ETHICS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAY

Cruise Missiles and US Security Policy

Reuben E. Brigety II

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ETHICS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR

Using four key case studies, this book examines the decisionmaking process behind the American use of cruise missiles after the 1991 Gulf War. The author argues that such precision strike technology loosens traditional constraints on foreign intervention, such as fear of casualties, thereby making the use of force more likely as an instrument of policy.

By comparing and contrasting the decisionmaking calculus in each of these cases, the book concludes that the availability of precision strike weapons creates a "strategic window" in which the use of force becomes a plausible policy choice. Thus, rather than the "pinprick" strikes that these episodes are often characterized as, the author argues that the ability to use force in this manner was an important policy option in a complex political environment and will remain so in the future. This book investigates how the advent of precision-guided munitions affects the likelihood of US policymakers using force. As such, it is an inquiry into the impact of ethics, strategy, and military technology on the decisionmaking of national leaders.

This book will be of much interest to students of US foreign policy, US politics, military ethics, strategic studies, and international relations in general.

Reuben Brigety II is an Assistant Professor of Government and Politics at George Mason University, and holds a PhD in International Affairs from Cambridge University.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007
by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group,
an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Brigety, Reuben E.
Ethics, technology, and the American way of war: cruise missiles and US security policy/by Reuben E. Brigety II.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-415-77064-4 (alk. paper)
1. United States – Military policy. 2. Tomahawk (Guided missile) 3. Limited war. 4. United States – Foreign relations – 1993-2001. 5. United States – Military policy – Moral and ethical aspects. I. Title.
UA23.B7828 2007
172′.420973 – dc22
2006034567

ISBN 0-203-08892-1 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0-415-77064-5 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-203-08892-1 (ebk)
ISBN13: 978-0-415-77064-4 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-08892-0 (ebk)

FOR MY FAMILY

CONTENTS

PREFACE

> Everything flows and nothing stays . . . . You can't step twice into the same river.
>
> Heraclitus, *c.* 540–480 BC

The world has changed dramatically since research for this book began in October 1998. Although the Cold War had been over for close to a decade, the United States and its allies were still struggling to construct a strategic framework to guide their foreign policy. Initiatives such as the expansion of NATO and the conduct of peacekeeping operations occupied the attention of American and European strategists. Yet there seemed to be no clear, overarching theme that linked American foreign policy goals and the use of armed force to achieve them.

That changed on 11 September 2001. On that day, four American commercial airplanes were hijacked within an hour of each other. Two of them slammed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third crashed into one side of the Pentagon near Washington, and the fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. This coordinated terrorist attack on the soil of the United States immediately focused American policymakers on the primary task of combating terrorism around the world. In a radio address to the nation just a few days after the attacks, President George W. Bush remarked:

> We are planning a broad and sustained campaign to secure our country and eradicate the evil of terrorism. And we are determined to see this conflict through. Americans of every faith and background are committed to this goal.[1]

Precisely how this unprecedented assault on the United States fundamentally rearranges its alliances and priorities in global affairs is still emerging as of this writing. Yet it is clear that it has undoubtedly caused American strategists to reexamine how force is used to achieve foreign policy objectives. As soldiers and statesmen contemplate the efficacy of airpower after the 2001–2 war in Afghanistan, and relearn the value of counterinsurgency operations in the 2003 war in Iraq, one of the doctrines which must also be reconsidered is the role of limited war strategies enabled by precision weapons. The attacks of 11 September 2001 may have ushered in a period when the massive use of force

in a campaign of total war was both an acceptable and a necessary response to a mortal threat to the nation.

Not all crises, however, present a clear provocation with such an obvious choice of response. So long as there are complex foreign policy dilemmas that defy resolution through conventional diplomacy but resist the application of overwhelming military power, it is vital to study the waging of limited war. This book is an effort to understand the constraints that ethical considerations in the use of force present to policymakers and the role of technology in overcoming them. Should it fulfill its purpose, it will contribute to the understanding of how the use of force can be more humane as it becomes more effective as an instrument of statecraft.

Reuben E. Brigety II
Fairfax, Virginia, 2006

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While the writing of a book is a significant exercise for the author, it simply cannot be completed without the assistance of many, many people. This was certainly the case for me. I am profoundly grateful to a number of individuals who made this work possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my doctoral adviser, Dr Paul Cornish. His insightful analysis, constant encouragement, and complete confidence in this project were invaluable. I am, perhaps, even more grateful for his warm friendship and for the thoughtfulness of his family. I will treasure their kindness for the rest of my life.

It would have been impossible to conduct this research without the patience of some prominent people who consented to my interview requests and who helped to guide my inquiries in their early stages. For their gracious efforts, I am grateful to Adm. Dennis Blair (Ret.), Capt. Joseph Bouchard (Ret.), Lt-Gen. Jim Clapper (Ret.), Mr Richard Clarke, Capt. Lee Geanuleas (Ret.), Adm. David Jeremiah (Ret.), Dr Anthony Lake, Rear-Adm. Tom Marfiak (Ret.), Capt. Mike Martus (Ret.), Gen. Peter Pace, Mr Barry Pavel, Gp-Capt. Stuart Peach, Mr Richard Pearle, Gen. Binford Peay (Ret.), Adm. Leighton Smith (Ret.), Mr Hal Sonnenfelt, Mr Mark Talisman, and Dr Paul Wolfowitz.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Sidney Sussex College of the University of Cambridge. In particular, I would like to thank my graduate tutors, Dr Daniel Tawfik and Dr Stuart Corbridge, and their secretary, Mrs Anthea Ansell, for their professional and personal support. Dr Helen Castor, Fellow of Medieval History, also played a pivotal role in my acceptance to the International Studies program at Cambridge. She is a kind and gracious friend.

For their financial support for my doctoral studies, I am extremely grateful to the Cambridge Overseas Trust, the Sidney Sussex College North American Trust and, most importantly, to the United States Naval Academy Alumni Association for granting me the Thomas G. Pownall Scholarship, which made possible the first two years of my studies at Cambridge. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Mary Wintersgill for her exceptional administration of the

scholarship during the time of my candidacy and for her continued friendship.

I am especially grateful to the entire staff of the Centre of International Studies at the University of Cambridge. It is difficult for me to imagine a more enlightened, diverse, and engaging place to study international affairs, or a more dedicated and caring staff to assist in that effort. Specifically, I am grateful to Professor James Mayall for his exceptional past leadership of the Centre; to Dr Philip Towle for first having faith in me as a candidate for the Master's Degree in international affairs; to Dr Geoffrey Edwards for his continuing interest in my academic and professional progress; to Mr Marc Weller for his brilliant legal instruction and for his wise counsel; to Dr Yezid Sayigh for showing me a new facet of the world of Middle Eastern politics and for his steadfast friendship and kind good wishes as I have progressed in my studies; and, finally, but certainly not least, to Mrs Ann Kemp and Mrs Wendy Cooke for their unfailing administrative support and constant personal kindness.

I could not have persevered through the completion of this work without the constant support of many family and friends. Although it is impossible to name them all, I would like to thank some of them explicitly here: Peter Ackerman, Lt-Cdr Silas and Jacqueline Ahn, Dr Richard Betts, Dr Stephen Biddle, Louis and Suzanne Blair, David Bonfili and Michelle Gavin, Cdr Richard Bryant, Lt-Cdr Hugh and Lt Rupa Danier, Jim Day, Sean and Jenifer Fahey, Louis Font and Gail Glazer, Cdr Tim and Vicky Galpin (Ret.), Emily Goldblatt, Matthew Goldin, Dr Louis Goodman, Dr Samantha Harvey, Tom Henneberg, Dr Frances Harbour, Dr James Joyner IV, Dr Tricia Juhn, Rev. Albert and Lucile Keller, Vice-Adm. Thomas and Lucy Kinnebrew (Ret.), Celeste Kruger, John and Virginia Lawrence, Adm. Charles Larson (Ret.), Mike and Alexa Mattis, Judge Stephan and Evelyn Mickle, Stephanie Mickle, Dr Charles and Anne McIntosh, Dr Evan Medeiros, Dr Jamie Miller, Ruth Morgan, Choise and Barabara Murray, Nicholas Patterson, Kendra Ryan, Sasha and Cori Sabet, Lt-Cdr Steve and Lauren Shedd, Joshua Shultz and Shoma Haque, Gibran Van Ert, Wyman and Rosemary Winbush, Dr Stephen and Alexandra Wrage, Sam and Tracey Zager, and Joy Zarembka.

For their enduring love, support and encouragement, I am eternally grateful to my parents, Drs Reuben and Barbara Brigety.

To my beloved Leelie and our son Roebel, I love you both.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	armored box launcher
AFSOUTH	Allied Forces, Southern Europe
ALCM	air-launched cruise missile
BSA	Bosnian Serb Army
CDC	Croat Democratic Community
CEB	combined effects bomblet
CEP	circular error probable
CG	cruiser-guided missile
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINC	commander-in-chief
CINCSOUTH	Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe
COMAIRSOUTH	Commander, Allied Air Forces, Southern Europe
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
CMSA	cruise missile support activity
CMSALANT	cruise missile support activity – Atlantic
CMSAPAC	cruise missile support activity – Pacific
CVN	aircraft carrier – nuclear propulsion
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DD	destroyer
DDG	destroyer-guided missile
DOD	Department of Defense
DSMAC	digital scene matching area correlator
EC	European Community
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GLCM	ground-launched cruise missile
GPS	global positioning system
HARM	high-speed anti-radiation missile
HDZ	Croat Democratic Union (English translation)
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IIS	Iraqi Intelligence Service
INF	intermediate nuclear forces
IWG	interagency working group
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff

JNA	Yugoslav National Army (English translation)
KDP	Kurdish Democratic Party
KPJ	Communist Party of Yugoslavia (English translation)
LCY	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
MAD	mutually assured destruction
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MRASM	medium-range air-to-surface missile
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Command Authority
NIMA	National Imagery and Mapping Agency
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
NSC	National Security Council
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
P-5	Permanent Five Members of the United Nations Security Council
PCC	policy coordinating committee
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party (English translation)
PGM	precision-guided munition
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RMA	revolution in military affairs
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SEAD	suppression of enemy air defenses
SDA	strategic decisionmaking apparatus
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party (English translation)
SLCM	sea-launched cruise missile
SSN	attack submarine – nuclear propulsion
TASM	Tomahawk anti-ship missile
TERCOM	terrain contour matching
TEZ	total exclusion zone
TOT	time over target
TLAM	Tomahawk land attack missile
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
US	United States
USCENTOM	United States Central Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VCJS	Vice-Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
VLS	vertical launch system
WMD	weapon(s) of mass destruction

1
INTRODUCTION

> Only the dead have seen the end of war.
>
> Plato, 438–347 BC

Pin-prick . . . Limp response . . . Abject failure . . . . Such words have been used repeatedly by various critics to describe the use of the Tomahawk cruise missile by American policymakers in dealing with foreign policy crises.[1] Clearly, the condemnation is not leveled at the weapon, *per se* – which has performed brilliantly in combat – but at the strategy underlying its employment. The limited use of force, so the argument goes, directed against a determined enemy and designed to minimize the loss of life on all sides is at best ineffectual and at worst counterproductive. It ignores the central reality of war that both soldiers and civilians are often, and regrettably, killed. A nation must be prepared to pay the price required in blood and treasure if it seeks to achieve its objectives through the force of arms. To presume otherwise, argue critics, is both delusional thinking and a dangerous strategy that can embolden adversaries, discourage allies and, ultimately, undermine the nation's security. While the Tomahawk may be a very useful weapon, its employment in anything short of a broad military campaign or a decapitation attempt is a prescription for defeat.

Regardless of the merits of such objections, they do not recognize a fundamental development. The use of the Tomahawk to achieve limited political objectives is not the result of feckless decisionmakers ignorant of the true demands of warfare in support of the national interest. Rather, it represents a logical and innovative response to real constraints on the use of force that come from changes in the international environment and shifting US domestic political considerations. Specifically, increased international attention on the protection of civilians in armed conflict has elevated the incidence of so-called "collateral damage" from the status of a vexing moral dilemma to a serious strategic problem. Furthermore, the American experience with warfare since World War II generally, and especially since the Vietnam War, has made it politically difficult for senior decisionmakers to risk the lives of American service personnel for anything but the most serious threats to American national security. As there continued to be provocations which fell short of this threshold, yet required the use of force, it was necessary for policymakers to develop approaches that made military power a viable instrument of statecraft

despite concern for casualties among non-American civilians and US military personnel. Through the use of new precision weapons technologies and established doctrines of limited war, policymakers not only found a means of circumventing these constraints but eventually of turning them into assets that could help advance America's interests. In so doing, they have initiated an emerging American approach to the use of force in which humanity is becoming a weapon of war.

The importance of international norms regarding civilian protections in warfare began to strengthen after World War II. The codification of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, and the subsequent 1977 Additional Protocols I and II, explicitly forbade attacks on civilians as a method of war. Furthermore, they stipulated that any incidental harm caused to civilians as a result of assaults on legitimate targets must be proportional to the direct military advantage gained from such attacks. Although Cold War politics and the inherent weakness of international law made the enforcement of such norms difficult, their articulation nevertheless established important principles that would subsequently become the basis for their strategic salience in a post-Cold War environment.

Chronologically coincident to the development of legal protections for civilians in armed conflict was the growth of limited war doctrine in American strategic thought. The atomic blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki had a profound impact beyond hastening an end to World War II. They also ushered in a new era in the history of warfare, and indeed of geopolitics, marked by the prospect of a catastrophic nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. As the arsenals of the superpowers grew, so did the possibility that any use of conventional armed forces to counter a particular threat might escalate into a full-fledged nuclear war. The notional Pyrrhic victory that would result from such a conflict challenged the very assertion that a nuclear war could be "winnable." It also encouraged American strategists to consider ways in which military power could be harnessed in the nuclear era to support political objectives in a rational manner with acceptable costs. The result was a body of thought dedicated to the concept of limited war. While some thinkers considered the topic of limited nuclear war in which nuclear exchanges might be graduated in scale and scope, others contemplated paradigms of limited conventional war where non-nuclear forces could be used to achieve discreet political objectives without triggering a nuclear response. Most of this work embodied principles such as signaling, reprisal, and coercion, in which armed force achieved political objectives by persuading an enemy to take a desired action rather than eliminating its ability to resist, as dictated by Clausewitzian models of total war.

Finally, advances in American cruise missile technology dramatically expanded the options available for the use of force. Experimentation with primitive forms of cruise missiles began even before the end of World War II as the United States tried to develop weapons similar to the V-1 rockets that

Germany used to terrorize Great Britain. Following the war, development continued as the US Navy worked on sea-launched versions of cruise missiles and the US Air Force tested air-launched models. The guidance systems, avionics, and warhead designs available to weapons engineers by the early 1960s made it difficult to design cruise missiles that were both practical and effective in their tactical employment. Although the Air Force persisted in pursuing the technology throughout this period (albeit at a relatively modest pace), the Navy essentially abandoned its cruise missile program for a decade. The Soviets, however, were able to develop sea-launched cruise missiles and invested in them heavily as weapons for their surface fleet to counter American dominance with tactical aviation assets aboard aircraft carriers. When a Soviet-made cruise missile sank an Israeli destroyer during the 1967 Six-Day War, US Navy leaders recognized the utility of this weapon. Furthermore, a series of technological advances by the early 1970s made it possible to conceive of a long-range cruise missile that could be accurate, lethal, and practical to employ. Finally, the advent of high-level arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union provided a political impetus to develop nuclear-armed cruise missiles as bargaining chips to encourage Soviet concessions in other weapons categories. This combination of forces led the US Navy to deploy its first multimission cruise missile by the early 1980s. It was called the Tomahawk. With initial efforts focused on its development as an anti-ship and tactical nuclear weapon, the creation of a conventional land attack variant of Tomahawk was almost an afterthought. This is ironic as it is only in the conventional land attack configuration that Tomahawk has been used in combat. Still, the availability of manned aircraft armed with relatively inexpensive conventional munitions led observers to question the cost-effectiveness, and ultimately the utility, of conventional Tomahawk strikes. Indeed, noted authority Richard Betts suggested as early as 1981:

> For cruise missiles with conventional armament, the primary conceptual issue is whether or not they will provide new tactical options. The salient question is cost-effectiveness . . . . But more than strategic and theater nuclear forces, whose adequacy is assessed primarily in terms of deterrence theories with large political and psychological components, conventional cruise missile sufficiency depends on operational doctrine.[2]

The end of the Cold War provided the context in which the maturity of American cruise missile technology was combined with an emergent operational doctrine designed to meet the challenges of a new era in international affairs. The debut of the Tomahawk during the 1991 Persian Gulf War graphically demonstrated its power and promise. The unmanned weapon's ability to strike with unprecedented accuracy from great distances, and to minimize risks to civilians and service personnel during combat, suggested a new way of applying force to achieve strategic objectives. It also began to raise expectations

in the American body politic and in the international community about the ability of the United States to wage war while avoiding harm to innocents.

These developments coincided with the strengthening of the humanitarian and human rights movements that occurred after the demise of the competition between the superpowers. US President George H.W. Bush hailed this historical milestone as the beginning of a New World Order in which nations would engage in a "partnership whose goals [would be] to increase democracy, increase prosperity, increase the peace, and reduce arms."[3] Although the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to eliminate the prospect of a global nuclear war, other intractable problems soon arose. Ethnic wars from the Balkans and the Caucasus to the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa sorely tested the vision of a peaceful and just new world.

Although they were often intense and destructive clashes killing thousands of people, the arguable relevance of these conflicts to the United States was not immediately obvious. For a nation disposed to resort to force only in support of its national interests, using American military forces to achieve a solution to these so-called "peripheral conflicts" was a suspect proposition. Nevertheless, pressure for action often mounted. The killing of innocent civilians in distant lands could be graphically delivered in real time to the living rooms of Western European and American audiences by the new, instantaneous, global news media. As citizens demanded an end to the killing on the grounds of protecting universal human rights, many also insisted that civilians be spared the brunt of foreign military operations designed to protect them from the brutality of forces within their own national borders. Christopher Coker used the term "humane war" to describe post-modern efforts to wage war in a humanitarian manner in order to support humanist objectives.[4] Others described it as humanitarian intervention, and suggested that it was perverse to kill civilians, even incidentally, in the course of combat operations initiated to protect them from attack. Thus, it was important to design military campaigns of this type in such a way that would spare harm to civilians as much as possible. Precision munitions in general, and the Tomahawk cruise missile in particular, would be indispensable in this regard.

Confronting ethic conflicts, however, was not the only challenge to the United States in the post-Cold War world. Intransigent dictators such as Saddam Hussein and implacable non-state actors such as Al-Qaida provided recurrent provocations to the interests of America and its allies. Although many argued throughout the 1990s that such threats constituted a profound danger, both the domestic and the international political environment made it difficult to respond to them with massive military force. President George H.W. Bush made an explicit decision to end the 1991 Persian Gulf War without toppling the Iraqi regime, opting instead to rely on economic and other sanctions to contain it. This policy was continued by the Clinton administration, which recognized that (even if it chose to) there was little international support for

another war on Iraq. Regarding Al-Qaida, using armed force in a "total war" paradigm against an armed, transnational terror organization was extremely complicated militarily, legally, and diplomatically. Finally, American popular resistance to risking the lives of American service personnel where the vital national interest was at least debatable, if not in doubt, significantly limited the strategic options available to senior decisionmakers.

Despite these myriad constraints, it was clear that the use of force would still be required in the post-Cold War era. Complex contingencies that did not present the United States with an obvious threat to its vital national interests made it difficult to mobilize American public opinion in risking the lives of American service personnel. Yet such crises often defied resolution through conventional diplomacy. Thus, in case after case, the challenge confronting American policymakers was to find a way to make the application of force a viable option in such a way that protected civilians to the extent possible, served US interests to the extent necessary, and limited risks to soldiers to the extent avoidable.

The maturation of the Tomahawk, combined with established strategies of limited war, allowed military force to be a viable instrument of statecraft in this contested environment. In addition, the tactical success of these weapons and the strategic flexibility that they provided to policymakers contributed to the development of other precision-guided munitions and associated doctrines for their use. Ultimately, this trend, along with other developments in US military practice, has led to a strategic approach in which the United States has tried to demonstrate its benevolence to civilians in war zones where it is conducting combat operations in a deliberate attempt to influence positively international public opinion regarding both the ends and the means of its resort to armed force. In addition to the wide use of precision munitions in limited and total war scenarios, this trend is characterized by the combat delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in war zones, post-conflict reconstruction projects, and information campaigns designed to display America's goodwill to the local population in a theater of operation as well as to global audiences worldwide. Such initiatives represent an effort not merely to overcome humanitarian constraints on the military instrument, but to turn them into a strategic advantage. Hence, the United States is exhibiting a novel approach, tailored to the realities of the prevailing circumstances, in which humanity may be regarded as a weapon of war.

This book is an examination of the first four uses of the Tomahawk cruise missile to achieved discrete and limited political objectives. Since the last of these strikes in 1996, the United States has continued to use cruise missiles in this manner. It launched limited strikes against targets in Iraq in August 1998, as well as against targets in Sudan and Afghanistan in December 1998. It has also employed Tomahawks and other precision munitions as part of broader air campaigns during Operation Allied Force in the former Yugoslavia in 1999,

Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001, and in Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq in 2003.

The object of this work is not simply the use of cruise missiles *per se*, but the extent to which they permit policymakers to circumvent and co-opt constraints on the use of force. As such, it focuses on decisions made at the highest levels of the American government to understand the pressures that senior officials face in confronting complex crises and the extent to which long-range precision weapons systems provide additional options for action. Thus, the tactical results of these strikes are of secondary importance to the political decision to employ cruise missiles and the strategies underlying their use. Such an analytical emphasis is intended to elucidate an emerging humanitarian approach in US military policy and to demonstrate why the Tomahawk has become the "weapon of choice" for US presidents.

Plan for the book

This work is divided into two sections. Part I examines the theoretical, strategic, and technical bases for exploring the relevance of the Tomahawk in American military practice. Part II identifies the first four case studies of the use of cruise missiles to support discrete foreign policy objectives since the end of the Persian Gulf War when the conventional land attack Tomahawk was first used in combat. Finally, these theoretical and practical bases will be used to suggest implications for the use of precision-guided munitions in American approaches to limited war and, more broadly, their place in a humanitarian strategy for armed conflict.

Part I: Theoretical approaches

Chapter 2: Humanity as a weapon of war

Despite the historical record of death and destruction associated with it, warfare has always had restrictions. Indeed, it is the existence of such rules that distinguish killing in war from murder in society. This chapter explores the philosophical and theoretical bases for conceptions of moderation in armed conflict. By examining warrior traditions, Christian just war philosophy, international humanitarian law, and international relations theory, it argues that the norm of civilian protections in armed conflict is a powerful consideration in the conduct of warfare. It has traditionally been seen as a limitation on the freedom of action of belligerents in battle and, therefore, on their ability to achieve victory. If the purpose of warfare is to serve political objectives, then restrictions on combat operations designed to protect civilians may be regarded as strategic constraints that impede the utility of armed force to support strategic objectives. Yet the chapter argues that humanitarian norms such

as civilian protection can also serve as strategic enablers, the observance of which can support the objectives for which a state uses force. There is a basis for this humanitarian approach in American strategic culture, which helps to explain an emerging trend in US military practice where humanity is a weapon of war.

Chapter 3: Limited war in American strategic thought

Wars may be fought in many ways. They can be unlimited in their objectives or means, or they may be deliberately limited in their scope, time, or purpose. This chapter explores the development of limited war approaches in modern American strategic theory. Originally conceived under the cloud of nuclear war, early limited war strategies offered methods of calibrating the use of conventional and nuclear force in order to make military power a viable instrument of statecraft without triggering a global nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. By tracing the evolution of this thinking from its origins in the Cold War to its continued relevance in the post-Cold War world, this chapter describes the strategic framework in which cruise missiles are used to achieve limited objectives through the use of force.

Chapter 4: Tomahawk: history, technology, and strategy

America is nothing if not a technological superpower. Chapter 3 traces the history of the Tomahawk cruise missile, taking note of the political and institutional forces that drove its development. It explains in detail, through unclassified sources, the technical capabilities embodied in the Tomahawk and why the technology present in the weapon has truly revolutionary strategic significance. Its twin characteristics of very high precision and "stand-off" launching several hundred miles away from its target allow each Tomahawk missile to deliver a significant amount of conventional explosives without immediately endangering the lives of American personnel, while (in theory) minimizing the casualties caused by an attack.

Part II: Practical applications

Chapter 5: Operation Southern Watch (January 1993)

This is the first instance of cruise missiles being used since the 1991 Persian Gulf War and their first use to influence discrete political events. Launched in the final days of the first Bush Administration, Operation Southern Watch used cruise missiles to influence Iraqi compliance with the United Nations weapons inspection regime. The decision to employ the weapon and the weapon's effectiveness in achieving the desired political result are discussed.

Chapter 6: Operation Bushwacker (June 1993)

Operation Bushwacker (June 1993) was the first use of force by the Clinton administration. A purely punitive raid, it was launched to retaliate against an alleged assassination plot against former President George H.W. Bush by Iraqi Intelligence Service agents. The motives of the strikes, the method by which the administration made the decision, and the immediate aftermath of the attack are all treated in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Operation Deliberate Force (September 1995)

Cruise missiles were employed against Serbian positions in Bosnia as a part of the larger NATO Operation Deliberate Force. The use of force in this instance was a classic case of "coercive diplomacy," yet the role of Tomahawk in this effort was relatively small. The operation was exceptionally complicated both diplomatically and politically. The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a conundrum that defied resolution by the participants and the Western powers for nearly four years. The decision by NATO to launch air strikes in September 1995 constituted the largest use of military force by the alliance in its history up to that date. The role of Tomahawk in this operation, why it was used, who approved it, and its ultimate political efficacy are addressed.

Chapter 8: Operation Desert Strike (September 1996)

In August 1996, Saddam Hussein sent three armored divisions into the town of Irbil to crush a separatist movement by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the main Kurdish political/military parties in northern Iraq. This operation represented the most significant military action in the region since the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The US responded to the aggression by launching cruise missile attacks against Iraqi air defenses in the south of the country, even though the immediate military threat was hundreds of miles away in the north of the country. The rationale of this decision as well as the benefits and shortcomings of using Tomahawk in this scenario are explained.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The conclusion synthesizes the theoretical lessons of Part I and the specific decision processes at work in Part II. It deduces common themes from these chapters to assess the impact of limited war strategies and technological advances in precision weaponry on American political–military strategy and decisions to use force. Finally, it places the use of precision munitions within a broader strategic humanitarian approach to armed conflict and suggests avenues for further research of this trend.

A note on sources and methodology

The construction of the case studies mentioned above relied on significant quantities of primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include interviews conducted with senior American policymakers who were involved in the decision to use force.[5] They also include the transcripts of press briefings and statements given by such policymakers or their representatives.

Secondary sources include press reports from a variety of news media from around the world. In many instances, press reports provided the most readily available sources of factual information about a particular event. Where appropriate, they are compared with multiple media sources to provide the most complete and accurate details of a given scenario.

Tertiary sources, such as books or extensive reports, were used to construct the general political context in which each of these strikes took place. In Chapters 7 and 8, considerably more emphasis is placed on the political context of these strikes than those in Chapters 5 and 6. This is not only because the political contexts of the former are far more complicated than those in Chapters 5 and 6, but also because it is impossible to understand the decision calculus to employ Tomahawk in those situations without a fundamental understanding of the constraints imposed by those exceptionally difficult political circumstances. Thus, the extended exposition of the political context in two of the four case studies presented is warranted by the complicated nature of the events under study.

Part I

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2

HUMANITY AS A WEAPON OF WAR

> This has been the most accurate war ever fought in this nation's history.
>
> Gen. Tommy Franks speaking about civilian casualties in Operation Enduring Freedom, February 2002[1]

Introduction

"War is Hell." Reflecting his experiences in the American Civil War, this famous dictum articulated by General William Tecumseh Sherman encapsulates the brutality and chaos that characterizes armed conflict. If Hell is a place of torment and pain free from any semblance of hope, it suggests a state where there are no limits and any horrible thing is conceivable. Many who have witnessed war, both soldiers and civilians alike, would share Sherman's view.

Yet warfare *has* historically had limits. Warriors from time immemorial have crafted codes of conduct to distinguish honorable killing from senseless slaughter. Theologians have struggled to reconcile the necessary violence of combat with religious conceptions of mercy and compassion. Statesmen have tried to limit the scope of war to contain its costs to their societies. And scholars have wrestled with the role of warfare as an instrument of state power in a world increasingly characterized by interstate cooperation and regulated by international law.

Each of these approaches conceives of warfare as an activity to be controlled. Yet the nature of war resists limitations. In a clash of arms where the price for failure can be profound and permanent, the temptation for combatants is to use whatever force is available to them, by whatever means are necessary, in order to achieve victory. Hence, Cicero's observation, "*Inter arma, silent leges*" or, "In time of war, the law is silent."

But what if victory in war could be achieved *through* moderation? What if limits on warfare offered a path toward victory rather than an obstacle to it? This would reframe the conception of the application of force and its utility as a means of advancing state interests.

Since the end of World War II, international standards intended to protect civilians during armed conflict have gained in strength and salience. The acceptance of this norm by governments and populations around the world has complicated the ability of states to achieve objectives through the use of force

when doing so causes harm to civilians. Yet it has not stopped states from resorting to force when they deemed it vital to their interests. Instead, some have adapted to this changing environment by finding ways to protect civilians in the midst of armed conflict. In doing so, they seek to garner support for their cause by demonstrating to people, both within a theater of war and beyond it, that they are humane belligerents. To the extent that humanitarian norms are used to advanced national interests in armed conflict, it may be suggested that humanity has become a weapon of war.

The present chapter explores this development through a variety of theoretical approaches. First, it presents an examination of international relations theory to address the role of norms in international affairs. With a focus on constructivist theory, it then examines the particular norm of civilian protection in armed conflict. Elements of Christian just war theory are examined as an early source of the civilian protection norm. The secularization of these Christian ideals about the protection of innocents provides an important basis for the modern international law of armed conflict. The chapter goes on to show how rules, codified in international treaties, that protect non-combatants have traditionally been regarded as strategic constraints on the prosecution of warfare. Nevertheless, recent changes in the international political environment have caused states to try to convert such constraints into strategic enablers that can ultimately support the objectives for which they use force. Finally, the chapter argues that a tradition of humanity in American strategic culture enables this approach. It provides the intellectual basis for the application of limited war strategies and precision technologies as part of a broader effort to derive strategic influence through the adherence to humanitarian norms in armed conflict.

Norms in international relations

Theories of international relations propose broad constructs, or world views, with which to analyze the behavior of actors in the international arena. Certainly the oldest, and arguably the most important, theory of international relations is classical realism. With its roots in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, classical realism is, at its core, a theory emphasizing the rational application of power in pursuit of a sovereign state's interests. It presumes that the most important form of power is military power.

