorist groups. Thus, the US needed to act in this case to prevent other 9/11s, or so the logic went.[264]

The decision to use force requires political leaders to articulate clear, attainable political objectives and this is the second variable. It is a necessary precursor to the development of strategy to secure the objectives. The unexpected attacks of 9/11 provided little time to think about desired political objectives vis-a-vis Afghanistan before launching the military campaign. This was not the case when considering the subsequent intervention in Iraq, as the Bush Administration had several months to develop and refine the political objectives.

Shortly after the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the United States shifted its sights toward Iraq. Military commands were alerted almost immediately after 9/11 to prepare for operations in Iraq, though official notification came later.[265] Formal planning for OIF began when Rumsfeld, issued an

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[259] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 133-134. Realizing that the Crusader's weight – which included the ammunition carrier – was an aspect that could derail the program, General Shinseki mandated that the acquisition leaders working with industry drop the weight by half to make the system more palatable to the administration. A little-known fact is that General Shinseki and Secretary White cancelled or restructured twenty-four acquisition programs in accordance with the *Army Vision*. The Crusader system, likewise went through a rigorous review before General Shinseki and Secretary White recommended its approval. Information from Nicholson interview.
[260] Patrick J. Haney, "Foreign-Policy Advising: Models and Mysteries from the Bush Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 35, No. 2 (June 2005), 296.
[261] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 65-66.
[262] Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020.
[263] Woodward, *Bush at War*, 74-85.
[264] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 65.
[265] Interview with Colonel(R) Kevin Benson, former Chief of Plans, 3rd US Army conducted 3 June 2020. Hereafter cited as Benson interview.

order on 27 November 2001 to the Commander, Central Command (CENTCOM), General Tommy Franks. Rumsfeld instructed Franks to begin development of courses of action for an invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The stated purpose of an attack – the political objectives – was two-fold. First, the United States wanted President Saddam Hussein removed from power in Iraq, along with the Ba'ath Party, which Hussein controlled. Second, the United States believed that Hussein was attempting to revitalize his nuclear program and the US wanted to prevent this from coming to pass. Hussein had a long history of antagonism with the United States dating back to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990, which the last chapter chronicled in some depth. A large coalition led by the United States operating under United Nations resolutions expelled Iraq from Kuwait in the First Gulf War. This confrontation destroyed much of the Iraqi army, but left Hussein in charge of Iraq, albeit under heavy international restrictions. The reader will recall from the last chapter that some officials in the George H.W. Bush Administration argued for Hussein's removal following the Gulf War of 1991. Throughout the rest of the 1990s Hussein continued to agitate his neighbors, while severely oppressing ethnic and religious groups within his country. Further, he was suspected of having revitalized his weapons of mass destruction programs. By 2001 it was assessed by some experts that the only course of action left to the United States to bring stability to the Gulf region was regime change.[266] These were the reasons identified by the Administration for intervening in Iraq. The discursive strategic question was, could the *use of force*, requiring adequate *forces*, actually secure the political objectives?

Political leaders should have a clear understanding, informed by the advice of their military advisers, of how to use force to secure political objectives and how to employ forces. This advice should include the pros and cons of using force, as well as the constraints and restraints involved in the decision to use force. Political leaders rely on their senior military advisers to develop this understanding. This is the important third variable of the theory. The use of force is not always appropriate, nor desired, to secure all political objectives. Where it is appropriate, political leaders must direct the use of force judiciously, again with the advice of military leaders factoring into the decision. Further, the size and type of forces is critical to winning military victory and securing the gains that military forces accrue through operations and campaigns. While political leaders have the prerogative to decide on the use of force and levels, as well as composition of forces in spite of military advice, it is never a good idea to dismiss or ignore that advice. They do so at their peril and this exacerbates mistrust between political and military leaders. This is another factor that tends to produce poor tenor in civil-military relations. The contentious planning effort for Iraq was a symptom of the poor tenor of civil-military relations in the Bush Administration. Dismissing the recommendations of the senior military advisers helped lead to poor strategic outcomes in 2003.

When Secretary Rumsfeld gave the order to begin planning, CENTCOM already had an existent operation plan (OPLAN). OPLAN 1003 was developed in 1998 as a blueprint for an offensive into Iraq.[267] General Franks immediately reviewed the plan with his staff and assessed it as obsolete, mainly because it did not consider current force dispositions and advances in precision weapon technology. Within a couple of weeks his staff refined the standing plan and presented it to the national command authority – consisting of the President, Secretary of Defense, and principal members of the national security council – for consideration.[268]

By 28 December 2001 Franks was ready to brief his commander's concept to President Bush at his Texas ranch.[269] Franks had commanded CENTCOM for about eighteen months when he was summoned to Crawford, Texas for this briefing. In 36 years of service, he had fought in combat in

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[266] Kenneth Pollack, "Next Stop Baghdad," *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2002), www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57805/kenneth-m-pollack/next-stop-baghdad. (Accessed 21 January 2020).

[267] Nora Bensahel, et al., *After Saddam: Pre-war Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 2008), 6.

[268] Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 315.

[269] *Ibid*., 345-346.

Vietnam and commanded field artillery units at every level before promotion to flag officer[270] rank and service in the First Gulf War. Most recently, forces under his command launched OEF in Afghanistan, toppling the Taliban in a spectacular campaign during the fall of 2001. On this day in late December, the experienced and battle-hardened Franks would lay out the basic concept that would plunge the United States into combat in a second theater while operations in Afghanistan were still on-going.

An interesting aspect of the orders transmitted to Franks to begin planning for Iraq is that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Richard B. Myers, was conspicuously absent from involvement in the process. Under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986 that reorganized the Department of Defense, the president and secretary of defense can exercise the prerogative of bypassing the chairman in the transmission of orders and information between them and the combatant commanders.[271] However, bypassing the chairman is rare and considered poor form. Yet, because of the difficult relations between Secretary Rumsfeld and the service chiefs in 2001-2003, Rumsfeld decided to transmit orders directly to the combatant commanders, which included General Franks as CENTCOM commander. This dynamic meant that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would have little influence on the development of strategy in the planning effort for Iraq, denying the civilian leaders of decades of military experience. Bypassing the chairman resulted from the breakdown in trust among the civilian and military leaders and this had a negative influence on the entire process of developing strategic direction for Iraq. This had a deleterious impact on force planning and resourcing for the campaign, which is the responsibility of the service chiefs based upon guidance from the Chairman embodied in the official document known as the Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG) for worldwide threats. When Rumsfeld cut the Chairman from strategic planning process it led to serious force and resource shortfalls during the execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It provides the clearest illustration of the negative effect of poor tenor of civil-military relations in strategic planning.

At the 28 December meeting General Franks detailed his 'commander's concept.' The updated plan – now dubbed OPLAN 1003V – contained four major phases for an operation into Iraq to change the regime and remove weapons of mass destruction. The phases included: Phase I Preparation; Phase II Shaping the Battlespace; Phase III Decisive Operations; and Phase IV Post-Hostility Operations. Phase I was designed to garner support from the international community while simultaneously building what Franks called an "air bridge" to transport and support forces in the proposed theater. Phase II's purpose was to "shape" the conflict environment – known as the battlespace in military parlance – by placing the enemy at a disadvantage before launch of the next phase. In Phase III the coalition would decisively defeat the Iraqi army while simultaneously removing the ruling regime from power. Specifically, this meant that the Hussein "regime leaders [were] dead, apprehended, or marginalized" paving the way for a new government. Finally, Phase IV was intended to establish a new, representative government without weapons of mass destruction and capable of defending itself. This phase also encompassed a reconstruction effort designed to quickly back the new government with a functioning economy.[272] Franks states in his memoirs that he believed that this final phase would last an unknown length of time and could "prove more challenging than major combat operations." This would also require a large force of various types of units to provide security and facilitate stability.[273] However, the White House and Rumsfeld desired a quick exit from Iraq and held a different viewpoint. They believed that "reconstruction would not be a particularly difficult task" and would last from four to six months. Thus,

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[270] This term is designated in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, Title 10 and the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislations refers to officers of the services who hold the ranks of general or admiral.

[271] United States Congress, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* (Washington, DC: US Congress, 1986), Section 163, paragraph (a) (1) and (2).

[272] *Ibid*., 349-352.

[273] *Ibid*., 352.

the US could withdraw most of the troops as soon as possible after the completion of major combat operations.[274]

The political leaders would rely on the operational excellence of the joint forces in order to enable the quick exit. By the early 21st century American forces were quite proficient in accomplishing their tactical tasks and trained incessantly in the conduct of battles and campaigns. The training regimen produced a joint force that was very competent in its ability to win such battles and campaigns. Further, the technological advantages enjoyed by American forces enabled them to carry out operations in a rapid manner with a high tempo to overwhelm any adversary. The advantages provided by cutting edge technology facilitated the speed of conducting operations and campaigns making it seem that US forces could move in, accomplish assigned tasks, and then leave once accomplishing the mission. The civilian leaders were aware of these capabilities as the recent past provided many examples of this excellence including the Gulf War of 1991 that we examined in the last chapter, and most recently in the rapid victory in defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan. This knowledge factored into the planning considerations of the civilian leaders and they expected that US forces could rapidly defeat Iraqi conventional forces and then return home thus reducing resource and political costs. What they failed to consider was that a war in Iraq could devolve into an intractable insurgency even though this was noted as a distinct possibility.[275] Winning a conventional campaign would require a modest force to defeat the Iraqi military. However, to secure the gains, prevent the germination of an insurgency, and ultimately secure the political objectives, a larger force was required. Yet this would necessarily mitigate against a rapid exit.

As stated previously, the Bush Administration came to office promising to end the Clinton Administration's predilection for "nation-building." One author noted that the intent of the administration was to "dispose of its foe, quickly withdraw many, if not most, of its troops, and avoid the decade-long commitment Clinton had initiated in the Balkans."[276] Thus, even though planners and leaders across the interagency of the US government identified the fact that after toppling the Iraqi regime stabilization tasks were required to fully achieve the political objective, the Secretary of Defense focused on ensuring a rapid exit over reconstruction.[277]

The problem with this embrace of an "exit strategy" for every military action, as in the case of the Iraq War, is that this focus becomes the end of military operations rather than achieving the political objective.[278] This problem is central to the strategic failures in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places like Somalia over the past three decades. While the military has achieved a high degree of operational excellence gaining many battlefield victories, the nation has failed to translate these into political triumphs. Thus, operational excellence has become conflated to the level of strategy as Hew Strachan

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[274] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 142 and Nora Bensahel, "Mission Not Accomplished: What Went Wrong with Iraqi Reconstruction," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (June 2006), 457-458.

[275] There were multiple sources that warned Bush Administration officials of the possibility that serious problems could arise in the aftermath of a successful conventional operation, including a potential insurgency. Such documents, among several, included a memo known as the "Parade of Horribles" and a study conducted by the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College. See Memorandum from Donald H. Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush dated October 15, 2002. "Iraq: An Illustrative List of Potential Problems." Text printed in *Air Force Magazine* (April 2011), 71 and Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003).

[276] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 142.

[277] Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 138, 167, and 213-214 and Bensahel, et al., *After Saddam*, xvii-xviii.

[278] Powell interview, 8 July 2020; Powell and Persico, My American Journey, 464-465; and Colin Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 5 (Winter 1992), 36-38. In General Powell's writings and his conversations with the author it is clear that his doctrine is meant to serve as a means of applying a disciplined thought process to complex problems and not as a sort of template for action. Further, the general was adamant in his interview that he never articulated the need for an exit strategy when considering the use of force.

notes in his study *The Direction of War* [279], and exiting the theater of operations rapidly has become an end unto itself.

Herein lay the major controversy that hobbled the planning process since there was a fundamental divergence between what forces the military thought was required to secure the political objectives and how the civilian political leadership viewed the problem. According to Risa Brooks, this high degree of divergence led the political leaders to make unsound strategic assessments that would cascade across the decision-making process resulting in the poor policy and strategy of the Iraq War. [280] One manifestation of the divergent assessments is between the Department of Defense and Department of State. Neither department could agree upon the extent of the requirements for stabilization of Iraq, nor who was responsible for this critical phase of the campaign. The inevitable result of such divergence of opinion and the ability to reach consensus was an ineffective strategy and poorly conceived plan that could not achieve the political objective.

The individual agencies planning for OIF in 2002 appear to have done an admirable job capturing the details and possibilities inherent in a campaign to liberate Iraq. For example, CENTCOM fully anticipated the requirement to maintain civil order, reconstruct infrastructure, and rebuild Iraq's government capacity. Further, General Franks clearly understood that force levels would necessarily have to rise to perform stability operations. [281] In fact, the future planning staff of CENTCOM drew up an OPLAN called IRAQI RECONSTRUCTION. It anticipated seven critical tasks to achieve a successful outcome to the war. The tasks included: maintenance of the rule of law, security, support to civil administration, assisting the Iraqi government, enlarging the coalition, emergency humanitarian assistance, and ensuring the operability of critical infrastructure. [282] CENTCOM even ran a couple of wargame simulations called DESERT FOX and INTERNAL LOOK to test the possible post-conflict scenarios and CENTCOM discovered that the tasks identified in the OPLAN were critical to success. [283]

In late 2002, prior to the Iraq invasion, the National Security Council (NSC) conducted its own effort to anticipate what could go wrong in Iraq and provided it to Rumsfeld for his consideration. Secretary Rumsfeld presented what he dubbed a "Parade of Horribles" to President Bush in October 2002 in a formal memorandum. The results of this process encapsulated in a NSC memorandum fully anticipated what actually did go wrong in Iraq. For instance, item #19 states that "[R]ather than having the post-Saddam effort require two to four years, it could take eight to ten years, thereby absorbing US leadership, military, and financial resources." [284] However, rather than addressing the NSC identified potential problems, it appears that Secretary Rumsfeld minimized these possible issues as he had dismissed the concerns of the Joint Chiefs and CENTCOM in order to continue the planning effort. [285] In the end, preconceived notions of an easy military campaign followed by a smooth transition to a democratic government in Iraq won the day versus sober thought about what could actually happen.

The Department of State also engaged in its own planning project termed "The Future of Iraq." Secretary of State Colin Powell commissioned a series of working groups to identify and plan for the challenges that could arise in the post-Saddam era. The resultant 2,000-page collection of documents included information on the development of a new Iraqi government and reconstruction efforts. Assessments of the DoS effort deemed it as a comprehensive, insightful look at the problem of a post-Saddam Iraq. [286] Yet in spite of the planning efforts of the DoD, NCS, and DoS, the stabilization phase of

[279] Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 214-215.
[280] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, 252.
[281] *Ibid*., 7-8 and Franks, *American Soldier*, 351-352 and 366.
[282] Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 9.
[283] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 79 and Tom Clancy with General Tony Zinni (retired) and Tony Koltz, *Battle Ready* (New York: Random House, 2005), 19-22.
[284] Memorandum from Donald H. Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush dated October 15, 2002. "Iraq: An Illustrative List of Potential Problems." Text printed in *Air Force Magazine* (April 2011), 71.
[285] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 168-170 and Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 91.
[286] Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 30-37 and Powell interview, 8 July 2020.

OIF was an abysmal failure resulting in an eight-year slog to "success" – as predicted in Rumsfeld's 'Parade of Horribles'. If the various agencies did such an admirable job of anticipating what might happen during the operation, then what went wrong in execution? The answer is the failure to integrate the planning across the agencies of the government, which is the responsibility of the NSC led by the National Security Advisor to the President.

One incident is illustrative of this failure to share information and demonstrates how the state of civil-military relations negatively affected the planning process. As the land component command continued to labor away at developing a workable Phase IV Reconstruction plan, Colonel Kevin Benson, the land component command's lead planner, sought to establish coordination with the other government agencies that would prove critical to securing the victory, including the Department of State. In the fall of 2002 Benson used his network to obtain six computer discs full of data assembled by the State Department from what would become the "Future of Iraq Study." Upon receiving the discs, Benson also got a stern admonition to not "let anyone know you've got this, it will cost you your career. And, please don't tell anyone you got it from me."[287] This incident illustrates two critical points. First, planning did take place, but the various agencies were not coordinating because there was no overall authority or process established to ensure that all the organs of government were working in a unified manner on the problem. Second, it shows the tremendous lack of trust that existed between the agencies and the use of fear by civilian leaders to prevent the military from exercising due diligence to ensure proper planning and coordination. Ultimately, this extremely poor state of civil-military relations negatively affected the entire planning process. As another author notes "[T]he planning was shoddy," and further, "there was no one really in charge of it, and there was little coordination between the various groups."[288] Therefore, it appears that the several departments of the government developed their own individual plans in a vacuum. The poor tenor of civil-military relations that developed early in the Bush Administration had a role in creating this vacuum. The reason for this is that Rumsfeld's outward disdain for military advice created mistrust that infected other agencies as well. The other departments of the government shared this mistrust and held their plans close rather than sharing.

Contributing to the problem of collaboration and integration in the planning process was the issue of inter-agency rivalry "below the level of the principals." In the US national security planning hierarchy there are principals (the senior leaders of departments and agencies such as the secretary of defense), the deputies (the principal's immediate assistants), and a number of lesser planning groups below these that vet and review all national security issues before they reach the level of the national command authority.[289] (See Figure 7.1) In an interview after retiring, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers stated that parochialism played a large role in the failure of planning. Specifically, the DoS – DoD relationship was anything but cooperative. "[A]nything coming out of Defense, we don't want to hear about" he intoned about the State Department, while the same attitude reigned at the DoD with reference to DoS. Thus, General Myers concluded that "we couldn't harness these [elements of national power] in a way to focus more effectively in Iraq."[290] Though the Bush Administration came to office with a team vowing to fix issues of national security, the atmosphere of mistrust actually exacerbated the problem. Secretary of State Powell also notes how unproductive this rivalry between the departments became. The commission from DoS that put together the "Future of Iraq Study" provided its contents to the DoD and briefed it to the principals at the Pentagon. However, "the Pentagon didn't like it. They just wouldn't listen, preferring to go with the flawed assumption that, once we knock off Hussein, everybody will give up and then the other things will be fine. That's nonsense."[291]

[287] Benson interview conducted 3 June 2020.

[288] *Ibid*., 15 and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 78-81.

[289] Meese, et al., *American National Security*, 256-258.

[290] Richard B. Myers, "An Interview with Richard B. Myers," *Prism* (Volume 2, Number 4, September 2011), 152.

[291] Powell interview, 8 July 2020. Interagency coordination should not have been a problem based upon the manner by which the Bush Administration organized the National Security Council for Planning. According to National Security Presidential Directive-1, dated February 13, 2001, the Council was organized with all departments of the

Thus, needed interagency coordination did not occur because the departments disagreed on basic assumptions. With all of the powerful agencies of government failing to communicate and coordinate effectively regarding the same strategic problem due to interagency rivalry, the inevitable result was the paralysis of the effort to develop coherent strategy throughout all phases of planning.
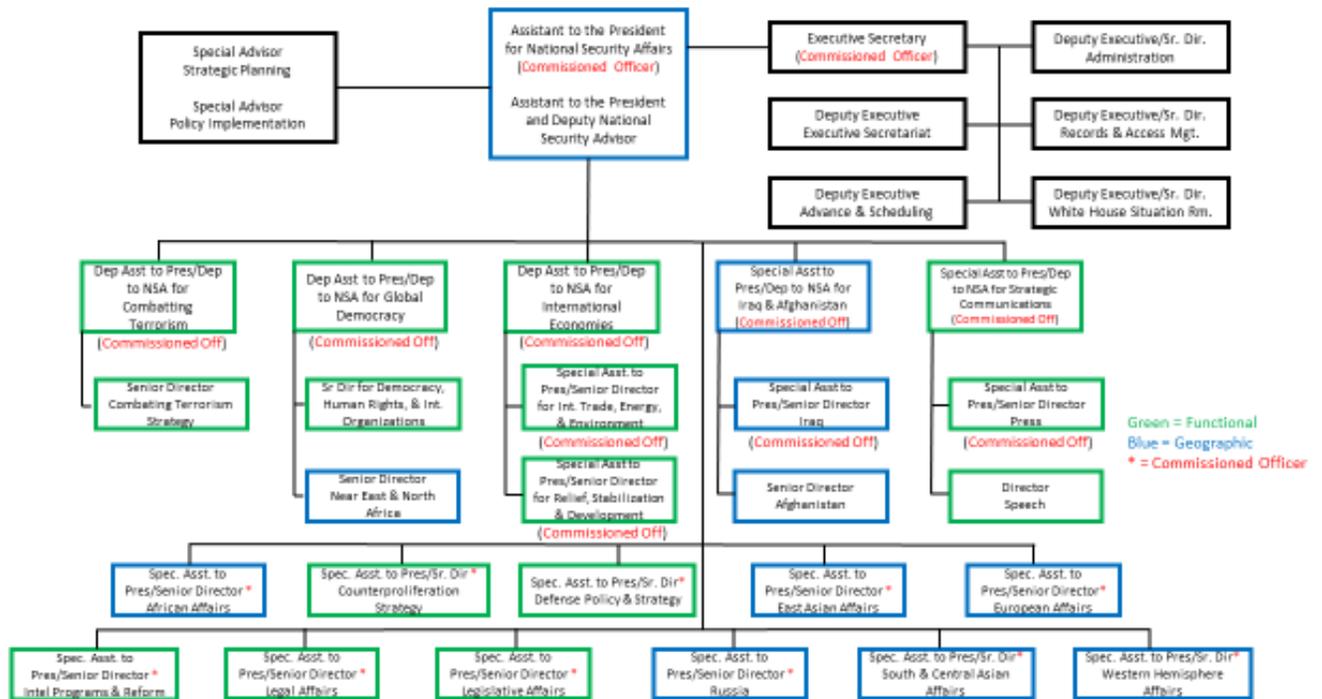

Figure 7.1. Organization of the National Security Council planning team during the Bush Administration. Note that there are representatives from the other departments of the US government resident within the council for the purpose of planning integration. (Source: Alan G. Whittaker, Frederick C. Smith, and Ambassador Elizabeth McKune, "The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System," Annual Update (Washington, DC: The White House, 2007), 63.)