In his landmark work *Politics Among Nations*, Hans Morgenthau proposed six principles that are at the core of realist thought.[2] Of particular interest is his thinking about the role of ethical and normative considerations in international relations. He wrote:

> A discussion of international morality must guard against the two extremes of either overrating the influence of ethics upon international

> politics or underestimating it by denying that statesmen and diplomats are moved by anything but considerations of material power.[3]

Although Morgenthau believed that classical realism's emphasis on rational self-interest precludes decisionmaking based principally on moral grounds, he nonetheless recognized that ethical considerations can have a constraining effect on state action. Just as ethics, mores, and laws protect domestic society from descending into a Hobbesian state of nature, so do they also regulate international conduct. Morgenthau explained:

> [I]f we ask ourselves what statesmen and diplomats are capable of doing to further the power objectives of their respective nations and what they actually do, we realize that they do less than they probably could and less than they actually did in other periods of history. They refuse to consider certain ends and to use certain means, either altogether or under certain conditions, not because in the light of expediency they appear impractical or unwise but because certain moral rules interpose an absolute barrier. Moral rules do not permit certain policies to be considered at all from the point of view of expediency. Certain things are not being done on moral grounds, even though it would be expedient to do them.[4]

Morgenthau's nuanced views on the role of moral rules, or norms, in a broader theory of classical realism are not universally shared. Indeed, neorealists, led by Kenneth Waltz, emphasize the determinative nature of the international system's structure on state behavior. In so doing, they de-emphasize the role of norms in international affairs. James Dogherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff Jr argued:

> Neorealism has as its focus the system as the structure that shapes the political relationships that take place among its members. For structural realism, international politics is more than the summation of the foreign policies of states and the external balance of other actors in the system. Thus, Kenneth Waltz argues for a neorealist approach based on patterned relationships among actors in a system that is anarchical. In this respect, drawing on the paradigm of international politics of classical realism, structural realism emphasizes those features of the structure that mold the way in which the components relate to one another.[5]

Neorealism's appeal rests in its analytical rigor and in the basis it provides for policy analysis. Nevertheless, it is not without critics. Its emphasis on power-based competition does not adequately explain interstate cooperation, particularly when it is contrary to state interests.[6] Furthermore, the focus on the state as the appropriate unit of analysis does not consider alternative

sources of power in international affairs, nor does the centrality of systemic structure account for domestic catalysts of state activity.[7]

It is against this body of thought that alternative theories of international relations developed. Neoliberalism accepts realism's assumptions of state interests and state-centric analysis, but proposes that those interests are best served in a cooperative rather than a competitive environment. Such cooperation is enabled through institutions that facilitate interstate cooperation. Norms operate within such institutions by articulating the acceptable limits of state behavior, thus creating a long-term interest for all states to support the institution even if it is against their short-term interests. While this approach accounts for interstate cooperation, it has at least two flaws relevant for this discussion. First, it does not explain the existence and resilience of norms beyond a formal institutional framework. Second, by maintaining a state-centric emphasis embedded in institutions, it does not account for the development and propagation of norms beyond an institutional context. As in realism, individuals have no place in neorealist analysis as either actors or objects of study.

Constructivism offers a theoretical approach for understanding the power of ideas and norms in international affairs. Martha Finnemore provided a useful definition of norms, and differentiates them from ideas. She wrote:

> I define norms in a simple and sociologically standard way as shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors. Unlike ideas which may be held privately, norms are shared and social; they are not just subjective but *inter*subjective. Ideas may or may not have behavioral implications; norms by definition concern behavior. One can say that they are collectively held ideas about behavior. This is not to say that norms are never violated – they are – but the very fact that one can talk about a violation indicates the existence of a norm.[8]

Constructivists argue that ideas, not material power, are the most important force in international affairs. As ideas must originate in the minds of individuals, it is people – rather than states – that are the most important unit of analysis. Ideas have the power to shape both individual and collective behavior by establishing shared notions of appropriate conduct. Thus, the power of ideas – to include ethical considerations – can frame the choices that decision-makers feel are available to them. As Morgenthau argued, they can constrain such choices by limiting the boundaries of acceptable behavior when states are prepared to apply sanction for the violation of a norm. Likewise, they can also expand the possible options available to a state by creating rewards for adherence to generally accepted ideas of right conduct.

The precise mechanism by which norms influence state action is a subject of intense interest for constructivists. Again, Finnemore suggested:

> Socially constructed rules, principles, norms of behavior, and shared beliefs may provide states, individuals, and other actors with understandings of what is important or valuable and what are effective and/or legitimate means of obtaining those valued goods. *These social structures may supply states with both preferences and strategies for pursuing those preferences* [emphasis added].[9]

Although scholars differ on this question,[10] it is clear that norms can either limit the range of options that decisionmakers feel are available to them, or expand such options by broadening the range of acceptable conduct. We may call a norm that limits state action a "strategic constraint," and a norm that expands a state's options a "strategic enabler."

These differing functions of norms in international affairs can be a bridge linking realist and constructivist paradigms in practice. Realism assumes that the conduct of international affairs is based on the rational pursuit of self-interest through the currency of material (especially military) power. Constructivism asserts that ideas can be the means to order international affairs by creating standards for expected behavior which order states' preferences. The link between these two paradigms occurs when the means of ideas are used to purse the ends of rational state interests. In other words, when ideational (rather than material) power becomes a viable method for the pursuit of national objectives, then the conceptual gap between realism and constructivism shrinks.

Finally, through its assertion that competition in an environment of anarchy is the defining feature of international affairs, neorealism offers a compelling explanation for *why* states resort to armed conflict. Similarly, neoliberalism suggests how institutions can regulate interstate competition and thus reduce the occurrence of war. Neither theory, however, accounts for *how states fight* nor, in particular, why states restrain the way in which they apply armed force when doing so would seem to inhibit their tactical effectiveness on the battlefield. With its emphasis on the power of norms, constructivism provides a useful framework for addressing this question. In particular, it offers a way to examine the role of humanity as both a constraining and an enabling factor in the conduct of war.

Civilian protection as a norm in warfare

There is, perhaps, no activity in international affairs whose regulatory norms are as compelling and important as armed conflict. The life and death nature of combat and the political stakes attached to its outcome have made war a perennial object of study for generations of soldiers and statesmen. Yet it is warfare's nature to affect those beyond the battlefield, and the departure that it requires from standards of normal civilized conduct, that has engaged philosophers and theologians who struggle with its brutality. That is not to

say that soldiers are unconcerned with the moral costs of war, or that philosophers are ignorant of its strategic consequences. However, there is an inherent tension between the application of violence that is necessary to be victorious in battle and the restraint on violence that is necessary to retain some semblance of humanity. Nowhere is this conundrum more pronounced than in the problem of protecting non-combatants (especially civilians) during armed conflict. While the difficulty of protecting civilians in the midst of battle suggests that the norm is a strategic constraint on the use of force, the salience of the non-combatant immunity norm over time, and its increased importance in international affairs post World War II, are the basis for its emergence as a strategic enabler in modern warfare.

Killing and warfare are as old as mankind. Indeed, one can barely conceive of war without killing. Yet what has made the institution of war distinct from the simple act of killing is the set of rules that have bounded the former to separate it from the societal presumption against the latter. In *The Code of the Warrior*, a survey of martial values across cultures and throughout history, Shannon French argued that restrictions on appropriate activity in combat have two principle purposes. First, they exist to ensure that any use of force perpetrated by the defenders of a society (i.e., warriors) reflects the values of the society. In distinguishing killing in combat from murder, French suggested:

> the fact that we abhor murder produces a disturbing tension for those who are asked to fight wars for their [country]. When they are trained for war, warriors are given a mandate by their society to take lives. But they must learn to take only certain lives in certain ways, at certain times, and for certain reasons. Otherwise, they become indistinguishable from murderers and will find themselves condemned by the very societies they were created to serve.[11]

Second, rules of warfare help to preserve the warrior's humanity from profound psychological harm. Again, French wrote:

> To say the least, the things that warriors are asked to do to guarantee their culture's survival are far from pleasant . . . . The combination of the warriors' own natural disgust at what they must witness in battle and the fact that what they must do to endure and conquer can seem so uncivilized, so against what they have been taught by their society, [that it] creates the condition for even the most accomplished warriors to feel tremendous self-loathing.[12]
>
> [. . .]
>
> Warriors . . . are not sociopaths. They respect the values of the society in which they were raised and which they are prepared to die to protect. Therefore, it is important for them to conduct themselves in such a way

> that they will be honored and esteemed by their countries, not reviled and rejected by them.[13]

Acknowledging that imposing restraints on war serves the interests of both society and its warriors tells us little about the actual content of those restraints. Indeed, the purpose of French's work is to demonstrate how those restraints vary across cultures. In the Western tradition, the modern code of conduct that governs armed forces in combat and by which societies judge the morality of war is inextricably linked to the Christian struggle to reconcile the temporal requirements of order and justice with the spiritual teachings of love and compassion. As Richard Shelly Hartigan argued:

> The existence of war has always posed a certain problem for Christians. The use of force and the necessity to kill fellow human beings has been difficult to reconcile with the ideals of peace and love expressed in the Christian ethic.[14]

It is this tension that is at the heart of Christian just war theory.

As it developed over the centuries, just war theory has traditionally included two branches: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. *Jus ad bellum*, or the "law for war," is a body of philosophical principles addressing appropriate circumstances for starting a war. *Jus in bello*, or the "law in war," delineates proper conduct during combat, regardless of the reasons for which a war is initiated. Of the Christian theologians who wrestled with the problem of war, among the most important were St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, and Franciscus de Victoria.

Early Christian doctrine on war

Although the evidence is not conclusive, there is a credible argument that early adherents to Christianity were fundamentally opposed to military service and participation in warfare. Interpreting literally Jesus' admonition to "love your enemies," most Christians assumed that following the non-violent example of Christ meant abstaining from killing. John Driver suggested:

> It is noteworthy that between 100 and 313 no Christian writers, to our knowledge, approved of Christian participation in warfare. In fact, all those who wrote on the subject disapproved of the practice.[15]
>
> The objections of early Christians to warfare and military service were based in the teachings and example of Jesus. This led them to resist stubbornly the evils and the injustices of their time. But in doing this, they resolutely refused to respond to evildoers with violence. They were even willing to suffer persecution and death rather than to shed the blood of their persecutors.[16]

For example, Tertullian (160–220) of Carthage saw "military service as at least temptation to sin, not only through violence but also (perhaps primarily) through lewdness and idolatry."[17] Another early Christian theologian, Origen of Alexandria (185–254), rejected political violence altogether. Lisa Cahill noted:

> Origen counsels the Christian to refrain from violence and even from military service in general, but at another level he supports the government [as a social necessity].[18]
>
> Like Tertullian, Origen does not deny the legitimacy of government. He does, however, object to Christian involvement with the professional violence of the military . . . . [H]e argues that Christ has absolutely forbidden any sort of homicide (or even vengeance) even against the greatest evildoer.[19]

Such steadfast refusal to serve in the Roman military, and renunciation of the pagan practices of Imperial life, put early Christians at odds with the Roman government. Will Durant explained the conflict this way:

> Pagan civilization was founded upon the state, Christian civilization upon religion. To a Roman, his religion was part of the structure and ceremony of government, and his morality culminated in patriotism; to a Christian his religion was something apart from and superior to political society; his highest allegiance belonged not to Caesar but to Christ . . . The detachment of the Christian from earthly affairs seemed to the pagan a flight from civic duty, a weakening of the national fiber and will.[20]

The conflict between Christians and the state resulted in official persecution of Christians, with many of them martyred for their beliefs. This changed, however, when Constantine converted to Christianity. With the Edict of Milan in 313, all religions in the Empire were to be tolerated, including Christianity.

In addition to facilitating the growth and spread of Christianity, Constantine's conversion and religious toleration had profound consequences for the development of Christian perspectives on war. Whereas early Christians practiced pacifism as a fundamental interpretation of their faith, a new way for Christians to view violence was introduced by St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. His theory for Christian participation in political violence would dramatically change the history of the church and the ethics of war.

St Augustine

Augustine was born in Roman North Africa in the town of Thagaste in 354.[21] He entered the University of Carthage at the age of 17 and trained in rhetoric and the classics of Latin literature. Initially attracted to Manichaeism, an ascetic interpretation of Christianity, Augustine became disillusioned and even-

tually left Carthage for Italy in 382 to study Platonic philosophy in Rome.[22] He did not stay in Rome for long. Through a series of connections from his Manichaean friends, Augustine was appointed by the Prefect of Rome to be the Professor of Rhetoric to the Imperial Court at Milan in 384. Influenced by the powerful teaching of St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Augustine experienced a powerful conversion and was baptized into the Christian faith in AD 381. Following his conversion, he returned to Africa and quickly rose through the church hierarchy, becoming Bishop of Hippo in 395. Augustine remained in Hippo until his death in 430. It was from this locale that he wrote brilliant pieces that became the basis of much of Roman Catholic doctrine, including his *magnum opus*, *De Civitate Dei*, or the *City of God.*

City of God was the largest, and arguably the most important, of Augustine's works. Completed near the end of his life and thirteen years in the making, *City of God* was written in the aftermath of the sack of Rome by Visigoth barbarians in 410. Although the damage to Rome was relatively slight, the city's capitulation had a devastating effect on the Roman psyche. Recriminations reverberated throughout the Empire as Romans tried to come to terms with their "Eternal City" falling to alien attack. One common explanation for the calamity was that the Roman people, following the Edict of Milan, were reaping divine justice for turning their back on the traditional Roman gods. Furthermore, many argued that Christian resistance to service in the Imperial army had weakened the state in both physical and moral strength.

Augustine wrote *City of God*, in part, to rebut this accusation. Among other things, he argued that there were two states of existence with which men should be concerned: mundane life on earth and the promise of divine life enabled by God. He allegorized these two states by comparing them to an Earthly City and a Heavenly City respectively. In an insightful exposition, William and Alan Ebenstein explained the thrust of *City of God* in this way:

> The great struggle in the universe [according to St Augustine], then, is not between church and state . . . but between two opposing ways of life: in the earthly city, the love of self, the lust of power predominate whereas in the heavenly city the love of God, "even to the contempt of self," is the foundation of order. St Augustine therefore divides the human race into two parts: "the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God . . . ."
>
> Just as the heavenly city symbolically represents, but is not identical with, the church, so the earthly city is symbolically reflected in the state. Strictly speaking, the *earthly city* is not identical with any empirical social or political organization but is the *community of the unrighteous*, including sinful members of the church and excluding righteous citizens of the state. Whereas the earthly city, as the incarnation of sin and lust, is the antithesis of any value whatsoever, the state, by contrast, has positive value, through [sic] it is not the absolute value inherent in the heavenly city.
>
> . . . The state, therefore, by providing social peace, "has its good in this

> world;" and St. Augustine recalls Greco-Roman ideas in saying that the state is, "in its own kind, better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods."[23]

It is from this idea – that man can use temporal peace to work for divine ends – that Augustine derived his views on killing that would become the foundation of Christian and secular just war theory.

Augustine did not articulate the systematic just war doctrine that is familiar to twentieth-century theorists. It took several centuries to develop. Indeed, Paul Ramsey noted:

> [He] was the first great formulator of the theory that war might be "just," which thereafter has mainly directed the course of Western Christian thinking about the problem of war. A brief inspection of Augustine's views will show that most later formulations of the theory of *justum bellum* and, as a consequence, the verdict that no actual war can meet the conditions of just-war theory, are radically un-Augustinian. It will show that the political experience and ethical analysis summarized in the so-called just war theory cannot be dealt with all in one lump, as if it were a simple system of moral rules for the classification of cases, subject to no significant decisions to be taken *within* this tradition itself.[24]

Augustine was thus the first major Christian theologian to articulate the *sine qua non* for just war theory – that, under certain circumstances, the Christian could justify killing another human being.

In *City of God*, Augustine proposed at least two major exceptions to the Old Testament prohibition against killing. The first exception is if the order to kill comes from God himself. As God is the ultimate force of good and justice in the universe, His commands, by definition, cannot be immoral. It is for this reason that the killings performed by the Israelites at the command of God cannot be viewed as immoral.

Of more significance to the development of just war theory, however, is Augustine's second major exception to killing. He argued that one might kill at the direction of the state, as the state supplies the temporal peace necessary for followers of God to work for divine peace on earth. Augustine made his argument in the following way:

> There are however certain exceptions to the law against killing, made by the authority of God himself. There are some whose killing God orders, either by a law, or by an express command to a particular person at a particular time. In fact one who owes a duty of obedience to the giver of the command does not himself "kill" – he is an instrument, a sword in the user's hand. For this reason the commandment forbidding killing was not broken by those who have waged wars on the authority of God, or

> those who have imposed the death penalty on criminals when representing the authority of the state, the justest [sic] and most reasonable source of power . . . . With the exception of these killings prescribed generally by a just law, or specially commanded by God himself – the source of justice – anyone who kills a human being, whether himself or anyone else, is involved in a charge of murder.[25]

It is here that Augustine's conception of the polemic between the heavenly city and the earthly city is of crucial importance. Because Augustine views the state as a vehicle by which man may work for heavenly purposes on earth, and because the state is ordained (or at least permitted to exist) by God, then killing is *only* justified in the preservation of the state. Thus, the Kingdom of God on earth may continue to take advantage of the peace and order that the state provides. Killing for any other purpose – personal anger, greed, envy, even self-defense – is, according to St Augustine, fundamentally immoral.

There are, of course, problems with Augustine's theory. For example, one may ask, What if the state is seeking unjust ends such as territorial expansion, which can be viewed as an expression of national greed? Or, What if a state created social order (or "peace" in the Augustinian sense) through fundamentally unjust means, such as arbitrary killings among the populace? In such circumstances, could a Christian still be justified in killing?

These questions, and others like them, would plague just war theorists for centuries after the passing of Augustine. Yet one may at least appreciate Augustine's position in defending state-sponsored violence by understanding the milieu in which he wrote. For Augustine, and for generations of Roman citizens before his birth, Rome was not just any state – it was *the only* state. The Roman Empire had straddled the Mediterranean world since well before the birth of Christ. Beyond all of her borders lay vast tracts of wilderness, implacable barbarians, and the human remnants of fallen civilizations that, even for the Romans, belonged to antiquity. Hence, to the Roman mind, the only options for human survival were civilized living under the aegis of the order provided by the Roman state, or chaotic existence beyond the protective boundaries of Rome. There was no middle ground. It is, in part, for this reason that Augustine saw the "peace" provided by Rome as essential for the earthly work of Christians, for without it they would fall prey to the hostile forces outside the Roman world. And it is in defense of this state-sponsored order that Augustine rationalized violence and killing. Although he was undoubtedly a devout Christian, Augustine was also a Roman citizen. His theology must be understood in that context.

Augustine's theology has withstood the test of time, making him unquestionably one of the intellectual fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. Although his work spanned many subjects, his greatest contribution in what would become the just war tradition was denouncing the Christian position of absolute pacifism and articulating a rationale for Christian participation in

organized violence. It was from this fundamental premise that all later just war theory would ultimately evolve. The next great developments in the just war tradition would not appear for another 800 years after the death of St Augustine. One of the most important figures in the next phase of the theory's development was St Thomas Aquinas.

St Thomas Aquinas

A great deal had changed in the world between the death of St Augustine in 435 and the birth of Thomas Aquinas in 1225. The Roman Empire, which was on the verge of collapsing in the time of Augustine but still wielded significant power, had become a distant memory. As the Roman grip on Western Europe evaporated, so did much of the intellectual inheritance from ancient Greece.

Yet where the Roman Empire lay defeated, the Christian Church proved triumphant. Between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, the Bishops of Rome had gradually centralized papal authority throughout all of Christendom. In the vacuum that was created by the absence of Roman power, two sources of authority emerged in medieval Europe: the Roman Catholic Church, which derived its legitimacy from its role as the agency of Christ on Earth; and, after the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, various feudal kings and lords who wielded temporal power through their local control of economic production, military force, and provincial customs. Thus, the greatest intellectual problem for the Church in the thirteenth century was not defending Christian doctrine against the onslaught of pagan philosophy and imperial power, as it was in the day of St Augustine. Rather, it was the need for "systematic and realistic elaboration of all thought in light of collective traditions and newly emerging forces pointing to the future."[26] Aquinas did more to achieve this goal than any other thinker in the Middle Ages and, in the process, became one of the primary intellectual benefactors of the just war tradition.

Thomas Aquinas was born in 1224 or 1225 to a prominent Neapolitan family in their castle at Roccasecca. His exposure to the ecclesiastical life came early when, at the age of 5, he was sent to study with monks at the Abbey of Monte Cassino. He remained there until he was a teenager, when he entered the University of Naples to continue his studies around age 15. It was also at Naples that he first encountered members of the Dominican Order of friars, and he joined their ranks in 1242 or 1243 when he was about 19 years old. The Dominicans sent him to the University of Paris – then the center of learning in medieval Europe – where he received a license to teach in 1256. Without question, the most significant of his many works were the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica.* It was in the *Summa Theologica* that Aquinas addressed the question of war, using the scholastic method of intellectual inquiry characteristic of medieval theology, and contributed to the foundation of the just war tradition. *Summa Theologica* was never completed. St Thomas died on 7 March 1272, at the age of 49.[27]

Aquinas' scholastic form of argument, defined by posing questions and answering with commentaries, does not lend itself to the flowing and uplifting style that characterized the writings of St Augustine. Yet its meticulous organization and lucid prose makes for unmistakable clarity in the transmission of his ideas. This is particularly helpful in understanding Aquinas' views on war, which he addressed in *Summa Theologica*, Part II, Question 40.[28]

Aquinas addressed the problem of war directly by considering four "points of inquiry:" (1) Whether some kind of war is lawful? (2) Whether it is lawful for clerics to fight? (3) Whether it is lawful for belligerents to lay ambushes? (4) Whether it is lawful to fight on holy days? In the modern parlance of just war theory (which was not in use in the days of Aquinas), point (1) concerns *jus ad bellum* while points (2) through (4) address matters of *jus in bello*. That is, the first point of inquiry discusses whether or not men can ever be morally justified in resorting to war, while the other points consider restrictions on the way war is to be ethically waged once it has been declared. Following the scholastic format, Aquinas began his discussion of *jus ad bellum* by suggesting four theses in support of the proposition that it is always sinful to wage war. The general thrust of these points is that it is always sinful to wage war because taking arms against an enemy who has done evil is implicitly, if not explicitly, forbidden by the scripture of the New Testament. Yet Aquinas countered those objections by suggesting that there are three conditions which, if met, can make war just: (1) that war be declared by an appropriate sovereign authority; (2) that there should be a just cause for initiating hostilities, "namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault";[29] and (3) "that belligerents should have a rightful intention, so that they intend the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil."[30]

Aquinas was not the first major Western theorist to propose an argument to legitimize warfare. Yet there are at least three aspects about his treatment of the subject that would prove to be of singular importance in the development of the just war tradition. First was his distinction between rules that make a war just in and of itself versus rules about just conduct in war. Put more succinctly, Aquinas addressed both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Although he never specifically used those terms, no other major Western thinker had addressed both the legality of warfare and the legality of specific conduct in warfare in the same argument. Aquinas was not the first to address such issues. Yet no one prior to Aquinas philosophically addressed *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* with a broad, rational argument from a Christian perspective. Later just war theorists would concentrate on *jus in bello* to codify Western laws of war in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the rational treatment of such issues began with Aquinas.

The second point of significance is the rational character of his argument. Besides his contributions to just war theory, Aquinas is more generally remembered for integrating the philosophical method of Aristotle into Church doctrine, thus providing a rational approach to the study of theology rather

than relying on the power of revelation, as did St Augustine's Platonism. There is clearly a spiritual dimension to Aquinas' treatment of the subject of war. Indeed, he framed the entire argument by first asking the question "Whether it is always *sinful* [emphasis added] to wage war?" *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines "sin" as "2 a: a transgression of the law of God,"[31] and "sinful" as "tainted with, marked by, or full of sin."[32] Hence, Aquinas can also be said to have asked the question, "Whether it is always *a transgression of the law of God* to wage war?"

Yet the originality of his approach lay not in the ecclesiastical manner in which he framed the question, but in the rational manner in which he answered it. In justifying Christian participation in warfare, and in suggesting criteria under which a war may be considered just, Aquinas developed a logical argument, with interdependent propositions, which was largely based on the obligations of a citizen to the sovereign, and on the responsibilities of the sovereign himself. It was Aquinas' rational approach to the morality of warfare that would make his arguments both approachable and acceptable to the humanist philosophers and jurists of the Enlightenment who sought to secularize just war theory and take it to its next stage of development.

Finally, the most original contribution that Aquinas made to the just war tradition was the principle of "double effect." In the third of his three conditions for just warfare, Aquinas said:

> [I]t is necessary that the belligerents should have a rightful intention, so that they intend the advancement of good or the avoidance of evil. Hence Augustine says . . . "True religion looks upon as peaceful those wars that are waged not for motives of aggrandizement, or cruelty, but with the object of securing peace, of punishing evil doers, and of uplifting the good." For it may happen that war is declared by the legitimate authority, and for a just cause, and yet be rendered unlawful through a wicked intention. Hence Augustine says . . . : "The passion for inflicting harm, the cruel thirst for vengeance, an unpacific and relentless spirit, the fervor of revolt, the lust of power, and such like things, all these are rightly condemned in war."[33]

The question of intention is of crucial importance to double effect. As it has become understood, double effect suggests that there are intended and unintended consequences of a particular action. For example, one may intend to defend oneself by killing an adversary, while not intending to deny the adversary's family of a husband and a father, even if such an outcome is foreseeable. The doctrine of double effect says that one must ensure that the intended consequences of an action must be morally acceptable and in proportion to the good sought. Likewise, one is not responsible for the unintended consequences of an action.[34] Writ large, this notion proved to have profound

consequences for later just war theory, particularly in the nuclear age. Sigmund argued:

> Possibly equally important [as his statement of just war principles] was [Aquinas'] description of what came to be known in ethics as the principle of "double effect." In discussing whether killing an unjust aggressor in order to defend one's life would be using evil means to achieve a good end, Aquinas argues that one intends only the defense of one's own life but not the killing that may inevitably result, and that only minimally necessary force may be used. This passage may be cited in connection with the debate on morality of nuclear warfare, with the defenders of nuclear deterrence arguing that it is not immoral to target military objectives that may incidentally have the unintended (but inevitable) effect of killing innocent people.[35]

This concept of intention, as first articulated by Aquinas, would become a core component of modern just war theory.

Franciscus de Victoria

Although the foundations of just war theory were developed under the auspices of the Christian Church, they did not remain there. Eventually, just war theory became secularized, and its fundamental tenets were interpreted in such a way as to make the theory applicable outside of Christendom. The first major figure in this secularization process was Franciscus de Victoria.[36] Cahill noted:

> The extension of the criteria of the just war beyond [the cultural boundary of Christendom], as well as the recognition that both parties to a conflict may have some right on their side, are the contributions of the sixteenth century Spanish Dominican, Franciscus de Victoria (c. 1492–1546). [James Turner] Johnson refers to Victoria's formulation of just war doctrine as "the first clear and complete statement of what has come to be considered as the classic requirements of the doctrine of just war."[37]

Franciscus de Victoria lived during the "golden age" of the Spanish Empire when it stretched from the Low Countries of Europe to the rainforests of Central and South America. As a Dominican, he was greatly influenced by the scholastic tradition bequeathed by St Thomas Aquinas. As a Christian, he was profoundly disturbed by reports of Spanish *conquistadores* committing unspeakable atrocities against the native peoples they encountered in the New World. Victoria lectured widely on this subject from his position as Prima Professor of Theology at the University of Salamanca. His students published his

lectures posthumously as *De Indis* and *De Jure Belli.* It is from these works, especially *De Jure Belli*, that Victoria bequeathed his legacy to both international law and just war theory.

Victoria began his inquiry in *De Jure Belli* by asking four questions:

> First, whether Christians may make war at all; secondly, where does the authority to declare or wage war repose; thirdly, what may and ought to furnish causes of just war; fourthly, what and how extensive measures may be taken in a just war against the enemy?[38]

Question one is principally a question of Christian theology which Victoria quickly dispatched, as answering in the negative would invalidate the remainder of his argument. Question two addresses the issue of legitimacy, regarding who has the legal authority to initiate hostilities. Like St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas before him, Victoria believed that only the sovereign of the state might justly begin warfare. Questions three and four consider issues of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* respectively. It is here that Victoria made original contributions to just war theory.

In answer to question three, what constitutes just cause for war, he began his response with those causes that are manifestly unjust. First, he denounced war based on religion. He stated explicitly that "difference of religion is not a cause of just war,"[39] and cites Thomas Aquinas as his reference for this. Next, he rejected territorial ambition as a just cause, saying, "Extension of empire is not a just cause of war."[40] For Victoria, accepting quest for empire as a just cause of warfare would have produced an inherent contradiction. Given that self-defense is obviously a just cause of war under natural law, both parties in a war for empire would be justified in fighting, making it impossible to kill anyone legitimately. This is clearly a logical absurdity in war. Finally, Victoria asserted that personal ambition on the part of the sovereign is also an unjust cause for war. He proclaimed, "neither the personal glory of the prince nor any other advantage to him is just cause of war."[41] Given that the primary responsibility of a sovereign is to secure the welfare of his people, Victoria argued that it would be a gross abuse of his power if a sovereign pursued war for his personal benefit. Such wars, therefore, must be considered unjust.

After this exposition, Victoria proclaimed that "there is a single and only just cause for commencing war, namely, a wrong received."[42] He quoted St Augustine to support his idea and argues that it is derived from natural law. If the law of nature exists to secure certain rights to man in addition to dictating "right" conduct, and if violation of those rights constitutes harm to man and manifest injustice, then war can only be justified as a means of redressing harm and restoring justice.

Even so, Victoria argued that not all injuries are of such a character as to justify hostilities. One must consider the nature and extent of the harm done in order to determine if war may be a legitimate means of redress. In this way,

Victoria also introduced an element of proportionality into the *jus ad bellum*. He noted:

> Not every kind and degree of wrong can suffice for commencing a war . . . . As, then, the evils inflicted in war are all of a severe and atrocious character, such as slaughter and fire and devastation, it is not lawful for slight wrongs to pursue the authors of the wrongs with war, seeing that the degree of punishment ought to correspond to the measure of the offence.[43]

Having outlined the principles of *jus ad bellum*, Victoria then considered the tenets of *jus in bello* in question four. He maintained that there is a single rule that governs all others regarding conduct in war:

> The fourth question is about the law of war, namely, what kind and degree of stress is lawful in a just war. Here let my first proposition be: In war everything is lawful which the defense of the common weal requires.[44]

This suggests that Victoria advocated a policy of "military necessity," arguing in effect that there are no limitations on what combatants may do in battle as long as they are fighting for a just cause. Yet Victoria realized the potential for brutal excesses that such a doctrine might engender, and he therefore articulates a series of "doubts" he had about particular situations arising in warfare. These doubts included the treatment of innocents, the taking of slaves, the right of conscientious objection, and the killing of prisoners. Nevertheless, nowhere in his argument does Victoria lay explicit prohibitions for conduct in warfare for which he does not later provide a legal loophole that a combatant might potentially exploit. For this reason, his conception of the *jus in bello* is not as clear or as persuasive as his *jus ad bellum.* Victoria made a major contribution to just war theory by providing the basis for a secular rationale of just recourse to war that was, by design, universally applicable.

Combatant–non-combatant distinction

Although many early Christian theologians concerned themselves principally with *jus ad bellum*, it is *jus in bello* which is arguably of greater concern to those who plan and execute armed conflict. As they developed over time, the two accepted tenets of *jus in bello* are discrimination and proportionality. Discrimination means that noncombatants should never be targets of military attack as such. Proportionality means that, during combat, incidental harm to non-combatants should never exceed that which is absolutely necessary to achieve the legitimate military objectives of the attack.

Implicit in this formulation is the principle of combatant–non-combatant distinction. Put simply, this presumes that there are people who are given

special permission to kill during war (combatants), and there are those who are not permitted to kill but who may also not be directly attacked (non-combatants).[45] The logic of the combatant–non-combatant distinction is so broadly understood as to make it almost intuitively obvious. Nevertheless, it is worth examining it more closely in order to understand why its breach, or respect, plays such a large role in popular perceptions of the legitimacy of armed conflict.

The notion that some people may be killed during war and others must be protected is based on the concept of innocence. The eminent American theologian Paul Ramsey explicitly linked the protection of innocents during armed conflict with the morally permissible resort to war similarly predicated on the defense of innocent people. He wrote:

> Since it was for the sake of the innocent and the helpless of earth that the Christian first thought himself obliged to make war against an enemy whose objective deeds had to be stopped, since only for their sake does a Christian justify himself in resisting by any means even an enemy-neighbor, he could never proceed to kill equally innocent people as a means of getting at the enemy's forces. Thus was twin-born the justification of war and the limitation which surrounded non-combatants [sic] with moral immunity from direct attack. Thus was twin-born the distinction between combatant and non-combatant [sic] in all Christian reflection about the morality of war.[46]

Edmund Santurri, in considering Ramsey's argument, concurred. He stated simply:

> If the rationale for war is defense of the innocuous innocent, then the innocuous innocent as a matter of consistency, should not be attacked directly in the prosecution of war. Ergo the [*jus*] *in bello* principle of non-combatant immunity.[47]

Hence, the concepts of distinction and proportionality in Christian just war theory, *jus in bello*, are predicated on the notion of the presumed innocence of those who do not participate in battle. That innocents have been killed, even deliberately, by armed forces in warfare throughout history does not mean that the concept of non-combatant immunity has no moral meaning. On the contrary, as Michael Walzer has demonstrated, the ability to recognize the breach of a moral rule, such as deliberately harming innocents in war, presupposes the existence of that rule in the first place.[48] Indeed, it is a concept that has prevailed, however imperfectly, over time.

One indication of the importance of civilian protections has been its development from moral exhortation to its codification in international law. Hugo Grotius, the father of international law, is a crucial figure in this process. Rely-

ing on an understanding of natural law, he proposed ethical and secular bases for an international legal order that extended beyond the confines of European Christendom to apply to peoples everywhere.[49]

In his attempt to explain the foundations and principles of international law, Grotius addressed a wide variety of issues in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (hereafter referred to as *JBP*), ranging from the nature of state sovereignty to options for conflict resolution between countries. Among his most important ideas were those concerning the laws of war.

Grotius devoted a great deal of thought to *jus ad bellum* questions, but he also addressed *jus in bello* questions as well. He insisted on moderation in killing and urged soldiers to refrain from killing non-combatants based on the conception of innocents articulated earlier by Christian just war theologians. Geoffrey Best summarized Grotius' argument:

> Grotius makes an eloquent and sophisticated presentation of the grounds on which non-combatants may be regarded as excludable from the operations and consequences of war. His argument runs more or less along these lines. The non-combatant is almost certainly "innocent" regarding the issues of the conflict. . . . Rulers and commanders may respect the non-combatant because there are no practical military reasons why they should not do so and because there are good religious and ethical reasons why they should. Their military efficiency will not usually be diminished; and even if in some circumstances it should minimally be so, Christian teaching and chivalric example offer plenty of precedent and justification for taking risks and accepting losses in a virtuous cause.[50]

Grotius' work, along with that of other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European writers, was instrumental in creating the basis for the codification of the modern law of war in the nineteenth century.[51] By the twentieth century, a central portion of this body of law would be legal provisions for the protection of non-combatants, to include civilians, in armed conflict.

Civilians are a subset of the non-combatant category in the law of war (also widely referred to as the "law of armed conflict/LOAC" or "international humanitarian law/IHL").[52] Broadly speaking, non-combatants are those who do not, or cannot, participate in hostilities.[53] While much of international humanitarian law concerns members of the armed forces who have become *hors de combat*, the provisions concerning the protection of civilians are most relevant here. With the adoption of treaties such as the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II of 1977, the international community demonstrated a clear concern for the plight of civilians in warfare, elevating their protection from a moral imperative to a legal requirement.

The context in which these provisions were developed is at least as important as their specific content. The protections articulated in 1949 Geneva Convention, for example, represent a reaction against the deliberate and

indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations in England, Germany, Poland, and Japan during World War II.[54] Similarly, the suffering of civilians during colonial wars of independence in the 1960s and during the Vietnam War led to the strengthened civilian protections for international conflicts contained in Additional Protocol I (API) and their extension to non-international conflicts through Additional Protocol II (APII). In particular, Article 51 of API states in part:

1 The civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against dangers arising from military operations . . . .
2 The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited.
3 Civilians shall enjoy the protection afforded by this section, unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities.
4 Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited . . . .

[. . .]

7 The presence or movements of the civilian population or individual civilians shall not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations, in particular in attempts to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield, favor or impede military operations . . . .
8 Any violation of these prohibitions shall not release the Parties to the conflict from their legal obligations with respect to the civilian population and civilians, including the obligation to take the precautionary measures provided for in Article 57.[55]

The growth of these international norms for civilian protections occurred contemporaneously with the development of another body of law – international human rights law. Applicable outside of situations of armed conflict, human rights law broadly defines the appropriate relationship between the state and the individual, regardless of the political system operative in a given country or the cultural norms prevailing there. Major international human rights instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, among others.

Although the content and application of international human rights law is not unproblematic, its genesis in the same historical period as IHL after World War II signals an important development in international relations. For the first time, individuals are recognized as appropriate subjects of concern in international law with rights and obligations that states must respect.[56] David Forsythe supported this view:

> Rights have been conferred on individuals as a means to human dignity, and states have been obligated to respect them, even when individuals have

> not been empowered to act for themselves. This can be demonstrated by reference to the Geneva Conventions and Protocols for the protection of victims in war.[57]

Furthermore, the establishment of a broad legal framework for the protection of civilians against the actions of states, in both peace and war, has enabled the growth and strengthening of a variety of civil society groups (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) and international organizations (like the International Committee of the Red Cross) dedicated to the defense of these norms. It also suggests a convergence between human rights law and IHL predicated on the broadly accepted norm of the dignity of human life, and the need to preserve it where possible.[58] Finnemore explained generally how states adapt to such normative changes in the international environment:

> State interests are defined in the context of internationally held norms and understandings about what is good and appropriate. That normative context influences the behavior of decisionmakers and of mass publics who may choose and constrain those decisionmakers. The normative context also changes over time, and as internationally held norms and values change, they create coordinated shifts in state interest and behavior across the system. It is these patterns of coordinated, system-wide redefinition of interests that look odd from conventional perspectives . . . . [S]tate's redefinitions of interest are often not the result of external threats or demands by domestic groups. Rather, they are shaped by internationally shared norms and values that structure and give meaning to international political life.[59]

Hence, the development of international humanitarian law by the vast majority of sovereign states, and the support of this regime by civil society groups around the world, suggests an evolving international environment in which the protection of civilians, especially during armed conflict, is an increasingly salient norm with the potential power to affect the conduct of states.

Civilian protection as a strategic constraint

Despite the codification of civilian protection as a norm in IHL, its application during armed conflict can impede military operations and, thus, can be contrary to a state's interests. Indeed, the presence of *jus in bello* legal rules regarding proportionality and discrimination meant to protect civilians reflect a fundamental tension in the law of war. While discrimination demands that civilians should not be targeted *as such*, proportionality recognizes the *inevitability* of harm to civilians in war and requires that it should not exceed the requirements of military necessity. Writing over 100 years before the adoption of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the great Prussian military philosopher

Carl von Clausewitz rejected any moderation of combat as antithetical to the very nature of war and, thus, contrary to the political objectives for which a state might employ armed force. He wrote:

> Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed: war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst . . . .
>
> To introduce the principle of moderation into the theory of war itself would always lead to logical absurdity.[60]

The tension between military effectiveness and humane conduct, especially regarding civilians, can be very difficult to resolve in practice. As such, the requirement for civilian protection under IHL can be regarded as a strategic constraint in at least three ways.

First, if one accepts the Clausewitzian perspective that the purpose of war is to achieve a political objective and the nature of war is to do so by eliminating the ability of the enemy to resist, then there is no logical limit to the amount of force one must apply to achieve that end. Restrictions on the use of force mandated by IHL, particularly regarding the protections of civilians, can impede military operations and inhibit the ability to break the enemy's will and capability to resist, which endangers the attainment of the political objective of the war. This is particularly true when legitimate military targets are, by happenstance, intermixed with a civilian population.

Second, and as a corollary to the first point, adherence to IHL can be exploited by an enemy prepared to seek a tactical advantage by endangering the lives of civilians. Cynically dubbed "lawfare" by some scholars, this approach deliberately situates military forces in close proximity to non-combatants and places (such as hospitals) protected under IHL. US Air Force lawyer Col. Charles Dunlap explained:

> Lawfare describes a method of warfare where law is used as a means of realizing a military objective. Though at first blush one might assume lawfare would result in less suffering in war (and sometimes it does), in practice it too often produces behavior that jeopardizes the protection of the truly innocent. There are many dimensions to lawfare, but the one increasingly embraced by U.S. opponents is a cynical manipulation of the rule of law and the humanitarian values it represents. Rather than seeking battlefield victories, *per se*, challengers try to destroy the will to fight by undermining the public support that is indispensable when democracies like the U.S. conduct military interventions. A principle way of bringing about that end is to make it appear that the U.S. is waging war in violation of the letter or spirit of LOAC.[61]

In so doing, the enemy complicates the proportionality calculus by elevating the foreseeable civilian harm that will result from an attack relative to its perceived military necessity. The enemy therefore uses a state's commitment to observe IHL against it, complicating its prosecution of armed conflict and, therefore, frustrating its ability to achieve the strategic political objectives for which it went to war.

Finally, IHL can be a strategic constraint because of the modern international environment in which wars are fought. Part of the genius of Clausewitz's perspective was his understanding of the political object of successful warfare. One of his weaknesses, however, is failing to consider the effect of the political context in which wars are fought on their ultimate strategic success. The codification and increased salience of IHL has made it increasingly difficult for states to secure strategic political objectives through armed conflict without giving due consideration to civilian protections. Commenting on this development in the context of Western society, Christopher Coker wrote:

> For the moment, the West is still in the war business but it is attempting to change its nature by fighting wars more humanely. Post-material societies fighting post-material wars – they try to avoid the material (human and environmental) damage which was essential to warfare for two millennia. They are intent on [sanitizing] war, on purging it of those elements which, though once familiar and accepted without question, now cast it in a light that is offensive to the liberal conscience.[62]

The strengthening of humanitarian norms has delegitimized assaults on non-combatants as such, and has also made inadvertent harm to innocent civilians less politically acceptable. This is of crucial importance in an era of increased democratic accountability in international affairs, both for domestic governance internally and in intergovernmental fora such as the UN Security Council, in which domestic public opinion and sentiment in the international community can undermine the strategic objectives for which a state uses armed force.

Civilian protection as a strategic enabler

Many of the same attributes that make civilian protection provisions in IHL a strategic constraint for states can also, paradoxically, make them strategic enablers as well. One of the more important aspects of civilian protection is its increased salience as a norm of international law. As argued above, the strengthening of this norm makes it difficult for states to violate it with impunity. This necessarily affects how they conduct combat operations which, in turn, impacts their ability to achieve strategic objectives through force.

Yet the strengthening of the civilian protection norm can also help states to achieve their strategic objectives when using armed force. Being seen as

a state that adheres to international law generally, and to humanitarian requirements in particular, can be a powerful strategic asset. One of the more important advances in strategic thought since the end of the Cold War is the recognition of the "information sphere" as part of the battle space. To a certain extent, information has always been important in war. Tactical knowledge of the enemy's movements and strategic knowledge about his intentions have always been seen as crucial elements of martial success. In the Information Age, however, the stakes are even higher. The ability of the global news media to send images and narratives of events around the world in real time for publics to consume can shape the way a state's actions are perceived. Ensuring that such perceptions are favorable to a state's interests is of critical importance in helping a state to achieve its strategic objectives. Managing such perceptions is an integral component of information warfare or IW. When combined with the increased salience of humanitarian norms, there is an intrinsic link among the destruction that warfare causes, the inevitable harm that it causes civilians, and the need to manage perceptions of civilian suffering so that it does not undermine the strategic objectives for which a state uses force.

Managing perceptions of civilian harm is not simply a matter of media damage control. It can also be a proactive exercise in which a state seeks to gain strategic advantage by demonstrating how it takes care to limit the suffering of non-combatants during armed conflict. In so doing, it can try to generate support for its objectives by demonstrating benevolence toward civilians on the battlefield. In this way, IHL norms of civilian protections can be a strategic enabler, and not merely a strategic constraint.

There are, therefore, two ways in which a state can pursue this path. The first is simply to manage the media message of harm that may be caused to civilians in the conduct of warfare. The second is to change the way in which it conducts combat, such that there is less harm to civilians, and then to publicize its efforts accordingly. A robust communications strategy is essential for both approaches. For the latter approach, however, a state must reconsider how it fights.

This necessarily requires a reconsideration of tactics, doctrine, and technology. Yet explanations for why a state organizes and employs its military forces in a particular way do not rest merely with a technical examination of field manuals or even with a careful review of the global strategic environment. Central to the question of why a state fights in a particular manner is the concept of strategic culture. Hence, understanding how humanitarian considerations have affected the use of force in American foreign policy necessarily involves an examination of American strategic culture.

Humanity in American strategic culture

The concept of strategic culture became popular in the 1970s and early 1980s as a way of explaining different strategic approaches between the United

States and the Soviet Union to winning nuclear war. The underlying premise of most of the strategic culture literature is that the unique historical and cultural experiences of a nation shape the way in which it makes strategic choices, distinguishing it from the choices that another state – with different historical and cultural experiences – would make given a similar set of empirical facts.[63] Colin Gray wrote:

> The subject of strategic culture matters deeply because it raises core questions about the roots of, and influences upon, strategic behavior. By strategic behavior, this author means behavior relevant to the threat or use of force for political purposes.[64]

Thus, although originally developed to explain differing strategic approaches to Cold War nuclear planning, the concept of strategic culture has the potential to illuminate strategic choices in different historical and political contexts as well.

There are at least two dominant themes in the literature regarding American strategic culture. The first is a tendency to seek decisive victory through the overwhelming use of force. Russell Weigley advanced this argument in his classic work *The American Way of War.* Writing in 1973, he stated:

> In the history of American strategy, the direction taken by the American conception of war made most American strategists, through most of the time span of American history, strategists of annihilation. At the beginning, when American military resources were still slight, America made a promising beginning in the nurture of strategists of attrition; but the wealth of the country and its adoption of unlimited aims in war cut that development short, until the strategy of annihilation became characteristically the American way in war.[65]

The Clausewitzian logic underlying strategies of annihilation is deceptively simple. If the enemy's will to resist is the primary impediment to the achievement of a strategic objective, then the utter elimination of such resistive capacity should enable the attainment of the desired goal. The difficulty arises, however, when the application of force not only eliminates the ability of the enemy to resist but also undermines the purposes for which force was used in the first place. Weigley, among others, noted this potential with the use of atomic and nuclear weapons. The destructive power of such weapons, which lie at the end of a logic of annihilation, can lead to a Pyrrhic victory in which the very notion of strategy as the intersection of ends and means is made moot. Again, Weigley wrote:

> Yet if employing the first atomic bombs [at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945] could seem at the time a mere extension of a strategy already in

> use, it soon became evident that by carrying a strategy of annihilation to the literalness of absurdity, the atomic bomb also represented a strategic revolution. The atomic explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended Clausewitz's "use of combats" as a viable inclusive definition of strategy. A strategy of annihilation could now be so complete that a use of combats encompassing atomic weapons could no longer serve "for the object of the War," unless the object of war was to transform the enemy's country into a desert.[66]

Despite the tendency toward strategies of annihilation, not all US military actions fit this mold. Indeed, Christopher Gacek argued that there are two schools of thought regarding American use of force: the "never again" school and the "limited war" school. Frustrated by the stalemate of the Korean War and chastened by defeat in the Vietnam War, advocates of the "never again" school believe that the United States should never again limit its military capabilities when pursuing political objectives through the application of armed force. As such, this approach is similar to a strategy of annihilation. Conversely, proponents of the "limited war" school believe that the existence of strategic constraints, such as the potential for escalation from a conventional to a nuclear armed conflict, means that the United States must be able to calibrate its application of force to suit the particular objective in question. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and air strikes against Libyan targets in Operation Eldorado Canyon in 1986 are manifestations of this approach.

There is arguably, however, a *preference* for decisive military action through strategies of annihilation or overwhelming force in American foreign policy. Even Gacek acknowledged that the adoption of limited war strategies is problematic in American foreign policy.[67] His work suggests that such strategies are adopted not out of preference but rather out of necessity when circumstances warrant it.

The second dominant theme in American strategic culture is the quest for technological superiority *vis-à-vis* an enemy, and the propensity to apply technological solutions to strategic problems.[68] To some degree, the quest for improved weapons development is virtually as old, and as diverse, as the history of war itself. Yet the American experience with advanced weapons is significant not only because of the sophistication of the technologies involved but also because of the doctrines that have been developed to govern their employment. The development of nuclear weapons and their intercontinental delivery systems, for example, led to a burgeoning strategic literature in the early days of the Cold War and offered a technological answer to the numerical inferiority of US and NATO conventional forces *vis-à-vis* the Warsaw Pact in Europe. Similarly, the advent of microprocessors, broadband communications, and advanced satellites enable warriors to penetrate the Clausewitzian "fog of war" and improve their knowledge of the battlefield. This has led to a general

"revolution in military affairs" (or RMA) embraced by the US military, in which those with access to advanced, and expensive, weapons technologies (to include intelligence, sensor, and reconnaissance capabilities) can dramatically improve their tactical dominance over potential enemies. Given the strength of its economy and its history of technological innovation, the RMA has led American military thinkers to reexamine and redevelop a variety of doctrinal concepts, from maneuver warfare to information operations. Writing in 1996, Elliot Cohen suggested:

> A revolution in military affairs is underway . . . . For the moment, it appears to offer the United States the prospect of military power beyond that of any other country on the planet, now and well into the next century. Small wonder, then, that by and large American theorists have embraced the idea of a revolution as an opportunity for their country, as indeed it is.[69]

Hence, the American way of war has been defined – and, indeed, continually redefined – by the penchant of the US to invest in the development of new weapons systems that improve its tactical advantage on the battlefield and its strategic position against its adversaries.

In addition to decisive victory and technological dominance, there is arguably a third element to American strategic culture – humanitarian principles in combat. Despite the tendency to seek decisive victory through overwhelming force, there is also a long tradition of restraining the conduct of war in order to minimize loss of life to non-combatants. A propensity for decisive victory does not explain strains of humanitarian consideration that run throughout American military practice, yet the record of concern is clear. For example, the American Civil War was the prototypical modern total war, in which each side fought for complete victory over its opponent. Yet, despite the political stakes of the conflict and the scorched earth strategies employed by men such as Union General William Tecumseh Sherman, the Union Army also authorized the drafting of the first set of regulations governing land warfare. *Instructions for Government of Armies of the United States in the Field* (1863), better known as The Lieber Code after its author Professor Francis Lieber, laid out a series of rules to tell Union soldiers how they were to behave toward enemy soldiers and civilians. Rooted in a general consideration of humanity that Lieber associated with modern "civilized" states, this document was the first attempt to codify systematically the laws of war, and it contributed to their later development throughout the nineteenth century.[70] Similarly, the United States was instrumental in the drafting of the Geneva Conventions in 1949 and their Additional Protocols in 1977. Finally, in 1950, the United States Congress adopted the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) as a body of law applicable to members of the armed forces during both peace and war.

Although it contains provisions for regulating unit discipline and ordinary criminal conduct (such as theft), it also articulates war crimes such as murder (or unlawful killing in combat).

As with other elements of strategic culture, the fact that there are counterexamples in a particular state's historical record does not invalidate the asserted cultural preference. Rather, the challenge is to explain credibly those variances within a broader pattern of action. For instance, the fact that some US soldiers have been prosecuted for illegal and inhumane acts on the battlefield (e.g., My Lai in Vietnam or Abu Ghraib in Iraq) does not mean that humanitarian principles are peripheral to, or absent from, American strategic culture. Indeed, the commitment to prosecute, rather than tolerate, American service personnel who have allegedly committed war crimes demonstrates the strength of the humanitarian norm in the US military.

This conception of American strategic culture – predicated on a penchant for decisive victory, technological solutions, and humanitarian concern – is a useful foundation for examining American military action in an international environment in which the impact of war on non-combatants can have strategic consequences. There is, however, an inherent tension. A focus on decisive victory through strategies of annihilation can make it difficult to conform to humanitarian considerations in combat. Conversely, a focus on humanitarian issues during armed conflict can make it difficult to follow a strategy of annihilation and may require a limited war strategy in which the application of armed force is constrained. This paradox is further complicated by the strategic implications of compromising humanitarian norms such as the protection of civilians. In such cases, the attainment of strategic objectives through the use of force can be compromised by the harm that such military operations can bring to civilians. Hence, compliance with the norm of civilian protection becomes not merely a moral imperative but a strategic one as well. A solution to this dilemma is a military approach that employs advanced technologies that can improve discrimination between combatants and non-combatants during armed conflict. In so doing, it addresses both military and humanitarian considerations, and enables strategic benefit to be derived directly from military operations and from the observance of the humanitarian norm of protecting civilians. Thus, a doctrine that incorporates each of the three strands of American strategic culture – decisive victory and humanitarian concern enabled by technological skill – constitutes a distinctive American approach, at once idealistic and pragmatic, in which humanity becomes a weapon of war.

3

LIMITED WAR IN AMERICAN STRATEGIC THOUGHT

A great country cannot wage a little war.
The Duke of Wellington to the House of Lords,
16 January 1838

Introduction

In his seminal work *On War*, Clausewitz suggested that the nature of warfare is to escalate to ever higher levels of violence until one side of a conflict is incapable of further opposition.[1] As Clausewitz further argues that the purpose of war is to serve the political interests of the state through victory on the battlefield, one might logically conclude, as Clausewitz did, that such interests can only be secured when the enemy is thoroughly defeated and unable to resist.[2]

Yet the philosophy and practice of American warfare does not reflect this Clausewitzian ideal. Not since World War II has the United States launched a military campaign characterized by both maximal aims and unlimited means.[3] This is a curious trend, not simply because it seems to undermine the Clausewitzian relationship between war and politics, but also because it stands in contrast to the predisposition for decisive victory in American strategic culture.

The nature of the international environment has changed considerably since the United States and its allies defeated the Axis Powers in what many describe as the "last good war."[4] The acquisition and expansion of nuclear arsenals during the Cold War challenged the very notion that a nuclear war could be won, and called into question the strategic utility of total war. Soviet Major-General Nikolai A. Talensky famously argued in 1965:

> In our days there is no illusion more dangerous than the idea that thermonuclear war can still serve as an instrument of politics, that it is possible to achieve political aims by using nuclear weapons and still survive.[5]

As the Cold War ended and the threat of mass destruction receded, new obstacles to the prosecution of total war emerged. The previous chapter argued that increased international concern about civilian casualties during armed conflict characterized the post-Cold War environment. This was particularly true in the so-called "humanitarian wars" of the 1990s when powerful countries

such as the United States were called on to use military force on behalf of civilians who were being attacked by their own governments or by other armed groups within the borders of their sovereign states. While deliberate attacks on civilians may be justly condemned, it is an enduring and inevitable aspect of modern warfare that civilians will be harmed when battles are fought in or near urban centers with weapons of varying degrees of accuracy. Given that such harm has both strategic as well as moral implications, military thinking must accommodate it.

Finally, ever since the Vietnam War, senior American policymakers have had to contend with a public that, by conventional wisdom, has proven increasingly reluctant to tolerate casualties inflicted on its armed forces in conflicts that do not appear to serve the vital national interest. It is not a novel development in the nation's history for its soldiers to suffer injury and death in time of war. Yet that experience in the 1960s and 1970s of an army conscripted from the general population, which endured losses in a conflict whose purpose seemed murky and whose resolution appeared inconclusive, had profound ramifications for the structure of the US armed forces, for the American approach to warfare and, indeed, for American politics broadly.

In the midst of these developments, civilian and military strategists wrestled with the dilemma of making armed force a viable instrument of American national policy in an environment where domestic and international constraints render the prospect of total war either infeasible or impractical. The result was the emergence of limited war doctrines designed to reestablish the relationship between force and politics that, at turns, seemed irrational in the context of nuclear war, paradoxical in the context of humanitarian war, and unworkable in the context of domestic US politics.

This chapter traces the development of limited war thinking in American strategic thought. It begins with a general discussion of the ways in which force can be used. Then it examines some of the major premises, and their authors, associated with limited war doctrines. Finally, it concludes with an assessment of the potential for these doctrines to be supported by precision munitions, and the implications of this development for American methods of warfare.

Approaches to force

Once the decision has been made to use or to threaten force as a means of achieving a policy objective, there are essentially four forms that such a strategy can take. It can be a policy of deterrence, compellence, conquest, or reprisal. In the course of its martial history, particularly after World War II, American presidents have pursued all four courses of action depending on the issue at stake and the price they were willing to pay.

Deterrence is essentially a passive strategy designed to dissuade a potential adversary from taking a certain action. By definition, it incorporates the threat

of force rather than the use of force. Indeed, if the actor employing deterrence eventually uses force to affect the issue in question, then it can be said that deterrence has failed. Lawrence Freedman explained deterrence this way:

> A standard definition [of deterrence] is employed by George and Smoke: "Deterrence is simply the persuasion of one's opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he might take outweigh its benefits" [quoted from Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*: (New York, 1974), p.11)]. The definition makes it clear that the idea is to dissuade the opponent from initiating action rather than to *compel* him to do – or undo – something against his will, which distinguishes it from a more general definition of power. However, it is by no means clear that the "something" in question threatens the deterrer directly. The deterred may decide not to act in a particular way, even though this may have no direct bearing on the interests of the deterrer. The definition acknowledges that the success of deterrence depends on the opponent being persuaded. No matter how sincere the deterrer might be in his conditional threats, if the opponent does not take these threats seriously then deterrence will fail.[6]

Deterrence strategies are attractive because, if they are successful, they achieve a particular objective without resort to the use of force. As Freedman noted, they can be difficult in practice because they leave the initiative with the adversary. It is hard to know what combination of threats will make an adversary decide that taking a certain action is not in his interests. Ultimately, making such a decision is up to the adversary, not the deterrer.

Deterrence as a strategy is most often associated with nuclear weapons. But it also has a conventional variant. The United States has pursued both sorts of deterrence at various times. Strategies of mutually assured destruction (MAD) and flexible response were used to deter a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union against the US. The deployment of 30,000 US troops to Kuwait in 1994 to deter a second Iraqi invasion is another example of conventional deterrence.

Compellence is a strategy that uses applied violence as a bargaining tool. Alexander Craig equated compellence with coercive diplomacy, and said that it:

> employs threats or limited force to persuade an opponent to call off or undo an encroachment – for example, to halt an invasion or give up territory that has been occupied. Coercive diplomacy therefore differs from the strategy of deterrence . . . whereas deterrence represents an effort to dissuade an opponent from undertaking an action that *has not yet been initiated*, coercive diplomacy attempts to reverse actions *which have already been undertaken* by the adversary.[7]

The definition of compellence can be expanded beyond that which Craig suggested. Rather than using force simply to reverse a territorial gain by an adversary, compellence can also be used to encourage an adversary to do or cease any number of other actions.

As Craig noted, this strategy is different from deterrence in that it does not rely on the promise of future, and as yet withheld, violence should the adversary take a particular action. Compellence applies violence to persuade an adversary to do a certain task lest he continue to be subjected to further uses of force. Thomas Schelling explained this point in detail:

> [Unlike defense, compellence] is more like "offence." *Forcible* offence is taking something, occupying a place, or disarming an enemy or a territory, by some direct action that the enemy is unable to block. "Compellence" is *inducing* his withdrawal, or his acquiescence, or his collaboration by an action that threatens to hurt, often one that could not forcibly accomplish its aim but that, nevertheless, can hurt enough to induce compliance. The forcible and the coercive are both present in a campaign that could reach its goal against resistance, by making evident the intent to proceed. Forcible action . . . is limited to what can be accomplished without enemy collaboration; compellent threats can try to induce more affirmative action, including the exercise of authority by an enemy to bring about the desired results.[8]

Coercive diplomacy is an attractive strategy because it presents the possibility of achieving strategic objectives while applying the least amount of military force and suffering as few friendly casualties as possible. Like deterrence, however, its fundamental flaw is that it leaves the initiative to the adversary by allowing him to decide when the losses he is experiencing are no longer worth retaining the object sought by the "compelling" nation.

The use of the atomic bomb by the United States against Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a strategy of compellence. The attacks did not give the allies an immediate military advantage. Instead, they presented the Japanese with an example of the destruction they could expect if they did not concede to the demands of the US. As has been noted previously, it was pursed as an option explicitly because it offered the possibility of achieving the strategic objective of securing Japan's unconditional surrender while risking the least number of American lives.

Compellence, however, is fundamentally different from conquest. Where compellence seeks to persuade, conquest imposes a result. Conquest, or brute force as Schelling called it, is the archetypical war with which Clausewitz was familiar. It is the use of violence to force the enemy to perform a particular action. It differs from compellence in that there is no semblance of negotiation. Schelling explained the difference this way:

> There is a difference between taking what you want and making someone give it to you, between fending off assault and making someone afraid to assault you, between holding what people are trying to take and making them afraid to take it, between losing what someone can forcibly take and giving it up to avoid risk or damage. It is the difference between defense and deterrence, between brute force and intimidation, between conquest and blackmail, between action and threats. It is the difference between unilateral, "undiplomatic" recourse to strength, and coercive diplomacy based on the power to hurt.
>
> The contrasts are several. The purely "military" or "undiplomatic" recourse to forcible action is concerned with enemy strength, not enemy interests; the coercive use of power to hurt, though, is the very exploitation of enemy wants and fears. And brute strength is usually measured relative to enemy strength, the one directly opposing the other, while the power to hurt is typically not reduced by the enemy's power to hurt in return.[9]

The strategy of conquest has at least two advantages. First, the initiative lies with the aggressor. Rather than waiting on an adversary to concede the object in question, the aggressor can seize it against the adversary's will if it is within his military capability to do so. Second, it is a relatively uncomplicated strategy. It does not require the complex signaling, bargaining, and analysis that are central to deterrence and compellence. Its greatest disadvantage, however, is that it is by far the most costly of all of the strategies. Pursuing a strategy of conquest, even if it is successful, can sap a nation of its material and human resources.

The United States has pursued strategies of conquest many times in its history. Typical examples are Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, World War II (with its demands for unconditional surrender from the Axis powers), and the American Civil War (for similar reasons to World War II).