The inability to integrate the planning led to many frictions and disagreements between the civilian and military leaders. Perhaps the most contested aspect of the planning revolved around the disagreement about the size of the force and composition of the forces to execute the campaign. Throughout the planning process the military developed myriad estimates of the size and composition of the forces required to achieve the stated ends that linked to the political objectives. Nevertheless, the senior political leaders, Secretary Rumsfeld and his deputy and longtime Washington insider, Paul Wolfowitz, rejected these out of hand. The tenor of civil-military relations was so poor that it limited any debate on the issue. These preconceived political notions were wrong demonstrating a clear lack of understanding of the use of force and a refusal to listen to military advisers. Instead, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz relied upon their own judgement in directing how the US military was resourced to secure the political objectives.

The decision to limit the size of the force contributed to the ultimate failure to transition smoothly from combat to post-war reconstruction. Also, the forces that were available consisted mostly of armor

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US government represented on the Council. See NSPD-1, "Organization of the National Security Council System," (Washington, DC: The White House, 2001).

and mechanized troops, which are ill-suited to the constabulary duties critical to stabilization of a post-conflict environment. The heavily armored and mechanized troops that invaded Iraq were well-trained in combat tasks involving battle on the open plain utilizing tanks and armored personnel carriers. However, such troops lacked training in counter-insurgency tasks, making them ill-suited to what would happen upon transition to stability operations to secure the gains of the operational forces. Every plan developed by the military called for at least 250,000 soldiers as the minimum adequate force required to secure the gains.[292] Some estimates of the forces required for transition to stabilization were on the order of 500,000.[293] In testimony before the Congress on 17 February 2003 General Shinseki, asserted that "several hundred thousand troops" would be needed to secure Iraq and enable capacity building to start and progress.[294] This enraged Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, who immediately went public with rebuttals of Shinseki's testimony.[295] At the time of the invasion of Iraq force levels never approached even the lower 250,000 number. In fact, when decisive operations ended in Iraq there were less than 170,000 troops in Iraq.

When the CFLCC was developing the plan for the size of the force required, the planners used standard factors learned in the staff college for the anticipated situation. The scheduled plan for sending forces to Iraq, was contained in a document known as the time phased force deployment list (TPFDL). This timetable had the requisite combat units, support, and service units needed to accomplish a mission of this size and scope. The numbers were on the order of 250,000 total troops. The TPFDL is a document that ensures the proper identification of forces for tasks required and ensures these forces flow into the theater at the time and place of need to secure the military objectives, which link to the political objectives. When the CFLCC planners completed the TPFDL they sent it to CENTCOM for approval and to US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) to ensure sourcing.[296] The Army staff then approved the document validating that the capabilities existed since the Army served as the force provider. Then, the document found its way to the Joint Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. However, when the TPFDL hit the Joint Staff offices one officer called Colonel Benson at CFLCC to discuss the numbers. This officer noted to Benson that "the number is too big" and added that "the secretary [Rumsfeld] will never approve it." Benson then said to him, "well, just give me a number then." The reply to this was that while there was no force cap, CFLCC had to get the numbers down to meet Rumsfeld's intent.[297] The dissonance between these extreme positions taken by the military and civilian leaders on forces required would lead to poor strategic problem assessment and, ultimately, a mismatch of

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[292] Franks, *American Soldier*, 366. Franks briefed this figure to Secretary Rumsfeld on 1 February 2003.

[293] Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 17.

[294] Eric Schmitt, "Threats and Responses: Military Spending; Pentagon Contradicts General on Occupation Forces' Size," *New York Times* 27 February 2003. http://nytimes.com/2003/02/28/us/threats-threatsandresponses.html (accessed 13 November 2011) and John Althouse, "Force to Occupy Iraq Massive," *USA Today* 25 February 2003. http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-02-25-iraq-us_x.htm (accessed 13 November 2011). General Nicholson noted in an interview with the author that General Shinseki's estimate was based upon a study by the Center for Military History that he commissioned. Further, the general had commanded forces in the Balkans in the 1990s and had experience with the conduct security and stabilization tasks within a civilian population.

[295] Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 74-75. General Nicholson noted in his interview with the author that it is ironic that the civilian secretaries were so adamant in their disavowals of Shinseki's testimony. A few days previous to the testimony General Shinseki personally briefed Undersecretary Wolfowitz on his estimates of the force required to secure Iraq. His estimate was based upon a Center of Military History study that he commissioned to analyze historical cases of stability operations following major combat and his personal experience as commander in Bosnia. Thus, the disavowal of General Shinseki's testimony was disingenuous and shocking to the general.

[296] A note on the difference between force generation and force employment is appropriate at this point. Force generation is a process by which the services recruit, organize, and train forces so that they are ready to present to the combatant commands like CENTCOM. The combatant commanders then accept these ready forces and develop campaign plans to employ these joint forces to achieve specific tasks designed to attain the commander's objectives for the theater.

[297] Benson interview, 3 June 2020.

the strategic ends and the ways and means available to achieve them.[298] This is yet another example of the poor state of military relations having a direct negative effect on the strategy development process.

An extreme example of the demand for a small force by civilian leaders came from Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz. The individual services, like the Army and Air Force, are responsible for providing trained and ready forces for employment to the geographic combatant command, in this case CENTCOM. Therefore, the services in coordination with the combatant commands develop estimates of forces needed for contingency operations and then provide the estimates to the civilian leaders for approval. While there is normally some wrangling over these numbers, it is usually of a minor nature. In the case of Iraq, the gap between the civilian demands and the services' estimates was abnormally large. At one point in the disagreement over force size, Wolfowitz actually suggested that a single armor brigade would be enough force to take Baghdad. Such a suggestion shocked military leaders who knew that one small organization could not defeat the entire Iraqi army arrayed against them.[299] Such unproductive dialogue demonstrates how poor tenor of relations led to a state in which civilian leaders would not listen to reason about how the use of force and the size of those forces could secure the political objectives in Iraq.

To assert control over the force sizing before the campaign started Rumsfeld informed the senior military leaders that he would not use the TPFDL process, opting instead for what is known as the request for forces (RFF) process.[300] A request for forces is a single request for a certain capability, organization, or unit to fulfill a precise mission. To build the force for a major operation using the RFF process would require the generation of hundreds of such requests explaining why the operation requires the needed capability and organization. What this meant was that instead of approving the TPFDL, which was a single document with all forces required for the operation, the secretary would use the RFF process so that he could review each and every individual unit deploying in order to determine if it was really needed. This clever bureaucratic ploy did two things. It provided the Secretary with the ability strongly assert his will on the process of determining what forces were needed for the operation and second, he could then pare down the force to ensure that his vision of how the operation should unfold would conform to that vision. This is an example of what military scholar James Dubik calls a compliance regime in which Rumsfeld acted from a position of power and to establish control. It provided no room for dialogue or discussion and resulted in a planning process that was characterized by suspicion, mistrust, and fear.[301] The outcome of this laborious process was that Rumsfeld deleted the deployment of many units needed to sustain the force, provide security during the operation, and those that would consolidate the gains made following the operation.[302] This set the conditions for the chaos that followed the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

One well-known example of how the use of the RFF process negatively affected the operation in Iraq with serious consequences is the much publicized incident of the capture of Private Jessica Lynch. She was captured and her transportation unit decimated when they took a wrong turn enroute to Baghdad. The absence of military police for traffic control was the primary reason for this tragedy. This failure demonstrates the consequences of meddling with the deployment planning process. Other incidents also demonstrate the disadvantages of the RFF process. For instance, inadequate logistic support forced an operational pause that required the maneuver forces to halt mid-way to Baghdad to allow the logistic tail to catch up enroute to the city costing several days of delay. Also, and likely most important, the failure

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[298] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 146 and Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, 248-251.

[299] Benson interview, 3 June 2020.

[300] *Ibid*. Also, General Nicholson noted in his interview with the author that the best analogy of the TPFDL process is attributed to Lieutenant General Michael Oates. He described it this way. "When you are looking at the TPFDL or a list of troops that you need it is sort of looking at a computer code. There are lines in there and you don't know what they are for, but they are necessary to make the rest of the thing work. When you selectively start deleting lines, then the forces in the theater are not going to work right."

[301] Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered*, 72-73.

[302] Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2017), see Chapter 8 for a full description of operations to consolidate gains.

to secure the victory following major combat operations was due to the paucity of needed combat forces that were removed using the RFF process. These events clearly demonstrates the breakdown of the planning process.[303] Therefore, the discordant civil-military relations produced policy, strategy, and operational plans that could not succeed in securing the political objectives of the administration.

The fourth variable, reliance on operational excellence as a substitute for strategy, emerges during the wrangling over force size and composition in the case of the Iraq War. The military had compiled an excellent track record since the late 1980s in delivering spectacular and rapid military victories, as in Panama, 1989 and the First Gulf War, 1991. However, what the civilian leaders in 2003 ignored was the political effort that accompanied the military success to secure the political objectives. These conflicts were not won by the military victory alone, but by the work of political and military leaders to translate that success into tangible political results. This means a changed political environment as prescribed by the clearly articulated and attainable objectives. Following the successful campaign to topple the Hussein regime the operating environment began to change as the situation in Iraq began to devolve into an insurgency. The political and military leaders were at a loss as to how to translate the conventional military victory into secured political objectives. The reliance on a small forces with a high degree of operational excellence substituted for a clear strategy to achieve a durable positive outcome. This further demonstrates how the poor tenor of civil-military relations negatively affected the ability to secure the political objectives of OIF in a lasting fashion because the political leaders failed to understand what forces can achieve and the surrounding political efforts needed to contextualize military efforts.

It is easy to see why the campaign in Iraq fell apart during Phase IV, Reconstruction, of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The various agencies of the US government had worked in an uncoordinated fashion which did not allow for a coherent transition to post-war stability and rebuilding, which was the critical phase for securing the political objectives. When decisive combat operations ended, the forces that won a spectacular victory were too small and the wrong type to solidify operational gains into strategic success. One expert notes that "[W]inning in war also requires consolidating military gains to achieve enduring political outcomes."[304] But, the military forces available could not secure the country because they were inappropriate to the changing mission. Small numbers of armor and mechanized forces are certainly appropriate for operations against a conventional army; however, as an army transitions from major combat to stability operations a larger number of light forces are necessary for security, as noted by several military professionals during the planning phase. This consolidates what is gained so that the military victory can translate into a changed environment as prescribed by the political objectives.[305]

However, this was not a belief that was adhered to by all. Officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, along with the Secretary himself, had the optimistic assumption that American forces' arrival on the scene would be supported by the Iraqi population, thus obviating the need for a large number of troops. The military success would convince the Iraqis to accept changed conditions without having to engage in messy political discourse to secure the political objectives. As one participant noted, "the senior players and civilian policy-makers had already made up their mind that this is how Iraq was going to go" and "they would not admit that other pesky things" could derail the effort.[306] H.R. McMaster agrees noting that "Washington government officials based policies on "My-raq", a country that was whatever those officials imagined it to be."[307] This was contrary to the view developed by the military

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[303] Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020.

[304] H.R McMaster, "Honor Veterans by Having the Will to Win a War," *Wall Street Journal* (November 11, 2021), A19.

[305] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 79 and 96-97; Franks, *American Soldier*, 366; and Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 17. Also, see Chapter 8 of Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2017), for a full description of operations to consolidate gains.

[306] Benson interview, 3 June 2020.

[307] H.R. McMaster, "Developing Strategic Empathy: History as the Foundation of Foreign Policy and National Security Strategy," The 2020 George C. Marshall Lecture on Military History in *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (July 2020), 691

planners and the acrimony of the civil-military relationship was a major factor in the civilian leaders' predilection to disregard military advice.[308] Yet, these officials were focused more on an "exit strategy" rather than "war termination", or "how to convert military success into political success, which is the purpose of post-conflict planning," according to Professor Mackubin Thomas Owens.[309] What all this demonstrates is that senior civilian political leaders neither understood the *use of force* (3rd variable) nor how the use of *forces* to translate battlefield success to secure political objectives (4th variable). Senior civilian leaders worked from the, in retrospect somewhat fallacious, assumption that since US forces would be viewed as liberators by the Iraqi people, there was not a need for large forces. The military leaders knew that even if the largely US force was welcomed, it required a sizeable presence during the post-war period to ensure security and services continued uninterrupted. Thus, this disagreement demonstrates that civilian leaders' misunderstanding of how to use *force* and employ *forces* to secure political objectives.[310] The previously highlighted lack of communications between Bush Administration officials and the military exacerbated the misunderstanding.

The military campaign began on 20 March 2003 and over the course of three weeks US and coalition forces rapidly and decisively defeated Iraqi conventional military forces. After the initial military victory, the collapse of the Saddam regime produced a chaos that pushed the deployed US ground forces to the breaking point; they were incapable providing the security needed for reconstruction. With the dissolution of the Saddam regime there was no civil government ready or capable of assuming responsibility for governing at the end of major combat operations. The lack of collaboration between agencies guaranteed that no one was ready to take full responsibility for the challenge of coordinating post-conflict operations. Then, shockingly, in the midst of all this turmoil, the civilian administrators sent over by the administration under Ambassador Paul Bremer unexpectedly announced a shift in policy. It was known as de-Ba'athification and required removal of all party members from the government and dissolution of the Iraqi army. This further complicated the security challenges and the reconstruction of Iraq. It was not part of the original policy objectives to remove Saddam Hussein and replace his regime. As noted previously in the discussion of the second variable, the ability to establish clear, attainable political objectives is indicative of the tenor of civil-military relations and the strategic competence of the leaders involved. Communication between the civilian and military leaders is necessary in developing strategic policy. That did not occur with the shift indicated by Bremer. The announcement of de-Ba'athification further expanded the political objectives by adding another difficult task to the military's requirements making these objectives even more difficult to secure. The military had no idea that this alteration of policy was coming and lacked understanding of the meaning of de-Ba'athification and how this applied to post-war operations. Furthermore, due to the lack of planning and coordination before the war, the military believed that various United States government agencies would assume responsibility for the resultant civil vacuum and perform reconstruction of the Iraqi government and state. However, no agency was readily available or able to execute these tasks.[311] All of this change and misunderstanding created instability in Iraq and provided the opportunity for an insurgency to take root guaranteeing that the previously articulated political objectives could not be secured.

Another factor in the failure to integrate agency planning was the failure to ensure all departments understood which agency had the lead and the inability to identify which department was responsible for what phase of the campaign. The way the US national security apparatus is structured, the national security adviser – Condoleezza Rice at that time – was supposed take charge of coordinating the various

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[308] Benson interview, 3 June 2020.

[309] Mackubin Thomas Owens, *U.S. Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 51.

[310] Conor Friedersdorf, "Remembering Why Americans Loathe Dick Cheney," *The Atlantic* (August 30, 2011). Accessed online 4 November 2021 at https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/08/remembering-why-americans-loathe-dick-cheney-244306/ and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 111.

[311] *Ibid*., 78-81; Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 36; Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace (*New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007), 98; and Benson interview, 3 June 2020.

agencies involved in national security planning. However, the system did not work as intended.[312] In a memorandum distributed to the Departments of Defense and State, President Bush assigned responsibility for post-war reconstruction to the Pentagon. This written direction made the DoD, vice the DoS, the lead for planning and coordination. General Franks noted in a planning update at the White House in August 2002 that the possibility of a rapid collapse of the Saddam regime would require an equally rapid American response to ensure that stability among the populace could be guaranteed. Franks further stated that "well-designed and well-funded reconstruction projects . . . will be the keys to our success." But he appears to have believed that the responsibility for implementing stabilizing measures rested with the civilian agencies rather than the military as prescribed in the memorandum from the President.[313] It is unknown why Franks believed that civilian agencies would take this responsibility for stability tasks. Regardless, this is a case of either outright insubordination or gross negligence in failing to adhere to the president's directive and provides another data point that demonstrates the poor tenor of civil-military relations. Nevertheless, when the regime did collapse, as Franks suspected it might, the military stood by expecting the civilians to quickly fill the vacuum – even though President Bush had signed the memorandum assigning responsibility for post-war reconstruction to the Pentagon.[314] As a result, it was not a failure to plan but "the ineffectiveness of the planning process", which inhibited effective strategic planning. This led to the conditions whereby the insurgency arose.[315] Again, the poor tenor of civil-military relations precluded any meaningful awareness and cooperation across the government and military.

On 9 April 2003 US forces were on the outskirts of Baghdad. The mechanized forces had moved nearly 300 miles in three weeks, pausing only during blinding sandstorms that periodically swept across the desert and to allow the long logistical tail to catch up. They had defeated Saddam Hussein's army in every engagement and as American forces approached the capital, organized resistance collapsed. As the Americans advanced, the Iraqi army simply walked away, leaving their guns and heavy equipment behind, but these forces were not the only ones to dissipate. The police and government officials at all levels followed suit. They left their work because they ostensibly were "fearful of citizens' vengeance" and possible arrest by the coalition for suspicion of being members of the Ba'ath Party.[316] Thus, as the US military stood poised on the doorstep of Baghdad, the civil government was in a state of collapse and the stage was set for lawlessness to ensue. As one senior commander noted, "we were enormously successful in getting to Baghdad with very little, limited loss," but "we had not planned for what was happening . . . and did not have adequate force."[317] The paucity of American numbers, the mismatch of forces readily available versus those trained specifically for stability operations and counterinsurgency[318], and the confusion over which US entity would take the lead in Phase IV exacerbated this sorry state of affairs.[319] Military leaders believed that once they defeated the Iraqi army that some other department of the US government would take charge of stabilizing the country.[320] Therefore, in spite of a brilliantly executed and victorious military campaign, US forces were not poised to secure the political objectives.

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[312] Powell interview, 8 July 2020.

[313] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 145-147; Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 17 and 28-30; and Franks, *American Soldier*, 392-393.

[314] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 145-147.

[315] Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 16.

[316] Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 89-90 and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 119-125.

[317] Interview with protected source, conducted 21 July 2020.

[318] Such forces were available. In 2003 it was (and remains) US Army policy that every maneuver brigade in the Army's ten divisions must conduct a rotation to one of the three combat training centers. The four light infantry divisions sent their brigades to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) where at least half of every rotation was designed as a counter-insurgency scenario.

[319] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 116-118; Bensahel, *After Saddam*, 82-84; Jonathan Weisman, "Iraq Chaos No Surprise, but Too Few Troops to Quell It," *Washington Post* 13 April 2003. http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A19587-2003-Apr-13?language=printer (accessed 13 November 2011). Interview with protected source, 21 July 2020.

[320] Interview with protected source, 21 July 2020.

One senior official aptly noted that "we really snatched defeat from the jaws of victory".[321] Lack of American military and interagency preparedness opened the door to disaster demonstrating the lack of alignment between ends, ways, and means, which is the essence of strategy. The operational excellence of the US military could not compensate for the strategic errors of the senior political and military leaders in the Iraq War.

Shortly after operations went awry with a burgeoning insurgency in late summer-early fall 2003, recriminations began to surface that the reason that a nasty insurgency was germinating in Iraq was due to a failure to anticipate and plan for such an eventuality. One author – among several – asserts that the plan's "incompleteness helped create the conditions for the difficult occupation that followed."[322] This assertion is patently false. As discussed earlier, a great deal of thought and planning was undertaken to anticipate and quell an insurgency.[323] However, several reasons contributed to the failure of the planning process and subsequent difficulties following major combat operations. The first reason is poorly constructed policy and strategy arising from the poor tenor of civil-military relations. The lack of trust among the leaders led to poor coordination between the various agencies and departments of the US government. In turn, the inability to work together resulted in the articulation of policy objectives that were far beyond the military resources the civilian leaders were willing to commit to secure the objectives. Further, this is an indicator of a lack of understanding of what use of force can achieve. Inclusion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in such discussions may have provided a fuller debate and resulted in more realistic policy objectives that use of force could secure. However, reliance on the military's operational excellence in theater warfighting became a substitute for strategic design for the purpose of securing policy objectives. Finally, the desire of political leaders for a quick exit from Iraq limited debate and consideration of a full range of strategic options. The various agencies of the United States government actually conducted a great deal of planning for Iraq considering strategic possibilities. Yet there was no true interagency coordination among the departments as noted earlier, and this further paralyzed the planning effort. But, the central problem is that the planning was not integrated due to the lack of trust between the military departments and civilian agencies.

All operational plans expected that the Iraqi army would suffer a rapid defeat and subsequently surrender in large numbers, much as they had during the First Gulf War in 1991. This assumption, though questioned by the planners, was shrugged off by "the senior players and civilian policy makers [who] had already made up their mind that this is how Iraq is going to go."[324] One of the first indications that things were not going to go as planned is conveyed by former Secretary of State Powell. He notes that soon after the invasion he was in the Oval Office with the president. Bush was watching a news broadcast and asked Powell, "why aren't the people cheering?" as US troops passed through Iraqi towns. The secretary said, "Mr. President you aren't going to see cheering because they are being invaded." This was the point where the fallacy of the faulty assumptions began to set in on the administration.[325]

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld infamously commented after the war began – and after the situation began to deteriorate – that "you go to war with the army that you have."[326] This is very true and in making the decision to go to war a government must understand the type of war upon which it intends to embark.[327] This understanding of the type of conflict enables development of the political objectives. Plus, comprehending the sort of conflict should lead to an evaluation of the means available and the ways that the war could be prosecuted. If the resources (means), like the army, are inappropriate to the task or

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[321] *Ibid*.

[322] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 115.

[323] Bensahel, *After Saddam*, xvii-xviii and Lebovic, *Planning to Fail*, 77-81.

[324] Benson interview, 3 June 2020. Every interview that I conducted echoes Colonel Benson's sentiments almost verbatim.

[325] Powell interview, 8 July 2020.

[326] Eric Schmitt, "Iraq-Bound Troops Confront Rumsfeld Over Lack of Armor," *New York Times* (December 8, 2004) accessed 18 February 2020 at https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/08/international/middleeast/iraqbound-troops-confront-rumsfeld-over-lack-of.html.