The final method of using force is the reprisal. Malcolm Shaw explained reprisals in the following definition:

> Reprisals are acts which are in themselves illegal and have been adopted by one state in retaliation for the commission of an earlier illegal act by another state. They are thus distinguishable from acts of retorsion, which are in themselves lawful acts.[10]

In the vernacular of modern strategists, reprisals can also be termed "sending a signal" – specifically with the use of force. They are military acts that are not designed to elicit a specific response from an adversary or to attain a particular objective. Instead, they are uses of force designed to communicate displeasure in a way that is much more forceful than conventional diplomatic activity or economic sanctions.

Reprisals are typically chosen when a country cannot take effective military action to reverse or induce a particular situation. This inability may be due to a lack of sufficient military resources, or it may be that the unfavorable circumstance is already a *fait accompli* that is impossible to reverse at all or without substantial military commitment. Nevertheless, the affected country might wish "to do something" rather than acquiesce to the situation completely. While reprisals bring the psychological and political benefits of knowing that a nation has done something rather than nothing, they are problematic in that they are patently illegal. Reprisals violate Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which admonishes countries to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political sovereignty of another state.

Of these four uses of force, only conquest may properly be considered consistent with total war. Deterrence may appear to be associated with it by *threatening* total annihilation in some instances in order to dissuade an adversary from taking a particular action. But as it relies on the use of force as a persuasive tool to achieve a political objective rather than seizing it outright, it should not be seen as a subset of total war. By comparison, strategies of both coercion and reprisal are examples of limited war as the use of either is associated with the limitation of either ends or means in armed combat. Each of the four uses of force has its own benefits and liabilities. Which type of option will be chosen in any given circumstance obviously depends on the particular details of the situation, the importance of the interests involved, and the military resources available.

Limited war and American strategy

The development of limited war approaches in American strategic thought has its roots in US nuclear strategy. Civilian and military strategists struggled to create a framework in which the use of military force could still be a viable instrument of policy in the shadow of cataclysmic nuclear war. Although its impetus was contending with the constraints of the Cold War, this effort laid the intellectual foundations for the very limited application of conventional force to achieve discreet political objectives in a post-Cold War environment.[11]

The use of atomic bombs against Japan in August 1945 helped to speed the end of World War II. The awesome power released by those weapons also caused American policymakers to rethink fundamentally how they should use military force to defend the United States and pursue its interests. The monopoly of atomic weapons that the US enjoyed between 1945 and 1949 led many to believe that it could intimidate the Soviets into conceding to allied post-war demands merely by threatening to use them in the event that American interests were challenged.[12] This approach, however, proved unworkable in a world where threats to the US were manifold and where it no longer had exclusive access to atomic weapons.

When the Soviets tested their first atomic device in 1949, abruptly end-

ing the American monopoly of "the bomb," the entire strategic equation for American national security changed. No longer could it rely on its sole ability to inflict massive damage as a means of influencing the behavior of potential adversaries and avoiding another large-scale war. Furthermore, as the Soviet Union developed more weapons and the means of delivering them, American strategists had to contend with the possibility of a nuclear attack on the United States.

Deterrence was the principle strategy initially used to contend with this threat. Although it was not new as a concept, deterrence took on a special significance in the context of nuclear war. By threatening a nuclear response to armed aggression, the United States sought to dissuade the Soviet Union from acting against the interests of America or her allies. In 1954, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles articulated a doctrine of "massive retaliation," which depended "primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing."[13] In summarizing the doctrine, Lawrence Freedman noted that Dulles believed:

> [The communists] had to recognize that in such circumstances the Western nations would respond in a manner that suited them, and that could well include massive nuclear retaliation against the centers of Soviet power. Dulles was mainly interested in extracting political leverage from this threat while he could, rather than developing a long-term basis for American strategy. But this approach was valid only as long as the United States could make such threats with confidence.[14]

The problem with making nuclear threats credible was the incredible damage that such force would inevitably entail. The use of non-tactical nuclear weapons (and tactical ones as well, depending on the circumstances) would cause massive civilian as well as military casualties. Furthermore, it was not clear that such a strategy would be universally applicable across a range of threats. While it might deter a nuclear attack aimed at the very destruction of the United States, it was less useful against conventional threats to peripheral interests in which the very survival of the US was not at stake. In such cases, the options facing the United States might be either to do nothing and accept the outcome of the adversary's action, or to risk a nuclear exchange over an issue that did not rise to the level of a vital national interest. This possibility was made strikingly clear in a series of early Cold War crises such as the Korean War and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Writing in 1957, Henry Kissinger articulated the fundamental conundrum of the day for American strategy:

> The dilemma of the nuclear period can, therefore, be defined as follows: the enormity of modern weapons makes the thought of war repugnant, but the refusal to run any risks would amount to giving the Soviet rulers a

> blank check. At a time when we have never been stronger, we have had to learn that power which is not clearly related to the objectives for which it is to be employed may merely serve to paralyze the will. No more urgent task confronts American policy than to bring our power into balance with the issues for which we are most likely to have to contend. All the difficult choices which confront us – the nature of our weapons systems, the risks diplomacy can run – presuppose an ability on our part to assess the meaning of the new technology.[15]

Assuming, therefore, that the Soviet conventional threat would not evaporate, American strategists began to search for options to make armed force politically viable and militarily useful below the nuclear threshold. It was in response to this problem that a series of "limited war" strategies began to emerge, starting from the early 1960s.

Robert Osgood offered a useful definition of limited war:

> A limited war is one in which the belligerents restrict the purposes for which they fight to concrete, well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement. Generally speaking, a limited war actively involves only two (or very few) major belligerents in the fighting. The battle is confined to a local geographical area and directed against selected targets – primarily those of direct military importance. It demands of the belligerents only a fractional commitment of their human and physical resources. It permits their economic, social, and political patterns of existence to continue without serious disruption.[16]

These new limited war strategies suggested ways to see the use of force as a bargaining process with levels of escalation, rather than as a single spasmodic episode. Furthermore, they suggested ways of controlling the pace and level of escalation so that the level of destruction or sacrifice incurred would not undermine the political purpose for which force was employed in the first place.

Approaches to limited war broadly fell into two variants: limited nuclear (or strategic) war and limited conventional war. In the early 1960s, scholars such as Herman Kahn and Morton Halperin argued that nuclear war could be limited in geography and scale.[17] Thus, it need not constitute a global holocaust, provided that smaller tactical nuclear weapons were employed and that belligerents were able to carefully calibrate the force employed in conflict to make it commensurate with the objectives sought. Indeed, the need to be able to use force short of "mutually assured destruction" associated with total nuclear war, and the recognition that nuclear weapons were a critical component of America's and NATO's defense posture, led the Kennedy administration to advance the concept of flexible response to apply force in a measured way across the spectrum of conflict depending on the interests at stake.

The merits of such approaches notwithstanding, limited nuclear war was never initiated in practice. Controlling the escalation of a nuclear exchange from tactical to strategic weapons, and the accompanying consequences, was a crucial dilemma. One could not be sure that an adversary would adhere to the same level of force and refrain from responding to a tactical nuclear weapon with a strategic one. Nevertheless, American policymakers faced dozens of situations throughout the Cold War in which conventional forces were employed in a variety of ways to achieve political objectives. Indeed, Barry Blechman and Stephen Kaplan documented over 180 cases between 1945 and 1978 in which American armed forces were used to achieve or support discrete military objectives without resorting to combat at all. Blechman and Kaplan defined such a "political use of armed force" as the following:

> A political use of the armed forces occurs when physical actions are taken by one or more components of the uniformed military services as part of a deliberate attempt by the national authorities to influence, or to be prepared to influence, specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence.[18]

In addition to such demonstrations of force, American policymakers also found multiple occasions throughout the Cold War to use or threaten the use of armed force. Some were large-scale conventional actions such as the Vietnam War, while others were more circumscribed applications. In the middle 1960s, scholars such as Thomas Schelling examined the ways in which the United States might be able to make use of limited applications of conventional or nuclear armed force in the context of a potential nuclear escalation.

Schelling argued that while military force may be applied in varied ways to achieve diverse ends, its most fundamental characteristic is the ability to "hurt."[19] This capacity can be applied to conventional military operations in a strategy of conquest, or to a nuclear posture designed for deterrence. It can also be used in a bargaining process to convince an adversary to comply with desired objectives. This is the logic underlying the strategy of compellence, as defined above. Again, Schelling wrote:

> "Compellence" is *inducing* [the enemy's] withdrawal, or his acquiescence, or his collaboration by an action that threatens to hurt, often one that could not forcibly accomplish its aim but that, nevertheless, can hurt enough to induce compliance.[20]

Christopher Gacek wrote of this generation of strategists and their ideas:

> [A] corpus of writing had accumulated that established to almost everyone's satisfaction that limited war capabilities were sorely needed . . . . Schelling offered important ways to think of tacit bargaining's focal points,

> and Kahn added a hypothetical degree of precision and discrimination in our understanding of the process of escalation. Kahn's use of the rungs of a ladder as a metaphor for the steps in the escalation process made the problem easier to understand but also trivialized the differences between different positions on the ladder. Undoubtedly, Limited War theory had reached a degree of sophistication and refinement [by the 1960s] not present a decade earlier.[21]

Scholarly exploration of limited war strategies in the 1960s provided the basis for further developments in the 1990s regarding discrete uses of force for finite political purposes. Building on Schelling's concept of compellence, these approaches dealt more with the use of conventional rather than nuclear force. Among the more important of these strategies is the doctrine of coercive diplomacy, articulated by Alexander George. George wrote:

> The general idea of coercive diplomacy is to back one's demand on an adversary with a threat of punishment for noncompliance that he will consider credible and potent enough to persuade him to comply with the demand.[22]

George suggested that coercive diplomacy is not synonymous with Schelling's concept of compellence because the former can incorporate a variety of coercive instruments besides the use of force, and does not distinguish between offensive and defensive threats.[23] Certainly, George recognized that armed force is one of many coercive tools and, as such, compellence may be seen as a subset of coercive diplomacy.

Much of the scholarly work on coercive diplomacy in the 1990s and early 2000s has focused on the effectiveness of this strategy. What makes coercive diplomacy generally, or compellence in particular, fail or succeed? The balance of opinion in the literature suggests that it is, at best, very difficult for the United States to employ coercive strategies that successfully extract concessions from an adversary. For example, Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman argued that there are intrinsic domestic and international political constraints that make coercion a difficult proposition for American policymakers. They wrote:

> Of the many problems that U.S. coercive strategy suffers, the greatest lie in the political rather than the military realm. Perceived casualty sensitivity, limited coalition cohesion, and a reluctance to commit high levels of military force – all of these weaken U.S. credibility in the eyes of adversary leaderships and constrain U.S. moves and countermoves. These restraints on the United States, and the adversary's ability to exploit them, often undermine U.S. strength, preventing the United States from using its military superiority to full advantage.[24]

Similarly, Robert Art proposed that there are at least four reasons why successful coercive diplomacy is difficult to accomplish. First, he suggested that compellence is inherently problematic, especially compared with deterrence, because "it is intrinsically more difficult to get a target to change its behavior than to keep its behavior as is."[25] Second, he echoed the thinking of Robert Pape in *Bombing to Win*[26] by arguing that the denial, punishment, and risk strategies associated with coercion also have inherent flaws. In strategies of coercive diplomacy focusing on denial or punishment, the amount of force applied is, by definition, limited. Thus, it is difficult to appreciably change an adversary's behavior when the means employed are only of a limited degree. Art wrote:

> After all, it is hard to inflict much punishment with coercive diplomacy: the limited use of force produces only limited punishment . . . . Similarly, the threat to deny is not denial, and the limited use of force can produce only limited denial in the sense that it cannot use enough force to stalemate a target.[27]

Likewise, risk strategies often prove problematic because, among other things, of the incremental nature by which they are applied. This allows an adversary to adapt to the damage inflicted and lessens the coercive value of the force applied. Third, Art noted that it is a challenging proposition to estimate the resolve of an enemy and thus difficult to apply only such limited force as is necessary before the coercer is forced to decide to use more force in a strategy of conquest or to renounce the objective that is sought. Finally, Art submitted that coercive diplomacy is difficult because the target must consider the costs in credibility and power that one loses by yielding to a demand, and the effect that such a loss might have on other would-be coercers.[28]

Finally, Pape used extensive empirical analysis to assess the utility of coercive strategies, particularly in the context of strategic bombing campaigns. By differentiating between coercion of punishment (in which civilians are deliberately targeted) and coercion of denial (in which a state's military capabilities are attacked), he argued that coercion is only marginally successful:

> [C]oercion is very hard. It hardly ever succeeds by raising costs and risks to civilians. When coercion does work, it is by denying the opponent to achieve its goals on the battlefield. However, even denial does not always work. Sometimes states can succeed only by decisively defeating their opponents.[29]

As Pape noted in his work, if a state has to resort to decisive defeat (or, in other words, conquest) in order to achieve its objectives, then coercion, by definition, has failed.[30]

If strategies of coercion and coercive diplomacy are so complex in theory

and so difficult in practice, why do American policymakers continue to employ them? Some explanations of this phenomenon are broadly applicable, while others are peculiar to American foreign policy.

Among the broader explanations, George submitted that coercive diplomacy can be a particularly appealing option for policymakers because it offers the promise of achieving strategic objectives without the cost entailed in the commitment of conventional forces for strategies of conquest, or the destruction implicit in strategies of nuclear deterrence. It does, however, have its own risks. He argued:

> Coercive diplomacy is an attractive strategy because it offers the defender a chance to achieve reasonable objectives in a crisis with less cost, with much less – if any – bloodshed, with fewer political and psychological costs, and often with less risk of unwanted escalation than is true with traditional military strategy . . . .
>
> However, precisely because of these attractions, coercive diplomacy can also be a beguiling strategy. Leaders of militarily powerful states may be tempted at times to believe that they can, with little risk, intimidate weaker opponents into giving up their challenge to a status quo situation. But the militarily weaker state may be strongly motivated by what it has at stake and refuse to back down, in effect calling the bluff of the coercing power. The latter, then, must decide whether to back off or to escalate the crisis into a military confrontation.[31]

Byman and Waxman suggested that the continued resort to coercive strategies may be an exercise in "satisficing." Although it may clearly have shortcomings as an alternative, coercion may nevertheless prove to be the best available option given a series of other constraints with which policymakers must contend. In short, coercion might be "good enough" for a given situation. Byman and Waxman argued, "Policy makers [sic] are likely to choose suboptimal strategies for a particular crisis because their actions must conform to broader foreign policy objectives and to domestic preferences (and they may want to bolster their political standing)."[32]

In the context of American foreign policy, one of the chief constraints with which policymakers must contend is sensitivity to casualties among US armed forces. Although he made the case that casualty aversion has its roots at least as far back as the American Civil War, Evan Andrew Huelfer recognized that the US experience in Vietnam had a profound effect on the decision to use force in American foreign policy:

> Since Vietnam, the casualty issue has remained in the forefront of American strategic thinking. The postwar national hangover from our [i.e., American] failure in Southeast Asia – commonly referred to as the "Vietnam Syndrome" – perpetuated a general disillusionment with a U.S. military

> role in solving international problems. Another outgrowth of the syndrome was an ardent aversion to high levels of combat casualties. Policy makers [sic] and strategists not only fixated on this perceived debilitation, but worked to construct new measures that would force the military to operate within the constraints of a murky strategic environment . . . . Since then, national leaders repeatedly have tried to achieve mission success "at the lowest possible cost in human life."[33]

Peter Feaver disputed this contention, at least in part, by proposing that the American public can tolerate casualties among its armed forces so long as the civilian political leadership remains steadfast, the *causus belli* is clear, and victory is likely.[34] Still, Feaver's argument suggests that the American public might not accept significant (or any) casualties should any one of his criteria not be met. Given the importance of maintaining popular support for the use of force in a democracy, and the possibility of circumstances arising in which the rationale for the use of force is unclear or its success is not assured, it is not surprising that policymakers would search for military options that might prove viable against such constraints.

The 1990s presented a series of international situations that proved at once intolerable and intractable. While the use of armed force seemed to be a plausible, if not necessary, reaction to provocations such as ethnic cleansing and sanction enforcement, often they were not perceived by the American public to be in the vital interests of the United States and worth risking the lives of American personnel. Furthermore, such crises forced the international community in general, and the United States in particular, to consider the question of humanitarian intervention. Rather than using force to support traditionally defined national security objectives, states were asked to exercise military options to stop atrocities against civilians perpetrated by their own governments or by non-state actors within their national boundaries.

One of the impetuses for this rather novel justification for the use of force was the rise of the global news media, which could instantly broadcast images of harm to civilians around the world. Dubbed the "CNN effect," Amos Jordan *et al*. have argued that it fundamentally changed the public's reaction to armed force. For the first time, the carnage of warfare no longer remained on the battlefield. Instead, it was beamed via television directly into the homes of domestic constituencies, whose support was not only a necessary condition for military action but often a catalyst for it:

> Prior to the nineteenth century, battlefields were usually relatively restricted, for the most part touching only the lives of those directly involved in combat. The virtually total wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries . . . changed this situation, brining the carnage and anguish of war into the lives and homes of whole populations.
>
> The communications and information revolutions have increasingly

> led to widespread revulsion (in democracies, at least) against the use of military force as a diplomatic tool . . . . Behind the development of international law concerning the use of military force has been an uneven and still weak – but growing – international moral consensus against virtually all international violence.[35]

Ironically, often the same public opinion that supported military action in order to stop the suffering of civilians by forces within their own territory also demanded that such actions spare civilians. Adam Roberts has argued that the confluence of the CNN effect and a renewed concern for human rights has not only forced governments to be wary of using force as a "diplomatic tool", as described above by Jordan *et al*., but it has also made them more responsive to calls for the use of force in support of humanitarian objectives.[36] Yet, even when the motives for military action are humanitarian rather than diplomatic or political, Roberts noted that the post-Cold War international context demands that such force must be applied according to *jus in bello* norms enshrined in the law of war:

> [One challenge for states] is that if military force is used in support of at least partly humanitarian goals, or in implementation of international humanitarian law, it is important that it should itself comply with that body of law.[37]

The confluence of the CNN effect and a renewed post-Cold War emphasis on human rights has led to an interesting paradox, particularly in the American context. On the one hand, by bringing the horrors of the battlefield into the homes of average citizens, the global instantaneous media made the American public more reticent to support the use of force, particularly in support of purely diplomatic or political objectives. On the other hand, the media's ability to demonstrate graphically the suffering of ordinary human beings in the midst of humanitarian emergencies made the American populace more willing to support the use of force to achieve humanitarian objectives in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, there was an expectation that, regardless of the *jus ad bellum* justification for the resort to force, *jus in bello* norms would largely be followed in its application. Furthermore, there was a lingering expectation from America's experience in Vietnam that the lives of American service personnel would never again be sacrificed for dubious or opaque political objectives. Thus, the emerging strategic context of the early 1990s necessitated that any potential military action would not only have to be justified by the correct motives and waged according to established norms, but it would also have to spare the lives of American servicemen as much as possible.

Conclusion

The unifying theme in the history of American limited war strategies is the search to make the use of force viable despite substantial international and domestic constraints. Early limited war approaches contended with the potential of an escalation to a nuclear exchange from a conventional armed conflict. Later efforts were motivated by domestic aversion to casualties among American armed forces, particularly when the objective sought through the use of force was not perceived by the electorate to be in the vital national interest. Finally, global considerations about civilian protections in warfare, and the propensity for such harm to occur in large-scale conventional operations, has informed the latest iteration of thinking about limited war. This is made all the more problematic when domestic audiences can see images of civilian suffering instantaneously via global news outlets.

The development of limited war strategies has been an iterative process as soldiers, scholars, and statesmen have adapted to the challenges of their times. It represents a movement to make the use of force conform to political objectives, as Clausewitz suggested that it must. While their efforts relied mainly on intellectual acumen, strategists have been aided in their desire to develop viable approaches to limited war by advances in modern weaponry that have made the application of force more precise. Perhaps no development is more important in this regard than the maturity of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) and, in particular, the Tomahawk cruise missile.

4

TOMAHAWK

History, technology, strategy

> Could not explosives even of the existing type be guided automatically in flying machines by wireless or other rays, without a human pilot, in ceaseless procession upon a hostile city, arsenal, camp, or dockyard?
>
> Winston Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, 1925

Introduction

The use of force is a crucial aspect of international relations. As the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu wrote, "War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied."[1] Since these words were penned nearly twenty-five centuries ago, soldiers, scholars, and statesmen from countries and cultures around the world have studied the problem of war. The profound consequences associated with the resort to force have led such people to study how to win wars, how to prevent them, and how to mitigate their deleterious effects.

American strategists in particular have wrestled with these questions. Indeed, the political environment in which policymakers have contemplated the use of force has changed dramatically between the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War. Some restraints on the use of force have relaxed, while others have emerged. Specifically, the demise of the superpower rivalry that dominated the Cold War has largely eliminated the fear that any use of force might lead to a nuclear confrontation. On the other hand, the end of the ideological battle between the superpowers has also reinvigorated an international human rights and humanitarian culture, thus increasing the importance of human rights and humanitarian concerns in *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* issues.

In addition to political changes, technological innovations have also affected the way in which policymakers consider the resort to, and application of, deadly force. During the Cold War, the Americans developed a variety of precision-guided munitions (PGMs). Although they were developed for tactical purposes, their maturity has arguably had strategic implications. The unique ability of PGMs to strike targets hundreds of miles from the launching platform and to do so with great precision means that, in theory, such weapons

can meet *jus in bello* requirements of proportionality and discrimination while also protecting friendly combatants from death or capture.

Policymakers grappling with strategic dilemmas in the post-Cold War environment have used these weapons repeatedly. Many such dilemmas have demonstrated that there are issues between states that cannot be resolved through non-violent diplomacy, yet are not sufficiently egregious that they warrant public support for full-scale military action. Yet, when force is used, adherence to international humanitarian law (IHL) now has strategic consequences. That is, the failure to respect IHL by harming civilians could undermine achieving the political purpose for which force was undertaken in the first place. In addition, the lack of popular support for the level of national sacrifice required for large-scale military action means that the political objective prompting the use of force could also be undermined by the loss of many friendly lives in combat.

Thus, in many situations in the post-Cold War era, American policymakers experienced a "strategic gap" in which the use of force was deemed to be necessary to achieve a political objective, but the manner in which force was used could undermine the very objective for which it was employed if it caused significant harm either to civilians or to friendly combatants. The precision and standoff capabilities of PGMs and limited war strategies, developed independently during the Cold War, helped policymakers to fill this strategic gap and gave them added flexibility in the use of force.

This chapter begins with a brief history of American cruise missile technology, in general, and of the Tomahawk cruise missile in particular. Next, it details many of the technical characteristics of the Tomahawk. Finally, it argues why it is part of a revolution in strategy.

Precision weapons technology and the Tomahawk

In 1713, Richard Steele said, "There is no weapon too short for a brave man."[2] History, however, suggests that even brave soldiers prefer long weapons to short ones. From the introduction of the longbow to the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles, the trend of weapons development has been to develop arms with stronger power that can be fired from farther ranges with greater accuracy. One particularly interesting aspect of weapons development in the latter part of the twentieth century has been an increased focus on the accuracy and range, rather than the firepower, of new weaponry. An excellent example of such a system is the Tomahawk cruise missile. With a greater degree of accuracy than any other standoff weapon in existence, this chapter argues that Tomahawk has the potential to revolutionize the strategic use of force.

History of the Tomahawk cruise missile[3]

Jane's Intelligence Review defines a cruise missile as:

> a relatively small, unmanned, expendable, aerodynamic, self-propelled, autonomous or semi-autonomous vehicle that can fly at low, radar-evading altitudes and is used as a comparatively precise means to deliver a warhead to a target area.[4]

This type of weapon is not new. Indeed, versions of cruise missiles have been in development and operation since at least the early days of World War II. The German V-1 "buzz bomb" is the best early example of such a weapon.

The US Navy began efforts to develop its own cruise missile even before the end of the war. In November 1944, it started development of a sea-launched, radio-guided rocket to be carried on escort carriers and, later, on submarines. Called the Loon, it was based on the German V-1, with the addition of a radio-controlled guidance system. Test firings began in January 1946, but the Loon proved to be unreliable. In addition, it had a very short range. Because of these deficiencies, it was eventually scrapped in an effort to find an alternative with longer range and better reliability.[5]

From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, the Air Force also developed a series of cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads. Among these were the SM-62 Snark and the AGM-28A/B Hound Dog. The Snark was a ground-launched intercontinental missile armed with a 4-megaton (MT) warhead, a range of 1,500 nm, and a cruising speed of Mach 0.85. Conversely, the Hound Dog was an air-to-surface missile delivered by a B-52 bomber. It had a 4-MT warhead, a shorter range of 674 nm, and cruised at Mach 2. Ultimately, the rationale for the deployment and maintenance of the Snark was as a stopgap measure until the maturation of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles in the American arsenal in 1961.[6] Similarly, the Hound Dog was conceived as an interim weapon until the deployment of its successor, the Skybolt missile. Yet it remained in service until 1976.[7]

The Navy also continued with cruise missile development during the same period. The aim of this program was to provide the Navy with an offensive nuclear capability. In the late 1940s, the weight of atomic weapons (around five tons) made their delivery by carrier-borne aircraft impractical, if not impossible. Guided cruise missiles offered a potential solution. By 1951, the Navy had tested the first of these weapons, the Regulus I. It was fully operational in 1955. Regulus I could be fired from the deck of a cruiser, aircraft carrier, or a submarine on the surface of the ocean (which was a serious tactical liability). It had a 3.8-MT warhead, a range of 575 nm, and a cruising speed of Mach 0.87. Despite its success within the parameters conceived for it, Regulus I was phased out of production in 1959, and ultimately out of service in 1964. Similarly, the follow-on to Regulus I, predictably dubbed Regulus II,

was never deployed even though it was more capable than its predecessor in payload, range, and speed. Advances in thermonuclear weapon designs and in naval aviation by the late 1950s made it feasible to deploy nuclear devices on carrier-based aircraft. Furthermore, the advent of the Polaris ballistic missile coupled with the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine offered a more effective way of delivering a nuclear payload at sea over long distances.[8] With the demise of the Regulus program, the Navy essentially abandoned its development of cruise missiles. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt would later say of this development that it was the "single worst decision about weapons [the Navy] made during my years of service."[9]

By the early 1970s, a series of forces and events aligned to revive interest in cruise missiles for the civilian leadership in the Department of Defense in general, and for the Department of the Navy in particular. The first was a number of technical advances that dramatically improved the prospects for developing a new generation of weapons. Among these developments were smaller and more potent nuclear warheads, microelectronics that could be employed in advanced guidance systems, and smaller turbofan engines that were more powerful and fuel efficient than their predecessors. Although important in their own rights, the combination of each of these advances allowed engineers to design cruise missiles with longer ranges, heavier payloads, greater accuracy, and more flexible deployment options than anything that preceded them.[10]

The second catalyst was the sinking of the Israeli destroyer *Elath* by an Egyptian-fired, Soviet-made SS-N-2 STYX missile during the 1967 Six-Day War. Following its propensity to develop its fleet around capital ships, the US Navy after World War II organized battle groups around its aircraft carriers. Although such a doctrine allowed the Navy to bring substantial tactical aviation assets to bear both at sea and ashore, it also required several screening ships (cruisers, destroyers, and frigates) to protect an aircraft carrier from attack. Conversely, the Soviet Navy had a smaller surface fleet with inferior aviation assets. It relied instead on the deployment of cruise missiles aboard smaller surface vessels to counter the American advantage in maritime tactical aircraft.[11] The sinking of the *Elath* proved the harm that sea-launched cruise missiles could do to a fleet. With no effective countermeasures to anti-ship cruise missiles, and indeed with no such weapon of its own, the US Navy was anxious to improve its capabilities in this area.

Finally, geopolitics provided an important catalyst for the American cruise missile program broadly, and for the sea-launched cruise missile in particular. In 1969, the United States and the Soviet Union initiated the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) to ensure the qualitative parity of their respective nuclear arsenals, thus bolstering the framework for deterrence on which the so-called "balance of terror" depended. Signed in 1972, SALT I consisted of two accords: (1) the antiballistic missile defense (ABM) treaty, which limited the deployment of ballistic missile defense systems; and (2) a 5-year interim agreement limiting the number of offensive nuclear weapons held by both

sides, to include intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) launching platforms.[12] The interim agreement was intended to lay the groundwork for a follow-on long-term treaty to restrict the size of the strategic weapons arsenals of both sides. Although SALT I was ultimately ratified by the United States, it was not without controversy. In freezing the missile inventories of both sides at 1972 levels, its critics noted that it allowed the Soviets to retain a higher number of total ballistic missile platforms (2,350 compared with 1,750).[13] Crucially, SALT I omitted a series of other weapons delivery platforms that had offensive strategic nuclear capability, such as strategic bombers and nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). Ronald Pflatgraff and Jacquelyn Davis noted that, although Soviet SLCMs were intended as anti-ship weapons, under the right tactical conditions, they could threaten US cities and thus have much the same effect as weapons covered under the SALT I interim agreement.[14] Part of the reason that this situation developed was that, having abandoned cruise missile programs in the early 1960s, the US had no weapons comparable to the Soviet SLCMs and were thus in an inferior negotiating position. Ronald Huisken noted:

> On the specific issue of SLCM, [US Secretary of Defense Melvin] Laird endeavored to explain the contradiction [of developing strategic SLCMs in the FY1973 defense budget] by arguing that the United States had been able to negotiate effectively in SALT I because it had active development or procurement programs in the various areas of weaponry covered by the agreements, namely ABMs, ICBMs and SLBMs. During the negotiations the Soviet Union apparently resisted attempts to include their submarine-launched cruise missiles in the interim agreement on offensive weapons, and U.S. officials concluded that their bargaining position on this issue was weak because the United States lacked comparable weapons and did not have any program to develop such weapons.[15]

As early as 1973, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger saw the negotiating value of the cruise missile as a bargaining chip, although he doubted its utility as a weapon.[16] Ultimately, the prospect of deploying cruise missiles in a variety of platforms provided useful negotiating leverage for the talks leading to SALT II in 1979.[17]

Hence, a combination of technological advances, tactical threats, and political imperatives helped to revive and strengthen cruise missile programs in general, and SLCM initiatives in particular, throughout the 1970s. This occurred despite significant bureaucratic resistance to the weapons in portions of both the Air Force and the Navy. While air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) promised to improve the penetrating capabilities of long-range bombers against Soviet air defenses, the pilotless vehicles also posed an institutional threat to manned aircraft which were the mainstay of the Air Force.[18] The same dynamic was at work in US naval aviation circles, where there was general

opposition to the deployment of SLCMs given the dominance of manned, carrier-based aircraft.[19] Furthermore, interest in the development of cruise missiles was reinvigorated in spite of (rather than because of) speculation about tactical and strategic merit. In the context of SLCMs, for example, debate raged about whether this weapons system was best applied as a tactical weapon against other ships or an addition to the nation's nuclear force posture. If it had utility as a nuclear weapon, how did it complement (or, indeed, compete with) SLBM systems such as the Poseidon and Trident missiles? Were nuclear-armed cruise missiles better deployed on surface ships or submarines? How would they affect the survivability and employment of surface assets, and how would their presence on attack submarines (with the requisite tradeoffs in weapons loads such as conventional torpedoes) affect that platform's primary mission of anti-submarine warfare? What was the utility of conventional variants of SLCMs against other ships or against targets ashore? To the extent that they might be employed in strike missions against land-based targets, what was the cost-effectiveness and tactical benefit compared with strike missions by carrier-based aircraft? Such questions framed the debate surrounding the development and deployment of SLCMs and helped to shape the way policymakers thought about these weapons as their technology improved and as the geopolitical environment shifted through the end of the Cold War.

Given the example of the *Elath* and the dominance of the Soviet Navy in cruise missile capability, it is not surprising that the US Navy initially applied developments in cruise missile technology to the problem of anti-surface ship warfare (ASUW) and eventually developed an anti-ship cruise missile of its own. The Harpoon (AGM-84D) is an all-weather, over-the-horizon, anti-ship missile system, capable of being launched from surface ships, submarines, and aircraft. It has a range of 60 nm. First introduced into full service in 1977 in its surface-launched variant, the Harpoon remains the Navy's primary missile for attacking ships at sea.[20]

Interest in cruise missile development did not peak, however, with the advent of Harpoon. In the early 1970s, improvements in technology led to the Navy's interest in making a submarine-launched cruise missile armed with a tactical nuclear warhead. By June 1972, the SLCM program had been approved, with powerful support not only within the Navy but also within the Nixon presidential administration. In January 1974, the Navy awarded contracts to competing companies for the development of two prototype weapons. The first company, General Dynamics, produced the YBGM-109, while the second company, LTV, made the YBGM-110. After several trials, the General Dynamics design was selected in March 1976. Nine months later, in January 1977, the Defense Systems Acquisition Review Council declared that the BGM-109, otherwise known as the Tomahawk, should enter full-scale engineering development. By the following month, full-scale production was approved.[21]

In the mid-1970s, there was also an effort to develop an air-launched version of the Tomahawk cruise missile, designated AGM-109, which would be

used as the Air Force's ALCM. Yet, for reasons of technical compatibility with existing Air Force launching platforms, the design that was ultimately chosen was a greatly modified version of a pre-existing aerial decoy missile called SCAD, which was carried by B-52 bombers. The new version of the ALCM, designated AGM-86B, was produced by Boeing and entered active service with the Air Force in December 1982.[22]

The Tomahawk was to come in six variants.[23] The first was the Tactical Land Attack Missile with a tactical nuclear warhead (TLAM-N). In addition, BGM-109 would be produced with a conventional unitary warhead for land attack (TLAM-C) and with a conventional warhead with submunitions (TLAM-D). A Tactical Anti-Ship Missile (TASM), a Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM), and a Medium-Range Air-to-Surface Missile (MRSAM) would round out the inventory. TASM entered into fleet service in 1982, followed by the GLCM in Europe in 1983, the TLAM-N in June 1984, TLAM-C in 1986, and TLAM-D in 1988. The MRSAM, however, was never moved from engineering development to full production. Like the ship-launched TLAM-N, GLCM also had a nuclear warhead. Both GLCM and the Pershing-II medium-range nuclear missile were introduced into the European theater by the Americans to correct what many in NATO perceived to be an imbalance of strategic forces caused by the deployment by the Soviets of the SS-20 mobile medium-range nuclear missile. These deployments, however, caused significant popular protests in Europe in the early 1980s. Eventually, the GLCM and the Pershing-II were retired from service in the early 1990s to comply with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty.[24]

Tomahawk – an evolution in technology

When the Tomahawk was first deployed, it possessed very little technology that had not been previously available and that was not already in use in other systems. It was the amalgamation of these advances, however, into a single weapon that produced a conventional standoff missile of unprecedented accuracy, survivability, reliability, and lethality.[25] As of 2006, the Tomahawk had been deployed operationally in four stages, or "blocks:" Block I, Block II, Block III, and Block IV (otherwise known as the "Tactical Tomahawk" or TACTOM).

Airframe, propulsion, and warheads

As noted earlier, Tomahawk is an air-breathing, subsonic cruise missile. It is, in effect, an unmanned aircraft. It is produced by Raytheon Systems Company of Tucson, Arizona.[26] The missile's airframe is the same for all four blocks of the Tomahawk. It is 18 feet 3 inches/5.56 meters in length (20 feet 6 inches/6.25 meters with a booster rocket attached). It is 20.4 inches/51.81 cm in diameter and weighs 2,900 lbs/1,315.44 kg (3,500 lbs/1587.6 kg with a booster rocket).

Once the weapon is launched, vertical and horizontal stabilizers unfold at its tail section and wings unfold at its mid-section. When in full flight, Tomahawk has a wingspan of 8 feet 9 inches/2.67 meters.[27]

When it is first launched, a solid-fuel booster propels Tomahawk. After transitioning to cruise phase, Blocks I, II, and III of the Tomahawk are powered by the relatively lightweight Williams International F-107-WR-402 turbofan engine, which remains in use for the duration of the missile's flight. Block IV is powered by the Williams International F-415 cruise turbojet engine. The range of the Tomahawk varies depending on the variant, from 700 nm (800 statute miles/1250 km) to 1350 nm (1500 statute miles/ 2500km).[28] Conventional versions of TLAM have a range of 600 nautical miles (690 statute miles/1104 km). It flies at a subsonic speed of about 550 mph/880 km/h. In addition, the airframe's small radar cross-section makes it very difficult to detect by radar. This characteristic, combined with the low altitude at which it flies, significantly enhances the missile's survivability in combat. Tomahawk's range allows it to be launched from platforms hundreds of miles off an enemy's coastline and to strike targets many miles inland.[29]

There are three warheads that TLAM can carry. The first, used on Block II TLAM-N, is a 200-kiloton W-80 nuclear device.[30] The second, deployed on Block III TLAM-C and Block IV TLAM-E, is a 1,000-lb Bullpup conventional unitary warhead.[31] Finally, TLAM-D employs a general use cluster munitions dispenser that distributes 166 combined effect bomblets (CEBs).

Guidance

The characteristic that makes Tomahawk truly unique is its accuracy, which is made possible by its guidance systems. Early variants of the Tomahawk (Block II TLAM-A) are equipped with an inertial navigation system (INS), Terrain Contour Mapping (TERCOM), and the Digital Scene Matching Area Correlator (DSMAC). TERCOM uses a highly sensitive radar altimeter embedded in the missile to identify surface features by their height. It then compares these readings with preprogrammed altitude information about the terrain features it should encounter at any given point. In addition to these data, the missile's computer also has stored within it expected land elevation values for geographic features on either side of the missile's track. After comparing observed and anticipated altitude data, the computer adjusts the missile's course to ensure it is following its intended flight path.[32] TERCOM guides the missile during its mid-course phase.[33] In the terminal phase, the weapon requires even more accurate guidance than TERCOM can provide. For this reason, Block II Tomahawks rely on DSMAC. DSMAC:

> Uses an optical sensor to scan the ground over which the missile is flying. The on-board computer converts the scanned image of the ground features into an image of black and white contrasts. The computer then

> compares that image to its stored DSMAC black and white images of the selected sites along the route. As with TERCOM, the missile's computer then adjusts the missile's course so it is following the preplanned route. The Block II missile uses inertial navigation between TERCOM and DSMAC to update [navigation] points.[34]

The operation of both TERCOM and DSMAC depends on the collection of intelligence about the missile's flight path and its target. They also depend on the successful transmission of this information to the launching platform *before* the weapon is released. This process requires a massive support infrastructure. The National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (formerly known as the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, or NIMA) gathers information about terrain features and target characteristics. This intelligence is used by organizations called Cruise Missile Support Activities (CMSAs) to plan cruise missile flight routes and target strikes. In order to achieve the goals directed by the National Command Authority (NCA), regional combatant commanders develop contingency plans that may call for the use of Tomahawk strikes. The commanders may then task the CMSAs to develop Tomahawk missions that would achieve the strategic objectives of the NCA. There are two CMSAs, each of which has responsibility for developing potential Tomahawk strike missions in roughly one-half of the world. Cruise Missile Support Activity – Atlantic (CMSALANT) is located at the headquarters of US Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia. Cruise Missile Support Activity – Pacific is located at the headquarters of the US Pacific Command in Honolulu, Hawaii.[35]

Planning a Block II TLAM mission is a lengthy and extensive process. Because TERCOM relies on distinctive terrain features to guide its flight, mission planners must plan a route from the launch platform to the target that incorporates particular geographic characteristics. DSMAC has specific requirements as well. The black and white images that it uses to identify the target can be obscured by changes in light. Such changes can be caused by differences in the time of day, weather, and other atmospheric anomalies such as smoke and fire. Thus, planners must ensure that, at the missile's time over target (TOT), the image that the weapon "sees" will correspond as closely as possible to the image that is stored in its on-board computer. Furthermore, planners must ensure that the missile's flight path avoids any insurmountable objects such as steep mountains or dense anti-air defenses. Even with all the necessary intelligence immediately available, preparing a Block II Tomahawk mission can be a very time-consuming process, taking anywhere from 24 to 80 hours.[36]

The difficulties of mission planning were substantially reduced with the advent of the Block III Tomahawk in 1993. In addition to TERCOM and DSMAC, Block III (TLAM-C,D) as well as Block IV (TLAM-E) uses global positioning system (GPS) technology to guide the weapon to its target. GPS

can be used for part or the entire flight path, and it can be used in conjunction with TERCOM and DSMAC, or employed exclusively. Even with this system, however, mission planners must still program into the missile's computer prior to launch the GPS coordinates it will use as waypoints along its route. Yet this process is far less time consuming than relying exclusively on TERCOM and DSMAC data for guidance. Furthermore, the addition of the GPS to Tomahawk increases the weapon's accuracy. While the actual circular error probable (CEP) of TLAM-C is classified, openly published data put the figure at 10 m.[37]

Once the planning process is complete, the mission must be transferred to the launching platform:

> Planned missions are transferred to the Tomahawk-capable ship or submarine either through delivery of a data transport device (which is a large computer disk) or through radio communications channels. Once a ship or submarine is tasked to launch a Tomahawk, the process on board the launching vessel involves powering up the missile, aligning its inertial navigation equipment, transferring the mission into the missile's computer, and then launching the missile.[38]

The latest iteration of the Tomahawk, Block IV/TLAM-E/TACTOM, is designed to give operational commanders maximum flexibility in the employment of the weapon. It can be reassigned in flight to attack one of fifteen preprogrammed targets, or it can be redirected to any set of GPS coordinates. In addition, it has the ability to loiter over a target for hours and to send battle damage assessment (BDA) imagery to commanders using an on-board camera.[39] TACTOM was declared operational and delivered to the fleet in May 2004.[40]

Launching platforms

Tomahawk can be launched from submarines and surface ships.[41] On submarines, they are launched either through torpedo tubes or, in specially configured boats, from twelve vertical launch system (VLS) tubes in the bow, outside the pressure hull but aft of the sonar dome. This means that the VLS tubes are actually internal to the submarine, rather than being located externally on the boat's hull. On surface ships, Tomahawks were initially fired from single-use armored box launchers (ABLs), each capable of firing four weapons. Later, surface vessels were fitted with the Mk41 VLS tubes forward and aft of the superstructure. VLS is now standard on all US Navy cruiser and destroyer classes. In sum, Tomahawk can be launched from *Los Angeles*-class attack submarines (SSN-688), *Seawolf*-class attack submarines (SSN-21), *Ticonderoga*-class AEGIS cruisers (CG-47), *Spruance*-class destroyers (DD-963), and *Arleigh Burke*-class AEGIS destroyers (DD-51).

Tomahawk – a revolution for strategy

Advances in technology often lead to advances in strategy for various reasons. B.H. Liddel Hart's theory of the "indirect approach," for example, was a response to the carnage of World War I caused by the destructive capacity of the machine gun combined with the cult of the offensive in nineteenth-century continental warfare.[42] The early airpower theorists (Doughet, Trenchard, Mitchell, and Harris) believed that the reach and destruction made possible by aircraft would allow air forces to attack an enemy's Clausewitzian centers of gravity directly, without first having to engage its land forces.[43] This, in turn, would permit a nation with air superiority to achieve strategic gain *vis-à-vis* its adversary with less sacrifice and greater speed than had previously been possible. Finally, the advent of nuclear weapons fundamentally changed strategic thought. For 40 years after the US and the USSR reached strategic parity in their nuclear capabilities, Western military thinkers struggled to find ways to make the existence and use of these weapons politically and strategically useful.[44]

Each of these technology-led changes in strategy occurred because of an unprecedented combination of geographic reach and destructive capacity in the particular weapon system. The Tomahawk, however, is unique in that it combines geographic reach with precise targeting, while also allowing the attacker to strike with impunity. In other words, the Tomahawk's revolutionary potential lies in its theoretical ability to destroy *exactly* what it was intended to hit and to do so at virtually no risk to the attacker and with a high degree of survivability for the weapon en route to its target.

There are at least two significant implications that can be derived from this capability. The first is that it enables an adversary to employ a strategy of coercion in a manner consistent with *jus in bello* requirements of proportionality and discrimination. As noted in Chapter 3, theories of coercion were developed along with the "limited war" school of strategic thought in the 1960s in an effort to make military force useful below the threshold of nuclear war. The gist of coercive diplomacy is that limited force can be used to destroy targets of such value to an adversary that he will eventually concede the object in question rather than suffer further loss. Successful employment of this strategy depends on two things: (1) the ability to identify which targets would be of such value to an adversary that their loss would force him to capitulate; and (2) the ability to destroy the targets, and only the targets, in question. Failure to identify properly the targets of value to an adversary would constitute a strategic failure even if the intended target were destroyed, because destruction of that target would not have achieved the purpose for which the use of force was initiated. In addition, causing significantly more destruction beyond what might have been necessary to achieve the strategic objective is the antithesis of limited force. Such actions raise serious questions about the ethical, political, and legal concerns regarding proportionality in the use of force.

With the Tomahawk, however, an attacker can identify a target of particular significance to an adversary, launch an attack with a high probability of hitting only the object in question, and virtually guarantee that no friendly lives are lost in the operation. Such characteristics are in accordance with *jus in bello* considerations of proportionality and discrimination, which are at the heart of the ethics and law of war.

The second revolutionary implication made possible by Tomahawk's capabilities concerns the resort to force as a method of achieving foreign policy objectives. As noted in Chapter 2, the law of war was developed as a means of both mitigating the horrors of combat and restricting the reasons for which states could justify resorting to war. If, however, new technology allows force to be used effectively with an absolute minimum loss of life (particularly in the case of non-combatants), then the constraints arising from humanitarian concerns for civilians can be greatly attenuated. Certainly in theory and largely in practice, the Tomahawk represents revolutionary technology.

Part II

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

5

OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH – JANUARY 1993

> There is no presumption more terrifying than that of those who would blow up the world on the basis of their personal judgment of a transient situation.
>
> George F. Kennan, August 1961

Introduction

Two days after Christmas 1992, an American F-16 fighter jet shot down an Iraqi MiG-25 challenging a no-fly zone established by the Gulf War allies in the southern part of Iraq. With less than 30 days left in the administration of US President George H.W. Bush, this incident set in motion a chain of events that concluded with the first use of cruise missiles since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and the first ever use of cruise missiles in an independent action.

The roots of this exchange lie in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The ceasefire resolution that ended the conflict left many important issues largely unsettled. Although the US-led coalition defeated Iraqi forces in Kuwait, they proved far less effective in coercing Saddam Hussein to take a series of actions that would have contributed to the general level of peace and security in the region. Most serious among these was Hussein's failure to comply with UN demands regarding his weapons of mass destruction program. The difficulty of the allied forces in shaping Iraqi behavior after the war was attributable not only to the inconclusive political settlement which left Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq, but also to a series of political, military, and geographic constraints faced by the first Bush administration in early 1993.

The use of cruise missiles in Operation Southern Watch in January 1993 presents a clear example of a coercive strategy that was adopted *vis-à-vis* an adversary because circumstances prevented the adoption of other diplomatic or military courses of action. Specifically, concern about losing an American pilot to hostile fire in the waning days of the Bush presidency led policymakers to search for options that would place maximum pressure on the Hussein regime with minimum political vulnerability for the United States. Although the strategy ultimately proved unsuccessful, the unique tactical qualities of Tomahawk led senior policymakers to believe that it was a suitable weapon for use in coercive diplomacy with Iraq.

Strategic context

Operation Southern Watch was established in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, dubbed Operation Desert Storm. In the first days after the allied victory, Desert Storm was seen in the West as an unqualified success. The world community had responded to a manifest threat to international peace and security by overturning Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, the world's oil supply had been safeguarded from the domination of Saddam Hussein, thus allowing the major industrial economies to function free from the threat of Iraqi blackmail. The US military saw Desert Storm as a singular success. In addition to its vast array of "high-tech" weaponry functioning very well, the military could also claim that it had moved beyond the specter of Vietnam by decisively winning a war fought for clearly and publicly defined political objectives.

Yet even as the allies basked in their victory, there were supporters and critics of the administration who felt that Desert Storm was not the complete success that it appeared to be at first glance. The essence of the problem lay in the mismatch between the objectives that the allies explicitly defined for the war effort and the outcome that they (or, at least, the Americans) privately hoped the war would produce. President Bush and other allied leaders explicitly limited their public war aims to liberating Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. On the eve of the start of Desert Storm, Bush reiterated this point in a nationally televised speech:

> Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place, and Kuwait will once again be free. Iraq will eventually comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, and then, when peace is restored, it is our hope that Iraq will live as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations, thus enhancing the security and stability of the Gulf.[1]

Absent from this vision was any mention of removing Saddam Hussein from power by force of arms. To be certain, neither the United States nor any of its allies would have been disappointed had Saddam been killed in the maelstrom of combat. Indeed, coalition air forces targeted command and control facilities where Saddam and his leadership may have been likely to be during the war. President Bush, however, explicitly ruled out occupying large parts of Iraq with the specific aim of deposing Saddam and controlling post-war Iraq. He had no desire to commit American ground forces to an open-ended mission trying to govern a hostile country. Bush explained his reasoning on this point:

> I firmly believed that we should not march into Baghdad. Our stated mission, as codified in UN resolutions, was a simple one – end the aggression,

> knock Iraq's forces out of Kuwait, and restore Kuwait's leader. To occupy Iraq would instantly shatter our coalition, turning the whole Arab world against us, and make a broken tyrant into a latter day Arab hero. It would have taken us way beyond the imprimatur of international law bestowed by the resolutions of the Security Council, assigning young soldiers to a fruitless hunt for a securely entrenched dictator and condemning them to fight in what would be an unwinnable urban guerrilla war. It could only plunge that part of the world into even greater instability and destroy the credibility we were working so hard to re-establish.[2]

The problem with this view was that it did not give the coalition any direct influence on the development of events in post-war Iraq. Unlike the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II, the allied forces of the Persian Gulf War did not occupy the enemy capital, and they did not replace the government that was responsible for initiating the war in the first place. An Iraqi unconditional surrender, modeled after those of World War II, would have increased the allies' ability to force the Iraqi government to take measures that would have eliminated it as a threat to the peace and security of its neighbors. It was from a desire to coerce Iraq to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 688 (1991) and cease attacks on ethnic minorities in the north and south of that country that the United States and its allies established Operation Southern Watch. As Anthony Cordesman noted:

> Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, which began in August 1992, was part of the international response to continued Iraqi non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 688. This resolution condemned Saddam Hussein's repression of the Iraqi civilian population, including air and ground attacks against insurgents in southeastern Iraq. USCENTCOM established a no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel to monitor Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 688 and established Joint Task Force (JTF) Southwest Asia to command and control the entire operation . . .
>
> Overall Operation SOUTHERN WATCH prevented Iraqi aircraft from participating in large-scale offensive actions against the people in southwestern Iraq, although Iraqi ground operations continued there at a somewhat reduced level.[3]

Failing to cooperate with Resolution 688 was not the only form of Iraqi non-compliance after the Gulf War. In addition, the UN was consistently frustrated in its efforts to investigate and eradicate Iraq's program for the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). By the outbreak of Desert Storm, Iraq had been investing heavily in the development of WMD for at least two decades. From 1984 onward, it had used mustard and nerve gases extensively against Iranian troops during the Iran–Iraq war, and it had

also used chemical weapons deliberately to kill 5,000 Kurdish citizens in the town of Halabja in March 1988. In the Iranian case, chemical weapons had been the crucial element in several Iraqi tactical victories, and they may have been one of the reasons that the Ayatollah Khomeini agreed to a ceasefire in 1988.[4] These sorts of engagements proved to Saddam Hussein the utility of WMD and may have contributed to his desire to retain that capability at all costs.[5]

Of even greater importance to Saddam, and to the allies, than his arsenal of chemical weapons was his program to develop nuclear weapons. Saddam ordered his engineers to begin work on "the bomb" in 1971, and he committed vast resources to the effort. Between 1987 and 1989, for example, Iraq spent over US$10 billion on its nuclear program. By 1993, over 2,000 engineers and 12,000 people in total were working on the project.[6]

Saddam Hussein had proved beyond doubt that he was a threat to his neighbors in the region by attempting to annex the entirety of Kuwait by force. Given that they were not prepared to go to great lengths to remove him from power, the allies implicitly wanted to attenuate his conventional war-making capacity as much as possible during Desert Storm so that he could never again threaten another country with a land invasion. Lieutenant-General Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor to President Bush, wrote about US strategy sessions before the beginning of the Gulf War:

> But [Secretary of Defense Richard] Cheney and I also believed that a ground offensive would be necessary . . . because it was essential that we destroy Iraq's offensive capability. This was also a major objective, although it had not been feasible to list it openly as such while a peaceful solution to the crisis was possible.[7]

Yet Iraq's nuclear capabilities could also be perceived as a major threat to other nations in the region. What made the problem even more complicated was that virtually no one outside Iraq knew exactly what it possessed in the way of WMD. To that end, the United Nations Security Council inserted a requirement into Desert Storm ceasefire Resolution 687 (1991) that Iraq submit to long-term monitoring and verification of its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons program with the purpose of permanently disarming the country of that capability. Furthermore, on 11 October 1991, the Security Council passed Resolution 715 (1991), which created the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and tasked it with discovering and reporting on the Iraqi WMD program.

The Iraqis, however, steadfastly refused to comply with the resolution. Indeed, they did not even officially recognize Resolution 715 until 26 November 1993.[8] Saddam Hussein's desire to retain WMD capabilities at all costs would ultimately make it exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, to coerce him to

permit UNSCOM inspectors into Baghdad, which was a major policy objective of both the UN and the US.

The options of the UN and the allies in the face of Iraqi intransigence, however, were limited. Because the allies expressly decided not to occupy Baghdad and other parts of Iraq, they could not force their way into sites suspected of nuclear production. The only method of coercion that the US and the UN had proven willing to apply to Iraq after the Gulf War was economic sanctions. First enacted on 6 August 1990 by UNSC Resolution 661 (1990), the US and the UN threatened to continue to enforce sanctions against Iraq unless it complied with all relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly those relating to its WMD program. This strategy was flawed, however, because senior American officials had stated publicly that the sanctions would remain in place as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power. There was, therefore, no economic incentive for Saddam to comply with the weapons inspection regime even if he could be persuaded to give up his WMD capability, because the economic situation would not improve until he ceased being President of Iraq. The sanctions regime never managed to secure Iraqi cooperation. Thus, by late 1992, direct military action to force inspections was impossible, and economic coercion was ineffective.

The effort to coerce Saddam Hussein met another obstacle in November 1992. President George Bush lost the presidential elections to Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. Although the balloting was held on 3 November 1992, Bush was not scheduled to relinquish his office until 20 January 1993. During the period between Election Day and the inauguration of a new president, the sitting president is termed a "lame duck" because his subjective powers, such as his powers of persuasion, are limited by the brief time he has left in his presidency. In addition to being less than effective in promoting domestic political objectives, a lame duck president may also prove to be less effective in his foreign policy agenda as well. Such a scenario was of particular concern to Scowcroft, who felt that potential adversaries might believe that the US would not respond forcefully to a military provocation because the president was about to relinquish power.[9] High on the list of such adversaries was Saddam Hussein.

By the end of 1992, the stage was set for another confrontation between the Gulf War coalition, led by the US, and Iraq. The UN had made clear by its statements that it was determined to strip Iraq of its WMD capability. Iraq had made it equally clear by its actions that it had no intention of complying with that effort. Because of the manner in which the Gulf War was ended, the allies had no direct control over events in post-war Iraq, and economic sanctions were proving to be completely ineffective as a coercive tool. When Bush lost his re-election bid while Saddam managed to hold on to power, the Iraqi leader had every reason to believe by late 1992 that a weakened president was governing the United States. Yet George Bush and his closest advisers had every

intention of safeguarding American interests and demonstrating American leadership until the last moments of his presidency. Thus, a final confrontation between these two men and their countries was all but inevitable.

Catalyst

By December 1992, the pattern of Iraqi action had become increasingly bellicose. Iraq had moved from simply hiding its mobile ballistic missiles and obstructing US military weapons inspectors to challenging the allies militarily. On 27 December at 10.20 am local time, two Iraqi MiG-25s flew south of the 32nd parallel, violating the air exclusion zone established by the allies in August 1992. While there were previous reports that the Iraqis had been challenging the zone when no allied planes were in the vicinity, this was the first time that they had done so in view of allied aircraft. This pair of aircraft retreated after being challenged by American F-15Cs. Twenty minutes later, however, another pair of MiGs flew south of the parallel. A pair of American F-16s warned them by radio to turn around and fly north. Instead, both Iraqi planes turned toward the Americans, prompting one of the American pilots to launch an AMRAAM air-to-air missile against the planes. One MiG was shot down and the other fled north.[10]

This engagement was unique for two reasons. First, it was the first military action between the allies and Iraq since the Gulf war. Second, it graphically confirmed that Saddam Hussein was indeed trying to test the United States in what could be a moment of weakness. Scowcroft was deeply concerned about the position of the United States in the final days of the Bush administration. This incident indicated that his concern had validity. President Bush recognized the pattern as well. "Saddam is testing something. I don't know whether he's testing me or President Clinton. It makes me think he doesn't get it yet."[11]

It is conceivable that the US may have viewed the Iraqi violation as an isolated incident. American policymakers never seriously considered responding further.[12] But the Iraqis initiated a series of other actions that the US considered provocative. Over the next week, there had been a number of other probes by Iraqi aircraft into the exclusion zone, although none was intercepted by allied aircraft. By 3 January, Iraq had moved seven SA-3 surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries and one SA-2 SAM battery south of the 32nd parallel, and it had activated existing SAM sites inside the exclusion zone that had not been activated since August 1992. In addition, Iraq sent more MiGs to the Al-Jarrah airbase just north of the 32nd parallel.[13]

At this point, there had been a series of other provocations: obstruction of UN weapons inspectors, incursions by small contingents of Iraqi troops across the Kuwaiti border, etc. Of concern to American policymakers was enforcing compliance with UN sanctions. Yet some officials argued that the more important objective was protecting American pilots. "It wasn't the po-

litical challenge [of confronting the US or the UN]," said one senior official, "but it was simply unacceptable to threaten American pilots. There was no question about that."[14] The question confronting policymakers, however, was how to respond to the threat.

The Bush administration decided to ask the allies to send an ultimatum to Iraq demanding that it remove the SAM sites or face military action. On January 6 at 10.15 pm GMT, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia issued a joint ultimatum to the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations. The statement demanded "all SAM systems which have been moved into new positions south of the 32nd parallel should be returned to their original sites or configurations within forty-eight hours of the delivery of the demarche."[15] Initial indications the day after the ultimatum was issued were that the Iraqis were complying with the coalition's demand. While not all the missiles had been moved to their original positions, the Iraqis had dismantled or disbanded the batteries, thus eliminating the immediate threat. The problem, however, was that US intelligence was unable to locate the precise position of the missiles and therefore was unable to determine if they were going to be moved to their original positions or relocated elsewhere *inside* the exclusion zone. Additionally, no Iraqi aircraft had challenged the no-fly zone in that time frame.[16] By 9 January, administration officials expressed satisfaction that the Iraqis had fulfilled most of the allies' demands. A statement issued by the White House said, "all available evidence indicates that Iraq is acceding to the requirements of the coalition's [January] 6 demarche. No Iraqi aircraft have entered the no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel and the Iraqi surface-to-air missiles have been dispersed and are no longer threatening coalition flight operations."[17]

Despite their apparent compliance with the demarche, the Iraqis took other confrontational measures against the allies. On 7 January, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz "rejected the allied demands, emphasizing Iraq's claim to sovereignty over all its territory." Iraq, he told an emergency afternoon cabinet meeting in Baghdad, would not heed the ultimatum "and will uphold its right to maintain its air defense bases where they are."[18] On the same day that Iraq took this position, it also forbade UN weapons inspectors flying into Iraq on any aircraft other than those chartered by Iraq. This arrangement would not simply have complicated the work of the UN inspectors logistically, but it would have jeopardized the principle that they had unfettered access to view any site in the country without notice. It was a clear challenge to the United Nations. On the day that Aziz made those statements, the United Nations Security Council warned that Iraq faced "grave consequences" if it stopped UN personnel. True to their word, on 10 January, the Iraqis barred a flight from Bahrain carrying seventy weapons inspectors from entering the country.[19]

On the same day, some 250 Iraqi soldiers entered territory that was to be ceded to the Kuwaitis on 15 January in accordance with a United Nations commission report redefining the borders between the two countries.[20] The soldiers took Silkworm missiles and other armaments from bunkers at Camp

Khor, a former Iraqi naval base at the port of Umm Qasr, which, after the redrawing of land boundaries, was 400 yards inside Kuwait.[21] On 11 January, 150 additional Iraqi workers crossed the border to dismantle warehouses and other facilities. Iraqi authorities claimed the whole incident was a misunderstanding. The territory from which Iraq seized the missiles had been Iraqi controlled even before the Gulf War. Iraq constructed a series of naval installations at Umm Qasr during the Iran–Iraq war. After the border had been redrawn, Iraqi Ambassador to the UN Niar Hamdoon claimed that Iraq had permission from the UN to remove all of its material from the area before 15 January.[22] Officials at the United Nations, however, disagreed.

> The UN Security Council [on the evening of 11 January] condemned the first raid, and demanded [that] Baghdad return the missiles. But the 15-nation council warned only vaguely of the "serious consequences" of Iraq's defiance. The council president, Ambassador Yoshio Hatano of Japan, did not "foresee a use of force by the UN immediately."[23]

In addition to the incursions around Umm Qasr, Iraqi forces placed SAMs into the northern no-fly zone as well. Batteries of SA-2 and SA-3 missiles had been redeployed near the Saddam Hydroelectric Dam about 25 miles north of Mosul. Allied aircraft had been patrolling the area to prevent Iraqis from using airpower against Kurdish refugees there.