[327] Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

the manner (way) of its employment does not fit the situation, it is unlikely to achieve the political objective established by the government. The process of evaluating the type of war, resources, and courses of action should objectively assess the probability of achieving the ends. If the decision-makers are in constant disagreement, acrimony can cause the process of strategic assessment to fail due to the lack of cooperation. Thus, planning efforts can produce incoherent solutions to complex problems and this is what happened during the strategic planning process for Iraq. Then, when battlefield conditions evolved, the inappropriate strategy was not modified through civilian-military consultation to account for the changing situation, which heretofore was the hallmark of the American way of war – the ability to adapt.

A combination of factors was responsible for the poor strategic outcome in 2003. These included the continued and worsening tenor of civil-military relations produced by an atmosphere of mistrust. Also, the disjointed and shortsighted planning among the senior political and military leaders and other Federal agencies led to the development of unrealistic and unachievable political objectives. Further, the failure to retain key Iraqi officials meant that the battlefield success achieved could not be translated into political success. Additionally, the absence of American light infantry and civil authority for security ensured that the military victory would not secure the political objectives. This demonstrated a misunderstanding of *how to use force* and what *forces* can accomplish to secure the political objectives. The development of an intractable insurgency following successful major combat operations was not foreordained. Ultimately, the failure of Phase IV, Reconstruction, represents the inability of strategic planners to correctly identify the kind of war upon which the United States was embarking. This led to vehement disagreements between civilian and military leaders on the required force levels. Therefore, the leaders were then unable to build or coordinate planning to mitigate what would happen when the tensions of three decades of rule under Saddam were released. While the separate agency planners did anticipate what could go wrong, factors such as mistrust, parochialism (a symptom of poor civil-military relations), compartmentalizing of plans and information within agencies and departments, and muddled authorities prevented integration of the individual agency plans that could deal with the possibilities. The war then spiraled into an intractable insurgency and with it the support of the American people plunged as the war became protracted. Thus, the strategic outcome was a failure. (See Table 7.1)

Conflict/Variables	Iraq, 2003
Trust	Poor, mistrust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Stated political objectives not achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders fail to understand use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Unable to translate success in battle into victory
Strategic Outcome	Failed to secure political objectives

Table 7.1. The Iraq War, 2003 summarized by the variables.

The conflict in Iraq, 2003 provides further evidence that the tenor of civil-military relations correlates to the quality of policy and strategy. In this case the tenor during planning process had the characteristics of an adversarial relationship exacerbated by argumentativeness, which according to the model would predict poor policy and strategy outcomes. As the case study Iraq, 2003 bears out this conclusion. The overview of the campaign against the common variables of trust, the establishment of achievable political objectives, understanding of the use of force, and translating battlefield success into secure political objectives supports this conclusion. The lack of trust within the civil-military relations of the Bush Administration is the first element that led to the poor tenor of those relations. This atmosphere of mistrust made it difficult for the political and military leaders to communicate in any meaningful fashion. When the question of use of force arose, political leaders settled on a political objective that military force could not achieve because these goals were too broad in scope and expanded even further with Paul Bremer's declaration of de-Ba'athification. The Bush Administration made this decision regarding their "ends' with little input from their senior military advisers. This lack of consultation led to inadequate military means to secure the political objectives, or secure the ends of strategy. Bush Administration officials simply never gained an informed understanding of the use of country's military to achieve political objectives in Iraq. Although US forces achieved a spectacular battlefield victory, these forces could not translate this into strategic success to secure shifting political objectives. Therefore, the poor tenor of civil-military relations affected every step of the strategic deliberations in a negative manner. This produced correspondingly poor policy and strategy as exhibited through analysis using the common variables. The next chapter will review and summarize the findings of this and the preceding case studies to make generalized conclusions about the relationship of strategy to civil-military relations.

Chapter 8

Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

"The civil-military dialogue itself does not produce success, but it increases or decreases the probability of success."[328]

James M. Dubik, "It's Time to Review the Civil-Military Dialogue" (2019)

This study's intent is to explore the question as to whether or not there is a correlation between the tenor of civil-military relations and the quality of policy and strategy that results from strategic deliberations. From observations of recent history, the US has struggled mightily to develop effective policy and strategy since the Vietnam War, and in particular, following the end of the Cold War. During the same period, the US has had tumultuous civil-military relations, with the notable exception of the 1980s. From this the natural question arises, is there a relationship between the difficulties in civil-military relations and the ability to develop quality policy and strategy to meet complex challenges? This dissertation asserts that there is a relationship. This leads to the articulation of a theory and that is, whether civil-military relations are good or bad, the resultant policy and strategy from strategic deliberations will mirror the relationship in terms of quality of outcomes. The study used case studies to determine if there is a correlation between civil-military relations and policy and strategy outcomes. Using standard variables, the dissertation examined four case studies to test the theory for validity. From these case studies the theory has validity because in each case the tenor of civil-military relations correlated to the quality of policy and strategy outcomes. This chapter will review and discuss the findings that support the theory while also identifying some potential gaps. Also, it will discuss the implications of the findings and conclude by offering recommendations for those involved in the strategic process to consider.

From the four cases examined in the dissertation it is reasonable to conclude that the tenor of civil-military relations during strategic deliberations among the actors has a direct effect on the quality and outcomes of the resultant policy and strategy. When the tenor is poor then the expected outcome of strategic deliberations is poor quality policy and strategy. On the other hand, when civil-military relations are sound the likelihood of good quality policy and strategy is much more likely to occur.

The civil-military relationship that produced the policy and strategy for Vietnam, 1964 and Iraq, 2003 was poor at best. First, the nature of deliberations was highly subjective since the political actors clearly advocated for specific options while deigning to listen to any objective alternatives such as that offered by the Army Chief of Staff Shinseki or the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1964.[329] Second, the communications conducted between the political actors and the military chiefs of staff was decidedly adversarial and argumentative characterized by mistrust and minimal communications. Political leaders, like Rumsfeld and McNamara, preferred consulting with the combatant commander, General Franks in 2003, or eliminating military advisers altogether from consultations as in 1964.[330] Third, in both cases the deliberations never seriously considered the type of war upon which the nation was about to engage.[331] Instead, political actors preferred to impose their vision for what the war should be instead of what the war would most likely become.[332] Finally, while the planning for Vietnam and Iraq proceeded, the deliberations in neither case reflected an open discussion whereby the political leaders sought military advice in good faith. Rather, the political leaders proceeded from preconceived notions of what they wanted and pressed the military leaders to conform to their preferred options. Both cases reflect a poor tenor in strategic deliberations attributable to the poor state of civil-military relations. These difficult

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[328] James M. Dubik, "It's Time to Review the Civil-Military Dialogue," *Army* (November 2019), 5.

[329] Nicholson Interview, 10 June 2020. General Shinseki commissioned a study by the Center for Military History to provide objective evidence to support his proposed option with respect to the number of troops required to secure Iraq after major combat operations.

[330] Garofano, "Deciding on Military Intervention," 49; Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020; and McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 90-91.

[331] Thus, these leaders violated Clausewitz' admonition to make such a determination beforehand.

[332] Nicholson Interview, 10 June 2020.

strategic deliberations produced policy and strategy that resulted in an eight-year imbroglio in Iraq and strategic defeat in Vietnam.

By contrast, the deliberations that took place in Indochina, 1954 and the Persian Gulf War, 1991 were an order of magnitude better than in 1964 and 2003. These earlier discourses produced a policy and strategy that worked for the benefit of US interests. First, the nature of the deliberations was more objective as Presidents Eisenhower and Bush preferred consultations and information from a variety of sources. That which Eisenhower received from Army Chief of Staff Ridgway was well-researched and assembled in a strategic estimate that weighed risk and cost-benefit in a dispassionate manner.[333] Likewise, Bush had astute advice from Chairman Powell that was measured and logical, which enabled the president to make well-informed decisions. Second, in 1954 Eisenhower would listen with great interest to a variety of sources, including Ridgway. Similarly, Bush's ability to listen intently to the advice of the Chairman facilitated positive strategic deliberations.[334] These communications were collegial and included submission of well-written products like Ridgway's strategic estimate.[335] Third, the content of the military advice in both cases clearly considered the kind of war that the US could become involved in, as Ridgway noted that intervention in Indochina would require hundreds of thousands of troops for five to seven years fighting an unconventional conflict.[336] Likewise, Powell and Schwarzkopf kept Bush informed as to the scale of resources required to liberate Kuwait.[337] Finally, the deliberations in 1954 and 1991 were iterative and open because trust underpinned the discussion between the actors. This enabled the political leaders to consider all advice rather than pressing for a preferred option as occurred in 1964 and 2003. The result of the deliberations reflect the integration of all four elements of the model.

Consequently, the four case studies support the theory proposed in this study. First, the civil-military relations during the planning for Iraq, 2003 was very poor and this had a negative effect upon the resultant policy and strategy. The actors, primarily Secretary Rumsfeld and most military advisers, did not trust each other and this "created a kind of atmosphere that tended to discount sound military advice."[338] Because Rumsfeld did not trust most military advice, in particular the advice emanating from Shinseki, as Army Chief of Staff, Rumsfeld would only seek advice that fit with his preconceptions, often working around – rather than through – established chains of command. Rumsfeld would ignore advice that tended to diverge from his notions of the way the Iraq War should unfold. This meant that differing perspectives were blocked from consideration during planning, which limited strategic options. The failure to consider other options also affected the development of political objectives, our second variable. Had the administration, specifically Rumsfeld, heeded other perspectives then the political leaders might have crafted political objectives that were more easily attainable, or even decided against military action. Instead, the administration promulgated such a broad set of political objectives that the use of military force could not secure them. This leads to the lack of understanding the Bush Administration had for what the use of force could achieve. General Shinseki told congressional leaders in no uncertain terms how much force and what type of forces were required to have a chance to secure the political objectives. Secretary Rumsfeld and Under Secretary Wolfowitz demonstrated their unwillingness to listen by discounting this advice and the result was that the coalition did not have adequate force to secure the political objectives after a spectacularly successful military campaign. Despite the battlefield success of US and coalition forces in 2003, the US failed to win the war and secure the political objectives. This is because the key administration leaders believed that the awesome military victory would deliver the political victory, the fourth variable. Thus, poor civil-military relations negatively affected strategic

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[333] Garofano, "Deciding on Military Intervention," 58 and Woodward, *The Commanders*, 304-305.
[334] Powell Interview, 10 July 2020.
[335] Garafano, "Deciding on Military Intervention," 58.
[336] *Ibid*.
[337] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 304-305; Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 488-489; and Schwarzkopf and Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 359-360 and 366-374,
[338] Nicholson Interview, 10 June 2020.

deliberations to such a degree that the political leaders adopted an unattainable policy predicated on military operations as the strategy to win the war and secure the political objectives. The root cause of strategic failure was bad civil-military relations.

The Persian Gulf War, Iraq in 1991, provides a stark contrast to the distinct failures in Iraq, 2003. According to the testimony of witnesses such as Colin Powell, civil-military relations during the process of strategic deliberations for the First Gulf War were sound to the point that Powell himself characterized them as "great."[339] The effect on those deliberations was that it facilitated a dialogue that produced an attainable policy and workable strategy to achieve the political objectives. Trust underpinned the relationship among the actors who felt free to speak unfettered. Reinforcing that idea, Powell stated in an interview, "I was given total openness to say whatever I wanted to say to the President that he needed to hear . . . and they would hear what I said."[340] Because of Bush's willingness to listen, multiple perspectives had an audience with him opening up many policy and strategy options. Such consideration of options enabled a measured development of attainable political objectives, the most important of which was the liberation of Kuwait. The appropriate political objectives enabled the tailoring of a force appropriate to secure the objectives. Powell informed the administration that to win, decisive force was required to the tune of several hundred thousand troops with appropriate capabilities like armor and heavy artillery. The civilian decision-maker, Bush, heeded the military advice because he understood the use of force as explained to him by his military advisers, Powell and Schwarzkopf. Following a successful military campaign, three of the four political objectives were secured, though the fourth only partially due to political mishandling of the cease fire negotiations detailed in Chapter Six. In this case sound civil-military relations facilitated an open dialogue for strategic deliberations to take place. The result was a successful policy that the US attained in combination with effective implementation of military strategy. Thus, good civil-military relations were vital to formulation of successful policy and sound strategy. (See Table 8.1 for a comparison of the wars in the Persian Gulf)

Conflict/Variables	Persian Gulf War, 1991	Iraq, 2003
Trust	Excellent, Trust	Poor, Mistrust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Political objectives achievable	Stated political objectives not achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force	Political leaders fail to understand use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Battlefield success partially translated into victory*	Unable to translate success in battle into victory
Strategic Outcome	Secured most political objectives	Failed to secure political objectives

Table 8.1. Comparison of the wars in the Persian Gulf summarized by variable of the theory.
*Though military victory was achieved, the success was partially fumbled because there was not a negotiated settlement.

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[339] Powell interview, 10 July 2020.
[340] *Ibid*.

The cases of the Persian Gulf War, 1991 and Iraq, 2003 provided an excellent contrast of the effect of civil-military relations on policy and strategy. In the Persian Gulf War case the positive tenor of relations facilitated the development of an effective policy and strategy to secure the political objectives. Conversely, the Iraq case demonstrated how the poor tenor of relations negatively affected the generation of policy and strategy resulting in a failure to secure political objectives. To provide further comparative evidence, the dissertation examined two additional cases in Southeast Asia that provide a stark contrast in validating the theory, Indochina, 1954 and Vietnam, 1964. Throughout the year 1964 the US was locked in a turbulent debate about what to do with the serious and rapidly deteriorating situation in South Vietnam. As deliberations commenced, the state of civil-military relations within the Johnson Administration was already strained since both the President and Secretary of Defense McNamara had little confidence in the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Trust had eroded due to the battles the Joint Chiefs had had with McNamara as he transformed the Pentagon's bureaucracy, as well as previous debates about the use of the military, like during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Accordingly, McNamara sidelined the members of the Joint Chiefs as the Johnson Administration considered options in Southeast Asia.[341] This meant that the Joint Chiefs' preferred option for intervention in South Vietnam did not receive adequate consideration by the president. When the administration published its political objectives in NSAM #288, they were too broad to attain with the commitment of force the president was willing to make at that time to secure them.[342] Thus, the decision to implement graduated pressure to achieve this broad set of political objectives demonstrates a lack of understanding as to what the use of force can accomplish. The decision for graduated pressure, in essence, amounted to a strategy of attrition, for which the Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army were well-suited. The use of attrition was dependent upon military ability to achieve a decisive victory through demonstrating that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army could not beat the US in the field. The best choice for them would then become surrender to US demands. But, winning on the battlefield divorced from the political objectives will not secure a durable cessation of conflict, and is not a strategy. The US did have military success in almost all encounters on the battlefield, yet it failed to win the war since operational excellence does not necessarily equate to a strategy linked to the political objectives. Therefore, a failure to understand how the use of force could secure, or be connected to, the political objectives ensured that the US would not achieve its policy goals. This failure to understand stems in large part from a lack of productive dialogue and debate among the national security team because of the poor state of civil-military relations. Here again in this third case, the state of civil-military relations had a direct and unfortunate effect upon the development of policy and strategy as demonstrated by the loss of the Vietnam War.

A decade earlier, a different administration also grappled with the question of what to do in Indochina. However, at that time the US successfully navigated through the challenge. Why? The primary reason for a better outcome in 1954 vs. 1964 was the tenor of civil-military relations. They were sound and this facilitated better strategic deliberations, in turn producing a sound policy and strategy. Political and military leaders developed a trust that enabled deliberations to proceed with a robust dialogue, considering many options, even though there was a sharp divergence of opinion among the actors.[343] Nevertheless, because the President established an atmosphere in which dissenting opinions had a voice, it enabled him to consider many perspectives. This quality was demonstrated by his meeting with Ridgway.[344] The appreciation that President Eisenhower had for the use of force, as a former military leader himself, acted to prevent adopting political objectives that were unattainable. When presented with the potential cost of making an open-ended intervention in Indochina, the president decided that this was not acceptable. This led to the formulation of political objectives that were narrower and attainable with a smaller commitment and using other instruments of national power.[345] Ultimately,

[341] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 90-91.
[342] National Security Action Memorandum #288, "South Vietnam," 1-2.
[343] Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dien Bien Phu," 354-357.
[344] Ridgway, *Soldier*, 276-277 and Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, 56-57.
[345] Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, I, 106-107, 588, and 605.

Eisenhower decided against the use of force, instead adopting a more nuanced strategy that involved diplomacy, economic aid, and international communications, while at the same time providing some military aid. Without the full dialogue and airing of diverse opinions, the full range of options might not have been considered. The prevailing tenor of sound civil-military relations made this possible and the result was a policy and strategy that worked for the duration of the Eisenhower Administration. (See Table 8.2 for a comparison of the Southeast Asia case studies)

Conflict/Variables	Indochina, 1954	Vietnam, 1964
Trust	Sound, Trust	Poor, Mistrust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Political objectives achievable	Stated political objectives not achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force	Political leaders fail to understand use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Conflict averted and objectives achieved by other means*	Unable to translate success in battle into victory
Strategic Outcome	Secured most political objectives	Failed to secure political objectives

Table 8.2. Comparison of the Indochina crises of 1954 and the Vietnam War, 1964 summarized by variable of the theory.
*The Eisenhower Administration decided against the use of force in favor of a three-pronged policy using other instruments of national power.

All four cases examined support the civil-military relations and policy-strategy relationship theory. In each case the tenor of those relations had a direct effect on the resultant policy and strategy that mirrored the relationship. Where civil-military relations were poor, characterized by acrimony or an effort to sideline dissenting opinion, as in 1964 and 2003, the policy articulated and strategy pursued were correspondingly lacking, resulting in a failure to secure the stated political objectives. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the tenor of civil-military relations has a direct and correlational effect on the strategic deliberations that produce policy and strategy. When relations are poor, the expected policy and strategy will also be of poor quality making it difficult to secure political objectives. When relations are sound the policy and strategy will have better quality making it more likely that an administration can secure its stated political objectives. As a result, success in national security depends upon effective civil-military relations and it is best when those relations are cordial with robust debate and full dialogue, so that they provide the widest range of options for decision-makers. This leads to policy and strategy that is able to better assure desired political objectives. (See Table 8.3 for side-by-side comparison of all case studies)

Conflict/Variables	Indochina, 1954	Vietnam, 1964	Persian Gulf War, 1991	Iraq, 2003

Trust	Sound, Trust	Poor, Mistrust	Excellent, Trust	Poor, Mistrust
Establishing Achievable Political Objectives	Political objectives achievable	Stated political objectives not achievable	Political objectives achievable	Stated political objectives not achievable
Understanding of the Use of Force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force	Political leaders fail to understand use of force	Political leaders have competent understanding of use of force	Political leaders fail to understand use of force
Translates Battlefield Success into Securing of Political Objectives	Conflict averted and objectives achieved by other means*	Unable to translate success in battle into victory	Battlefield success partially translated into victory**	Unable to translate success in battle into victory
Strategic Outcome	Secured most political objectives	Failed to secure political objectives	Secured most political objectives	Failed to secure political objectives

Table 8.3. Variable Comparison for all Case Studies.
*The Eisenhower Administration decided against the use of force in favor of a three-pronged policy using other instruments of national power.
**Though military victory was achieved, the success was partially fumbled because there was not a negotiated settlement.

Even though the civil-military and policy-strategy correlation theory seems valid, all theories have some potential gaps, and the question arises, is it possible that there are scenarios in which poor civil-military relations could nevertheless produce sound policy and strategy to secure political objectives and vice versa? The research does not rule this out. The first potential gap is that this study applies only to civil-military relations within democracies and it would require additional research to determine if the theory is applicable to non-democratic states. The second possibility is that even with poor civil-military relations a strong executive authority can overcome difficulties among the national security team to implement a policy and strategy that works. (See Figure 3.2, upper left quadrant, below for a graphic depiction of the civil-military relations and policy-strategy corollary theory) Further, such a leader would have to remove some individuals to implement his or her policy to prevent subordinates from obstructing the policy and strategy. Peter Feaver points out in his agency theory that obstruction strategies are commonplace when agents are required to execute policy with which they disagree.[346] Nevertheless, a strong, charismatic leader could potentially overcome such efforts to obstruct policy and strategy established by executive authority. One possible example of this dynamic is in the way President Harry Truman asserted himself during the rift in civil-military relations with General Douglas MacArthur over policy and strategy in Korea. MacArthur opposed Truman's policy designed to limit the conflict in Korea to the confines of the peninsula, while MacArthur sought to widen the war by striking targets in China. The General vocalized his opposition to Truman publicly, which threatened to undermine the President's policy. In this case Truman strongly intervened to maintain civil control of the military and ensure the execution of his policy and strategy decisions by firing MacArthur.[347] Feaver calls this "assertive control

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[346] Peter D. Feaver, "An Agency Theory Explanation of American Civil-Military Relations During the Cold War," (Working paper for the Program for the Study in Democracy, Institutions and Political Economy, Duke University, 1997), 2-10.
[347] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 35.

of high conflict situations."[348] Thus, in spite of intense disagreement between the Truman Administration and MacArthur, the president decisively asserted his positional authority to ensure that the military did not obstruct American policy and strategy.[349]

The third possible gap in the theory is that the national security team might have good civil-military relations and yet produce a poor policy and strategy. (See Figure 3.2, lower right quadrant) This phenomenon could arise when there is "strong group cohesion" producing "groupthink" during strategic deliberations. During such instances of decision making by a group there is a lack of diverse perspectives due to common ideology among the actors. During the deliberations few options are considered because the team members coalesce around a single, flawed course of action. A possible example of this occurrence was during the Kennedy Administration when the national security team gave unanimous support to the Bay of Pigs operation.[350] The Bay of Pigs was an attempt to use American trained Cuban exiles to invade Cuba and topple the communist Fidel Castro regime. This policy and strategy with reference to Cuba was an abject failure, though the Kennedy Administration at this early point in his presidency enjoyed good civil-military relations.[351] This type of case could present another weakness in the validity of the theory.
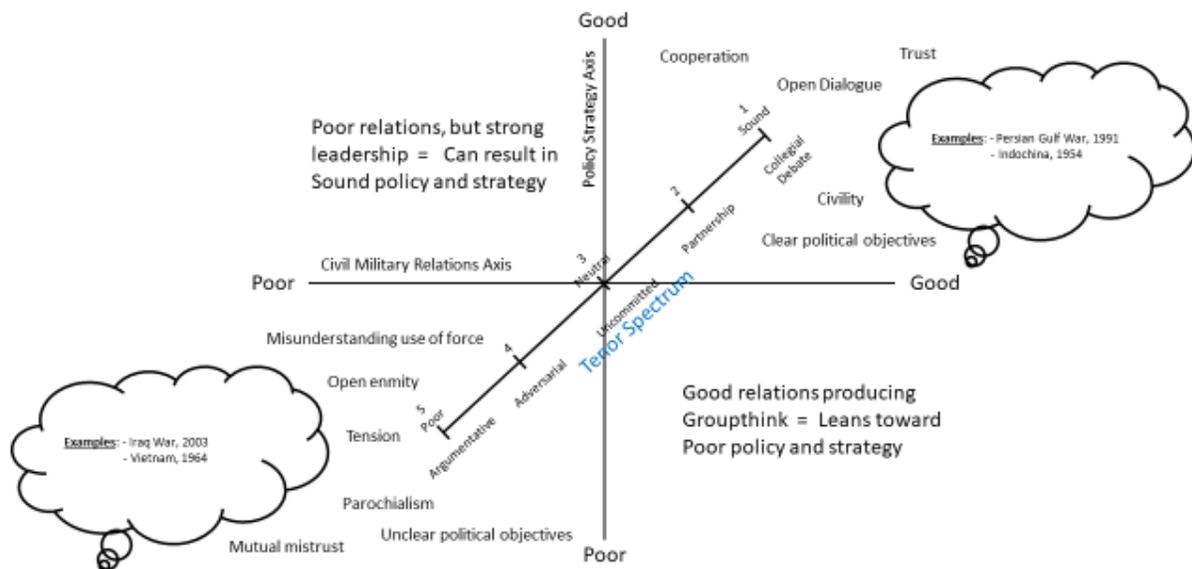

Figure 8.4. The Civil-Military Relations policy & strategy relationship.