The United States viewed these incidents as a series of provocations designed to test the will of America, of the allies, and of the United Nations. Marlin Fitzwater, White House Spokesman for President Bush, stated, "It's clear from this raid into Kuwait that Saddam Hussein is continuing his pattern of trying to cheat wherever possible, continuing to challenge UN resolutions."[24] On 11 January, President Bush met with his senior national security officials to decide how to respond to the Iraqi actions. Present at that meeting were General Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor, Vice-President Dan Quayle, Robert Gates, Director of the CIA, Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense, and General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Following that meeting, President Bush ordered a strike on Iraqi SAM missile batteries at the earliest opportunity. Foul weather over the targets prevented the strike on 12 January. At 9.50 am Eastern Standard Time (EDT) on 13 January, President Bush received an update that the offending missile batteries were still in place. As the strike order had already been given, he simply took no further action.[25]

At 10.45 am EDT on 13 January, approximately eighty British, French, and American warplanes struck missile targets in southern Iraq. American F-15s and F-16s, as well as British Tornadoes and French Mirages, flew from Saudi airbases near Riyadh. American F-14s and A-6s flew from the aircraft carrier *USS Kitty Hawk* in the Persian Gulf. They attacked radar sites near Tallil, an airbase near Nasiriya, and air defense installations at Samawa, Najaf, and Al

Amara. The attack was designed to "send a message" to the Iraqis that they must comply with UN resolutions. In addition, the President ordered 1,250 US troops to deploy to Kuwait as a deterrent to Saddam Hussein from taking action against that country.[26]

Decision

Despite the allied attacks against the missile sites, there was yet another problem to be solved. The Iraqis still refused to allow UN weapons inspectors to fly into Baghdad. The Americans had issued another ultimatum to Iraq, this time demanding that it allow the UN inspectors to fly safely to Baghdad by 4 pm EDT on 15 January, or else it would be considered in violation of UN resolutions.[27] Shortly before the deadline expired, the Iraqis responded that they would allow the UN inspectors to fly to Baghdad but that they could not guarantee their security. By 16 January, the Iraqis claimed that they would guarantee the safety of the UN inspectors, but only if they did not fly across the no-fly zone established by the allies south of the 32nd parallel. The UN rejected that stipulation, claiming that Resolution 715 had given them legal authority to have unfettered access to any place in the country. On the evening of the 16 January, President Bush met with the Joint Chiefs at Camp David to discuss options *vis-à-vis* Iraq.[28] Although there are no publicly available transcripts of this meeting, it may be deduced from the events of the following days that the President and his advisers discussed further military options with regard to the situation in Iraq.

Despite the dearth of viable military options, President Bush and General Scowcroft were determined to find an appropriate response to Iraq's intransigence regarding inspection of its nuclear facilities. *The New York Times* reported that the Bush administration had decided as early as Friday 15 January to launch a cruise missile attack against a politically significant target in Iraq, but that the operation was delayed so that the allies could better assess Saddam's willingness to comply with UN demands.[29] Without any signs of cooperation forthcoming, President Bush likely made the final decision on the evening of 16 January to launch the attack.

Action

The next day, 17 January 1993, the United States launched 45 Tomahawk Block II Land Attack Cruise Missiles (TLAM-C) against the Zaafaraniyah industrial complex 8 miles southeast of downtown Baghdad. The weapons were fired from three ships in the Persian Gulf (the cruiser *USS Cowpens* and the destroyers *USS Hewit* and *USS Stump*) and a ship in the Red Sea (*USS Caron*). Of the forty-five weapons launched, one missile malfunctioned and three landed within the complex but failed to hit any structures.[30] At least one of the missiles strayed off course or was knocked off course by anti-aircraft

fire and smashed into the Al-Rashid Hotel in downtown Baghdad. The errant missile killed at least three civilians.[31] Pentagon officials stated that thirty-seven of the forty-five missiles launched likely hit targets within the complex.[32]

The Americans claimed that the site had been used to produce sophisticated computer-controlled machine tools used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.[33] Indeed, the day after the attack on 19 January 1993, President Bush sent a letter to Congress citing its role in Iraq's nuclear production program as the reason it was selected as a target:

> On January 17, 1993, at my direction, US Tomahawk missiles destroyed the Zaafaraniyah nuclear fabrication facility near Baghdad. This facility was selected because of its role in Iraq's electromagnetic isotope separation (EMIS) program. The Coalition attack was designed to help achieve the goals of UN Security Council Resolutions 687, 707, and 715 requiring Iraq to accept the inspection and elimination of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. Zaafaraniyah had been inspected a number of times, and some equipment used for the production of EMIS components for Iraq's nuclear weapons program was removed. The facility nonetheless contained precision machine tools used to fabricate items for military and civilian customers and could again be used to support Iraq's nuclear weapons program.[34]

As President Bush suggested in his letter, the facility had already been rendered functionally inoperable on previous visits by UNSCOM inspectors. Tours of the plant that Iraqi officials arranged for foreign journalists demonstrated that it had been "reduced to rubble."[35]

Although the United States did not launch any more Tomahawk strikes after 17 January, other military operations in Iraq continued through the final hours of the Bush presidency. They essentially consisted of "defensive actions" by coalition pilots in response to Iraqi provocations over the northern and southern no-fly zones. *The Washington Post* reported:

> Just as it did on Sunday [17 January 1993], the Baghdad government briefly seized the military initiative yesterday, provoking a series of early morning confrontations in the northern no-fly zone. Pentagon officials reported that every US, British and French plane that entered the zone was illuminated by Iraqi target acquisition radars or shot at with antiaircraft artillery . . . .
>
> In response to the antiaircraft threats, American F-4G anti-radar jets fired HARM missiles at Iraqi SA-6 missile sites near Mosul at 3:39 am EDT and again at 3:44 am. Less than an hour later, two US F-16 fighters dropped cluster bombs on an antiaircraft artillery emplacement at Bashiquah Airfield . . . .

> The main allied attack yesterday [18 January 1993] – the first daylight bombing since the 1991 gulf war – was in the southern no-fly zone.
>
> Eighteen US and British strike aircraft from bases in Saudi Arabia staged a 15-minute raid on three air defense command posts south of the 32nd parallel, finishing the job begun last Wednesday [13 January 1993] . . . .
>
> "We can say categorically that the Iraqi air defense capability in southern Iraq is neutralized," [a senior US military] official said.[36]

After weeks of tensions and "tit-for-tat" moves in the final days of the Bush administration, Saddam Hussein declared a unilateral ceasefire upon the inauguration of Bill Clinton as a "goodwill gesture." As *The Washington Post* noted:

> Iraq's confrontation with the United States and allied powers entered a lull yesterday [19 January 1993] as Baghdad declared a cease-fire in a goodwill gesture to the incoming Clinton administration, and the Bush administration elected not to respond to several new Iraqi provocations.
>
> Iraq's cease-fire declaration, scheduled to take effect at midnight EDT last night [19 January 1993], appeared to remove the threat of action against US and allied warplanes policing two zones where Iraqi planes are forbidden to fly. Iraq also informed the United Nations yesterday [19 January] that it would no longer prohibit or put conditions on flights of United Nations inspectors into the country.
>
> Iraq thus eliminated the two major causes of Western military action in the past week. But the Baghdad government also made clear it still objects to certain UN restrictions and the ban on military flights in southern and northern Iraq, saying its gestures are intended to give "the new US administration an opportunity to study" whether the constraints can be removed.[37]

Bill Clinton was sworn in as the forty-fourth president of the United States on 20 January 1993, and the confrontation between the United States and Iraq was over – for the moment.

Analysis

The launching of Tomahawk cruise missiles in Operation Southern Watch in January 1993 was the first use of the weapon after the Persian Gulf War and also the first use of the weapon to achieve a discrete political objective. Although the president had publicly stated that the purpose of the Tomahawk strike was to help force Iraqi compliance with the UN weapons inspection regime, administration officials also privately admitted that the attack was meant to "send a signal" to Saddam that the US would not be intimidated in

the days before a change of administration and that his freedom of action to create further "mischief" would always be limited by an American willingness to respond with force.

In many ways, the tactical characteristics of Tomahawk made it an ideal weapon for this mission. Indeed, one could argue that, given the constraints the US was facing at the time of the strike, it would not have been able to use force as readily against the target it chose had not a weapon such as Tomahawk been available for use. The level of accuracy of which each missile is capable, coupled with the fact that almost four dozen of the weapons were launched, meant that mission planners and policymakers could have a very high level of confidence that their intended target would be destroyed and that nothing else would be significantly damaged.[38]

Furthermore, the fact that TLAM is a pilotless, standoff weapon meant that the US could use force against its adversary without risking any American lives in the process. The heavy anti-aircraft defenses around downtown Baghdad made such a situation a distinct possibility.[39] Scowcroft, in particular, was very concerned about losing an American pilot in a raid on downtown Baghdad.[40] In addition to the potential loss of life, he did not want to give Saddam a pilot to use as a political pawn, as they had during the Gulf War, on the eve of a change in presidential administrations.

Finally, the third characteristic that made TLAM a useful tool was that it was available. As has been noted above, there was only a fraction of the combat strike aircraft available at the time of this strike as had been in the theater during the Gulf War. In addition, the concentration of air defenses around Baghdad would have meant that many suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD) missions would have had to have been flown in advance of the strike aircraft undertaking their assault on the facility. Given that forty-five Tomahawks were launched and that each weapon carried a 1,000-lb warhead, mission planners must have intended to deliver 45,000 lbs of ordnance on the target. Dropping a comparable number of bombs to achieve the same effect as forty-five cruise missiles would have required several tactical aircraft flying several sorties, each carrying with it the potential loss of an aircrew. As TLAM-capable ships were already on station in the Persian Gulf and in the Red Sea, those weapons were readily available to a degree that the requisite numbers of aircraft probably were not. Even if they had been available, using them would have required permission from Saudi Arabia, where the planes would have been based, to launch the strike. Using TLAMs from sovereign US warships in international waters eliminated the basing requirement in both tactical and strategic planning for the strike.[41]

The tactical characteristics of Tomahawk in this instance also brought a particular strategic significance. It allowed the Bush administration to use force in a manner other than the doctrine of overwhelming decisive force advocated by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell. There was a general consensus among the most senior policymakers in the

Bush administration that Saddam Hussein was not a leader with whom conventional, non-violent diplomacy would prove useful.[42] Yet there simply was not enough time, materiel, or political will to use overwhelming conventional force to pursue a strategy of conquest and make Saddam Hussein conform to UN demands. The availability of Tomahawk allowed American policymakers to use force as a coercive tool, to send a political signal to an adversary, and to do so without risking American lives, which is the cardinal concern on which the decisive force doctrine rests in American strategic thought. It was thus an exercise in coercive diplomacy.

Although the vast majority of the missiles launched in the attack hit the targets for which they were intended, this mission was largely a failure as a method of coercion. The Iraqis were not more forthcoming in disclosing their WMD production capabilities as a result of the strike. Indeed, as noted earlier, they did not even recognize the legality of UNSCOM until very late in 1993. Some observers, however, remarked that the goodwill ceasefire announced by Saddam on 20 January showed that the political signal had been received and that, in this sense, the attack had been somewhat successful. *The Washington Post* wrote:

> After a day [on 19 January] when dissension about the allied air strikes percolated at the United Nations, elated US, French and British diplomats credited the military actions with forcing Baghdad to back down. "They blinked," one diplomat said.
>
> Swedish ambassador Rolf Ekeus, director of the UN special commission created to eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, brushed off suggestions that the allied strikes had been excessive, calling them "a good example of how this matter should be dealt with under such extremely difficult circumstances." But he cautioned against declaring an end to the confrontation with Iraq.[43]

The fact that the raid was not successful as a method of coercion is not a result of the functioning of the missiles. They performed largely as they were intended and destroyed the target chosen by the president and his advisers. Instead, it was a result of not choosing the correct target set, the destruction of which would have forced Saddam to comply with the UN weapons inspection regime. It is worth considering, however, what an appropriate target would have been to achieve that objective. Saddam Hussein did not comply with UN resolutions to withdraw from Kuwait when one of the largest fighting forces ever assembled was waiting in Saudi Arabia to eject his forces from that country. Nor did comprehensive and devastating economic sanctions force him to comply with a variety of UN resolutions before or after the war. If such awesome military and economic measures did not force him to relinquish possession of a foreign territory, it is difficult to imagine how a military effort a fraction of the size of one day of operations in Desert Storm could have

coerced him give up the WMD program on which he felt the strength of his regime and his personal survival ultimately depended. Thus, the problem with coercive diplomacy in this circumstance did not necessarily depend on the weapons or the tactics employed, but on the psychology of an adversary who was prepared to risk virtually everything to maintain his grip on power.

Conclusion

The use of cruise missiles in Operation Southern Watch in January 1993 was a classic attempt to use coercive diplomacy. Although one purpose of the mission was to "send a signal" to Saddam Hussein about his disregard for UN Security Council resolutions, the main objective of the strike was to coerce him to comply with the UNSCOM inspection regime.

Yet, the coercion was not successful. The mission's failure in this regard was not a result of the weapon employed, but a function of the target selected and the mindset of the adversary. The weapon worked as policymakers had hoped. It destroyed the intended target and no American lives were lost, although some civilians were unintentionally killed. Saddam Hussein, however, was unmoved by the destruction of the Zaafaraniyah facility because he was likely committed to the preservation of his WMD capability at any cost.

That Tomahawk could have been largely successful tactically and yet failed in its strategic objective demonstrates the difficulty of employing coercive diplomacy in practice. The success of a coercive strategy depends not only on the ability to apply force, but to do so against a target that is of sufficient value to the enemy that he will concede the object in question. Hence, successful coercion demands psychological as well as technical precision. Nevertheless, given the political and operational constraints of the final days of the Bush administration, coercive diplomacy proved to be an attractive strategy *vis-à-vis* Iraq, perhaps even deceptively so.

6

OPERATION BUSHWACKER – JUNE 1993

> It was the first time I know of in which the US retaliated against an action which never occurred.
>
> A senior US official speaking in 1998 about American action under Operation Bushwacker in June 1993

Introduction

In March 1993, the Iraqi government initiated an action so brazen that it was, at least at first, literally unbelievable to outsiders who learned of it. The Iraqis launched a plot to assassinate George H.W. Bush, former president of the United States of America.

How the US government, under the leadership of President Bill Clinton, chose to respond to news of this plan is an interesting study in strategic choice under little or no time pressure from the flow of external events. The nature of the provocation, the options available to the president, and the means he chose to execute his decision tell us a great deal about the assumptions and concerns underlying the use of force in the early tenure of the Clinton administration and of the utility of the Tomahawk cruise missile as an instrument of statecraft.

Strategic context

Relations between the United States and Iraq had been marked by increasing tension and hostility in the final days of the first Bush administration. President Bush had demonized Saddam Hussein in the months before the outbreak of Desert Storm by publicly comparing him with Adolph Hitler. The American-led coalition dealt the Iraqis a punishing military defeat and continued to enforce comprehensive economic sanctions against the country after the war ended in order to compel the Iraqi government to comply with a series of UN resolutions. By the middle of 1992, the US government also publicly stated that the sanctions would remain in force until Saddam Hussein had been deposed from power, presumably by his own people.

The Iraqis, for their part, continued to violate UN Security Council resolutions after the war and to break international norms through violent suppression of uprisings by Kurdish and Shi'a populations in the north and south of

Iraq respectively. In 1992, they consistently refused to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors sent to dismantle Iraq's WMD program. Finally, the Iraqis continued to challenge the northern and southern "no-fly" zones by illuminating allied aircraft patrolling the zones with air defense radars and, on occasion, by firing on them. As discussed in Chapter 5, this pattern of behavior led the allies to launch a series of attacks against Iraqi air defense installations in the no-fly zones and to attack the Zaafaraniyah nuclear fabrication facility with a salvo of Tomahawk cruise missiles in the days before the end of the Bush administration. Despite Saddam Hussein's defiance, the economic sanctions imposed by the UN were having a devastating effect on the economy of Iraq. Although he wanted the sanctions removed, he was equally unwilling to relinquish power, as the Bush administration demanded, in order to achieve that outcome.

Saddam was given reason to hope for a reversal of fortune, however, by the defeat of George Bush in the 1992 presidential elections and the victory of Bill Clinton. With the aim of achieving a rapprochement with the new American presidential administration, Saddam declared a ceasefire against American aircraft in the no-fly zones scheduled to take effect by midnight EDT on 20 January 1993, the eve of the inauguration of then President-elect Clinton. Furthermore, he agreed to allow UN weapons inspectors to enter Iraq in their own aircraft and to guarantee their safety. Calling these actions a "goodwill gesture," Saddam hoped that they would give the new administration an opportunity to reassess American policy toward Iraq and expeditiously call for an end to economic sanctions.[1]

A series of incidents at the beginning of the Clinton administration, however, threatened the proposed ceasefire. On the day of Clinton's inauguration, 20 January, US aircraft were involved in three separate engagements with Iraqi air defense artillery. In two of those incidents, Iraqi gunners fired on American warplanes, and in the third, an Iraqi SAM battery illuminated a US F-4G, an anti-air defense aircraft.[2] On 21 January, an Iraqi SAM battery illuminated two American combat aircraft 10 miles south of Mosul. The aircraft fired HARM anti-radiation missiles at the site. The next day, 22 January, two more F-4Gs fired on an Iraqi air defense battery after they were illuminated by hostile radar.[3] On 24 January, three US naval aircraft patrolling the southern no-fly zone were attacked by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. None of the planes was hit.[4]

In explaining their actions, US governmental officials asserted the right of their pilots to protect themselves from hostile Iraqi behavior under rules of engagement adopted during the Bush administration for patrolling the no-fly zones. Iraqi officials condemned the American actions as provocative and aggressive while simultaneously reaffirming the ceasefire of 20 January. Journalist Michael Gordon wrote:

> In recent days [near 23 January 1993], Iraq has blamed the United States

> for the skirmishes, insisting that it was committed to a cease-fire and saying that the American warplanes that had started the fighting [sic].[5]

Nevertheless, Saddam Hussein had a significant interest in improving relations with the United States, and he did not want continued skirmishes with American pilots to interfere with that effort. To that end, on 1 February, he ordered all Iraqi air defense installations to shut down their radars in order to avoid giving coalition aircraft a pretext for bombing Iraqi positions. *The Washington Post* reported:

> A senior Iraqi official said today [1 February 1993] that all Iraq's surveillance radar has been ordered shut down following a series of attacks on radar-guided missile sites by US aircraft patrolling "no-fly zones" in the south and north of the country . . . .
>
> "I believe there is the possibility that the surveillance radar was switched on to save the right de facto," [the official] said. "It did not work. We are not interested in violating the cease-fire or in having a confrontation."
>
> The explanation, from an official who asked not to be named, provided the first insight into a puzzling Iraqi strategy at the time: declaring a cease-fire while at the same time using its air defense network in a way that drew US bomb and missile attacks. It appeared designed as a conciliatory gesture toward the new Clinton administration, one of several overtures in recent weeks . . . .
>
> A highly placed [Iraqi] adviser . . . indicated that for the next few months, Iraq will provide the US-led allies no opportunity for a showdown. "We will not give them the chance," he said.[6]

Although the Iraqis stopped targeting American aircraft in the no-fly zones in early February 1993, they remained essentially non-compliant with United Nations weapons inspections. As noted in Chapter 5, Saddam Hussein had a profound interest in retaining as much of his WMD capability as he could. The treatment of UN weapons inspectors by Iraqi officials reflected this. Although a previous standoff between these two groups had been resolved in early January, by the end of February, another UN–Iraqi crisis had developed. On 22 February, an UNSCOM inspection team was flying in a UN helicopter to inspect three sites in a suburb west of Baghdad. The aircraft was white and clearly marked with UN insignia. It was intercepted by Iraqi helicopters, forced to fly around the site, and warned that it would be shot down if it flew directly over the site in question. Eventually, Iraqi land-based anti-aircraft batteries trained their weapons on the UN helicopter, at which point it was compelled to turn around and leave the area.[7]

Despite this incident, a month later, US and British officials began to alter their policy toward Iraq. On 29 March 1993, the UN Security Council met to

review the sanctions regime against Iraq. Although both countries had previously stated their position that Saddam Hussein had to be removed from power before UN sanctions could be lifted, they did not reiterate the demand at this meeting. Although the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher emphasized that the US wanted to "de-personalize" the conflict with Iraq, the move was seen as a possible softening of the American and British position toward the country.[8]

Yet Saddam may have missed this point in light of more significant events that transpired at that meeting. The Security Council voted to renew comprehensive sanctions against Iraq, noting that the Iraqi government had not fully complied with UN Security Council resolutions demanding that Iraq make available its entire WMD program for documentation and destruction. Thus, the Iraqi strategy of rapprochement with the West – and with the Americans in particular – as a method of achieving relief from economic sanctions had failed, at least in the near term.

Shortly after the UN Security Council decision, the Iraqis undertook an action that could be viewed as revenge against the United States for initiating a chain of events that impoverished their country. They attempted to take the life of a former American president.

Catalyst

Early on the morning of 13 April 1993, a Toyota Land Cruiser and a Chevrolet Suburban clandestinely drove through the Iraqi desert and crossed the border into Kuwait undetected. The vehicles were laden with eleven Iraqi nationals, a number of pistols and hand grenades, thirteen cartons of scotch and several time bombs. Hidden deep within the interior paneling of the Land Cruiser was 180 lbs of explosives, enough to kill anyone within a 300-meter radius of the point of detonation. Most of the rest of the group were known smugglers, present to make the journey appear to be an illicit smuggling operation. Yet their purported mission was to use a car bomb to assassinate former President George Bush during his trip to Kuwait from 14 to 16 April 1993.[9]

The two main actors among the eleven Iraqis were Wali Ghazali and Raad Assadi. Ghazali, a 36-year-old nurse and father of five from the southern Iraqi town of Najaf, claimed to have been recruited for the mission in Basra by an Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) agent named Abdel Hussein about 20 days [that is, some time in late March] before the group entered Kuwait. Assadi, 33, owned a coffee shop in Basra called Our Nights. In addition to frequently smuggling alcohol into Kuwait where it is banned, Assadi was also a self-confessed occasional informant for the IIS.[10]

After crossing the border on 13 April, the group drove to a sheep farm owned by a Kuwaiti named Bader Jiyad Shimmeri. They parked the cars, hid the whisky, and drove to Kuwait City. In the meantime, an unnamed informant had seen the group entering Kuwait and dropping off some cartons in

the desert. He alerted Kuwaiti authorities, who scoured the area and found a "green military bag" containing explosives, batteries, and timing devices.

The next day, 14 April, Kuwaiti police obtained a search warrant and searched Shimmeri's farm, which was a known smugglers' haven in the area. They found the vehicles and the scotch. Later, they placed the farm under surveillance and eventually arrested Shimmeri along with several of the Iraqis in the group. The rest of the group, including Ghazali and Assadi, discovered the police stakeout on the morning of 14 April and decided to look for a new place to hide. On 15 April, they decided to abort the mission and head back to Iraq. They stole a Mercedes, which broke down shortly after their journey began. Without a working vehicle, the remaining members of the group decided to walk back across the border. Four Kuwaiti civilians spotted them and called the police. The Iraqis were subsequently arrested and taken into custody.[11]

Initially, the Kuwaitis thought they had captured a smuggling ring. But, under interrogation, Ghazali admitted that one of their vehicles was indeed a car bomb to be targeted at President Bush. Indeed, had it not been for his confession, the Kuwaitis likely never would have found the explosives as they had to search the vehicle several times before discovering them.[12]

Exactly how the United States government first became aware of the Iraqi assassination plot is unclear. *The New York Times* reported on 9 May 1993 that Kuwaiti officials informed the US State Department and the US Secret Service (which provides physical security for past and current presidents) about the assassination plot upon President Bush's arrival in Kuwait. That would mean that the US government had knowledge of the situation at least as early as 14 April. Yet independent interviews with senior US officials indicated that the American government did not learn of the plot through official diplomatic channels but from press reports in the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Ahram* in mid-April 1993.[13] The story was first reported in a US newspaper on 28 April 1993 when *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, "Kuwait has charged 17 Iraqis with plotting to destabilize the emirate, and one suspect confessed he planned to kill Bush during the former U.S. leader's visit earlier this month, Kuwait's defense chief said."[14] This was the extent of the paper's coverage.

Decision

Regardless of the original source, it is clear that news of the plot reached the National Security Council (NSC) in Washington some time in mid-April. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake authorized a member of his staff to dispatch investigation teams from the FBI and the CIA to go to Kuwait to verify the story.[15] As early as 8 May, officials from the FBI and the US Secret Service had arrived in Kuwait to interview the suspects and inspect forensic evidence.[16]

Initially, American officials were very skeptical of Kuwaiti claims that they had discovered a plot against the life of President Bush. In addition to the

amateurish nature of the assassination attempt, US officials feared that Kuwait had used torture to extract confessions from the Iraqis or had planted evidence to implicate and embarrass Iraq.[17] As the investigations progressed, however, a number of factors coalesced that led US investigating teams to conclude that the highest levels of the Iraqi government had been complicit in the assassination attempt. The first was the strength of the available forensic evidence. Elements of the bomb found in the Toyota Land Cruiser – such as the blasting cap, the plastic explosives, the integrated circuitry, and the remote-controlled firing device – matched almost exactly those of a car bomb known to have been intended for use in an Iraqi-sponsored attack in Turkey in late 1990 or early 1991.[18] The second component was the strength of the Iraqi confessions. When FBI and Secret Service officials interviewed the plotters, they found their stories not only consistent with each other but also consistent with what they had told the Kuwaiti police.[19] Finally, there were several classified sources that supported the theory that the Iraqis had tried to assassinate George Bush upon orders from their government. Among these sources was a study on IIS recruitment methods, which may have matched the manner in which the plotters claimed to have been recruited for their mission by IIS agents in Basra.[20]

When details of the plot became public in early April, many in the American government felt that an assassination attempt against a former President of the United States for actions he took in the discharge of the duties of his office posed serious threats to American interests.[21] The first threat was clearly to the office of the Presidency. Failure to respond to the Iraqi action would have imperiled other former Presidents who, while in office, had taken actions that displeased other nations and groups. It had to be made clear that all Presidents, as well as other American officials, enjoyed the full protection of the United States both while they were in office and after they left public service.

The second interest was a general desire to deter terrorist activity. During the 1980s, the United States established a very strong track record for retaliating against terrorist attacks. Any potential action that the US might take against Iraq, therefore, would be unilateral and not necessarily in its capacity as the leader in a coalition of states containing Iraq.

While these teams were investigating the incident, a key staff member at the NSC began working with a very small number of people at the Joint Staff and the Defense Intelligence Agency to devise possible military responses.[22] There was very little debate among senior administration advisers that the US would have to respond to an assassination attempt against a former president if the allegations were shown to be well founded. The only serious question was what the appropriate response should be.[23] A military response to the attempt was seriously contemplated from the beginning of the American deliberations. Preparations for the use of force were conducted in the utmost secrecy, with only a handful of people in the Defense Department, the Department of State, the CIA, and the NSC involved in the planning.[24] Even people in the White House communications office were deliberately kept uninformed

until a couple of hours before the military strike actually occurred.[25] While the actual options for military force remain highly classified, it is clear from press reports, interviews, and the public statements of administration officials that a variety of choices were developed from which the President could select.[26] Among the target options considered were "high-value" military industrial sites, various military targets, and places where Saddam Hussein was likely to be residing.[27]

Preparations for a military strike continued through the end of June while the FBI/Secret Service and CIA investigations were winding to a close. On Tuesday 22 June, senior officials from the FBI and the CIA met with US Attorney-General Janet Reno. There was general agreement at that meeting that Iraq was responsible for the attack.[28] Reno was convinced that sufficient evidence existed to bring forward an indictment against the Iraqi agents responsible. Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey determined that, in the intelligence world, which has a much lower burden of proof than that of legal circles, he was one hundred percent positive that the Iraqis were responsible for the plot.[29] Yet there was no evidence, or "smoking gun," conclusively tying Saddam Hussein to the planning or execution of the assassination plot.

The President received these reports on Thursday 24 June and called a meeting of his closest advisers to review the reports that evening. Among that group were National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, Deputy National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, White House Chief of Staff Thomas McLarty Jr, Presidential Counselor David Gergen, and Senior Adviser to the President George Stephanopoulous. Either during or shortly after that meeting, the President became convinced that the Iraqi government was behind the assassination attempt and that the United States should respond with military force.[30]

Some time between Thursday evening and Friday 25 June, the target for a military response was chosen. The central feature of the strike plan was an attack against the headquarters building of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, otherwise known as the *Mukhabarat*. One of several Iraqi intelligence organs, the *Mukhabarat* was principally responsible for the collection of foreign intelligence, the conduct of covert operations abroad, and the internal repression of dissent against the ruling Ba'ath regime.[31] Early in the planning process, there was a consensus among the principals on at least three things. The first was that the Iraqi assassination attempt, although unsuccessful, could not go unanswered. The second was that the American response should be directed against Iraq's intelligence capacity.[32] The third was that any US military strike had to be seen as legitimate in the eyes of the US public and, if possible, in world opinion as well. *The Washington Post* reported:

> . . . one participant in the final round of reviews [of potential options] said the administration wanted to satisfy even the narrowest legal test of "self defense" under Article 51 of the United Nations charter.

> "You could probably attack a lot of targets and be legally, technically correct," the participant said, "but there was an effort here to ensure it would be readily seen as a legal target. The world audience is an important audience, and we're sensitive to that."[33]

The President personally chose this target from a list of possible options. The *Mukhabarat* headquarters was a perfect target because it was the heart of Iraqi foreign covert operations, and because its physical location provided a low risk of collateral damage relative to other potential targets.[34] The rest of the strike plan included informing a series of allied nations in Europe and the Middle East of the incipient action, as well as transmitting the execute order to the Joint Staff and ultimately to military units in the area.

During a meeting with the other principals (including Secretary of State Christopher, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, and US Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright) on Friday 25 June, Lake directed his assistant Richard Clarke to execute a strike plan that his staff and a small number of others had put together over the preceding weeks. The actual date of the strike was delayed until early morning on Sunday 27 June so that it would not fall on the Muslim Sabbath.

Action

On Sunday 27 June 1993 at 12.22 am Baghdad time, the destroyer *USS Peterson* in the Red Sea and the cruiser *USS Chancellorsville* in the Persian Gulf launched twenty-three Tomahawk cruise missiles at the headquarters of the *Mukhabarat.* Shortly after 2 am local time, sixteen of the missiles hit their designated targets, four landed elsewhere in the intelligence compound, and three landed in residential areas. The three errant missiles killed eight civilians and wounded at least twelve others.[35] One of the civilians killed was Leila Attar, who was director of the Saddam Hussein Center for the Arts and renowned throughout the Arab world for her contemporary paintings.[36]

President Clinton called former President Bush at 4.40 pm EDT on 26 June 1993 to advise him of the attack. At 7.40 pm EDT, he made a live televised address to the American public to inform them of the action he had ordered. Using particularly strong language, he condemned the Iraqi assassination plot as "loathsome and cowardly." Furthermore, he justified the American action as an example of self-defense and deterrence. He stated:

> From the first days of our revolution, America's security has depended on the clarity of this message: Don't tread on us. A firm and commensurate response was essential to protect our sovereignty, to send a message to those who engage in state-sponsored terrorism, to deter further violence against our people and to affirm the expectation of civilized behavior among nations.[37]

In an emergency session before the UN Security Council, US Ambassador Madeline Albright also condemned the Iraqi assassination plot and justified the US action as self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. After publicly presenting evidence that Iraq had indeed tried to kill former President Bush, Ambassador Albright went on to say:

> As President Clinton indicated last night [26 June 1993], this [assassination attempt] was a direct attack on the United States, an attack that required a direct United States response. Consequently, President Clinton yesterday instructed the United States armed forces to carry out a military operation against the headquarters of the Iraqi Intelligence Service in Baghdad. We responded directly, as we are entitled to do, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which provides for the exercise of self-defense in such cases.
>
> Mr. President, our response has been proportional [sic] and aimed at a target directly linked to the operation against President Bush. It was designed to damage the terrorist infrastructure of the Iraqi regime, reduce its ability to promote terrorism, and deter further acts of aggression against the United States.[38]

The response of the Iraqi government at the Security Council meeting included a flat denial of US accusations of an Iraqi-planned assassination attempt and a condemnation of the US military action. *The New York Times* reported:

> In response [to the US presentation before the Security Council], the Iraqi delegate, Nizar Hamdoon, called the American attack "an unprecedented act of blackmail." He accused Kuwait of "totally fabricating" the evidence against Iraq, saying it was similar to the "infamous stories" that circulated about Iraqi soldiers taking babies from incubators during their occupation of Kuwait in 1991.
>
> "Certain organs in the American Government found pretexts in that in order to commit further acts of aggression against Iraq," Mr. Hamdoon said.[39]

Response to the strike among the American public was extremely favorable.