The four case studies examined in Chapters 4 through 7 provide support for the validity of the civil-military and policy-strategy alignment theory. This dissertation sought to answer the question, is there a consistent relationship – an alignment – between the tenor of civil-military relations and the

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[348] Peter D. Feaver, *Guarding the Guardians: Civilian Control of Nuclear Weapons in the United States* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), 10-11.

[349] It is arguable that Truman's Korea policy and strategy was successful, but he did maintain positive control over the military and saw his decisions through to fruition.

[350] Robert S. Baron, "So Right It's Wrong: Groupthink and the Ubiquitous Nature of Polarized Group Decision Making," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 37 (2005), 219-221.

[351] This took place in April 1961 less than three months after Kennedy came to the office. The civilian and military leaders were still in the "honeymoon" phase of the civil-military relationship. The Bay of Pigs is the first of several events in the Kennedy Administration that eventually soured civil-military relations in the run up to the Vietnam War.

quality of policy and strategy developed in strategic deliberations? The answer appears to be, yes. In the four major conflict situations reviewed, civil-military relations had a direct and correlational effect upon the policy and strategy produced during strategic deliberations. When civil-military relations were sound, as in 1954 and 1991, the policy and strategy the national security team produced was correspondingly sound and effective. By contrast, when civil-military relations were poor, as in 1964 and 2003, the policy and strategy produced was also poor as the disasters in Vietnam and Iraq show. In each case civil-military relations were the key factor in predicting the policy outcomes from deliberations. While strong leadership can overcome such tenor deficits and excessive groupthink can undermine otherwise sound tenor, these are often exceptions rather than the rule. Indeed, sound tenor – as the model suggests – increases the odds that sound policy will flow from deliberations between decision-makers and senior military officers. The ability of key leaders to assess civil-military relations can enable them to identify how they might affect the production of policy and strategy in a positive manner. Thus, leaders could implement corrective action to facilitate development of policy and strategy that is effective for the US. While not a cure-all for toxic civil-military relations, an intentional emphasis upon tenor in the terms presented in this model – will help nudge both civilian and military leaders towards a more constructive relationship. Lack of such introspection leaves civil-military relations and the important output of these relations, policy and strategy, to chance and indeed ego. This outcome is unacceptable for the US or any other nation.

Implications and Recommendations

Over the last five decades the US has struggled to develop sound policy and strategy in using its military to secure political objectives. The central reason for this difficulty is poor civil-military relations at the national level that began to develop during the Vietnam War and continued to decline in subsequent years, with the exception of the 1980s when civil-military relations made a brief recovery. The decline accelerated in the mid-1990s and hit the lowest point by the mid-2000s in the midst of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are several factors that contributed to this steady fall in civil-military relations, which had a corresponding effect on policy and strategy development. These factors include:

1. The retreat of US academic institutions from the study of war.
2. The starkly contrasting cultures of the political class and military leaders, sowing the seeds of mistrust.
3. The substitution of military excellence, manifested through operational art, for strategy.

The combination of these complex factors disintegrated trust, in turn straining the civil-military accord between political and military leaders. The poor quality of civil-military relations had a corresponding effect on strategic deliberations. The premise of this dissertation is that the quality of civil-military relations is directly proportional to the excellence of strategy derived during strategic deliberations among the actors. Ultimately, the strategic failure depicted in this research is attributable to a breakdown of political and military leaders to build human relationships founded on trust. Until all involved make a concerted effort to rebuild the civil-military relationship and address the factors above, policy and strategy development will continue to suffer. Therefore, there are a few steps political and military leaders – along with interested scholars and experts – can take to reverse the downward slide in civil-military relations, which could in turn improve the quality of strategy development. Failing to act will guarantee continued struggles with detrimental effects for the United States.

Civil-military relations are critically important for every state, regardless of form of government. They represent an expression of the character of the society and the relationship between the political class and military. More importantly, civil-military relations are central to the ability of a state to secure itself. Flowing from civil-military relations is strategy, which is the way that a state determines to secure

itself.[352] Therefore, the ability of any state to formulate sound strategy depends on the tenor of civil-military relations. When civil-military relations are sound the likelihood of producing sound strategy is much greater than when civil-military relations are poor.

To remedy the problem of continued poor civil-military relations and corresponding difficulties with strategy development there are seven things the US can do to "renegotiate the civil-military bargain"[353] in order to improve policy and strategy development. The first thing the US should do is to adopt a new theory of civil-military relations for the 21st century. A host of scholars and strategists ranging from Eliot Cohen, Hew Strachan, and Mackubin Owens have made this assertion that a new theory is required. A new theory of civil-military relations must reflect the international security environment and enable future generations of senior political and military officials to understand that environment to function effectively within it.

A new theory should contain the following elements. It should identify the character of war across the continuum of conflict from below the threshold of war, to low-intensity violence, such as insurgencies, through large-scale, high intensity state vs. state struggles. Such a description gets right to Clausewitz's admonition to understand the kind of war that senior leaders are embarking upon should those leaders adopt a policy to use the instrument of war.[354] Next, "the corner-stone of the whole structure [of a theory should be] the integration of civil and military authorities, not the subordination of the military to political control."[355] As we have seen, central to Huntington's theory of objective control is the subordination of military to political leaders creating a bifurcation of roles and responsibilities.[356] This has the effect of separating the actors when developing strategy at the very point when integration of the actors is critical. Therefore, a new theory must emphasize the need for political and military leaders to act in unison during policy and strategy development to prevent the divergence of purpose we have seen for several decades in strategic design. This leads us to the most critical aspect of a new theory, which is to emphasize that the central purpose of civil-military relations is the production of strategy that must serve policy.[357] Thus, a new theory must contain a full discussion of how civil-military relations work to facilitate the development of policy and strategy.

The second aspect required for renegotiation of the civil-military bargain is to update and reimagine the Goldwater-Nichols Act for the 21st century and include in such an update how the interagency of the US government should function in conjunction with the Department of Defense. Discussions of updating Goldwater-Nichols started in 2002 with the launch of a non-government research project, and later released in 2004, by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) titled *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*. This report in two parts outlines reforms targeted to the post-Cold War national security environment.[358] This effort is one among many calls for reform based upon the observed shortcomings of the original legislation. Among these shortcomings detailed in Chapter 7 are the issues of the service chief's loss of voice in strategic deliberations in favor of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as the primary military adviser to the president, the resulting corporatism of the Joint Chiefs,

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[352] Sapolsky, et al., *US Defense Politics*, 13.

[353] Owens, *U.S. Civil-Military Relations Since 9/11*. This quote of from the subtitle of Owen's book and is central to the thesis of his work.

[354] Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations," 16-17.

[355] Strachan, *The Direction of War*, 91.

[356] Risa Brooks, Jim Golby, and Heidi Urben, "Crisis of Command: America's Broken Civil-Military Relationship Imperils National Security," *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2021). Accessed online 9 April 2021 at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-04-09/national-security-crisis-command. This recently published article notes the continuing bifurcation of roles and responsibilities in civil-military relations in the US and the enduring embrace of Huntington's theory by both senior political and military leaders.

[357] Owens, *US Civil-Military Relations after 9/11*, 49-50.

[358] Clark A. Murdock and Richard W. Weitz, "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: New Proposals for Defense Reform," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 38 (Spring 2005) 34. See the full report by Clark A. Murdock, et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, Phases I and II Reports (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004 and 2005).

and a chain of command that isolates the joint chiefs of staff as it did during the planning for Iraq in 2002-2003. Any restructuring of Goldwater-Nichols should give a voice back to the service chiefs by requiring the submission of strategic estimates and options by the chiefs, the integration of political and military leaders in strategy development, and more thorough professional development of senior military leaders so that they have a balanced military and political education. These recommendations could help ensure provision of effective and useful military advice in a functional civil-military relationship in the future by eliminating the bifurcation of policy and strategy development processes to ensure the integration of the actors with shared responsibilities.[359] Such proposals, such as restructuring budget procedures and eliminating redundancy, are fairly common as recommended by authors like Clark Murdock, Richard Weitz, John Garafano, and Mackubin Owens. Yet other aspects of reform are also critically important.

Evidenced during the planning for Iraq one particular shortfall requires attention in new legislation. In the planning prior to the invasion of Iraq coordination between the Department of Defense and other agencies of the US government was extremely poor, characterized by rivalry and an unwillingness to cooperate and collaborate. Since modern war requires what is now known as a "whole of government approach," it makes sense to include interagency coordination considerations in any update to the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. Such legislation should place responsibility for certain tasks on other agencies of the US government so that the Department of Defense is not the lead agency for all government efforts.[360] Further, bureaucratic impediments requiring permissions for coordination and sharing information must be reduced or eliminated to facilitate effectiveness between agencies and departments. Also, organizations should implement broadening opportunities among leaders working in associated agencies as well as education opportunities. An example of this is allowing military officers to work in other federal agencies or civilian employees in various departments, like the US State Department, attending military staff schools and war colleges.[361] Such steps and others could create better understanding and cooperation among the various departments and agencies to produce better civil-military relations at all levels across the US federal government and institutionalize the trust building and shared lived experience. Political scientists Joel Sokolsky and Shaohan Lin note that leaders who have common education experiences develop a sense of trust that pays dividends when working together to solve real-world problems.[362] The time to act is now to reform Goldwater-Nichols, in order to improve civil-military relations along with the effectiveness of policy and strategy development processes. Again, the purpose of these reforms is to achieve greater integration among the actors so that civil-military relations better reflect the historical reality that Cohen and Strachan describe.

The third step that the US must take to improve civil-military relations to produce better policy and strategy is improve professional military education. The education of military officers in the US is actually quite good as the Department of Defense makes a significant investment in its leaders from an early period, while also providing opportunities to study at leading civilian institutions. In particular, professional military education (PME) is exceptional at the tactical and operational levels of war. Further, the Department of Defense does an excellent job educating officers to perform at the strategic level of war. Despite this, there are two areas of PME that can be improved. First, education for employment at the strategic level comes too late in an officer's career. Second, PME lacks necessary elements of political considerations due to Huntington's admonition to remain apolitical and a paucity of curriculum dealing with human relationships, specifically the need to develop emotional intelligence and

[359] Garofano, "Deciding on Military Intervention," 58-62.

[360] Murdock and Weitz, "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols," 39-40 and Brooks, Golby, and Urben, "Crisis of Command."

[361] Dwayne Wagner and Gus Otto, "Interagency Coordination and Synchronization: Do We Need a Goldwater-Nichols for the Interagency," in *Through the Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Lens: Linking the Strategic Environment and Operational Planning*, David A. Anderson and Heather R. Karambelas, eds. (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2017) 21-29.

[362] Sokolsky and Lin, "Schoolhouses and COCOMs," in *Culture and the Soldier*, H. Christian Breede, ed., 178-179.

the ability to empathize with political leaders' unique challenges.[363] Remedying this issue will require restructuring of the joint senior officer professional military education program. Strategic education should start earlier in a career and it should identify specifically those officers who exhibit particular talent to groom them for duty at this level to gain needed experience. In addition to this, professional military education should include political considerations, in contravention of Huntington, in order to develop awareness and political-strategic acumen before assuming key positions advising strategic leaders.[364] Finally, study in human relations should permeate every level of professional military education. This is exemplified by General Nicholson's admonition that a critical element of this education for senior military leaders is emotional intelligence, which is the awareness of others' emotions and the ability to handle relationships in a judicious and empathetic manner. Senior military leaders can work for multiple administrations and civilian leaders all of whom have different ways in which they give and receive information. Emotional intelligence enables greater understanding of how leaders engage in decision-making. This would facilitate the ability of military officers to effectively tailor the way advice is provided to civilian leaders. Further, emotional intelligence can serve as a function to cultivate good tenor with intractable personalities in strategic deliberations. Use of emotional intelligence case studies at the war colleges and in the joint strategic education program for general officers known as CAPSTONE[365] can help develop such skills and in the long run improve relations between the actors.[366]

As important as professional military education is for military officers, education for civilian leaders is also critical. This civilian need provides the fourth recommendation to improve civil-military relations. In the 1990s military defense expertise in terms of education and experience began to exceed civilian skills as opportunity for education and military service among politicians and civil servants declined. This had the effect of creating an element of intimidation from military leaders apparently "greater competence and political sophistication" in national defense matters. This knowledge imbalance had negative consequences for civil-military relations, as it exacerbated tensions and mistrust due to perceived unequal levels of national security competence.[367] To regain education and experience balance between the actors there are several things the Department of Defense can do for both political appointees and elected officials involved in national security. First, it is time for the Department of Defense to reintroduce an old program in which some of the country's elite universities run defense seminars in security studies for appointees of significant promise to develop these leaders. Second, DoD can seek to employ young students and junior faculty from top colleges in internships in DoD for practical experience in defense policy and strategy making. This would enable future civilian leaders to gain practical defense experience. Finally, Gibson and Snider suggest that the National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, DC start a program for elected officials. National Defense University, the premier war college in the professional military education system, could run a course or seminar incorporating both military leaders and elected officials that provides education both in theory and practice in national

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[363] Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations," 16-17; Coletta and Crosbie, "The Virtues of Military Politics," 2; Interview with protected source, 21 July 2020; Powell interview, 10 June 2020; and Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020. Each of the retired 4-star leaders expressed the sentiment that strategic education comes too late in an officer's career and General Nicholson focused on the need for greater focus on human relationships and emotional intelligence.

[364] Coletta and Crosbie, "The Virtues of Military Politics," 2-6 and Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations," 25-26.

[365] CAPSTONE is the name of the initial professional military education for new flag officers in the US military. Its purpose is to prepare the newest senior leaders for the challenges they will face at the strategic level. These officers receive some strategic PME at the various war colleges, but this occurs at the colonel/captain level of an officer's career. By this point an officer has served twenty to twenty-two years focused at the tactical level of war. This is far too late for leaders who must now interact with political leaders in working through complex problems involved with policy and strategy development. CAPSTONE serves as an advanced refresher of the strategic concepts introduced at the war colleges.

[366] Nicholson interview, 10 June 2020.

[367] Gibson and Snider, "Civil-Military Relations and the Potential to Influence," 212.

security practitioners.[368] Elected officials, who have a wide array of civilian experience could benefit from such focused study on national security to elevate discussions and deliberations on defense policy and strategy. In turn military leaders would benefit from gaining an appreciation of political considerations that have an impact upon policy and strategy. The war colleges and CAPSTONE can add curriculum to develop political literacy. It might take time to see the benefits of such programs, but over time they could lift the competence and experience of civilian officials to create a balance between the actors who have a common understanding of security issues and use the same language when communicating. This would go a long way toward rebuilding trust among the actors because, through common education, the civilian and military leaders would gain a shared perspective.[369] Ultimately, this could have positive effects on civil-military relations and a corresponding rise in the quality of defense policy and strategy.

Another related aspect that could improve civil-military relations is for American academia to become reengaged in military history, war studies, and strategic studies in political science departments. Perhaps the provision of financial incentives could help induce academia to become more engaged in the study of such disciplines. The opportunities for Americans – civilian or military – to gain advanced degrees in these disciplines is limited for a nation the size of the US with an extensive college and university system. Before the Vietnam War such opportunities for study in the defense and security disciplines was more readily available. Many elite and reputable colleges and universities provided offerings, including advanced degrees. These opportunities had been trending upward since World War II due to a combination of patriotism and interest in military history following that conflict and the emergence of the Cold War. This in turn, produced a need for leaders to gain expertise in war disciplines.[370] The turmoil of the Vietnam War, and perceived military and political immoralities associated with it, led to anti-war protests on campuses around the US. This caused college administrations to eliminate Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs and reduce studies in military topics in the 1970s. One scholar noted that by removing programs in military disciplines "[I]t is almost as if they [colleges] hoped that by ignoring war, they might eliminate it altogether."[371] Obviously, this is wishful thinking. Eventually, the lack of academic study opportunities combined with the declining levels of military service by political leaders became manifest in the 1990s as most political leaders were novices in military affairs and national security matters. This lack of knowledge only enhanced extant suspicions, added to tensions, and deepened mistrust between political leaders – like those in the Clinton Administration – and the military professionals who were supposed to advise them. The poor quality of policy and strategy in the 1990s and beyond demonstrate the corollary between civil-military relationships and the output – policy and strategy – of these interactions.

Another way that the US could improve civil-military relations is to reemphasize the diplomatic, information, and economic instruments of national power, rather that overusing the military instrument. This would mean reintroducing the Powell Doctrine and gaining a clear understanding of its tenets versus the misinterpretations that attached to its original articulation. As several scholars like Rosa Brooks have noted, the military has become the primary instrument of national power for a wide variety of problems facing the US, many of which the military instrument is ill-suited to solve. Other tools, such as diplomatic or economic instruments, are far better suited to address specific problems arising in the 21st century. This requires the US to act more judiciously with national power and consider the use of all instruments by applying the appropriate tools to complex problems. Further, the military instrument

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[368] *Ibid*., 212-213 and Brooks, Golby, and Urben, "Crisis of Command." The authors of this article note that a major problem with civil-military relations is the lack of education and training of civilian professional staffers in the Department of Defense who oversee the development of policy and execution of those policies.
[369] Sokolsky and Lin, "Schoolhouses and COCOMs," in *Culture and the Soldier*, H. Christian Breede, ed., 178-179. This essay notes that education opportunities assist in bridging cultural gaps leading to a trusting relationship among individuals from disparate backgrounds.
[370] Downs and Murtazashvili, *Arms and the University*, 298-301.
[371] *Ibid*., 299-302.

should only be used when the other instruments and options are exhausted. The original Powell Doctrine – not the manner by which it became misinterpreted over time – provides leaders with a graduated response for the consideration of application of the military instrument. It is not meant to limit civilian leaders. Rather, it encourages politicians and military leaders to review all options before resorting to the military instrument.[372] This approach would also facilitate fuller discussions and deliberations about policy and strategy thereby enhancing civil-military relations.

While the six recommendations identified above could go a long way toward restoring civil-military relations, there is one more thing that both actors must work on together to move things in the right direction. That is, political and military leaders have to rebuild the now defunct bond of trust necessary for sound civil-military relations. Trust is not quantifiable nor a tangible factor in civil-military relationships. Yet without trust, civil-military relations are difficult and produce poor quality policy and strategy as these examples demonstrate. Trust underpins all sound human relationships and therefore, political and military leaders need to develop trust to facilitate good civil-military relations. Along these lines there are several things that each actor in the civil-military bargain can do to build trust and restore the civil-military relationship. According to historian Richard Kohn, political leaders can develop an understanding of the military and its culture and treat military leaders and institutions with respect while at the same time holding them responsible for their actions. Military leaders must provide unvarnished advice that incorporates an understanding of political considerations. At the same time, military leaders must avoid politicization and activities like leaking to the press or slow-rolling, which undermines the trust of political leaders in their military advisers.[373]

Trust in human relationships is critical to developing good civil-military relations, and from these should flow effective strategic deliberations producing sound policy and strategy. Thus, time spent building trust is worth the cost if it produces better civil-military relations. One thing is certain, and that is, if the actors make no effort to develop a trusting relationship it will perpetuate the poor civil-military relations we have seen for several decades, and with it, continued struggles in national security policy and strategy formulation.

The US has suffered from a strategic malaise since the Vietnam War that is attributable to deteriorating civil-military relations during that time. Multiple historical examples bear out the fact that poor strategy outcomes are linked to correspondingly poor civil-military relations.[374] Therefore, it stands to reason that the first step to improving policy and strategy outcomes is to improve civil-military relations. All participants must take steps toward improving these relations for the sake of the country and its people. As strategist Colin Gray pointed out though, "there is no 'promised land' in the future" that will guarantee the improvement of the "the practice of strategy."[375] Yet US political and military leaders are obligated to develop civil-military relations that will result in effective strategic deliberations to advance the vital interests of the nation. Anything less than their best effort in this respect is unacceptable.

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[372] Powell interview, 8 July 2020.

[373] *Ibid*., 274-281; Kohn, "Building Trust," in *American Civil-Military Relations*, 274-275 and 284-285; and Brooks, Golby, and Urben, "Crisis of Command." These authors reinforce Kohn's recommendations, with special emphasis on military leaders resisting politicization.

[374] Hoffman, "Dereliction of Duty *Redux*," 218.

[375] Gray, *The Future of Strategy*, 79.

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Interviews

Colonel Kevin M. Benson, U.S. Army retired. Former Chief of Plans, 3rd Army and US Army Central
(ARCENT) (Combined Forces Land Component Command for Operation Iraqi Freedom).

General John W. Nicholson, Jr., U.S. Army retired. Former strategist for General Eric Shinseki, June
2001 – June 2002 and military aide to the Secretary of the Army, June 2002 – June 2003.

General Colin Powell, U.S. Army retired. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of
State of the United States.

Interview with protected source. This interview took place on 21 July 2025 with a senior official in the
Department of Defense who served over the course of several presidential administrations. This
official granted the author the permission to use his ideas but, requested anonymity and non-
attribution of quotations.

Appendix

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1 – Colonel (Retired) Kevin Benson, former Chief of Plans, 3rd Army. The 3rd Army served as the Joint Force Land Component Command for the opening phases of the Iraq War, 2003

Conducted on 3 June 2020

Interview began with a brief description of the dissertation to the interviewee followed by a confirmation of Colonel Benson's duty position during the timeframe of the planning effort for the Iraq War, 2003, known as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Question #2 (Author): You served as the chief of plans for US Army Central (3rd Army), which became the combined forces land component command (CFLCC) for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). In that capacity, you oversaw the drafting of plans for the operation. When was the command, and your shop, alerted to begin working on plans for the invasion?

Answer Question #2 (Colonel Benson): C5 [plans staff directorate] at CFLCC was notified almost immediately after 9-11. I didn't arrive at 3rd Army until June of '02, so when I got there they had been hard at work with Afghanistan and Iraq upon my arrival.

Me: From what I've heard and read, the date that gets pinned down is November 27, 2001. That's the written order. The order was simply the trigger that set the thing in motion.

Colonel Benson: This is just anecdotal. On 12 September [2001] I called 3rd Army because I already knew it was going to be my follow-on assignment. I was in a fellowship program at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] instead of going to Carlisle [the Army War College]. General [Paul] Mikolashek, who was 3rd Army commander at the time, he's the guy who hired me. I called him and asked him essentially if he needed me immediately (the conversation went seriously on an unsecured line) and he told me no, stay in school, you know what's coming next.

Me: I'm sure he had a little bit of insider information.

Colonel Benson: I'm sure that he did.

Me: When did General [David] McKiernan take command?

Colonel Benson: He took command in late August or early September 2002.

Question #3 (Author): What were the major points of emphasis for the planning effort? From what I have read, the real effort was on Phases I-III of the operation and Phase IV Stabilization got short shrift.

Answer Question #3 (Colonel Benson): When I joined the headquarters, this is my second assignment with 3rd Army, I had been there as a lieutenant colonel. The first question after I met my folks [in the plans shop] and I am not making this up, to my senior planner lieutenant colonel, now Colonel (retired) Tom Riley was, "what do we do after we get to Baghdad? Who is working on that?" He said, "Sir, we're not working on that." So, I asked him, "what are you working on?" He said, as he handed me a piece of paper on Xerox (I don't have a copy of this, I am sure Tom does) and it said, "we have a brigade on the ground, why can't we go now?" [signed] Wolfowitz [Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense] And, I laughed because I thought they were busting my ass. I mean these folks had sandbags under their eyes and they had the planner's stare and I laughed thinking this is my kind of outfit. I love these people

already. I am the new colonel, nobody knows me and they are busting my chops right off the bat. And, he didn't laugh. He looked at me and said, "Sir, that's what we are working on."

Me: so, the brigade that's in Kuwait, Wolfowitz wanted to go now [June 2002].

Colonel Benson: It was a serious question, and yes. So, that was my introduction. So, we were working on phases 1, 2, and 3 [these are the phases of a combat operation in which the plan discusses deployment, preparation, and execution of combat operations] – but, what headquarters [3rd Army] and CENTCOM [Central Command] were working on was answering queries emanating from OSD [the Office of the Secretary of Defense] and the White House [like the one from Under Secretary Wolfowitz noted above]. And, that's what we were doing. That was the state of play and so, the focus of the main effort really at the time was developing the time phased force deployment list [TPFDL or TPFDD] and that was really important because we had to sequence in the units in a progression so that there is time to go through all of the reception, staging, integration, and onward movement [know in military parlance as JRSOI]. The first effort was to establish a large enough force to begin the fight because the expectation was, we were going to be told to start because we had a brigade on the ground. "Why can't we start now?" We were told to plan for an earlier start [to combat operations] than we were ready for. So, the TPFDD effort was quite important.

Me: I have read that Secretary [Donald] Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were very involved in tweaking the TPFDD.

Colonel Benson: Yes, they were. For example, in January of '03 we developed, based on the standing planning factors that I learned in staff college and AMSP [the School of Advanced Military Studies advanced military studies program for majors], what the 4th Division [Infantry] should look like if it's going in with just the 4th ID. [This division was attached to a British corps that was supposed to enter Iraq through Turkey] The 4th ID was part of the northern effort, which was going to be headed by the British corps headquarters with a British division, the 4th ID, and the 2nd ACR [armored cavalry regiment] under the command of the JSOTF [joint special operations task force]. The effort just ballooned back and forth, but we put in the request for forces (RFF) for the 4th ID to be reinforced. So, you would figure the division with reinforcing FA [field artillery] Brigades and it went from us to CENTCOM to FORSCOM [US Army Forces Command].

Me: So, CENTCOM was good with this?

Colonel Benson: the CENTCOM boys and girls were so engaged in answering odd ball questions from OSD that they would just accept from me what they could, when they could. So, it went up to the Army Staff [in the Pentagon] and they didn't ask any questions. We prefaced it [the RFF] with the standard planning factors [that Colonel Benson notes above]. We don't know what kind of resistance [from the enemy]. I can tell you how long it is going to take to get to the port of Escandera [Turkey], then by rail to Batman [a forward operating base] in Turkey, and then road march down and all that stuff to the gates [Turkish-Iraqi border], and then attack. But, we don't know when we are going to get the word [to go into combat], so here is our request to build the force. And, the reply back from a friend of mine on the Joint Staff [in the Pentagon] was that the number [of personnel and equipment] is too big. So, I said, "OK, what is the force cap?" And, I got the sucking intake of breath. "Hey, there is no force cap." Nobody ever said that. So, I said, "OK, fine. Then tell me a number." That was the reality of what we were doing.

Me: The civilian leadership was so adamant about forcing the military to accept their vision of the future of war that they used Iraq as a sort of experiment to prove that their vision was correct?

Colonel Benson: When General Mikolashek told me what we started with [numbers for planning the operation], I started to investigate along those lines to learn about what the policy makers were thinking. Recall that before 9-11 we were talking about reducing the Army to nine divisions. It was the new expectation of warfare, at least their vision, them being the policy makers' vision. Now what else. Well, there was that book Eliot Cohen wrote called *Supreme Command*, which I am convinced Secretary Rumsfeld never read that book. I am convinced somebody read it for him and gave him a one page fact sheet on it that essentially boiled down to statesmen need to ask their military people annoying questions to make them think outside the box. Judging from the tenor of the questions and all the VTCs [video teleconferences] I sat in on with Rumsfeld, et al, that is my impression. Again, I have no proof, there is no documentation, just my reflection.

Me: From what I have read, Rumsfeld believed the military was out of control because of what happened in the Clinton Administration and he wanted the military brought back under civilian control.

Colonel Benson: Oh, yeah. Absolutely, I remember that. I mean, yeah, because there was the [General Barry] McCaffrey incident and all those other things. I recall that too.

Question #4 (Author): What was General McKiernan's guidance for the planning effort?

Answer Question #2 (Colonel Benson): Because we were responding to what the administration or the secretary was directing, even if I didn't know that officially, we did not get a lot of guidance from General McKiernan initially. That was my impression after talking with General Mikolashek. We were going to start the fight with the 1st MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] as the sole command and control headquarters with 3rd ID and 1st Marine Division under its command and control sometime after An-Nasiriya [a town in Iraq]. This is what we were wargaming. Between forward movement and force flow, 5th Corps headquarters would be introduced and then we would split into a two corps advance to Baghdad and that was what my commander wanted. So, OK, we will continue to plan for that. Then, the curveball was thrown in. I don't mean to use that deliberately, that was a curveball. Then, we learned of this northern axis of advance, but that was still going to be when 4th ID or whatever [plus the British corps], came directly under CFLCC command and control. That's what we were working on. McKiernan came in and said, "we're going to cross the line of departure with two corps headquarters, as much of the 1st MEF, and as much of the 5th Corps as we can get in before we're told to go." That is the direction [from McKiernan] for the [planning] effort. And so [the planning effort amounted to], the five different versions of the TPFDD, we were doing the plan [for combat operations], and we were responding to the "snowflakes" [see Nicholson interview for description of "snowflakes"] that came down to us. So, that's what we were doing once McKiernan took command. That was great.

Me: General McKiernan had a vision of what forces were required. Did he run afoul of anyone based on this vision?

Colonel Benson: No, we did not at the time [late summer 2002]. We were working with the apportioned forces [those designated to CENTCOM for operations in the area of responsibility], for OPLAN [operations plan] 1003. The apportioned force less another headquarters because the 18th [Airborne Corps] was committed [at that time, the 18th Airborne Corps was in Afghanistan serving as the joint task force in charge of operations in that theater]. As the conventional forces plus all of the enabling forces under the theater support command, like 32nd AAMDC [air and missile defense command], so we did not have a problem with the amount of forces. The problem was in convincing OSD to let us flow all of the forces in.

Me: Did you ever hear from OSD what the logic was for not flowing those forces in?

Colonel Benson: Not in so many words. What was communicated via [Air Force] Major General [Victor] Renuart, who was J3 [operations directorate] at CENTCOM, he was the key player on that staff, no question. He was [General Tommy] Franks go-to guy. Renuart told us that the Secretary, in a meeting he was in, said that the president has not yet taken a decision for war. Therefore, we are going to use the request for forces [RFF] process for everything that goes into theater until the president takes the decision to go to war. So, the next words were to not use the TPFDD with just one decision on everything that flowed. It was going to be individual decisions for every RFF. So, the work that we did, finding the time-phased force deployment dates came in handy as we developed the individual RFFs build around the divisions, corps support troops and all that.

Me: So, what that did was allow the Secretary through a bureaucratic mechanism to become personally involved with decisions for a deployment of each individual unit. The TPFDD was an automatic, single decision about forces, but RFFs require individual decisions.

Colonel Benson: Exactly, which is one decision [TPFDD] then everything goes.

Me: So, in his mind [Rumsfeld] that is civilian control.

Colonel Benson: That's right. After we got done wailing and gnashing of teeth, and generating stomach acid, that was the line I took with the guys. OK, this is the state of play that we have to deal with, so now it's more important to figure out how to sequence forces, who we want, when, and we go back to wargaming.

Question #5 (Author): CFLCC took the lead in planning on behalf of CENTCOM for Phase IV, post-hostility operations, although CENTCOM drew up OPLAN IRAQI RECONSTRUCTION. How extensive was the OPLAN and was it useful for developing CFLCCs plans for Phase IV?

Answer Question #5 (Colonel Benson): That was a specified task to us in the CENTCOM campaign plan.

Me: The CFLCC was working on this [Phase IV plan], but it should have been one piece of an overarching interagency plan. So, what other planning was occurring and by who?

Colonel Benson: That is correct. First of all, CENTCOM developed a chart that was titled 511-16-125. It showed the CENTCOM phases I through IV. Our Phase III ended once Bagdad was invested. We envisioned, McKiernan said this and I absolutely agreed with him that Phase IV is a rolling Phase IV. First, in the CFLCC zone and then the entire country and so everyone's in Phase III on D-Day, H-Hour, then on D-Day, H-Hour plus five minutes. The lead elements are in Phase III, but the trail is in Phase IV, which in the vernacular of the time was Support and Stability operations. So, in our Phase III of our major combat operations plan there were stability and support operations tasks in Phase III for both the Corps and the MEF, and then, 32nd TSC [Theater Support Command]. Phase IV, with that as guidance, I didn't ask for any more guidance from General McKiernan frankly. He told me to figure it out and I accepted that as trust. I would periodically update him until we got into the new year [2003]. And then, we became more and more drawn into getting the forces we needed to get to start the fight established and all the things that general officers were drawn into and I did not have to deal with because I was not a flag officer.

Me: So, General McKiernan knew that to secure the victory you had to do certain things – support and stability tasks [what current doctrine calls consolidation] – in order to secure the gains.

Colonel Benson: Yes, Yes. General McKiernan I think he had a broad understanding, he continually told me to think operationally. I came in, I knew it was not going to be that difficult to downplay getting to

Baghdad. I knew that it wasn't going to be that difficult. It was the Phase IV, removing of the regime and reestablishing a new government, and all of the policy objectives that were listed in the CENTCOM campaign plan that would be difficult. The key was security and the other thing is, which helped us initially, was in the CENTCOM campaign plan, 1003V, Phase IV, as rough as it was. As outlined, it had three sub-phases and CFLCC, 3rd Army participation ended at Phase IVa. So, when we wrote Cobra II and then subsequent to that, Eclipse 2, what we were looking at was what did the endstate conditions look like. Then, we owe the headquarters that followed on and will establish control a good handover to civil control in [phase] IVc. And, so that was the focus of all the wargaming that we did.

Question #6 (Author): Did General McKiernan have concerns about CENTCOMs planning for Phase IV, and if so, how did he attempt to mitigate it.?

Answer Question #6 (Colonel Benson): and he did honest to God and I took this again as an expression of trust. He never really raised anything about Phase IV with me. He never really did and I recognized why. It's because the snowflakes started to come. They really were. We were being bombarded.

Me: What were the questions in those snowflakes?

Colonel Benson: They ranged from, we have one brigade, can we go now? to, have you given any consideration to Arab troops occupying the Arab holy sites in Iraq? And, we had to go back and say, "well, first, no Arab nation has offered up any troops. So, Mr. Secretary, we'd love to have some, please help." Every one of those [snowflakes] takes away from the [planning] effort. So, where we go with the Arab troops, "Mr. Secretary, you do realize that any nation that might contribute troops are all Sunni while the holy sites are Shi'a?" So, it all boils down to cultural understanding, which the civilian leadership lacked. Though the military has a reputation for lacking it, this is not the case. We were really thinking about that stuff [cultural], we really were.

Me: Who else was thinking about that?

Colonel Benson: Sadly, I don't think anyone was. That's probably incorrect, in fact, I know it's incorrect. I learned much later there was a Marine Colonel from the Marine Corps Reserve who had been an FBI agent and he was the guy who was doing all of the research on how do we recover the art treasures that had been looted. I can't remember his name, but I didn't know that he was in theater. He was at CENTCOM headquarters.

Me: So, it wasn't that there was a lack of planning, it was where the emphasis was placed?

Colonel Benson: Exactly correct. Segway – I heard about the "Future of Iraq Study" that State [Department of State] put together in the fall of 2002 and man I wanted that. So, through my friends on the Joint Staff – I won't use their names – and on the Army Staff, they sent me by courier six CDs that were stuffed and they said this is not all of the output of the "Future of Iraq Study." It's what we think is most salient for your effort. "Gee, thanks," I said and [my friend replied] "Kevin, don't let anyone know you've got this. It will cost you your career. And, please don't let anybody know you got it from me."

Me: that's indicative of civil-military relations because you are not going to be successful without a whole of government approach and it seemed that you were purposely prevented from doing the needed cross-coordination. Why wouldn't the left hand talk to the right hand?

Colonel Benson: I don't know. [General] Jay Garner, General Garner, sent me a letter that he had and it was in long hand on presidential memo paper that said in words to the effect that, "To all departments and agencies of the US government: Lieutenant General Garner is my personal representative for the

organization ORHA [Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance]." Wow, sir, this is really powerful. And he said, "it's not worth a shit." He said it just like that. And I said, "you're kidding." And he said, "everybody else like USAID said 'so what'."

So, Phase IV McKiernan said he trusted me to get after it. He brought in a general officer for every staff section, but the G5 and I really appreciated that. He said, "Kevin's my planning." That rubbed [General] JD Thurman raw a little bit. He could never figure out how there was a colonel who wasn't working for him.

Question #9 (Author): What did CFLCC consider to be the minimum forces required for Phase IV? Was CFLCC and CENTCOM pressured to keep forces capped at or below a certain level?

Answer Question #9 (Colonel Benson): It was because I was planning on all of the apportioned forces until the Secretary [instituted the RFF process]. At first, we had to justify why we needed the 1st Armor Division, wasn't the British armor division the equivalent? The answer was, yes, but that's under national control and the British are not going to let it come to Baghdad, so we need a force in Baghdad.

Me: Shouldn't the civilians have understood this problem?

Colonel Benson: Evidently not. And, again, this is just my impression based on talks with friends of mine – OSD and all the military guys – it was, they could not – they being the Army officers that I had a relationship with – they could not raise those topics to the Secretary [Rumsfeld]. The answers had to come from the field. So, I'm [Rumsfeld] not listening to anyone, any of the military guys here on my personal staff, the Joint Staff, and the Army Staff. It's got to come from the field. So, that was the trickle-down effect of this. We were going like this, we're doing wargames, but you've got to answer this. That was the reality.

Question #17 (Author): What was your sense of how civil-military relations affected the planning process? Either positively or negatively? If negative, how so?

Answer Question #17 (Colonel Benson): It truly, I had no way of knowing really. The one interaction about "Don't let anyone know you got this thing from State, this will cost you your career," I'm thinking, I'm never going to get a brigade [command], I'm never going to be a GO [general officer] so, what career?" That was the only indicator I had, honest to God mate. I was so busy that I really wasn't thinking about what was going on in [Washington] DC. We were trying to wargame Phase IV and that phase was the most complex thing that kept bringing in this group, that group from the Iranians, and the intelligence service from the Syrians, and the Turks are operating up north, and we were getting hit with "how are you guys going to stop the Turks?" For one, they are NATO allies for God's sake and so the only guys [civilians] that I worked with were from the CIA.

Me: Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz get a lot of credit for being "in the know" in military affairs, but it seems that there is a lot they didn't know.

Colonel Benson: Yes, but I think that's our fault. We need to get better at giving military advice. As professional officers we did not know how to talk to policy makers. I'm absolutely convinced of that. We did not know how to give politically aware military advice and that's the mantra that I preached the four years that I was the director of SAMS [the School of Advanced Military Studies]. You guys and gals [majors] are going to serve at the division level, but you fellows [colonels] are going to serve at the strategic level. How do you guys talk to a politician? And, how do you talk to the 20-something policy staffer from the SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee] and HASC [House Armed Services Committee]? We really tried to introduce stuff like that at SAMS because I'm really convinced we didn't

know how to do that. I'll give you an example. It was in one of the VTCs I was in. The Secretary was there, the Chairman [of the Joint Chiefs] was there. Then, the Secretary was called out to go to a meeting. Then, the Chairman leaves and now we were down to one of the other assistant secretaries and he was talking about, we're going to find the smoking gun [of Iraqi nuclear sites], we're going to establish the Iraq study group, we're going to find all this WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. I thought there was WMD there, I really did. But, then he started reeling off names of reserve units and I never had an occasion to be brave in my career on the battlefield. My two incidents that I call my bravery were, one, was during a secure VTC because I was in Kuwait and I hit the button to say, "excuse me, Mr. Secretary, Colonel Benson, J5, 3rd Army, CFLCC, all of those units you just mentioned were called up under presidential reserve call-up. They are ending their legally mandated time and we have to send them back to the states. This is the law under which they were activated. We can't use them much beyond September of that year [2003]." And, if looks could kill, I'd be dead. That guy just did not want to hear that and a couple of general officers on the Joint Staff kind of jumped in and said "we have got that Mr. Secretary." He never answered me.

The other time was this. Douglas Feith, 25 March 2003, this is the first time I ever hear [the term] de-Ba'athification and that tells an interesting story. General John Abazaid [director of Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff at that time] had just finished a masterful talk about how we were going to deal with the Ba'ath Party and the Iraqi Army. It was brilliant. And, Feith, because Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz had left the room with the Chairman, he leaned into the microphone and said that the policy of the United States government is de-Ba'athification. Just like that. I thought to myself, "I wonder what the hell that means." And so, I said, "excuse me Mr. Secretary, Colonel Benson, 3rd Army, J5, we are working on Phase IV plans, could I have some clarification on what that means?" Abazaid jumped in and said, "I've got that, Kevin." Because, you know, during an SVTC [secure video teleconference] all the cameras come to you and so it was Abazaid saving me. But, once again the Secretary never answered.

Me: That is interesting. The civilian leaders needed to define that because the initial thought was de-Ba'athification was only the senior leaders because you need the lower level party members to keep the country running.

Colonel Benson: That's what we thought, we being uniformed members [military]. Ambassador [Paul] Bremer was the guy who issued the two orders that dissolved the Iraqi army and abolished the Ba'ath Party. Every member of the Ba'ath Party, you're out.

Me: When you get rid of every party official you suddenly have a huge vacuum.

Colonel Benson: Yes, what the hell do we do now?

Question #8 (Author): How much emphasis was placed on wrapping up Phase III Major Combat Operations rapidly? Executing and wrapping up Phase IV?