> President Clinton's decision to attack Iraq has brought him a substantial boost in approval ratings for handling both foreign policy and his overall job as President and has diminished uncertainty over his leadership on the world stage, according to the latest New York Times/CBS New Poll.
>
> The poll found that two-thirds of Americans surveyed supported the weekend air strike on the Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad,

> and six out of 10 approved of Mr. Clinton's general dealings with Iraq, more than approved of Mr. Clinton's handling of the crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia.[40]

Despite Iraqi vows of vengeance after the US attack,[41] no significant military action followed.

Analysis

The decision to use cruise missiles in response to an Iraqi assassination plot is particularly interesting because the US government was not under any particular pressure to respond militarily. No lives were under imminent threat once the plot had been discovered. Although the cruise missile attack was popular after it was launched, calls for retaliation were not particularly strident within the American public before action was taken. Not even former President George Bush, the target of the plot, publicly (or privately, so far as is known) demanded action. This relative lack of pressure allowed President Clinton and his advisers to take their time in investigating the situation, weighing options, and planning a response. Furthermore, this particular set of circumstances arguably permitted the Clinton administration to exercise the use of force entirely consistent with American strategic cultural concerns about civilian casualties as there were relatively few external constraints dictating either the target to be struck or the timing of the attack. Thus, policymakers could be very deliberate about their targeting options and bring to bear a variety of considerations of their own choosing to the decision.

Given the policy of rapprochement that the Iraqi government was pursuing toward the US in the first days of the Clinton administration, it is curious that they would choose to launch an assassination attempt against a former US president. Presumably such an attack, whether or not it was successful, would have scuttled any such effort. Yet, given the closed nature of the former Iraqi regime, it is virtually impossible to know how much weight this outcome carried when balanced against a possible desire to seek revenge against the architect of the Persian Gulf War or to demonstrate displeasure at the US-led coalition voting in the UN Security Council to renew economic sanctions against Iraq.

In any event, the Clinton administration began to respond to the situation very shortly after they became aware of the plot some time in the middle of April 1993. The weeks they took to conduct a painstaking forensic and intelligence investigation reflected the importance of adherence to law in their strategic decisionmaking. It is worth noting, for example, that the US action against Libya in Operation Eldorado Canyon in 1986 was launched on significantly less conclusive evidence of Libyan complicity in a terrorist operation that killed several American servicemen in Europe that year.

Another example of the importance of adherence to international law in

security affairs was the target chosen and the means by which it was attacked. Under conditions of anonymity, senior US officials clearly stated after the attack that one of the reasons that they did not try to target Saddam Hussein was that they could not conclusively prove that he had ordered the assassination plot. Such a consideration is extraordinary when one can easily envision justifying such an attack as "pre-emptive" self-defense against a leader who simply must have known about the actions of his security forces in trying to kill a former American head of state. Yet, the operational constraints of such an effort notwithstanding, the US government justified *not* targeting Saddam on, essentially, legal rules of evidence.

The final example of the importance of international law to the Clinton administration was the legal argument they used to justify the strike. Within 24 hours of launching the strike, the US called a special emergency session of the UN Security Council to explain its actions to the world. It was at this meeting that Ambassador Albright reiterated President Clinton's assertion that the strike was justified as an act of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Whether or not the attack met the requirements of Article 51 is a matter of debate. After all, no sovereign territory of the United States had been occupied or placed under threat. No attack against the US by Iraq was imminent. Even if one could argue that a threat of an attack against a current or previous head of government constituted aggression and justified an act of self-defense,[42] the American military action was launched over *2 months* after the alleged threat occurred. Thus, any claim of imminent harm to the sovereignty of the United States was essentially groundless. Nevertheless, it was very important for the Clinton administration to have the imprimatur of international law in justifying its actions, and Article 51 self-defense most closely approximated legal justification.

Ethical concerns were also very important in the planning and execution of this operation. President Clinton was very concerned about minimizing civilian casualties in any military action he might authorize. General Colin Powell noted this tendency in the new president during their first meeting.[43] Avoiding civilian deaths was also very important to the rest of his close national security team.[44] In addition to ensuring the operational viability of the Tomahawks,[45] striking the *Mukhabarat* headquarters at night reduced the likelihood of killing unnecessarily people who would surely have perished in a daytime raid. The accuracy demonstrated by Tomahawks in the Gulf War and in the January 1993 raid provided a way for planners and for the president to have a high degree of confidence that civilians would not be unintentionally killed.

Operationally, the options available were constrained by the geography of the United States and by the tactical conditions in Iraq. Although the coalition forces had established no-fly zones across Iraq that essentially bracketed Baghdad, the air defenses around the city that the Iraqis were allowed to maintain were quite formidable. Thus, just like the strike in January 1993, military planners had to consider that any strike by manned aircraft in or

around Baghdad would have been extremely dangerous for the pilots involved. Furthermore, the loss or capture of an American pilot in a military operation designed to send a political signal would have been a public relations coup for the Iraqis. Thus, it was imperative that US forces generate options that minimized or eliminated that possibility. The use of cruise missiles provided a ready answer.

It is unclear the extent to which the specter of Vietnam or other circumstances affected the decisionmaking process in this operation. In general, officials in the Clinton administration tried to allow the military to develop and present options for military force once the senior national security staff had proposed a particular political objective. This was also true for the employment of cruise missiles. Anthony Lake remarked:

> The use of cruise missiles is almost always the recommendation of the military . . . . I always urged the President – and he agreed – to leave the tactics to the military since they are the professionals.[46]

Yet there may have been other historical factors at work in this situation that were factors of personal history. One of the criticisms that Bill Clinton faced as a candidate for the presidency was that he was untested and unprepared to exercise leadership in foreign and military affairs. Opponents argued this because he had spent his entire political career in state politics in Arkansas and because he had studiously avoided – some say "dodged" – military service during the Vietnam War. In addition, as noted above, he had been in office for nearly 6 months without demonstrating his capacity to serve effectively as commander-in-chief in the midst of a hot military action. One of Clinton's senior aides suggested that one of the motivations for the president's decision to respond with force was his need or desire to prove his mettle under fire, and this scenario provided him with an opportunity to do.[47]

TLAM proved to be an ideal weapon for the concerns and constraints of this situation. It provided the technology necessary to meet the Clinton administration's desire to apply force with proportionality and discrimination as required by the law of armed conflict. It provided mission planners with the flexibility necessary to contend with the tactical difficulty of air defenses and geographic distance from the United States, just as in the Tomahawk raid of January 1993. And it allowed the president to conduct an act of reprisal to send a signal to Iraq and to prove his willingness to use force with very little political risk – indeed, to his political benefit.

Conclusion

The 1993 assassination plot against former US President George Bush was an episode so bizarre that even US government officials were initially incredulous about it. Nevertheless, it provided the Clinton administration with one of its

first opportunities to grapple with an emerging foreign policy issue from its beginning to its conclusion. In addition, the manner in which it was handled was a particularly useful glimpse into the operations and values of the Clinton national security team under almost ideal circumstances. Because of its ability to deploy to remote places and to apply force remotely and accurately, the Tomahawk cruise missile proved to be an integral part of the resolution of this issue.

7

OPERATION DELIBERATE FORCE – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1995

> Never get involved in a five-sided argument that's been going on for two thousand years.
>
> James Webb in *The Nightingale's Song*, 1995

Introduction

The civil war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 was an international crisis that both attracted the world's attention because of its ferocity and engendered much indecision about its resolution. Following the end of the Cold War, and at the beginning of what US President George Bush had called a "New World Order," the crisis in Bosnia seemed to be a return to the past. The war brought the worst fighting and the greatest humanitarian disasters Europe had seen on the continent since the end of World War II. Despite such obvious suffering, the availability of the military means to address it, and the absence of Cold War rivalries which had hampered humanitarian interventions for half a century, the Western allies were at a loss for a way to resolve the problem at political and military costs that they were willing to accept. When they finally did muster the will to use their abundant military resources to intervene, cruise missiles were important parts of the solution. This case study will explain the factors leading to the decision to use force in Bosnia to achieve some political objectives in the crisis, and it will explain the role that cruise missiles played in that effort. Although cruise missiles were only used once in a 14-day NATO air offensive, the political events that led to their use were many, many years in the making. An examination of this particular use of cruise missiles in a strategy of coercion must therefore begin with an in-depth look at the forces and events that led to the NATO–Bosnian Serb confrontation of September 1995.

Strategic context

Prelude to war in Bosnia-Herzegovina

By the early 1990s the fragile balance that had held together the ethnically diverse republics of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia in a political union since 1945 had begun to unravel. The poli-

tics of ethnicity would become most violent in Bosnia. Because of the ethnic diversity of its populace, Bosnia was the republic that had the most to lose from the disintegration of Yugoslavia. None of the three ethnic groups in that republic – Serbs, Muslims, or Croats – had an absolute majority in the population. Thus, each group had a particular preference and interest in the future of Bosnia with respect to its relationship with the other republics of the former Yugoslavia.

The Bosnian Serbs were opposed to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. As Serbia was the largest republic of the state, Serbians could feel assured that a country in which Serbia was the dominant partner would protect their interests. If Yugoslavia were to disintegrate, the Bosnian Serbs preferred to establish their own state rather than be a minority group in an independent Bosnia. This desire was rooted in a virulent form of nationalism that led to the belief that the Serbs would certainly be subjected to repression in a country in which they were not the majority.[1]

The Bosnian Muslims wanted an outcome exactly opposite that of the Bosnian Serbs. The Muslims preferred to remain in a unified Yugoslavia, so long as both Slovenia and Croatia remained in the federation as well. If both those republics gained independence, reasoned the Muslim leadership, then the Muslims would become minorities without allies or patrons in a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia. Given the increasingly strident nationalism preached by Serbian leaders in Serbia and in Bosnia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Muslim leadership felt that such a situation would be intolerable, if not outright dangerous. Thus, they preferred to live in an independent, sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina rather than be part of a "rump" Yugoslavia in which Serbia was the dominant partner.[2]

The position of the Croats in Bosnia was divided between those who favored a unified and multiethnic Bosnian state and those who favored an autonomous Bosnian Croat entity linked to Croatia. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1992, the advocates for a whole Bosnia were dominant within the Croat community.[3]

The failure of negotiations: June 1991–April 1992

The positions of the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Muslims, and the Croats were fundamentally incompatible. The independence declarations of Slovenia and Croatia, and their subsequent recognition by the European Community, forced Bosnians of all ethnic groups to address the future of their republic and the positions of their respective communities within it.

Although negotiations among Bosnia's political leaders had continued through the summer of 1991, by that fall, they had broken down. On 14 October, after the Serbian delegates had walked out of parliament, Croat and Muslim delegates passed a resolution demanding sovereignty for Bosnia. As Donia and Fine noted, "The sovereignty vote signaled an end to parliamentary

efforts to reach a three-way agreement, although negotiations among the leaders of the three parties continued."[4]

Concerned with the rapid deterioration of Yugoslavia, the EC established a commission to study the issue, make recommendations, and coordinate the policies of EC members with regard to the Balkans. Headed by Robert Badinter of France and consisting of presidents of constitutional courts from five Western European countries, the Badinter Commission (as it became known) noted that Yugoslavia was indeed disintegrating. Furthermore, it recommended that the EC establish a deadline for emerging republics to apply for recognition as sovereign countries: 23 December 1991 was to be the day by which new states would have to apply. Those applicants meeting certain criteria – such as effective control of a territory, commitment to democracy, and respect for the rights of minorities within territorial boundaries – would be officially recognized by the EC on 25 January 1992. By 23 December, the EC had received applications from Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Commission recommended without reservation granting recognition to Slovenia and, although they had some concerns about the minority rights of Krajina Serbs in Croatia, they felt that Croatia should be recognized as well.[5] They expressed profound misgivings, however, about recognizing Bosnia as an independent sovereign state. Noting the protests by leaders of the Bosnian Serbs that independence would make them ethnic minorities in a new state, the Badinter Commission suggested that the EC withhold recognition of Bosnia pending a national referendum to ascertain the will of the population, and in particular the will of the Serbs, with regard to sovereignty. The Bosnian government announced that a referendum on independence would be held on 29 February–1 March 1992.

The Serb leadership, however, argued that they were bound to be outvoted in any referendum by the Muslims and the Croats who, comprising at least sixty percent of the population, were in support of independence. Determined not to be subjected to an "Ustashe–fundamentalist" coalition and offended by the 14 October declaration of sovereignty by the Bosnian government, the Bosnian Serbs decided to establish their own republic on 21 December 1991, 2 days before the deadline for EC recognition.

Despite the actions of the Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian President Izetbegovic continued to press for international recognition of Bosnia's sovereignty. After two EC-sponsored conferences in early 1992 failed to develop a consensus among the parties for a cantonal governing arrangement for Bosnia, the referendum on independence proceeded as scheduled. Karadzic and the SDS encouraged the Serbs to boycott the referendum, and virtually no Serb voted. Thus, only about 64 percent of the electorate voted. When presented with a resolution that asked, "Are you in favor of a sovereign and independent Bosnia-Hercegovina, a state of equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs,

Croats and others who live in it," over 99 percent of those who voted said "yes."[6] Recognition by the EC followed shortly thereafter on 6 April 1992, and by the United States on the next day.

Almost immediately, Bosnia was plunged into civil war. All avenues for a political solution to avert the crisis were abandoned.

Conduct of the war: April 1992–May 1995[7]

By early April, Bosnia was engulfed in civil war. Donia and Fine succinctly explained the war aims of each of the parties to the conflict:

> Serbian forces set out to capture as much of Bosnia as they could. Their efforts were initially directed against three areas: the region of eastern Bosnia (inhabited before 1992 by a mixed Serbian and Bosnian Muslim population) that borders Serbia, a large territory of northwestern Bosnia with a substantial Serbian population, and a corridor across northern Bosnia that connects the two. The corridor was essential to Serbian plans as a land bridge to the Serbs of western Bosnia and to the Serb-inhabited regions of Croatia.
>
> The Croats' war aims likewise consisted of acquiring the maximum amount of territory. Their principal target was the region of Herzegovina west of the Neretva River and adjacent to Croatia. Consolidation of Croatian gains in this area would provide, in addition to an expansion of Croatian territory, military benefits in the event of renewed hostilities with the Serbs in Croatia . . . .
>
> The forces of the Bosnian government hoped, at the very minimum, to maintain control of the principal cities and the roads connecting them. The cities, with their multiethnic composition and long tradition of tolerance among ethnic groups, constituted the primary political base for preserving Bosnia as a multiethnic society . . . .[8]

Although wars generally involve protracted violence, the war in Bosnia was particularly brutal. All parties to the conflict, but particularly the Bosnian Serbs, deliberately targeted civilian populations to achieve their war aims. The Bosnian Serbs also forcibly removed non-Serb civilians from their homes in territory that the Republika Srbska wanted to consolidate in their own nation. This practice, dubbed "ethnic cleansing," created a massive humanitarian crisis throughout Bosnia, as hundreds of thousands of people became internally displaced persons. In addition, there were widespread allegations of Muslim civilians being executed *en masse* by Serb forces and of Muslim women being systematically sexually assaulted by Bosnian Serb soldiers.[9]

The strategic importance of the Balkans, and later the reporting of systematic human rights abuses, prompted international interest in resolving the

Bosnia crisis almost from the very beginning. Yet despite vigorous diplomatic activity to find a negotiated settlement, by the summer of 1995, all such comprehensive (and many smaller) efforts had failed.[10]

As unfruitful as such efforts at negotiation were, it was impossible for the international community to abandon Bosnia. Television images of Muslims held in Bosnian Serb concentration camps, eyewitness accounts of civilians suffering under artillery barrages in cities such as Sarajevo and Banja Luka, press reports of rapes, and other blatant human rights abuses shocked the collective Western conscience.

The UN became committed to Bosnia on 21 February 1992 when the Security Council established a peacekeeping mission to the country called the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The original mandate of UNPROFOR was "to create the conditions of peace and security required for the negotiation of an overall settlement to the Yugoslav crisis."[11] As the humanitarian conditions in Bosnia worsened, the mandate of UNPROFOR was expanded to providing security for humanitarian relief efforts and supervising the collection and storage of Bosnian Serb heavy weapons.[12] Yet the deployment of peacekeepers into Bosnia was controversial at the time, and later became problematic, because there was no peace to keep. This was of particular importance in regard to the UN decision to establish "safe areas."

In early April 1993, the Bosnian town of Srebrenica was under imminent danger of being overtaken by attacking Bosnian Serb forces. Its capture would likely have caused an immense humanitarian disaster. Recognizing this, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 819 on 16 April declaring Srebrenica a "safe area." The concept was that a safe area would be a haven where civilians would be untouched by military forces. The Serbs abandoned their attack for the moment, apparently out of respect for the resolution. Yet the term safe area was never explicitly defined, nor did the UN state unequivocally that it would vigorously defend the havens from assault or that they would definitely favor reprisals against any forces that violated their integrity. Nevertheless, in the face of the apparent success of Resolution 819, the Security Council passed Resolution 824 on 6 May 1993 extending safe area status to five other Bosnian cities: Sarajevo, Bihac, Gorazde, Tuzla, and Zepa. On 3 June 1993, the Security Council passed Resolution 836 significantly expanding the mandate of UNPROFOR with regard to the safe areas, stating:

> The Security Council . . . decides to extend to that and [sic] the mandate of UNPROFOR in order to enable it, in the safe areas referred to in resolution 824 (1993), to deter attacks against the safe areas, to monitor the cease-fire, to promote the withdrawal of military or paramilitary units other than those of the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to occupy some key points on the ground, in addition to participating in the delivery of humanitarian relief to the population as provided for in [R]esolution 772 (1992).[13]

The increased involvement of the UN on the ground developed concurrently with the changing role of NATO in Bosnia. Although the Balkans were technically outside the geographic mandate of NATO, there were clear security concerns for the alliance resulting from instability in that area. Furthermore, NATO was a robust military organization in search of a mission after the Cold War. The combination of the clear threat to international peace and security on the European continent that the war in Bosnia represented, the perceived need to threaten or use force to apply UN Security Council resolutions in Bosnia, and the need for NATO to redefine itself after the end of the Cold War led naturally to the appearance of a collective security role for NATO in the Balkans.

Thus, as the UN and NATO became partners in trying to establish peace in Bosnia, the credibility of both organizations was continually threatened by the repeated indifference of the Bosnian Serbs to UN pronouncements and NATO ultimata. The transgressions that were deemed most serious were Bosnian Serb attacks on UN-designated safe areas.

Although the Bosnian Serbs initially respected UN and NATO pronouncements regarding the safe areas, they gradually became emboldened in their defiance. On 5 February 1994, a mortar shell fell into a busy market square in Sarajevo, killing sixty-eight civilians and wounding 197. Although there was some controversy regarding which party to the conflict caused the explosion, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) immediately issued an ultimatum requiring the Serbs to pull back all heavy weaponry outside a 20-km "exclusion zone" around the city, or face major NATO air strikes. Eventually, the Serbs complied with the order. Within a year, however, the system protecting the safe areas was in trouble and nearing collapse.

Catalyst: 23 May–28 August 1995

Events in Bosnia proceeded quickly between late May and late August 1995. On 23 May, despite the issuance of a UN ultimatum, Bosnian Serb forces seized heavy weapons impounded in UN-guarded facilities near Sarajevo. Two days later, on 25 May, NATO punished the Bosnian Serbs for their actions by launching air strikes against one of their ammunition depots near Pale, which was the first time allied forces had struck so close to the Bosnian Serb capital. In response, the Bosnian Serbs launched artillery barrages against five of the six UN-designated safe areas: Tuzla, Srebrenica, Gorazde, Bihac, and Sarajevo. In Tuzla, one artillery shell smashed into a cafe-lined street, killing seventy-one people. It was the largest single incident of civilians killed in conventional fighting during the war to that point. In addition, the Serbs began taking UN peacekeepers hostage and using them as human shields, threatening to kill them if NATO bombed again. By 1 June, the Bosnian Serbs held some 350 peacekeepers captive.[14]

Concerned about the inability of lightly armed UN ground forces to protect

themselves and designated safe areas, defense ministers from fifteen Western nations met in Paris on 3–4 June and agreed to form a rapid deployment force of 10,000 heavily armed troops designed to bolster "the UN mission in Bosnia and [to protect] it from attack." Although the Bosnian Serbs began releasing hostages on 7 June, tensions between them and the Western allies remained high.[15] In response to this aggression, NATO foreign and defense ministers met in London on 21 June and declared that they would attack the Serbs with broad air strikes if they moved on Gorazde, which appeared to be the next target.

Yet the situation did not improve. One month later, on 11 June 1995, the UN safe haven of Srebrenica fell to a Bosnian Serb assault.[16] Shortly thereafter, a battle ensued in which the Bosnian Serbs assaulted a second safe haven, Zepa, which they captured 2 weeks later on 25 July. Frustrated with such recalcitrance and recognizing the need for a more robust military response, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made the crucial decision on 26 July to renounce the UN veto over NATO, thus eliminating the dual-key approach to strategic decisionmaking in Bosnia. NATO now had a free hand to enforce its ultimata at will.[17]

This step did not discourage Bosnian Serb assaults, however. From 25 to 31 July, the region around the safe haven of Bihac came under a three-pronged assault from Bosnian Serbs, Croatian Serbs, and rebel Muslims. Sensing that the entire safe haven regime was on the verge of collapse, NATO issued another ultimatum on 1 August stating that it would launch a broad air campaign if any of the remaining safe havens (Sarajevo, Gorazde, Tuzla, and the city of Bihac) were attacked.[18]

Throughout the summer of 1995, as Bosnian Serb aggression escalated, NATO had been laying the political groundwork for offensive action against the Bosnian Serbs. This change in strategy from a peacekeeping to a peace enforcement role for NATO was due to both the increasingly brazen behavior of Bosnian Serb forces and a change in outlook within the alliance, led by the US government, which suggested that only a robust use of force would encourage the Serbs to comply with Security Council resolutions and NATO ultimata. The results of this shift were the pronouncement of the London Conference on 21 June and the NAC decisions on 25 July and 1 August, which promised a disproportionate aerial assault if the Bosnian Serbs violated the sanctity of any of the remaining safe havens. By these actions, NATO clearly articulated its political will to use force offensively if the Bosnian Serbs presented them with another provocation.

Less than a month had passed before the Bosnian Serbs had yet again defied NATO. On 28 August, a mortar shell fired from Bosnian Serb positions struck the Markala marketplace in Sarajevo, killing thirty-seven and injuring eighty. It had landed less than 100 yards from where a similar shell had fallen in February 1994, killing scores of innocent and unarmed people.

By the summer of 1995, both the UN and NATO had been made to look

impotent by the Bosnian Serbs, who had committed widespread human rights abuses, reneged on several international mediation efforts, violated the sanctity of the UN safe areas, and taken several hundred UN peacekeepers hostage. The need to end human suffering, to find a negotiated settlement and, perhaps most importantly, to preserve the credibility of the UN and of NATO would soon elicit the strongest international action of the war. The 1995 attack on the Markala marketplace was the catalyst for an unprecedented NATO action. On 30 August, in response to the violation of its 1 August ultimatum, NATO attacked Bosnian Serb positions in Operation Deliberate Force, the largest air campaign it had ever launched until that point.

Decision

Although the actual decision to initiate Deliberate Force was made immediately after the marketplace bombing of 28 August, preparations for such a contingency had been ongoing since the beginning of the summer of 1995. In fact, NATO has stated that:

> [d]etailed planning and refinement [of an offensive air operations plan for Bosnia] continued as events escalated through the spring and summer of 1995 following the expiration of [a cease-fire in Bosnia negotiated by former US President Jimmy Carter which lasted from December 1994 to March 1995].[19]

Once the decisions of the London Conference on 21 June and of the NAC on 25 July and 1 August had been made, there was a clear understanding throughout NATO of what sort of event would trigger an offensive air strike by the alliance. Such an event could be:

> Any concentration of forces and/or heavy weapons, and the conduct of other military preparations which, in the common judgment of NATO and the U.N. military commanders, presents a direct threat to the safe areas, [or]
>
> Direct attacks (e.g. ground, shelling, or aircraft) on the safe areas.[20]

Using this guidance, NATO military planners integrated and modified several existing contingency plans and devised Operation Deliberate Force. It was first briefed in detail to NATO Secretary-General Willie Claes and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) General George Joulwan on 3 August by NATO Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH) Admiral Leighton Smith and NATO Commander, Allied Air Forces, Southern Europe (COMAIRSOUTH) Lieutenant-General Mike Ryan. A week later on 10 August, Admiral Smith and UNPROFOR Commander, Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier signed a memorandum of

understanding (MOU) that delineated the joint UN–NATO arrangements for implementing decisions of the Security Council and the NAC regarding the safe areas in Bosnia. By this point, responsibility for making the actual decision to launch an offensive air strike against the Bosnian Serbs for failing to comply with UN and NATO pronouncements on the safe areas had been delegated from the political authorities of both organizations to their military commanders in the field.[21]

Following the marketplace bombing on 28 August, both the UN and NATO had the trigger which they had anticipated formally by the MOU on 10 August. Speaking at a press conference the day after NATO began Operation Deliberate Force, Admiral Smith remarked:

> Let me start by telling you that following the mortar attack on the 28th of August, there was extensive coordination first between this headquarters (AFSOUTH) and [Commander of UN Forces in Bosnia Lieutenant General Rupert] Smith's headquarters in Sarajevo and later between this headquarters and General Janvier's headquarters in Zagreb. In the early morning of the 29th General Smith and I agreed that the circumstances surrounding the mortar attack in Sarajevo warranted air operations along the lines of the North Atlantic Council decision as supported by the United Nations.
>
> After that decision was made, Lieutenant General Ryan, the Commander of Allied Air Forces Southern Europe and General Rupert Smith had their staffs coordinate and refine a set of militarily significant targets which General Janvier and I had previously approved as a set of targets which we would consider for this particular circumstance. There was [sic] some modifications to that list. Late on the evening of the 29th, General Janvier conferred [sic] extensively and we agreed to the final list. After that point I issued the order to General Ryan to carry out the operation.[22]

Action

The objectives of Operation Deliberate Force were stated explicitly by NATO Secretary-General Claes in a press statement on 30 August:

> Our objective is to reduce the threat to the Sarajevo Safe Area and to deter further attacks there or on any other Safe Area. We hope that this operation will also demonstrate to the Bosnian Serbs the futility of further military actions and convince all parties of the determination of the Alliance to implement its decisions.[23]

To achieve that end, Operation Deliberate Force began on 30 August 1995 at 2 am (Central European Time, CET) when the first group of attack aircraft,

called a "strike package," cleared the coast over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first bomb hit its target at 2.12 am.[24] Over sixty NATO aircraft flying from bases in Italy and from the American aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* in the Adriatic Sea attacked over ninety targets in southeastern Bosnia and around Sarajevo.

In addition to devising a plan that they hoped would coerce the Serbs to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions and NATO ultimata, NATO air planners were also very much concerned with limiting collateral damage that might be caused by the air strikes. Admiral Smith noted this in his first press conference following the start of the bombing:

> I'd like to make a point here that a major consideration in developing the target list was to ensure that we minimized collateral damage and that we struck only military targets.[25]

Michael Beale also documented the concerns over collateral damage in the planning of Deliberate Force:

> Deliberate Force was a denial campaign designed to reduce the offensive military capabilities of the BSA [Bosnian Serb Army]. Targets included heavy weapons of the fielded forces, command and control facilities, direct and essential military support facilities, and the supporting infrastructure and lines of communication for the BSA. *In order to avoid excessive casualties, the actual fielded forces would only be targeted if they were massing for attack* [emphasis added] . . . .
>
> Another dilemma facing planners was using aircraft without a precision capability. Many NATO aircraft had no precision capability and consequently could not be employed as accurately. Since Deliberate Force was a coalition effort, it was imperative that NATO show a combined front to the UN as well as the warring parties within Bosnia. Targets located close to concentrated populations were hit by precision weapons and the nonprecision weapons were used where the risk of collateral damage was lower . . . .
>
> Actual operations required making tough targeting and weaponeering decisions. NATO and the UN wanted to use airpower to coerce the Serbians into cooperating but collateral damage and causalities needed to be minimized. General Ryan personally approved every DMPI [Desired Mean Point of Impact, or the point on the target that a weapon is intended to hit].[26]

NATO offensive air operations designed to coerce the Bosnian Serbs while simultaneously minimizing collateral damage continued virtually unabated from 30 August until 2 September when NATO announced a temporary bombing halt while diplomats worked to achieve a negotiated end to the crisis.

The request for the pause first came from US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, who had been shuttling among the Balkan capitals since the start of the bombing to find a consensus for a diplomatic settlement. General Janvier endorsed his request.[27] Originally scheduled to last 24 hours, the pause was extended by the UN and NATO to last not more than an additional 72 hours to 11 pm CET 4 September, at which time the air strikes would continue if the Bosnian Serbs had not complied with NATO ultimata.[28] The Bosnian Serbs, however, did not comply. Concerned about losing his tactical advantage on the ground if he removed heavy weapons from Sarajevo as NATO and the UN demanded, Commander of the BSA General Ratko Mladic stated that he would comply with the demand only if the UN ensured that the Bosnian Muslims would not take advantage of a Serbian withdrawal.[29]

NATO, however, demanded unconditional Serb compliance with their ultimatum. When it was clear that their cooperation was not forthcoming, NATO resumed air strikes at 1 pm CET on 5 September. The day after Deliberate Force recommenced, Admiral Smith held another press conference to explain his decision to resume strikes:

> As you know, NATO air assets recommenced strike operations against Bosnian Serb military significant [sic] targets in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reason for the recommencement is that NATO and the United Nations have collectively agreed on certain conditions which must be met. Those conditions [one], were not met, and [two], certainly there was no indication that there was intent on the Bosnian Serbs' part to meet them.
>
> Let me tell you that Gen. Janvier and I consulted very closely throughout the afternoon and night of the 4th [of September]; our assessment early in the evening of the fourth suggested that there was almost no indications of movement of heavy weapons moving, but unfortunately, the restrictions of movement on the part of Gen. Smith's forces, as well as inclement weather, prevented us from making a thorough assessment. Therefore, rather than miscalculate and recommence operations based on limited information, Gen. Janvier and I conferred and agreed that we should extend the period of assessment throughout the night and into the next day. On the morning of the 5th [of September], we talked very early after daylight, we compared that information that had been put together by Gen. Smith's forces in Sarajevo, as well as that which had been gathered by NATO air assets after the weather cleared. I can assure you that the movement of heavy weapons was very insignificant, and by no means did it indicate any willingness to comply with Gen. Janvier's previous letter, and a letter from Gen. Smith to Mladic outlining the methodology by which he should withdraw those weapons. We therefore collectively decided at around 9:45 [am] local yesterday [5 September] that we should ask Gen. Ryan to recommence NATO airstrike operations, which as you now know started shortly after 1 o'clock [pm].