Answer Question #8 (Colonel Benson): It was huge. We'd, I don't remember the precise day, it was the day that the Secretary came to Baghdad and before the Secretary arrived, [General Tommy] Franks had his photo ops moment with all of his commanders sitting on the sofa in the palace by the airport all smoking cigars. Then the Secretary blew in and blew out. I got a call from a guy named Terry Moran, who is a civilian who worked directly for McKiernan [as a political adviser]. It started out with, "Kevin, go secure. Are you sitting down?" "Yes." "The CINC [commander-in-chief Franks] just said take as much risk going out as you did going in. I want the 3rd Division home by the end of August." This was in June.

Me: Did the guy give you any inkling as to why?

Colonel Benson: No, We didn't have Saddam [i.e. captured him], we don't have Uday, we don't have Qusay [Saddam's sons], we don't have any of the deck of 52 [most wanted Iraqis]. WTH? I believe that one of the things we were up against was no matter how good our military advice would have been or politically aware, I really do believe that the senior players and civilian policy makers had already made up their minds that this is how Iraq was going to go. And, that they would be able to pay for reconstruction because they'll be able to sell oil and democracy will bloom and we will just be able to leave. I think that Rumsfeld was so fixed [on this outcome] that they were not admitting other pesky things like, you know, under the Geneva-Hague Convention we were the occupying power, even though we're not supposed to use that word. Occupying power means you are responsible for reestablishing civil governance.

Question #11 (Author): What was CFLCCs reaction to the decision to cancel the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to the theater? What effect did this have on the ability to transition from Phase III to Phase IV?

Answer Question #11 (Colonel Benson): We were gob smacked. Really, we still had to have a force to go into Baghdad and that's another story. And, there was a real press then to try to get more of a coalition of the willing to pony up. I thought we needed 250,000 troops, 20 brigades, which is about 100,000 and 150,000 combat support and combat service support troops. So, General [Eric] Shinseki said, when he said about 250,000, I said, "man, that was General Shinseki, I am doing OK." So, what can the Brits [British] bring? What can the Spanish, what can the Poles, God, who can we get? Anybody else to try to establish a degree of control. The Marines were getting out as quickly as they could. They really were. I was kind of steamed at the Marines frankly. Their big thing was we have to reestablish the MEU [marine expeditionary unit] flotation, but that's just three Marine rifle battalions. The Marines got out of there as quickly as possible. They were un-assing.

Me: Is this residue from the Powell Doctrine? [The misinterpreted tenet to have an exit strategy]

Colonel Benson: It could be. I don't know for sure. I really think it was folks getting advice or guidance from other places. The Commandant [of the Marine Corps] wanted to get his corps personnel out of Iraq. It's not that the Army wanted to stay. It's just that all of us traditionally educated planners who were looking at Geneva-Hague and at the policy objectives, that were actually pretty well stated in the campaign plan, how do you attain those with an ever shrinking number of Americans? Every national contingent [from the coalition] has its national caveats. Ambassador Bremer has just dis-established the Iraqi army. So, yeah, we were concerned about Phase IV and then it was, and I still don't know the why of this, maybe because the administration wanted to demonstrate that it was meeting all of its objectives. So, suddenly we go from 3rd Army, who's [designated as] CJTF-7 [Combined Joint Task Force 7] within less than a month and hand that mission over to 5th Corps. 3rd Army will leave and 5th Corps you're only going to stay until August to get everybody out.

Question #12 (Author): What were your concerns about the planning process overall?

Answer Question #12 (Colonel Benson): Honest to God, the planning process, I think, it worked. We did follow the MDMP [military decision making process] and JOPES [Joint Operation Planning and Execution System]. My problem with the process was the education of the officers. It was, we were a field army – a term I used before it was in vogue – we had two corps headquarters under our control plus a TSC [theater support command] and all these other theater assets that were land components. The staff college graduates from distance learning or resident [were deficient]. I asked everybody, "hey, Mikey,

how does a division fight?" And, you would get a blank stare. Or, "hey, Chuck, to whom are we writing when we write our major OPLAN [operations plan]?" "What do you mean Colonel B?" You know, two echelons down below a field army is a division and we have to envision how those divisions are going to fight to give tasks to corps commanders. That was my concern with the process. The spillover of this is, how do we talk to House and Senate staffers?

Me: This is a large part of civil-military relations, we are not preparing these guys [majors] for interactions with staffers and politicians to give politically astute military advice.

Colonel Benson: Never. I did not. Interagency to me at that time was a process that resided in Washington. I did not see any other civilians ever except the CIA. So really, I have no idea [about providing military advice to politicians]. Again, I did not know about it until after I got back to SAMS that I learned about the Marine Colonel and his interagency group that was going to restore looted Iraqi antiquities and artwork. And, there was an effort, ORHA, under General Garner, that had some State folks. They were brought in kind of late. I was working with them, but they were in the hotel by the seashore [in Kuwait] and it was an effort just to get to them.

Question #14 (Author): Transition point. Were there tensions between CENTCOM and CFLCC over planning for OIF, and Phase IV in particular?

Answer Question #14 (Colonel Benson): Not really. There really was not. At least from where I sat. We all knew each other. Oddly enough, we went to all of the TPFDD conferences at Scott Air Force Base. They would come up to us as often as they could. I went back to Qatar to see them and on a regular basis we talked every day. We didn't have any problems.

Question #15 (Author): What was your sense of the civil-military relations environment at the time? In particular, what was the tenor of relations between CENTCOM and OSD, CJCS and the Army?

Answer Question #15 (Colonel Benson): Again, anecdotally there was a lot of frustration about the unending number of snowflakes. They were over all, inane topics from our perspective. Inane questions. When the White House and OSD asked a question, that was the main effort, especially the White House. And, you don't put the second string on that. So, those guys, like General [Raymond] Halvorson, Lieutenant General Mike Fitzgerald [at CENTCOM], those guys who were my principal go-to guys, were constantly being pulled in because they had earned Franks trust, Renuart's trust, and Abazaid's trust. This came in. Answer it. That diverts your attention from anything that is long range. We've got to answer the White House. We've got to answer the SecDef, so planning efforts fall to the wayside.

Question #16 (Author): What was the pressure on CENTCOM to deliver a plan below their recommended force levels?

Answer Question #16 (Colonel Benson): Actually none. It didn't come down like that. We were planning off the apportioned forces.

Me: so, there was no pressure in the planning, but it was after you delivered the plan that things started getting sliced.

Colonel Benson: That's it, exactly. Once we had the force to be able to cross the LD [line of departure] with the force that McKiernan wanted to begin the fight with, then why do you need all the rest of this force? I'm absolutely convinced that in their minds [civilians thought] this is going easy. See, those Army folks were just being conservative and we needed to prod them. What do you mean we have to occupy? We don't need to do that. Now we can go home. And, so that became the questions.

Me: so, the civilians just wanted to prove their point?

Colonel Benson: Exactly. That is what it felt like.

Question #17 (Author): What was your sense of how civil-military relations affected the planning process? Either positively or negatively? If negative, how so?

Answer Question #17 (Colonel Benson): It was neither negative or positive. It was the reality that smacked me in the side of the head while I was sitting over there [in Iraq] and after 13 years of reflection. Everything that Clausewitz wrote was correct. Policy makers have to be involved.

Question #18 (Author): In hindsight, what might have been the appropriate force level, force mix, and resourcing to secure victory and political objectives following Phase III?

Answer Question #18 (Colonel Benson): Honestly, you know, the force mix was not correct and his [McKiernan's] recommendations were not accepted. He wanted the 101st [Airborne Division]. I don't know what the right answer is, I really don't and everything would be speculation and revisionist history. One thing I did recommend was 5th Corps with I MEF as the follow and support effort for Phase III and IV to control [the terrain] as we go. This would consolidate the gains and secure victory.

Question #21 (Author): Do you have any sense that OSD was not open to such suggestions?

Answer Question #18 (Colonel Benson): No, OSD was not open to suggestions. Truthfully, the second secure VTC that I sat in with the Secretary, my impression, and I wrote it down, was it's already over. He's already moved on from Iraq. That's just my impression. The language, what he was saying.

Question #23 (Author): In your opinion, did arguments over force levels tend to sour civil-military relations and produce a planning process whereby concerns were no longer listened to or even expressed?

Answer Question #23 (Colonel Benson): I think what it did personally from observing, it reinforced in the civilian side that we, the uniformed side, were hide-bound traditionalists that could not admit a new idea in. I even heard a staffer from [Senator Chuck] Hagel who came over, and I heard him say, the hardest thing to get into the military mind is a new idea. The hardest thing to get out of a military mind is an old idea. I heard one of his staffers say that. When we were laying this down, this is what was going on.

Interview concluded with a request for follow up in needed to clarify aspects of the interview.

End of Interview.

Interview 2 – General (Retired) John W. Nicholson, former military aide to the Secretary of the Army and strategist on personal staff of the Chief of Staff of the Army during the planning and preparation for the Iraq War, 2003

Conducted 10 June 2020

Interview began with a brief description of the dissertation and a question confirming the positions General Nicholson held from 2001 to 2003.

Question #2 (Author): You served as the strategist for the Chief of Staff of the Army at a critical point when the joint force and Army was planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Could you characterize the working relationship between the CoS, CJCS, and OSD (Office of the Secretary of Defense)?

Answer Question #2 (General Nicholson): I think 'contentious' is the word I would use. And, there was no sugar-coating it. There are a couple of reasons for that, which are number one, Rumsfeld's intellectual arrogance and this coupled with a political ideology that, for those who adhered to it, could be characterized as zealots – like Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, and others. So you had this combination of personal style, which is coupled with a political ideology which created a kind of atmosphere that tended to discount sound military advice. What this created was the tendency to discount things that did not conform with their pre-conceived notions. So, you have this combination of personal style and political zealotry that had a tendency to make them [civilians in OSD] not receptive to Shinseki's ideas.

Me: This was a shock to military leaders because they had anticipated that an incoming Republican administration would lead to improvement over the poor relations that existed during the Clinton Administration.

General Nicholson: Yes, that is correct. The phrase that was used by, I think, Vice President Cheney was "help is on the way." I think that there was anticipation that things would turn positive and the reason is that in the 90s there was the 'peace dividend' after the Cold War that drew down the budget and end strength from the military and there had been no strategic vision in place to guide this and it led to a disjointed drawdown in my view. General Shinseki believed that the drawdown of the 90s had lacked a coherent vision and this ties in with your question #3 [which I sent to the general before the interview] in that General Shinseki wanted to supply a vision of the future to guide force structure. In a way it was a kind of haphazard drawdown that had no vision, and frankly, did not make good use of the resources given by Congress. So, I think there was a great hope that help was on the way.

Question #3 (Author): I have read the vision [Army Vision 2020, developed by General Shinseki] and it seems to me that it was very transformative. But, I guess the SecDef didn't think that the vision moved fast enough [to transform]. Is that a correct assessment?

Answer Question #3 (General Nicholson): First, we had a period of analysis and examination started by the Chief at the time. I think it was General [Dennis] Reimer. We had a series of experiments, but these things were slow and inconclusive. I think there was a dissatisfaction by General Shinseki and a lot of other people that we had not taken advantage of this opportunity after the end of the Cold War from 1991 to 2001 to really come up with a new vision. So, Shinseki saw a need for change, this is well before 1999, long before the election of President [George W.] Bush. He [General Shinseki] had a phrase that he was referring to in 1999. His phrase was, "you may not like change, but you'll like irrelevance less." So, what I think happened, much of the Army and military, came out of DESERT STORM saying this validated our structure, our doctrine, and we don't need to change. So, Shinseki was dealing with an internal impediment to change by those who didn't see a need to change. Then, externally he was responding to those calling for change. He was all about change and so he started it a year before President Bush was even elected. By the time Rumsfeld comes to the scene in January 2001, General Shinseki was well into the transformation of the Army. Rumsfeld hijacked the term "transformation" from General Shinseki. So then, Rumsfeld convened some groups to work on the concept of transformation. But, they never produced anything. By summer of 2001 I would argue that there was no defense level [DoD] vision. There was no competing vision and so General Shinseki's vision substituted for this lack of DoD vision. Rumsfeld's part was more on the order of funding missile defense. This is the one new idea that I thought Rumsfeld brought because he had been on a missile defense blue ribbon panel and he wanted to pay for it as I recall with 100 billion dollars and the way to pay for it was to reduce the Army by two divisions. General Shinseki's answer to that was something like, "we are a ten division Army with twelve division's worth of missions." He said, "if you reduce our missions two divisions' worth, then we can reduce the Army to eight divisions, otherwise we can't." And this was a

very simple message and 100 members [of Congress] on the Hill signed a letter to Rumsfeld in the summer of 2001 saying "don't reduce the Army." So, Rumsfeld was furious and there was an article that appeared, I remember by this time I was at the Pentagon working for General Shinseki, and the article was about Rumsfeld and it said that he had failed to deliver on all these great expectations. He was the only guy who had previously been a SecDef. He was viewed as the voice of experience and following the years of President Clinton's administration, there were expectations that great things would happen. So, Rumsfeld was furious, but then 9-11 happened.

Then, he resurrected his reputation. So, he turned into a tough wartime leader after 9-11. After all that, everyone forgot the fact that he failed to produce a vision. I think there never was a competing vision. It was simply a budget drill harvesting money from the Army for missile defense. The only thing that Rumsfeld promoted as a sort of competing vision – you heard about [Douglas] MacGregor's work called *Breaking the Phalanx* – it basically talked about reorganizing the Army along the lines of cavalry regiments and of course that's what we were already doing. So, MacGregor, I think, could have taken credit for having contributed to Army transformation. He proposed a BCT [brigade combat team] structure and of course that's exactly what we went to. Part of transformation, starting with Stryker brigade combat teams, and then we went to the 10th Mountain Division when we stood up one of the first BCTs in the Army. That functional change that MacGregor proposed was already part of the Army transformation. What Rumsfeld did was seize upon MacGregor's work. He had him come brief him. He promoted MacGregor's work as some sort of alternative to Army transformation, which it really wasn't. Rumsfeld created a false dichotomy. Most of MacGregor's ideas were already incorporated in Army transformation. MacGregor and others whose ideas Rumsfeld latched onto sort of came under his [Rumsfeld's] spell since they felt important because the SecDef wants to talk to me about my ideas. Really what he [Rumsfeld] was doing was using them to undermine General Shinseki, and army transformation, so that was my perspective. So, people like Doug MacGregor were simply useful to his [Rumsfeld's] agenda. So, his perspective – there was no debate on other ideas – was this is what we are going to do with no argument, while the military guys tried to approach the problem very objectively, logically, maybe with too much PowerPoint, but they approached it from an intellectual standpoint. On the other hand, the politicians' approach was a little different. They viewed the problem as a bureaucratic fight, and Rumsfeld very much did see this as an arena of bureaucratic in-fighting and none other than Henry Kissinger said that he [Rumsfeld] was the best at bureaucratic in-fighting that he had ever seen in the US government. So, Rumsfeld's answer when he couldn't compete intellectually was to respond with a personal attack. And, that's what he did. He would call them [Army senior leaders] hidebound dinosaurs and he reacted personally. So, if you are an officer like General Shinseki, you say to yourself, "what is this all about." There was no debate on the relative merits of the policy [of transformation] or the mission. It was a personal attack and then there was, when he made his [Shinseki] comments before the Senate about the number of troops required to stabilize Iraq, there was a personal attack afterwards, there wasn't a debate, it was just a personal attack, so I think this was my observation of how this thing played out.

Me: *Breaking the Phalanx* describes how you can win battles and operations, but it does not describe how you win wars strategically.

General Nicholson: Correct. Let me add one thing to Question #4. One of the things driving transformation was the political agenda of the Administration. I think this is out of my area of expertise, but you had when President Bush came in he had an idea about fixing Social Security and how he was going to do that. So, he wanted to have things wrapped up in Iraq before the 2004 election to get to that agenda item. So, we had gotten into a war after 9-11 and there was a need to wrap it up and declare

victory in Iraq in the spring and summer of 2003. This is another example of the discounting of military expertise by Rumsfeld to think you could just declare victory and was representative of his arrogance. The book *Cobra II* lays out how this went down. The reality was that there was no attention paid to post-conflict resolution, and they didn't even write a plan for it. Despite being told that it was a requirement.

So, the political agenda and running a reelection campaign intervened, so it would have been very convenient if they could have Iraq and Afghanistan all wrapped up by the late summer of '03. As if you could just will the end of the war by ignoring conditions and, of course, it didn't work. This was an example of arrogance and lack of understanding of military conditions that achieve political objectives. When I say arrogance, I mean intellectual arrogance. He was arrogant not to consider other ideas that were contrary to his own. It was arrogant to disregard military advice as if he [Rumsfeld] had all the answers. As a result, he had already decided what he wanted and he created this false persona [demonstrating civil-military control – that he had perfect questions and he had used these things called "snowflakes" that he sent out. They were little notes. Do you remember these? Me: Yes. So, Rumsfeld called HR McMaster who you remember wrote that book *Dereliction of Duty*. So, I knew HR and I called him and I said, "Hey, HR, I'm working for the Chief, when you're done meeting with Rumsfeld, can you come over and have a little chat. So he comes by and I ask him "what did he [Rumsfeld] ask you?" He replied, "I was explaining to him the thesis of my book" and I said "what else did you get into?" And, he said, "how did I get this information? and I said, well, you know the archives, the archives were opened up, 25 years later and all of the secret materials in the archives after 25 years are declassified and I was one of the first people to get in there. So, that's where I got all these insights. And he [Rumsfeld] said, Oh, that's very interesting." So, literally within a couple of weeks all the snowflakes were being made top secret and the reason was, I think, Rumsfeld was worried that they would write about him like they did McNamara, which is a very apt comparison. Because he was just like McNamara in many ways. Arrogant, believes in his own methodologies and he was trying to apply a business model to war. So, the snowflakes all became top secret so that they would not be able to be seen for 50 years instead of 25 years later because I think HR [McMaster] had a dereliction of duty II about Rumsfeld. Because Rumsfeld I believe was derelict. He was [cannot make out next couple of words on recording]. When I look at Afghanistan I see all the early opportunities that he missed because of his preconceived notions about how things should unfold. So, when Shinseki was asking for more capabilities for Afghanistan, Rumsfeld was rejecting him. Another example was when they had Osama bin Laden holed up in Tora Bora and Rumsfeld rejected sending Rangers in to get him. And so again and again and again, this comes up and then you got to look at the culpability of people like Tommy Franks [CENTCOM Commander] and others like General Myers [CJCS]. He [General Myers] might have been cast in an incorrect light. Tommy Franks I think definitely fell under the spell of Rumsfeld and he referred to Shinseki and others as Title 10 bastards, which was one of the quotes that he used when he was talking about the service chiefs. As a result, I think they [Rumsfeld and Franks] went around the service chiefs. They were following the chain of command, but they were not following Goldwater-Nichols. The service chiefs were supposed to provide advice, [but] he [Rumsfeld] would not listen to their advice.

Me: Colonel Benson told me "Rumsfeld only took advice from the field" and he disregarded all the advice that was coming from the uniforms in the beltway.

General Nicholson; Yeah, which is just a political way of conveniently ignoring the advice of the most senior people of the military, which is complete bullshit, that's my take on it.

Question #5 (Author): How did the struggle with the Crusader program affect the relationship between the CoS, CJCS, and OSD?

Answer Question #5 (General Nicholson): The Crusader thing made the relationship worse and more acrimonious and two things on that. First, Rumsfeld used it as a poster child for what was wrong with acquisition and there was some merit to this argument. It was a 100-ton system, and you (author) are an artilleryman, the weapon coupled with the ammo carrier and it was a behemoth. But, it had all this new technology and it had a three-man crew. Plus, it had this long range and the system it was replacing was thirty years old [actually more than that, 40 years at that time in 2001]. So, we needed a new system and this represented a leap in technology, but it wasn't easy to transport and so what was interesting is that the Crusader is not what Shinseki wanted since he wanted greater deployability. So, this [Crusader] was kind of a one off. But, we needed it so much in our heavy formations for modernization that he [Shinseki] was willing to support. Shinseki wanted a totally restructured acquisition process, and this is not well-known, but they [CoS and Secretary of the Army] either cancelled or restructured 24 programs. So, Crusader went through a very rigorous examination. And, in the end, they decided to keep it because it was necessary. In addition to transformation, there was a modernization piece that would result in the objective force and future combat system. And, there was a recapitalization, it was like, we have these things around that are 25 years old, like the Bradley fighting vehicle, so those things had to be recapitalized to keep them in the fight, even though we had a modernization program to come up with the next generation of vehicles. I think the Crusader program, when you look at the totality of what Shinseki was doing, it all made sense, but of course, Rumsfeld then used this as the poster child for everything that was wrong with acquisitions. So, Shinseki argued to keep the Crusader and Secretary [of the Army] White endorsed that and then sent it up to OSD [office of the Secretary of Defense]. Then, Rumsfeld dressed down Shinseki and he made White stand next to him when he cancelled the Crusader program. He made White do this publicly and it really pissed White off, because White agreed with Shinseki. So, this poisoned the relationship and Rumsfeld knew that White was an easier target to go after than Shinseki. Later, Rumsfeld was able to orchestrate White's resignation.

Me: So, the start point for planning for Iraq was poor civil-military relations?

General Nicholson: Yes. I think the relationship with the President was good, but I think the President delegated the details to Rumsfeld. He thought that was the best way to do it and Rumsfeld ran with that and because of Rumsfeld's arrogant nature, and his close relationship with Cheney, I think delegation went sideways, unfortunately.

Me: My research shows that this is the case, so I would summarize that the President delegated, but didn't check his senior civilians and things deteriorated from there.

General Nicholson: I think that's accurate.

Question #6 (Author): Did these struggles and disagreements have an effect – positive or negative – on the strategic planning process as the military prepared for OIF?

Answer Question #6 (General Nicholson): I think if you want to be purely objective here, I think that the chain of command, which is the President to SecDef to COCOM Commander, that worked well. The problem was Rumsfeld hugging Tommy Franks and he coopted Franks when he was not getting the answers he wanted out of the service chiefs and the Chairman. So, I put that as a positive relationship [the chain of command] and I think Franks to Rumsfeld to the President, that chain of command worked well. It produced an unprecedented rapid downfall of Saddam's [Hussein] forces. That is one interpretation that you could make. It was, and I don't agree with this, but had Rumsfeld not pushed back on the plan for 250,000 troops and pared down the numbers, then we wouldn't have achieved the rapid victory that we did. That is one way that you could interpret it [the state of civil-military relations] as

events played out. On the other hand, Rumsfeld would do things like bring in the TPFDD and the plan we had for Iraq and it was detailed, well-developed with a TPFDD. Rumsfeld asked to see the TPFDD.

Me: Colonel Benson discussed the TPFDD issue with me. Rather than approving it as per normal procedure, he preferred to use an RFF [request for forces] process to approve each unit in order to impose control through a bureaucratic mechanism to push his vision.

General Nicholson: Exactly. So, an example would be military police to secure the lines of communication. So, Rumsfeld disapproved the security elements that would have done this. So, you have the incident where the 3rd Infantry Division's follow-on logistic troops get captured and murdered by Saddam Hussein's guys and this sort of thing was avoidable if they had brought the right troops to secure the lines of communication, but they didn't because Rumsfeld would say, "what do we need these guys for?" The best analogy is from [Lieutenant General retired] Mike Oates. "When you are looking at the TPFDD or a list of troops that you need is sort of like looking at a computer code. There are lines in there and you don't know what they are for, but they are necessary to make the rest of the thing work. So, when you go in and selectively start deleting lines, then the forces in the theater are not going to work right, and you won't know why." When you are going over the list and the staffer there doesn't know the answer as to why a certain unit is on the TPFDD it makes it easy to delete. But, then you have Americans being captured and killed and their bodies are being put on display. So, that was the result of Rumsfeld's interference, combined with the complete lack of planning for Phase IV. So, I think that on #6 [Question], Tommy Franks and the chain of command worked, but not the other side with the Title 10 bastards. So, they [Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Franks] ignored the Title 10 guys, so that was one perspective and *Cobra II* offers a great discussion.

Rumsfeld by ignoring the service chiefs, could just go through the chain of command and Franks to appear that he was listening to the field. Then, there was his restrictions on planning for Phase IV, which was a deliberate directive by Rumsfeld. So, we don't have a plan, which was bizarre thinking that the problem [of post-conflict stabilization] would just go away. The guy in all of this who was culpable was Tommy Franks. Why didn't he insist upon a plan for Phase IV? He didn't, he went along with Rumsfeld's pressure and did not produce a Phase IV plan and that was, I think, irresponsible. And, we saw what happened. So, the Jay Garner is another interesting story.

I was in the room when Jay Garner [retired lieutenant general who headed the short-lived Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA)] came by to meeting with Secretary White before he went over to Kuwait and it was shocking. He and Shinseki and Tommy White were all friends. So, Garner got this call from Rumsfeld telling him he needed to come see Rumsfeld. The SecDef told him "I want you to go over [to Kuwait and later Iraq] and after they [coalition forces] decapitate the government, I want you to go in there with your guys and run the ministries of the Iraqi government." They were going to use all these retired generals to run it. He had this PowerPoint slide that showed like Ministry of Interior – General Jerry Benton, Ministry of Defense – General so and so, and he slid this slide in front of White and he [White] laughed and said, "Jesus Christ, are you serious?" And, Garner said, "well, the Hill [Congress] is asking me to come up there and brief them about the plan. But, I got a ticket to Kuwait." And then he [White] said, "JC [General Garner's nickname] are you going over there with this?" And, he did. It would be laughable except it's tragic. This is the result of Rumsfeld's arrogance. He had this idea that he could just sort of will the problem away. It was unbelievable. So, Garner goes over there and sits in a hotel in Kuwait for weeks, no coordination with the military, meanwhile they are off on the lightning campaign to Baghdad. There were successful, then Garner has got to hitch a ride on a C-130 up there [to Baghdad] to try to take control of all the ministries. So, then the whole thing just fell apart because there

was no plan [from the Pentagon]. There was no plan, because that is the way Rumsfeld wanted it. And, he drove that through Tommy Franks, who was part of that problem of producing the plan.

Me: In my interview with Colonel Benson, he said General Garner was in a hotel by the seashore while we were driving to Baghdad, but he said that CENTCOM expected the CFLCC to worry about Phase IV. They did an extensive plan, but the plan was ignored because, he said, Rumsfeld ignored it because democracy would just suddenly flourish and everyone would come home by the end of the year and celebrate a great victory.

General Nicholson: this is the zealotry of the neo-cons [new conservatives]. This is where for us military guys, it is hard to relate. You may remember this guy Chalabi [eventually installed as the Prime Minister of Iraq]. Rumsfeld and the neo-cons, like Wolfowitz and Doug Feith, are listening to this guy Chalabi. And, he is telling them what they want to hear. "As soon as you arrive, everything will be great and the Iraqi people will support you, etc." This conveniently plays along with their vision. Therefore, we don't need all of this capability because they [Chalabi and Garner] are just going to take over from there. So, when they brought Chalabi over there, they put him in charge, but he was completely rejected by the Iraqis who said, "who is this guy? He hasn't been here. Now, he wants to come in and run the government, no way." That collapsed quickly, but not before we missed our opportunity to stabilize the situation. Of course, the other guy [Paul] Bremer, when Garner was unceremoniously dismissed, Bremer was brought in April or May [it was on 12 May 2003]. Remember, when he came in one of the first things he did without any consultation was to dissolve the Iraqi Army and that was part of the neo-con zealotry. Without any consultation he comes in and says anyone who was in an Iraq uniform must be a bad guy. Also, anyone who was in the Ba'ath Party must, therefore, be dismissed and we are not going to let any of the Ba'ath Party members in the post-regime government, so you are all fired. The result was that you made enemies out of all of them. This created the beginnings of ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria]. This was all naïve thinking from political zealots. This is where, not just civil-military relationships, but also personal characteristics of the leaders above does play a role. So, the fact that Rumsfeld was arrogant played a role. The fact that they adhered to a political ideology that tended to discount military advice or, advice that was contrary to what they believed. That was an issue. Of course, there were other things too, like personalities, processes, what processes do they use, and what are their policy thoughts. My experience in Afghanistan involved two administrations with Obama and Trump, two very different presidents. Different personalities, different processes, different policy. Same mission, but different thoughts and processes, and these affect civil-military relations.

Question #7 (Author): Do you know why General Shinseki believed it would require the forces he recommended to secure the victory after major combat operations?

Answer Question #7 (General Nicholson): Shinseki's answer was based on historical research. Shinseki didn't pull that number out of thin air. I accompanied him to his meeting with Secretary Wolfowitz where he laid this out. What happened was that Shinseki, when all this lack of planning was playing out, he had the Center for Military History do an analysis of, and of course, he had been the commander in Bosnia, so he knew what a stabilization mission looked like, following the cessation of hostilities. So, he knew what was required from personal experience, and we had the historical examples of post-war Germany and there was Bosnia and other post-war stabilization missions and it looked at the ratios of soldiers to population, time, etc. So, there was historical research to back up his conclusion that it was going to take hundreds of thousands of soldiers and a lot of time to do it. That is what he presented. Rumsfeld refused to discuss it with him. So, the Deputy SecDef [Wolfowitz] agreed to see him. Then, he [Shinseki] laid it out. Then, the point was, "if I am asked [by Congress] my opinion, it is based upon this research." Wolfowitz, as I recall, was very professional and polite and acknowledged receipt. He didn't

necessarily agree with it, but received it and said thank you very much. Then, Shinseki goes up to the Hill and he had all these sources and he presented this to the Deputy SecDef and he went up to the Hill and he was asked by [Senator Carl] Levin, I think, or [Senator Patrick] Leahy in the Senate, who asked the question. Shinseki paused, because he knew it was going to start a shit storm when he said that, and he was not trying to undermine the SecDef, but he was going to do his duty and provide military advice to the Hill and to the leadership. And, he did tell the [executive branch] leadership before he said it to the Hill. The SecDef completely discounted it and Wolfowitz came out afterward and said that it [Shinseki's testimony] was wildly off the mark. Then, he said it was not accurate.

Me: He actually provided that information to OSD before the testimony on the Hill?

General Nicholson: Yes, but these OSD officials acted like they had never heard it before. So, yes, he told them beforehand and then told the Hill too. Then, they [OSD] acted like they never heard this before. It was complete nonsense. They did hear it before, and of course, CENTCOM knew this. They were military professionals over there, so why did they ignore this? They may have passed it to CFLCC, but the bottom line was that the Army was going to end up holding the bag for all this [post-war stabilization]. So, the Army is the only force that can do stabilization. So, the Army was going to be left with the mission. So, the Chief of Staff was going to the leadership to tell them, "we know this is coming. Here is what history tells us and then, this is what it takes. But, they were ignoring the problem, but the Army was going to end up handling this and it did end up dealing with the problem. So, the Army [joint and coalition land forces] wasn't sized and it ended up with 15-month deployments, 16-month deployments all because we weren't ready due to OSD ignoring this advice. So, the outcomes of this were done on the backs of these soldiers because political leadership didn't want to listen to the advice they were getting.

Question #8 (Author): Why did the SecDef and other senior officials in OSD disagree with his assessment?

Answer Question #8 (General Nicholson): I think there were two things. This cocktail of belief about saving the world, the neo-con idea, coupled with the carte blanch given them post-9-11 was another factor I think. There was a period of time in the fall [after 9-11], September, October, November when there was talk about where are these terrorists around the world? Then, where do we need to go after them? Afghanistan was at the top of the list, and then there were all the other places like Africa and elsewhere. Then, Iraq came up on the list, but this list was being floated with a whole bunch of hands on it and people were asking what are our military options, to go into these places and take out these terrorists. It was a myopic approach to say we're gonna go with the military instrument to strike at these groups and then go on to the next target, next target, next target, etc. So, there was a feeling that "we didn't want to get bogged down." If you accept Shinseki's assessment you will get bogged down. We are going to knock down these targets and move on to the next ones, and there was this urgency, this idea – the whole idea about wars of choice – those who support terrorists, we are going to go after and we have this military instrument that is unchallenged in the world. So, there was a hubris as well. There was a personal arrogance on the part of Mr. Rumsfeld and his personal style combined to lead him to disregard the assessment. Then, there was an overall hubris that the American military could do anything. So, there was an overreliance on the military and you saw this rejection of State [Department of State] and other voices in the room. If you remember from history that when the working group came over from State they were talking about the stabilization, and they [OSD] kicked them out. DoS was using the Future of Iraq Study to discuss the issue and they [OSD] kicked them out of the room. They weren't involved, so all that work was thrown away. So, part of it was hubris, arrogance, but the threat, there was a legitimate desire to protect America from what we had just been through, so that it would never happen again. But,

how to do it was the question, and there was a lack of understanding of the limits of military power [i.e. the use of force to achieve political objectives].

Me: so, the military instrument was overused to the detriment of all other instruments of national power?

General Nicholson: Yes, I agree.

Question #9 (Author): What was the effect of this disagreement on the planning process? Did the actors double down on their positions?

Answer Question #9 (General Nicholson): Kevin Benson can give you a better feel for that because at my level we weren't directly involved in the planning. The planning was being done at CENTCOM.

Me: Benson gave me information on the planning, but the tension he saw came from answering all the snowflakes that trickled down to him. These had an effect on the planning process because it forced him to focus on the 25 meter target vs. the long range target.

General Nicholson: Absolutely, it absorbs bandwidth. I think that [General David D.] McKiernan would be a good guy to talk to.

Question #10 (Author): Was there an effort by any single agency assigned to coordinate planning for OIF as an interagency effort?

Answer Question #10 (General Nicholson): No. OSD limited the ability of planners to coordinate outside the Pentagon and that was coming from Mr. Rumsfeld. This was part of a lack of trust because Colin Powell wasn't their guy or on the inside and Rumsfeld wanted to drive the agenda. They [Cheney and Rumsfeld] didn't trust Powell and they set him up and trotted him out there without enough time to look at the intelligence before doing the UN briefing. What he did was, the Friday before he [Powell] gets the intel, sends his speechwriter over and it doesn't have the smoking gun [on Iraqi nuclear program] that he is expecting. So, he says, "we need to delay the speech because the information and intel is not here." The White House said, "no, we need to go ahead and do the speech." My conclusion is he, [Powell] was set up by Cheney and Rumsfeld and they used his credibility and his stature and gravitas to justify the invasion and the intel wasn't there. He was a good soldier and when the President tells him to do something, he does it. And, he got screwed by those guys. That was all part of Rumsfeld's bureaucratic machinations. In the end, Rumsfeld was fired after the mid-term election in 2006 when we [3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division – General Nicholson, then a Colonel, was the commander of this brigade in which I was the fire support officer] were in Afghanistan and was replaced by [Robert] Gates. Rumsfeld used a deliberate effort to stovepipe the planning and it wasn't based on producing the best plan possible. It was based on asserting personal control by Rumsfeld over the outcome. That's what it was based upon. The factors that drove that solution were not designed to produce the optimum policy. They [the processes] were designed for internal control by Secretary Rumsfeld and Cheney – although I am not as competent to assess Cheney as I am Rumsfeld.

Me: That goes to the heart of the thesis [of the dissertation] that civil-military relations affect the outcome of strategy.

General Nicholson: Yes.

Question #11 (Author): Transition point. Moving forward to your recent experience as a senior leader of our military, has the relationship between the services and OSD improved since 2003?

Answer Question #11 (General Nicholson): I think it is about relationships. The way I look at it the primacy of relationships is critical to the outcome. I think the military leader has to recognize the importance of the relationship and then devote time and energy in having and building a relationship. One of the issues is that this is not how we are raised. We are raised in a hierarchical structure whereby you follow orders. But, when you step into this world [of civil-military relations], interface between military and civilian leaders is a new environment. Military officers are not institutionally prepared for that. Some do perform well in the environment, but it is not because of institutional reasons. It's because of personal reasons or personal, experiential development that prepared them for it, or they have the personality for it, or they did things that prepared them for it. I think a lot of it is, you have to understand the people you are dealing with. You gotta have emotional intelligence. You have to be patient, you have to listen, and respect the others [civilians]. So, all of those qualities, these are not things you see on a list of attributes for military leaders like empathy, emotional intelligence, but they are essential for a good relationship. It is not a question of time as to whether or not the relationship has improved. It is a question of have we learned from what has happened, and how to have effective relationships with civil-military interface and I would say it is still struggling, we have not institutionally fixed this. It is still very much a question of personalities involved, processes that they [civilians] use, policies that they establish. I think about Trump and Obama, the two presidents that I had to deal with, two very different presidents. Obama was very analytical, Harvard trained lawyer, somewhat unemotional in decision-making, wanted all the data, was objective in looking at the facts and wanted to see all the facts and multiple options. Whereas, Trump is an emotional decision-maker. He even says, "I make decisions based on my gut." If you remember in the brigade, we studied intuitive decision-making, Gary Klein [author of *Sources of Power*, a reference in the bibliography], intuitive decision-making is fine when you have experience and so it makes sense. When your intuition is not informed by experience, then it is more of a gamble or it is uninformed decision-making. That is risky. Two very different presidents based on personalities and processes. Because Obama was very objective and process-oriented, he had a very good national security staff process. Other interagency positions were definitely on the table. They ran a good process that brought in all the opinions. Trump does not. His process is based upon the personalities that are giving him advice. For example, he [Trump] is not interested in the staff answer, he is interested in what does Mike Pompeo [former Secretary of State] think, what does Jim Mattis [former Secretary of Defense] think, what does [Mike] Pence [former Vice President] think. So, his decision-making process is informed by opinions of these trusted advisers vs. a staff answer. That is how it worked and is not going to change with time. It will change based upon whoever is President based upon his decision-making style. So, to answer the question, "has the relationship improved?" I think the answer is, it is not a function of the passage of time, that would assume that we have learned from our experience and I am not sure that we have because the players change all the time and they may or may not have learned from past experience. The military leaders have seen that these relationships are extremely important. How you manage those from the bottom up is critically important. But, I don't know that they have improved. So, my answer is, I don't think so.

Me: This goes back to education and culture. Military officers are not institutionally prepared because they come from a different culture than politicians. This establishes a tension right off the bat that if you don't work on the relationship it is only going to get worse.

General Nicholson: Absolutely, you are right and there are all kinds of good examples because of the cast of characters will change dramatically, like when an administration changes. When you are a general in a key role and the administration changes you have to adjust to completely different styles. Sometimes generals don't survive the transition. Arguably, General McKiernan was an example, getting fired shortly after transition of administrations [from Bush to Obama]. I think it was wrong what they did within six

months of the new administration coming in when McKiernan was replaced by McChrystal. Part of the reason was a new set of leaders and a new approach. When I was a four-star [general] it was a year with Obama and then 18 months under Trump and, of course, Trump talked about firing me. Part of it was, well he hasn't won the war. So, [Marine General and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Joseph F.] Dunford tells Trump, "that wasn't a mission he was given by the President [Obama]. He is executing the policy of President Obama." But, he might as well have been talking to the wall. But, he [Trump] didn't fire me, he fired everybody else.

So, from 2003 to now, civil-military relations has not improved. It is a function of the different personalities involved and their experiences. So, unless you had another Goldwater-Nichols to codify some things, I don't know that it is going to improve. It could improve if we institutionally take on the preparation of flag officers to perform at this level and interface, I think that is actually the way. As a CAPSTONE senior mentor [CAPSTONE is the US military professional military education program for flag officers] I try to share this with the new joint flag officers. This is where they learn, from the experiences like Shinseki, McKiernan, and others using case studies to look at how did that work or not to learn by it and I think that is a way to help in the institutional preparation of people to perform at this level of interface.

Me: the concluding chapter of the dissertation will provide some recommendations on how we might improve civil-military relations. One of the things that I intend to recommend, that you have alluded to, is a new Goldwater-Nichols that includes the interagency and places requirements for education of flag officers and senior civilian officials, which is one of the things that Don Snider from West Point discusses. This follow up is in line with Question #14: What can senior civilians and military leaders do to improve planning processes at the strategic level? Improve the relations between the actors?

General Nicholson: That is a good idea. I think NDU [the US military's National Defense University] may not have the time to take this on, but it is a good idea. The military is working on this and it doesn't always get credit. We value civilian control. But, there is an intimidation factor for those [civilians] unfamiliar with the military. We are a very respected institution. One of the most respected in the country, for over 20 years. So, there is an intimidation factor that we [the military] need to be aware of. This is what I mean about emotional intelligence or empathy or they ability to establish an authentic relationship, if you don't have this then you shouldn't be operating in this space. Stick them in the acquisition world or somewhere else, but not here [in the civil-military relations environment]. When you look back at the Army I grew up in, the Cold War Army, you could rise to 4-star general and never leave the Army [for joint or political interface jobs]. You could be a master of tactics and grand tactics. But, this is very different now. The civil-military interface is completely different. The other dimension is allies. I had three chains of command. The US, Afghan, and I had to deal with them frequently each week and all the ministries. And then NATO up to the Secretary General and 41 nations of the coalition. So, I had to deal with everyone who had a stake in the outcome. I loved it, but it required everything that I had leaned and it requires different skill sets from what we learn when you are learning how to be a good brigade commander. It is very different.

Me: How can we improve civil-military relations?

General Nicholson: I think we have to be honest with ourselves. We need to select people who have the right skill sets and have the right qualities. If they don't have those qualities, either develop those qualities or don't select them for the roles [as flag officers] at the civil-military interface. We have to be very selective about who we put in those roles. I think we need to use case studies [in CAPSTONE] like those used at Harvard Business School to educate personal relationships and interactions. There are

enough examples of this with leaders who are still alive, Shinseki and McKiernan or McChrystal to talk about their roles to a course. These are not happy case studies but, they are things we can learn from. By virtue of having a guy come share his experience, the case study method would be a good way to use with future flag officers entering the civil-military interface.

Interview wrapped up with a request to follow up if needed and confirmation that this was acceptable.

End of Interview.

Interview 3 – General (Retired) Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the First Gulf War, 1991 and Secretary of State of the United States during the planning and preparation for the Iraq War, 2003

Conducted on 8 July 2020

Interview began with a description of the dissertation and the proposed theory.

Question #1 (Author): Vietnam was a turning point event for the United States military. One of the factors that made civil-military relations difficult during the 1960s, Secretary of Defense McNamara and his 'whiz kids' ran rings around their military counterparts in terms of education and strategic experience as several scholars and authors have noted. So, the military after Vietnam made a concerted effort to develop its best and brightest with advanced civil education and fellowships to elevate education and experience to a level on par with civilian leaders. What was your experience with education and fellowships and how did this prepare you for future responsibilities as a strategic leader?

Answer to Question #1 (General Powell): Having spoken to the War College over the last eight years, and the officers going back and forth to these places [Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria] many are wondering and asking the questions "why are we here?" "Why are we in Syria?" "Why are we in Somalia, or places in Africa, why are we where we are?" and, there are various reasons. I speak to the War College every year and many of them [the students] are quite frankly ignorant. They simply don't have the experience. In my case, I can't cover what happened after the 1990s because I retired in 1993, that is over 25 years ago. But, what they did for me [military and Army leadership] is they sent me to Leavenworth in my first year of eligibility and after that I wanted to go to graduate school and they looked at my records and said, it's not good enough. So, then I took the test to go to graduate school [the graduate record exam (GRE)] and I did well and they looked at my military record, which was pretty good and so, they said you can go to graduate school at George Washington University. I wanted to be exposed to foreign policy and they said 'no,' we are sending you there to get a master's degree in computers, and I said 'what?' I don't know anything about computers and this was in the early 1970s. And so, they were very wise to send me and others for such degrees because they wanted some people who knew something about the information age. So, I went to grad school for two years and did that and got out of grad school in 1971 and went back to work for the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff [of the Army] for a year, which was very, very revealing. I then went to work for General [William E.] Dupuy [Training and Doctrine Command, Commanding General] for a couple of years and then, in '74 they told me that I was going to compete for a job as a White House fellow. So, I said "what is it?" They told me what a White House fellow was because I didn't know, and lo and behold I got it. I was a White House fellow for a year. Remarkably, it made a huge difference in my career and my life. I met and encountered a lot of people in Washington, a lot of civilian experts and advisers to the President, you name it. More importantly, I went to Russia, I traveled throughout the Soviet Union from Siberia all the way across the country. And, I also traveled to

Red China for three weeks. Then, I was supposed to come back to the Army after finishing my fellowship, but I was exposed to a lot more because I was not released to go to the Army. I was working for the SecDef [Secretary of Defense] and I had a lot of exposure to defense secretaries and deputies. So, I had a very interesting background. Unlike most [other officers], but it served me well and I found myself practically isolated from the Army. I was military assistant to two SecDefs and military assistant to three deputy SecDefs. So, it was quite fascinating. But, I pretty much found out that I was stuck in the political world, and as hard as I tried getting back out into the Army, I kept getting dragged back. Finally, they made me the national security adviser [NSA]. It had nothing to do with my skill, it was about who I was working for. After I became the NSA, one day my boss Frank Carlucci, the NSA at the time, was sent over to be the SecDef, and then he and President Reagan came to me one morning and they said to me, "you are now the national security adviser." I didn't ask for it. I was trapped for the rest of the Reagan Administration. And then, when that came to an end, I had to figure out what to do next for the Army. So, I was a staff colonel and brigadier general and I went to General Vuono [Chief of Staff of the Army] and he said "you still have a place in the Army to come back to." I said, "but I have a lousy record because I keep working for these civilians. I'm not sure the Army wants me back. If they don't want me back, just say so boss and I will retire tomorrow." He said "no, we have a place for you" and that was as the FORSCOM [Forces Command] Commander. And, when I reported that to both Bush and Reagan, they asked what did I want to do. I said, "if you want me to stay, I will stay, if you want me to go, I will go, but I really didn't want to stay in the White House." So, the bottom line was I went to the President and Vice President, Reagan and Bush, and told them that I was going to be staying in the Army and I was going to take over FORSCOM. The thing that I remember is that Reagan looked at me and said, "does that come with a fourth star?" And, I said, "yes sir, it does." That was it, that was the end of that. So, then I was FORSCOM Commander and it lasted six months [then he took over as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs] and it was a career pattern unlike any other. I never recommend that anybody repeat it. But, it was remarkable and it certainly served me very, very well. Did that answer the question?

Me: Yes sir. But, that fully prepared you to operate at the strategic level in civil-military relations, correct sir?

General Powell: I thought I was able to operate well at that level before that. After I came out of Leavenworth I was prepared to operate at that level, the strategic level.

Question #2 (Author): Chris Gibson and Don Snider say that one of the reasons for the decline of civil-military relations in the 1990s was that military leaders had caught up and surpassed civilian leaders in terms of education attainment and strategic experience by that time. They say that the tone of deliberations on policy and strategy changed and became dominated by military leaders because civilians lacked the education experience in strategic decision-making. Would you agree with this assessment and how did the tenor of civil-military relations change in the 1990s?

Answer Question #2 (General Powell): You are looking for binary answers. The way that I would answer that is, some [civilians] do and some don't [find military leader education and experience] intimidating. I have known some [civilians] that would slap down generals and admirals. I have found others that are more open to it. In my case, of the four Secretaries [of Defense] that I worked for, they became the most beloved of friends over those four years and I always had the ability to say anything that I wanted to say. They would listen to my criticisms or my advice and the thing about working for Weinberger and Cheney, I was blessed with some awesome civilian leaders. Right now for example, there can be some difficulty with strategy, but I had a good experience. You have to be careful with this because there is no simple answer here between 'A' or 'B'.

Me: So, it is really based upon personalities then sir?

General Powell: Yes. There are some assholes, and one guy that I worked for basically said that my career was over. I was a one-star and I spoke out in meetings [because Powell had been able to do so in previous jobs], which surprised people and he didn't like me and I didn't really care for him. But, he three blocked me [on his officer evaluation report], and I said OK I guess that is the way it is. He said this is the way I see it. So, I went home and started writing my resume to get out of the Army, but what I didn't realize was more senior generals know what was going on and that it was wrong. So, they threw me a life preserver and I was able to hang in and I didn't want to do anything else, but be a soldier. So, I told them that I was ready to do anything. So, I went one way to Fort Leavenworth [as the deputy commanding general of the combined arms center for training] and he went another way. But, it is a very uncommon situation. I survived and he didn't.

Me: So, military leaders need to have a great deal of emotional intelligence to understand who they are dealing with then?

General Powell: Yep, I had to do this and I survived him. I was the Chairman when the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. We had some very, very serious discussions and I would always express what I thought [in those discussions] and sometimes it tested my civilian leaders' patience. You know, my boss was Dick Cheney and one day he pulled me aside and said, "you know, you are not supposed to talk politics, you are supposed to talk military." I said, "well I gotta talk whenever I have to talk, and make sure that I am giving the boss what he needs – Bush and others – the best of my knowledge. I will try to behave, but I gotta do what I gotta do." And, he accepted that and then it was challenging because I said things that ruffled feathers a lot of times. But, we came to an understanding of what my responsibilities were and it was military, I was the Chairman, so I was the military adviser to the SecState [Secretary of State], SecDef, the President, and the Vice President. Those are the four members whose counsel that I was responsible for. And, so Dick and I got it down to when we would go to an Oval Office meeting, the President would ask, "Mr. Cheney, what's the DoD [Department of Defense] position on this?" And, Cheney would answer with the DoD position on this is "such and such." Then, he would pause and then he [Cheney] would say this is the DoD position, but Colin doesn't agree with me Mr. President, so he will tell you what he thinks." I tell you what, you won't see that around there [the President's inner circle] very often. I was given total openness to say whatever I wanted to the President that he needed to hear or any of the others needed to hear and I could do that and they would hear what I said. But, he [the President] could do what he wanted anyway. Because, he was the boss. So, the point you are making about who wins, civilians or others, during my time there [at the strategic level of civil-military relations] I worked for civilians who didn't get muscled by the military. I had to deal with some tough civilians on the Hill [Capitol Hill, the Congress] like the Les Aspins and Sam Nunns of the world, these guys were tough and they made my life miserable. I had a tough time, but it was all part of the game. I never felt that they were doing anything that was not proper and I also told them that I didn't have every answer, but here is the answer that I have, so they were OK with that. We would have tough times. Les Aspin [senator and later secretary of defense] was fun to argue with, Sam Nunn [chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee] was very good with military matters. Ron Dellums who was congressman from California and a former Marine was the most liberal guy in Congress, but he was a former Marine and so he would give us what we needed, but would question everything. So, that is the way it was. I was uncomfortable at times, but everything is much more complicated and it all depends on the personalities. My blessing was that I was in DoD at a senior level at a time when we were allowed to speak openly. We were expected to speak openly and part of my confirmation [hearing] as Chairman and other confirmations as a general they [Congress] would always ask this final question: "are you prepared to tell

us the truth when we ask you for the truth?" and, "not what your boss would want you to say?" They expect that, and the answer had to be 'yes'. Any other answer would be stupid, but every one of us has to answer that question. So, I always answered yes and I did that.

One of the biggest recent stories was when the guy [Shinseki] was Chief of Staff of the Army and he was asked by a congressman a question like, he was asked "how many troops do you think that will be needed to win in this Iraq situation?" and, please give us your opinion on this answer?" He said, "a couple hundred thousand." He was fired. Not quite fired, he was put on ice, which is disgraceful. It was in the era of Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and that crowd.

Me: I have interviewed a couple of other folks like General Nicholson, who I have worked for and he also emphasized how fickle personality is and how you have to understand the personalities you are working for.

General Powell: You have to be ready to be fired.

Me: It sounds like when you were in the position of Chairman that your experience was what Eliot Cohen describes as "the unequal dialogue." You had a great situation as compared to others like Shinseki.

General Powell: That's true. I came into the senior position with an array of political skills. I got it from all the guys I had worked for. Even more importantly, I came to the position as Chairman because of the influence of President Bush. When I became the Chairman on November 15th [1989], I had been a four-star for six months. So, it was political. But, it happened. I had dealt with the political stuff, but he was also confident that I could handle the military department. Nobody wants to replay my way of doing it. So, when you talk to your classes, tell all of them "don't try to repeat what Powell did."

Me: What is good about this interview is that beyond my dissertation, this gives me good information as a professional teacher to pass on to the classroom.

Question #3 (Author): You developed the Powell Doctrine based on your experiences as military aide to Secretary of Defense Weinberger. Some have criticized the doctrine because, they say, "it ties the hands of civilian leaders from using force." In other words, they viewed it as a template of yes or no questions and criteria. What was your true intent for promulgating the Doctrine?

Answer to Question #3 (General Powell): In moving on to the Powell Doctrine, you don't have it right. There is no Army manual or Air Force or Marine Corps manual that has a chapter that says, title "The Powell Doctrine." That's not in the military. I smile about it because it is perhaps one of the most widely known doctrines out there, but it is not in any manual. A reporter did that. It was right after Desert Storm, a reporter wanted to interview me and he came in and we talked for a while and I said, "what do you want?" He says, "I want to write an article on the Powell Doctrine." And, I said, "that's great, what is it?" and he started to talk about it and that is where the Powell Doctrine came from. It did not come from Weinberger's Doctrine. It reflects what I have said to many people. It comes from the basic principles of war. We [the Army] have about nine of them, the other services [he meant joint doctrine] have a couple more, ten or eleven, [there are actually twelve principles of war in joint doctrine], but the basic principles of war are the Powell Doctrine. Go look those up and in the principles you will see it. So, that is what I was thinking about and I never wrote it up as the Powell Doctrine, the reporter did. So, I am kind of proud of it. I got a doctrine in the military right now. But, it was a reporter who did it, which makes sense. You have to realize in the rest of your paper that it is not quite right what you have there. [I sent the general a portion of my discussion on the Powell Doctrine before the interview to see if I had captured it correctly. I had not because I had interpreted it based upon long-standing

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misconceptions about the Powell Doctrine that continue to circulate within the military. The general corrected me so that I would capture his thoughts accurately.] Things like, that weren't really accurate, they came out of Weinberger's paper [his 1984 speech to the National Press Club], which sort of gets attributed to me. I never said some of the things that you have in there. Here are my basic tenets:

- Try to solve the thing [crisis] diplomatically, which means politically
- If you can't solve the thing diplomatically, if ultimately the use of force is necessary, then figure out what your objective is by your use of force
- What end do you want to put in place
- Then, use decisive force

Actually, the first time I ever used that I said 'overwhelming' force. But, I never used that word again. Because, that was not what I meant. I mean decisive force. Decisive force means, enough to get the job done, you don't have to overwhelm. That may sound a little tricky, but the example that I use to make the point, to differentiate, is Desert Storm, decisive. Bosnia, decisive. Going into Somalia with 25,000 guys, decisive. One example that is decisive, but did not involve force with it was when there was a coup in the Philippines. I guess this was in December of '89. I was in the Command Center [the National Command Center of the Pentagon] basically my boss [Cheney] was sick and was home. The President was on an airplane heading to a meeting with the Russians. Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser was with him. So, it was me and the Vice President [Quayle] and he called and was talking to the Filipinos and they Filipinos wanted us to bomb their airfield. They didn't want any planes taking off and attacking the capital, or attacking the palace. So, I said "let me give it some thought." The CINCPAC [commander-in-chief Pacific Command] guy was in Washington, so he and I had a chat about it. I said, "I think there is an easier way of handling this then to blow up an airfield." So, I got on the phone and I called the Air Force's military advisers there and I said, "this is what I want you to do. Get a hold of the Air Force [the units stationed at Clark Field at that time] in the Philippines and have them buzz the airfield and if they see any planes going on the runway to take off and have them [the US planes] buzz the plane, to discourage them from taking off. If that doesn't work, then shoot it down." But, "that is the last resort." Of course, Filipino pilots were not about to come up and challenge our F4s. "Then, report back." Funny thing about this was I needed to talk to the Defense Minister, a good friend of mine [Ramos], but we couldn't find him right away. Of all the communications I had in the command center this one was among the most difficult because there was no simple telephone available [phones in the NMCC are all secure, encrypted telephones]. And, when they couldn't get the Defense Minister, I said "what?" So, the attaché to the Philippines was in town that night and I said to him "do you have a telephone number for the Defense Minister" and he said, "oh yeah, sure." So, we started ripping up the command center and found a phone in a next door office. Finally, I got one and I called the guy on the phone and he picked up the phone and I said, "look, this is what I have been told that or asked to do by your President [Aquino] and she is a nice lady, I like her, but I don't think that it [bombing an airfield] is the right thing to do. So, here is what we will do." So, I told him and said that I didn't want to fight. He said, "oh, thank God." He said, "do you know tomorrow what kind of problem we would have if you had bombed the airfield?" I said, "I certainly did, that's why I didn't do it." So, that is the Powell Doctrine.

Me: so, it is a graduated response basically, then?

General Powell: yeah.

Me: sir, that clarifies it.

General Powell: Good, also the other thing in your letter [requesting an interview] is about having an exit strategy. You will never find that in anything that I ever wrote. [This answers question number four,

which is: One particular aspect of the Doctrine that comes in for heavy criticism is that the "demand" to have a clear exit strategy has been so inculcated in senior military leaders (and some civilian leaders) that focus on this is causing our planning to seek a rapid exit before victory and political objectives are fully secured. What was your purpose in articulating this element of the doctrine? General Powell's answer was that he never articulated in his doctrine that strategic planning for the use of force required an exit strategy. This is a myth that has been attributed to the doctrine by others and over the course of time it became conflated to the point where an "exit strategy" was a tenet of the Powell Doctrine.]

Me: Sir, I noticed that [in your book], but many authors have attributed this to you. But, everywhere that I have looked in your writings I haven't found that. Where did it come from?

General Powell: I don't know, you are the author. I never used that. I don't know how it got attributed to me but, I suspect it is from Weinberger. But, attributing the exit strategy to me is not accurate. I didn't copy from anybody. I had a reporter that put it in his paper, and the thing is it gets published and people talk about it, and everyone that comes along reinterprets it. There is no need for that, it's simple. Take a look at the principles of war. That's the Powell Doctrine. And, I have left out a lot of the stuff that Weinberger had like 'exit strategy' or that you have to get the people [public] on your side. Eventually, you have to get people on your side, but that's not at the beginning. It is a process, and so, I wrote one article about it and it was in the *New York Times*, maybe you will be able to find it. [I have all the general's writings and this particular article is titled "Why Generals Get Nervous", published 10 August 1992] I wrote the article because I was answering some guy who was attacking me. It was about 'when are we going to do something about what is going on in the Balkans or something. He [I don't know to whom the general was referring to] made me so mad, so I wrote an article in the *New York Times*. That is the only thing I have ever seen quoted on the Powell Doctrine. But, I wrote it myself.

Me: It is critical that I get this correct. So, I am glad that I am talking to you. You cleared up a lot of misconceptions for me and I know that there are many out there and in the military that still have this misconception about the Powell Doctrine.

Colin Powell: Let me give you one summary that I don't see in your paper [my letter to him and the list of questions]. Everything is not black and white. Everything, especially in war, is nuanced. If you are going to write a paper about this, instead of saying who is in charge of war, civilians or military, no, no no. I never found that to be the simple case. It's interesting. We know who the civilians are, but every case is different. I think Rumsfeld was terrible. Cheney was great. There you have it.

Question #6 (Author): I would like to talk about your time as Secretary of State. You were on the other side of civil-military relations as the SecState. How did the planning effort get affected by the poor civil-military relations at that time in 2002?

Answer Question #6 (General Powell): We had a problem in that I was no longer the Chairman. So, I really had to restrain my military advice. I had to focus on diplomatic advice. This was a constant set of problems between me and my staff at the State Department and Rumsfeld and his folks, the Wolfowitz's, and all the rest of them in the world, the Doug Feith's, and the rest of the department [the DoD], and we did not have a good system to clear all this up. The president was considering the use of military force and I kept telling him, "think twice." There was a meeting that I had with him [George W. Bush] in August [2002] and in it I laid out to him the dangers of going to war. Rumsfeld wasn't there, thank God. And, he [Bush] understood, and he said, "what do I do?" I told him to take it to the UN [United Nations] and we did take it to the UN. We said, Saddam Hussein has got an agenda, but also a chance to back down. But, he didn't take it. I said to the president in a private meeting at the White House, "you do understand that we can do this and get a resolution [from the UN] and he [Saddam] might stand down

form the resolution." Further, "all of the weapons [of mass destruction] that are supposedly there, if he did back down, are you prepared to accept a situation where Saddam Hussein is still in charge? . . . . With no weapons of mass destruction?" He [Bush] blinked twice and said, "yes." But, unfortunately, Donald Rumsfeld got to him and convinced him otherwise. So, there was little coordination between Defense and the State Department. We had some really hard core people that were under Rumsfeld and they convinced the president that military action was necessary. I told him of the dangers. I sucked all the oxygen out of the air. I told him this would affect the next four year [of the administration], but we went in anyway. So, what was the relationship between me, Cheney, and Rumsfeld? Not good. And, that's the way it was. It was poor, including Cheney for that matter. I don't know what the president thinks about it all now.

Me: to follow up, I know there were planning efforts for the post-war between the separate departments like State and DoD. But, the interagency coordination didn't work well?

General Powell: It was horrible. We commissioned a study [at the State Department, the one that Colonel Benson refers to in his interview] because nothing from the Defense Department was coming and one of our guys was in charge of the study and he pulled the team together and went through all the things that might happen. All things we needed to be doing and thinking about. We considered what the situation would be when the war was over, etc., etc. We spent a lot of time on what we should do when it was over [meaning the end of major combat operations]. You can probably find the paper somewhere. We put it all together and the Pentagon didn't like it. They just didn't want to listen to the State Department. So, they just wanted to go with their assumptions that, once we knock off Hussein, everybody will give up and then the other things will be fine. That's nonsense. A lot of this is in my book, so take a look at it. [Powell's book titled *It Worked for Me*]

Me: I wonder why there wasn't anyone in charge of the interagency to try to pull it together along with the differing opinions.

General Powell: Well, that's the job of the National Security Adviser, Condi Rice. We did not have an interagency system to work the issues. I was in one place, Rummy [Rumsfeld] and mostly Wolfowitz and along with Doug Feith were in a different place. And, the president just sort of let us play with each other. Cheney was there and of course he had the ear of the president every day, all day, which I did not. So that position [vice president] always occupies a sort of a wheelhouse position. They were so anxious to get this done, they thought it was going to be a piece of cake. I will never forget the day that it [the Iraq War, 2003] started, or a couple of days after it started. Our troops were marching toward Baghdad from the south. They were marching up the highway and the President and I were in the Oval Office. He was looking at the soldiers [on TV] as they made the march north and they were going through some towns. He said, "why aren't the people cheering?" And I said, "Mr. President, you aren't going to see cheering because they are being invaded." Then, the greatest teaching point then, and this sickens me, is the decision to disband the Iraqi Army and government system. We were with the President on three occasions, at the Pentagon, etc. discussing this. The Pentagon said, "we are going to drop leaflets on the Iraqi Army, telling them to just go home and wait for instructions. Then, we will recreate the Iraqi Army. That was news to all of us, except for Rumsfeld. Jerry Bremer who was the guy in charge of setting up the provisional Iraqi govt., he was told that he could decide whether to disband the Iraqi Army. So, he did and I actually learned about it by reading it in the newspaper. I asked Condi Rice, "is the President good with this? We have been telling everybody we are not going to do this." She said, "I'm going to talk to him" and she went and talked to him. He [Bush] said it was necessary to back Bremer. And it was a disaster. What the Pentagon wanted to do was to create a new army, one that could keep people from

invading Iraq. But, that's not what was needed. Iraq needs an army that can secure Iraq. And, that's what happened.

Question #8 (Author): Would a Goldwater-Nichols for the US interagency enterprise alleviate some of the issues? What might be some key elements to the legislation?

Answer Question #8 (General Powell): I don't know. What would it say?

Me: I have read a couple of pieces that recommend the interagency cross-fertilize by working in other departments outside their own areas of expertise to gain experience across the interagency. Then, create some kind of a mechanism to require interagency coordination. I am interested in your opinion on this.

General Powell: Goldwater-Nichols did force jointness, but that was not a major point of the legislation. The major point was to have the Chairman be the single voice for the joint chiefs, so that they speak with one voice. I gave my advice to the President as the Chairman. I always spoke to the Chiefs before giving any advice. But, I did not have to get a vote from the Chiefs as to what I should say. That was the point of Goldwater-Nichols because there was a concern about how the Chiefs operated, so they were advisers to the president [before Goldwater-Nichols], but Goldwater-Nichols said that I was the principal adviser to the President. But, I didn't have to ask them anything. But, I always did. Only once did I ever give the President something that I didn't talk about with the Chiefs first. Only once did the President ever overturn me. It was over tactical nuclear weapons. The Chiefs wanted them and I didn't. But, we got rid of those the following year [1992]. So, that's it. The other part you are thinking about is making sure that everyone gets joint trained. I don't know if that stuck though [it has]. There was a lot of unhappiness with all of that, so I don't know [the attitude among military officers with ref to joint professional military education has changed as these leaders eagerly seek out such joint education for professional development and to maintain their upward mobility within the military.] After 25 years you have to go find someone else to answer that one.

Conclusion of interview.

Interview 4 - Interview with protected source. This interview took place on 21 July 2020 with a senior official in the Department of Defense who served over the course of several presidential administrations. This official granted the author the permission to use his ideas but, requested anonymity and non-attribution of quotations.

Conducted on 21 July 2020

Text of interview redacted.

End of interview.