> I must stress the fact that throughout this entire assessment process, Gen. Javier and I conferred closely and we were never in disagreement on anything, to include what we were seeing, to include the extension of the assessment period, and to include the commencement of strike operations. I think that it is a very good working relationship that I clearly enjoy at this point, in the sense that we communicate frequently, and again, we concur. Now there are three conditions and you know that they are:
>
> - No attacks on safe areas.
> - Begin immediately a withdrawal of all heavy weapons from the 20 km exclusion zone and complete that withdrawal without any halts or delays.
> - Complete freedom of movement for the UN forces and recognized humanitarian aid distribution assets, as well as free access to Sarajevo airport.
>
> Those objectives remain, they are not negotiable, and we have seen no evidence that the Bosnian Serbs are willing to comply.
>
> Let me just finish by telling you that it would be a very grave mistake indeed to doubt the resolve of NATO and the United Nations in proceeding until we achieve those objectives . . . . We will continue these strike operations for the foreseeable future.[30]

When Deliberate Force continued on 5 September, many more targets were struck that were similar in function and significance to those that were attacked from 30 August through 2 September. Furthermore, they were hit with assets such as these in the early days of the operations, such as precision and non-precision weapons dropped from strike aircraft.

That pattern changed, however, on 10 September. At 8.40 pm local time, thirteen Block III Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missiles (TLAMs) were launched from the *USS Normandy*, a *Ticonderoga*-class AEGIS missile cruiser on station in the Adriatic Sea. The missiles attacked Bosnian Serb air defense sites around Banja Luka in northwestern Bosnia. Use of the weapon had been actively considered by US forces at least since the week previous to their launch. As *The Washington Post* reported at the time:

> Adm. Leighton Smith, the commander of NATO forces in southern Europe, had requested the missile strike last week, and President Clinton approved the move in a meeting Thursday [7 September] with national security aides, according to administration officials. During that meeting, Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, endorsed the need for cruise missiles, and there was little dispute about it, officials said.[31]

Although Bosnian Serb officials condemned the use of Tomahawks as

an unwarranted escalation in NATO's bombing campaign, NATO officials repeatedly stated that Tomahawk was used purely for its tactical value as a standoff precision weapon. A NATO spokesman stated:

> With respect to the Tomahawk launch as with our other operations, we still have no indications that we have caused any significant collateral damage. And collateral and minimizing collateral damage continues to be a very key part of targeting as you know. And indeed the Tomahawk missile is a particularly accurate system. And is used not least because of that aspect of its operational capability . . . .
>
> We don't consider the Tomahawk represents an escalation. We have a range of weapons, a range of systems, and a range of capabilities. And the Tomahawk we consider as one element in that armory. We don't consider its use as an escalation and if suitable again, we may well use it again just as may use [sic] other elements of our armory . . . .
>
> I think you could make a connection in that one of the elements certainly in considering the use of the Tomahawk is that it removes the risk of pilots in particular high risk areas. We can send a Tomahawk missile where we perhaps might not wish to send a pilot or where sending a pilot would expose him to very high risk. So certainly that's one element. Equally, of course, it's fairly impervious to weather. And you know we have been impacted by weather, so that's another element. But there are many elements.[32]

Operation Deliberate Force continued after 11 September, but Tomahawk cruise missiles were not used again as part of the air campaign. Offensive air operations were suspended at 10 pm CET on 14 September 1995 at the request of General Janvier following agreement by the Bosnian Serbs to a UN-sponsored "Framework Agreement" in which all the warring parties pledged to:

- cease all offensive operations within the Sarajevo Total Exclusion Zone [TEZ];
- remove heavy weapons from the TEZ within 144 hours;
- [grant] unimpeded road access to Sarajevo; and
- BIH [Bosnia and Herzegovina] and BSA commanders agreed to meet to formalize a cessation of hostilities agreement.[33]

The initial suspension of hostilities was scheduled to last for 72 hours until 17 September. It would be extended another 72 hours to 20 September if the UN and NATO were satisfied that the initial conditions in the Framework Agreement were being met by all sides. On 20 September, satisfied that the Bosnian Serbs had complied with the terms of the Agreement, Admiral Smith and General Janvier issued a joint statement suspending air strikes indefinitely. NATO's first major offensive action had been successfully completed.[34]

Analysis

Operation Deliberate Force was a textbook example of both coalition air warfare and coercive diplomacy. As coalition warfare, it was notable because it was the first time since the Persian Gulf War that several national air forces had conducted joint and sustained offensive military operations against a common adversary as directed by a clear political consensus agreed upon by their governments. As coercive diplomacy, it was exemplary because it achieved the desired political objective – forcing the Bosnian Serbs to comply with UN and NATO ultimata regarding Sarajevo – by identifying targets of sufficient value to the adversary such that their destruction convinced him to concede the political object in question rather than endure further losses.

The means applied to conduct this campaign of coercive diplomacy were mostly precision-guided bombs dropped by conventional attack aircraft, although there were some unguided weapons used as well. Over the course of 11 days from 29 August through 14 September, NATO flew 3,515 sorties, of which 2,470 were "penetrating" sorties that actually delivered munitions against the 338 individual targets attacked in the campaign. One thousand twenty-six bombs were dropped in that time period. Of that number, 708, or almost 76 percent, were precision-guided bombs. The rest were non-precision munitions.[35]

At just thirteen missiles, the number of Tomahawks used in Deliberate Force was a miniscule percentage of the total weapons delivered. In addition to being less than significant numerically, the destruction caused by the Tomahawks was not significant to the overall strategic development of the campaign. There is no evidence that the Bosnian Serbs capitulated either solely or primarily because of the loss of the air defense facilities around Banja Luka that were attacked by Tomahawk cruise missiles. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that they agreed to NATO's terms because the sustained air campaigns broke their aura of military invincibility, convinced them of the resolve of the Western alliance, and contributed to changing the strategic situation on the ground against them in such a way that might adversely affect their bargaining position at any forthcoming peace negotiations. Thus, it was the overall destruction of Deliberate Force, and not the effect of any particular weapon or the loss of a specific target, that successfully coerced the Bosnian Serbs to make the desired concessions.

That is not to say, however, that Tomahawk did not play a significant strategic, in addition to a tactical, role in Deliberate Force. The strategic effect of Tomahawk was not due to the destruction caused by its use, but to the fact that it was used at all. It has already been noted above that the Bosnian Serbs regarded the employment of Tomahawk as an unwarranted escalation of violence in NATO's bombing campaign. Yet Robert Owen has documented that the use of TLAM had a far more profound psychological effect than may have been evident from the mere public protestations of the Bosnian Serbs:

> As it turned out, these weapons were more than just another weapon in the context of Bosnia. TLAMs represented the high end of PGM technology. Their sudden use in Bosnia signaled to many people that NATO was initiating a significant escalation of the conflict. That was not the intent of the military commanders, but the action was taken that way . . . . At the same time, Admiral Smith reported that he subsequently learned from an American diplomat in contact with the Bosnian Serbs that the TLAMs "scared the [slang word for feces] out of the Serbs." It was, according to the admiral, more evidence to the Serbs that NATO's intent was serious and that they "did not have a clue where [they] could go next" [substitutions in the original].[36]

What is perhaps most striking about this effect of the use of Tomahawks is that it was completely unintended by its planners. TLAM was employed solely because its unique characteristics of standoff precision made it ideal to eliminate concentrated air defenses in an area where NATO pilots might have had to attack targets if offensive operations continued for several more weeks. While all coercive diplomacy has a psychological element in that the attacker must understand his enemy well enough to determine what is of great value to him, the psychological effect of Tomahawk in this context contributed directly to the coercive success of Deliberate Force, not because of what the missile did, but merely because it was used.

Conclusion

Although Operation Deliberate Force only lasted for less than two weeks, it was an extraordinarily complex operation both politically and militarily. The causes that led to it were rooted in the medieval history of the Balkans, but it was prosecuted with the most state-of-the-art weaponry available at the end of the twentieth century. While there were at least three political entities that were embroiled in fighting on the ground in Bosnia, the coalition that supported Deliberate Force both in the UN and in NATO consisted of dozens of nations. Ultimately, it will be remembered as the largest offensive action at that time of the world's oldest and most effective military alliance. When students of strategy and diplomacy study Deliberate Force in the future, they will also note a prime example of the psychological contribution that the Tomahawk can make to the practice of coercive diplomacy.

8

OPERATION DESERT STRIKE – SEPTEMBER 1996

> Some things we screwed up, but we got this one right.
> Dr Anthony Lake, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, speaking about Operation Desert Strike, 1996, 29 April 1998

Introduction

On 31 August 1996, Saddam Hussein ordered 40,000 armored troops to attack the Kurdish city of Irbil in northern Iraq. Within less than 4 days, Saddam withdrew his troops, and US President Bill Clinton ordered a cruise missile strike to retaliate against Iraqi aggression.

Brief though this incident may have been, it graphically illustrated many of the difficulties in the use of force as a diplomatic tool in the post-Cold War era. It was an extraordinarily complex situation. The events that precipitated the crisis are rooted in the political history of the region. Analysis of the American decision to use force should therefore begin with an understanding of the strategic context in which the crisis evolved. Such an examination must consider the peculiar history of the Kurdish people, their relationship with governments in the region, their particular relationship with Saddam Hussein, and the political situation in Kurdistan after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. With such an understanding in hand, it is possible to consider the particular events of the crisis, the threats they posed to American interests, and the options available to the President. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of the actions taken by the United States and with an analysis of why the President chose to use a Tomahawk cruise missile strike to respond to the situation.

Strategic context

Regional politics and the Kurdish question

The combined pressures of interfactional politics among the Kurds, interstate rivalries among the states in the region, and selective interference by powers outside the region both complicated and perpetuated the "Kurdish question" in the 1990s. This resulted in four interlocking political dynamics.

First, no state in the region had a *bona fide* interest in the existence of an

autonomous Kurdistan. Such an entity would almost certainly embolden Shi'a communities in the southern part of Iraq to agitate for their own autonomy or independence. This development would destroy the territorial integrity of Iraq. Additionally, it would threaten the political stability of Saudi Arabia, whose Sunni Muslim majority would be threatened with having such an active Shi'a community close to its borders. The creation of Kurdistan would also degrade the security of Turkey by encouraging a hostile Kurdish insurgency that has been in its eastern provinces since the late 1970s. Similarly, Iran has had to subdue a smaller Kurdish insurgency movement in its western province of Korestan. Therefore, it would not support an autonomous Kurdistan that could threaten its sovereignty.

Second, there is no external power that has had an abiding interest in the creation of an autonomous Kurdistan. Since its inception, for example, Israel has always had the United States as an unflagging champion of its security. Iran has continued to support Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon despite international condemnation of its activities. Yet no such consistent champion has emerged for the Kurds. Although the United States supported Kurdish autonomy under Wilson's Fourteen Points after World War I and encouraged the Kurds to rise against Saddam Hussein before and during the first Persian Gulf War, American support has been sporadic. The British fervently supported an autonomous Kurdistan as part of the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, but they also had to renege on their support to sign the Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey in 1923 that explicitly repudiated the potential for a Kurdish state. The British are no longer the major influence in the area that they held before the end of World War II. In short, powers external to the region have only supported Kurdish aspirations as long as they have been in their own interests or, at best, as long as they did not supersede more important interests in the region.

Third, various states both in the region and outside it have frequently found it expedient to offer a measure of autonomy to the Kurds, or to support one Kurdish faction against another, as a means of furthering their own interests *vis-à-vis* other states. Iran, for example, was a staunch supporter of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) during its war with Iraq from 1980 to 1988. It supported the Kurds as a method of destabilizing Baghdad. As a condition of the 1988 ceasefire, however, it stopped its support of the Kurds, thus allowing Iraq to launch its Anfal campaign. Similarly, the United States assured the Kurds in 1972 that it would guarantee Iranian support in the event of a Kurdish revolt against the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. When the Iranians signed an agreement with Iraq in 1975, in effect trading in their support of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) for amicable settlement of outstanding border disputes, the United States did nothing. The Kurds have only been able to rely on allies in the region as long as they have served the immediate interests of the patron state in question.

Fourth, the internal rivalries among Kurdish factions had prevented them from uniting in any meaningful way since the collapse of the Barzani revolt in

1975. Kurdish factionalism between the KDP and the PUK intensified in the 1990s. Following the first Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein crushed a rebellion by the Iraqi Kurds. Two million Kurdish refugees fled to the mountains in Iran and southern Turkey. To alleviate their suffering and provide an umbrella under which the Kurds might assert their autonomy within Iraq, the Gulf War allies established a safe haven north of the 36th parallel in March 1991.[1] They explicitly prohibited Iraqi aircraft from flying in this region.

The Kurds held free elections for an autonomous assembly in May 1992, and the results determined that power was to be shared between the KDP led by Masud Barzani and the PUK led by Jalal Talabani. By December 1994, this power-sharing arrangement had broken down into factional fighting. The tension between the groups exploded into fratricide largely because the KDP was not sharing with the PUK revenue from a lucrative – and illicit – oil trade. Denied additional money and failing to receive major funding from any other source (including the United States), the PUK turned to Iran for support.[2] Four thousand Kurds were killed through internecine warfare before the United States brokered a ceasefire between the groups in August 1995. Thus, not only had they not been able to assert their own independence, they had left themselves vulnerable to external powers to exploit these divisions for their own purposes.

Each of these factors played a significant role in the US decision to use force against Iraq in September 1996 in response to Iraqi aggression against the Kurds. When making that decision, American policymakers had to consider the broader strategic picture. No US ally in the region – Turkey, Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, Kuwait – would have supported any American action that would have led to a stronger Kurdish presence. Hence, Iraqi actions against the Kurds in August 1996 placed the United States in a very difficult strategic position.

Catalyst

By July 1996, the August 1995 ceasefire between the KDP and the PUK had broken down. The Iranians felt sufficiently emboldened by their partnership with the PUK to send troops into northern Iraq to suppress hostile opposition groups. In their wake, the leadership of the KDP accused the Iranians of leaving ammunition and arms when they withdrew on 29 July. Fighting resumed between the two factions on 17 August. To redress the perceived imbalance caused by the PUK's alliance with Iran, Barzani allegedly sent a letter to Saddam Hussein on 22 August. In that letter, he requested Iraqi military assistance to seize the town of Irbil, the seat of the Kurdish assembly, which was controlled by the PUK.[3] This request was made despite the fact that the KDP and the PUK agreed that week to renewed peace talks in London.[4] Knowledge of the letter, however, did not reach the Western allies until over a week later on 30 August.[5]

US intelligence sources first alerted the administration about Iraqi troop movements on 26 August. After days of steadily increasing military activity by Republican Guard units near Baghdad, the CIA issued a report expressing "reasonable confidence" that Iraq would launch an offensive against Irbil. By 28 August, the CIA upgraded its warning and said it was highly certain that Iraq would launch an attack. The urgency of the CIA assessment led the US and the UK to issue a joint demarche to the Iraqis via the Iraqi ambassador to the UN warning Iraq not to attack Irbil. The following day, US officials began consultations with the French, the Russians, and the Turks to encourage them to support the joint Anglo-American warning to Iraq. The French were non-committal, and the Russians did not endorse allied military action to respond to the situation. Not only did the Turks denounce a military response, but they would not allow US or British jets operating from Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey to be used in any offensive operation against Iraq related to Irbil.[6]

On 30 August, US Defense Department officials revealed to the press that Iraq had been massing military forces in Kurdistan during the previous week. Three Iraqi armored divisions comprising at least 30,000 men and hundreds of artillery pieces had moved just south of Irbil along the 36th parallel.[7] The US publicly warned Iraq that any use of force in the area would be viewed with "grave consequences" and took several military actions to demonstrate its resolve. Among these actions was an increase in flights over the southern no-fly zone by naval jets operating from the *USS Carl Vinson*, an aircraft carrier sailing in the Persian Gulf.[8] Despite these warnings, Iraqi armored and infantry units overran Irbil on 31 August.

United States officials were concerned about the Iraqi aggression for several reasons. First, there were clear humanitarian and legal considerations. Initial reports indicated that the fighting was not simply limited to military forces. Rather, Iraqi troops were executing hundreds of political opponents of the regime in Baghdad and arresting civilian members of Talabani's PUK *en masse.*[9] The no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel was established by the allies in 1991 precisely to prevent persecution of the Kurds by the Iraqis. While that ban never officially extended to ground vehicles, it was understood that Iraq would not be able to take aggressive action in the region. By oppressing ethnic minorities, Saddam broke the norms of international humanitarian conduct and violated the terms of UN Resolution 688. In the words of one State Department official, "Someone has to protect the Iraqi Kurds. In this case, the United States has taken upon itself to act in our own interest to do so."[10]

Second, there was a concern for the strategic balance in northern Iraq. The primary reason that the United States had been brokering a ceasefire among the Kurdish factions since 1995 was to provide a unified opposition to the regime in Baghdad and also to provide a strategic counterweight to Iranian influence in the area. As had been the case in the past, disunity among the Kurds made them vulnerable to manipulation by external powers such as Iran

and Iraq, both of which were enemies of the United States. The intervention by Baghdad on behalf of one of the Kurdish factions threatened not simply the stability of Iraqi Kurdistan, but it also undermined US efforts in the region to build a credible opposition able to apply pressure on Baghdad. Although the United States was hostile to the regime in Baghdad, it still had an interest in maintaining the stability of northern Iraq. Failure to do so might have led to dismemberment of the country, which would not have been in the interest of any state in the region or in the interest of the US. American officials were concerned about the potentially destabilizing influence of Iraqi military action in the area.[11]

Third, the strategic balance in the southern part of Iraq was threatened as well. There was a general consensus among senior American policymakers that, if Saddam were allowed to exercise military force with impunity in the north, then it would embolden him to use force in the south as well. Such an action would inevitably threaten the oilfields of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This was a scenario that American officials simply could not allow to materialize.[12]

Decision

Given the nature of the Iraqi actions and the interests of the United States in the stability of northern Iraq, it seems logical that the primary objective of the US would have been to push the Iraqis south of the 36th parallel. This does not appear to have been the case.

To be certain, the United States did not want Iraq to attack Irbil. After initial intelligence reports showed three divisions of Republican Guard troops on the outskirts of the city, American officials took strong diplomatic action to deter a potential Iraqi assault. The demarche issued to Iraq by the US and the UK on 28 August warned of grave consequences exacting a serious price in the event of any offensive action against Irbil. As a means of demonstrating the resolve of that threat, the US enhanced air patrols of the no-fly zones in the northern and southern parts of the country. In addition, they put various military forces based in the United States on a heightened state of alert in such a way that Iraqi intelligence would detect the change.[13] The objective of the United States between 26 August, when intelligence reports first confirmed the Iraqi buildup, and 31 August, when Iraq actually attacked Irbil, was to deter such an attack from taking place.

Once the Iraqis ignored the warnings of the allies and attacked the city, the situation changed dramatically. The initial objective – deterring attack – had not been achieved. Policymakers then had to devise new objectives by evaluating their interests in the region and determining the constraints on their actions.

The interest in maintaining the stability of northern Iraq had not changed, nor had the humanitarian interest in protecting the Kurds. On 31 August, a senior Clinton administration official publicly reiterated the protection of the

Kurdish population as a concern for the United States.[14] To be certain, the Iraqi attack on Irbil in support of the KDP threatened both those interests. Therefore, an obvious objective might have been repelling the Iraqi offensive.

Achieving that objective, however, was constrained by several factors. First, the fighting in Irbil was not a simple case of Iraqi aggression against an ethnic minority. It was precipitated by factional fighting among the Kurds. Masud Barzani's invitation to Iraq to intervene gave Saddam Hussein a vague veil of legitimacy for his actions. As Irbil is inside Iraqi territory, he could claim that his actions were a matter of internal security. Not only did the factional fighting complicate matters politically, it complicated them militarily as well. Any intervention on the ground would draw America into the Kurdish internecine warfare while preventing it from focusing purely on the ejection of the Iraqis.

The second set of constraints was operational. Repelling the Iraqi invasion would have required robust American military action. Senior American policymakers never seriously considered sending in ground forces to perform such a task.[15] The region is extremely mountainous. Placing ground forces there would have been very difficult. Furthermore, officials wanted to avoid the political and human cost of placing American soldiers in the midst of active ethnic conflict, as in Beirut 1983 and Somalia 1991. One administration spokesman remarked at the time:

> To dispel that force from that location would require the use of resources, a commitment of resources that is well beyond the geopolitical reality that exists here.
>
> As a practical matter, it would be very difficult to do. The United States would clearly have to do that entirely on its own, and that was not an option that was seriously considered.[16]

Furthermore, it was unlikely that the United States could affect the situation on the ground through the use of combat aircraft. Irbil is over 450 statute miles from the closest point of approach in the Persian Gulf, far out of the reach of carrier-based aircraft without refueling. Similarly, it is at least 360 miles from the closest point on the Saudi–Iraqi border, and many miles more to airbases in Saudi Arabia from which allied aircraft operate. Even if they did have the range, any aircraft originating in Saudi Arabia or the Persian Gulf would have to fly over very heavy anti-air defenses in the vicinity of Baghdad before moving on to their objective of Irbil.

That point, however, was moot. The nearest airbases from which allied aircraft might fly to Irbil were inside Turkey. Although official US government statements never confirmed it, press reports indicated that the Turks refused to allow their airfields to be used for any offensive operations against Iraq.[17] Yet, even if the Turks had permitted the use of their airbases, the military told

the civilian leadership that there was nothing that could be done through the use of airpower that would change the situation on the ground.[18]

Thus, American policymakers found themselves in a difficult position after the Iraqi attack on Irbil. They had clearly demonstrated that it was in America's interest to deter such an attack. Iraq's action would threaten the strategic balance in northern Iraq. It would threaten the human rights of Kurds in the area. It would be a blow to international law. And it might embolden the Iraqis to take offensive action against Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the south. Yet once the attack took place, there were no feasible options to address the aggression directly. Political constraints from the Kurdish infighting made American leadership wary of intervening militarily. Additionally, Turkish and Saudi condemnation of any potential attack prevented the use of aircraft based in these countries. America was also constrained operationally. No use of ground troops was authorized, and military experts were skeptical that airpower alone could repulse the Iraqi forces. Hence, it was clear that America could take no direct military action in northern Iraq to restore the *status quo ante* and promote stability in the area.

Nevertheless, there were important interests that remained. It was the judgment of many senior administration officials that Iraq could not be allowed to act with impunity. The most significant American interest that was threatened by Saddam's action was the protection of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. On 2 August 1990, Iraqi forces had invaded Kuwait and precipitated the Persian Gulf War. After cessation of hostilities on 2 March 1991, Iraq proved intransigent in complying with requirements to open its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program to United Nations inspectors. The inspection regime was intended to deny Iraq the capacity to threaten its neighbors with such weapons. Yet this pattern of defiance continued through 1993. On 7 October 1994, Iraq massed troops near Basra, about 20 miles north of the Kuwaiti border. It only altered the threatening military movements after the United States dispatched 36,000 troops to Kuwait to deter a potential invasion.[19] In short, there had been a series of highly visible threatening actions taken by Iraq against its neighbors. The consensus among senior administration officials was that failure to take strong action against Iraq to punish it for its aggression in the north would embolden it to be aggressive in the south, where America's most important interests lay.

Hence, America clearly had a direct interest in stopping the aggression against the Kurds. Not only was there a humanitarian concern for the atrocities committed against certain groups in Irbil, but there was a strategic concern about the threat to stability in the region posed by the invasion. Yet America was constrained by the absence of any feasible and desirable military options that could have *directly* reversed the Iraqi military action. Instead, policymakers had to consider the broader strategic interests of the United States and the long-term threat posed by the Iraqi invasion. In the words of one senior military officer:

> The Kurds were clearly a concern, but that part was already done. [The larger concern] was preventing more damage to the Kurds and making sure Saddam was not emboldened in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[20]

The primary objective, therefore, was taking steps to deter Saddam Hussein from initiating military action against his southern neighbors in the immediate or distant future.

Military planning for a strike began on 28 August, the same day that the United States issued a demarche to Iraq.[21] Although Iraq had not yet invaded Irbil, American policymakers were taking a two-pronged approach to the problem. First, they were undertaking extensive diplomatic initiatives to dissuade the Iraqis from launching an attack. Second, they were preparing a series of forceful options to punish Iraq in the event that it attacked and to protect America's broader strategic interests in the region.

On 29 August, the President's senior foreign policy advisors met in Washington. Among those present at this meeting were National Security Advisor Dr Anthony Lake, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Secretary of Defense Dr William Perry. It was at this meeting that options were developed to send signals to the Iraqis, including placing US forces on higher alert and increasing patrols in the northern no-fly zone. Furthermore, the President approved various diplomatic initiatives, including high-level communications with the French, the Russians, and the Turks to encourage them to influence the Iraqis to withdraw their forces.[22] The results of these meetings over the next two days, however, were mixed.

> As one official put it yesterday, "The French were indifferent, and the Turks did not want to see any military action. They said publicly, before we [American officials] even asked, that we could not use Incirlik . . . in any action against the Iraqis related to the attack on Irbil."[23]

By 30 August, the situation on the ground had not improved. Over three divisions of Republican Guard forces still remained arrayed on the outskirts of Irbil. The President continued to receive daily updates from National Security Advisor Lake throughout the day. In addition, the United States sent a second private message to the Iraqis via their mission at the United Nations "warning them of serious consequences should their build-up be followed by any military activity."[24] But the Iraqis ignored the warning. The following day, on 31 August, Saddam Hussein's forces attacked Irbil.

On the day of the attack, Dr Lake met with the other principals in Washington. It was at this meeting that they developed the outline of the strategic response to the Iraqi aggression. As has been noted, it was clear that the United States could not take any direct action to repel the Iraqi attack. But it was also clear that America had to respond. From the beginning of the crisis,

the consensus among senior policymakers was that the United States would act forcefully if Iraq attacked Irbil. As one administration spokesman said:

> [E]ssentially the United States – President Clinton and Secretary Christopher and Tony Lake and Bill Perry – saw very early on, after it was clear that Saddam Hussein was bringing major military force to bear in Irbil, that the United States could not stand by idly and allow this to happen without an appropriate response . . . . From then on, it was just a decision as to what was the appropriate response; what should be the mixture of the force, and what the target should be.[25]

Therefore, the principals' committee decided to recommend that the President take action that would protect America's longer term interests in the region. Rather than responding tactically to Iraq's aggression in the north, the principals recommended that the United States take action in the southern portion of Iraq. Specifically, they suggested that America expand the no-fly zone in southern Iraq that was established by the Gulf War Allies in August 1992. They also suggested the creation of a new corridor of restricted airspace in western Iraq.[26] The principals recommended these steps for two reasons. First, because of constraints in available airbases in the north, it was very difficult to expand the northern no-fly zone. Second, expansion of the southern no-fly zone and the creation of a new no-fly zone in the west would make it more difficult for Iraq to threaten Saudi Arabia or Kuwait in the future.[27] Expansion of the no-fly zone from the 32nd parallel north to the 33rd parallel would remove an additional 60-mile-wide corridor from the airspace under Iraqi control. In order to patrol such an area safely, Iraqi fixed and mobile air defenses inside the new zone would have to be eliminated.

Resistance from the Turks and also from the Jordanians significantly altered the plan. Neither country would permit the use of its territory either for offensive attacks against Iraq or for the maintenance of a new air exclusion zone in western Iraq.[28] Therefore, the final recommendation to the President simply included a measured attack against air defenses in the south.[29]

President Clinton received these recommendations in the form of a National Security Council Decision Memorandum while campaigning in Covington, Tennessee. After conferring with Vice-President Albert Gore, he approved the recommendations of the National Security Council. His signing of the memorandum formally tasked the military to undertake the mission of destroying the necessary air defense installations in order to establish the expanded no-fly zone. In addition, it dispatched General John Shalikashvili (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) and Ambassador Robert Pelletreau (Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs) to conduct consultations with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt.[30]

With the strategic concept for a response in hand, Dr Anthony Lake and

Lieutenant-General Peter Pace, Director of Operations for the Joint Staff, flew to Little Rock, Arkansas, to meet with the President on 1 September. They briefed him on the military and diplomatic preparations for the proposed strike. That day, Iraqi forces had withdrawn from the center of Irbil, but they were still arrayed around the outskirts of the city. Yet the redeployment did not satisfy American officials because the Iraqis remained inside the exclusion zone.[31] The President was particularly concerned about the potential of collateral damage from any US military action. Given the danger that Iraqi surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) might pose to American pilots, cruise missiles were to be used to dismantle the air defenses.[32] At the time of the briefing, there were already three ships in the Persian Gulf capable of launching Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missiles (TLAM-C). In addition, B-52 bombers carrying conventional air-launched cruise missiles (C-ALCM) were being flown into position at an airbase in Guam to participate in the proposed strike. Military advisors from the Pentagon felt that the requisite forces would be in a better position to launch the attack if they were given an additional 24 hours to prepare. Based on that briefing, the President approved the strike to occur on 2 September.

Throughout the course of the day, the President received a series of updates from his national security team. He also approved a second decision memorandum that made minor modifications to the parameters of the strike, but still held to the broad strategic concept devised by the principals' committee on 31 August. The changes reflected "the consultations that were going on in the region and further consideration by the National Security Council . . . ."[33] Following a series of other diplomatic consultations with European allies and other heads of state in the Near East, President Clinton gave the final launch order at 8.11 pm EDT on 2 September 1996.

Action

On 3 September at 1.55 am EDT, US military forces unleashed the attack.[34] Eight Tomahawk cruise missiles from the guided missile destroyer *USS Laboon*, six TLAMs from the cruiser *USS Shiloh*, and thirteen conventional air-launched cruise missiles fired from B-52 aircraft attacked Iraqi command and control facilities at Iskandariya and Tallil. Later in the evening on 3 September, the US launched seventeen additional cruise missiles, at many of the same targets, from the destroyers *USS Laboon* and *USS Hewitt*, and from the submarine *USS Jefferson.* Pentagon sources were confident that all the intended targets were destroyed.[35] According to one senior Pentagon official:

> After the second strike, the overall assessment was that the two strikes, involving 44 cruise missiles, had achieved a severe degradation of Iraqi defenses south of the 33rd parallel. There were two sets of targets: there were SAM sites; and then there were command and control and air defense centers. Looking at the first set of targets, we concluded that of the

eight SAM sites involved, all had been damaged or vacated. Of the eight SAM sights involved, five were determined to be severely destroyed or damaged. One was either damaged or vacated. In two, we determined that the targets had been moved before they were hit. So, basically, the targets we were aiming at had been moved before the missiles got there.

The second set of targets involved, as I said, the air defense and command and control facilities. These, basically, are the facilities that integrate the air defense system and tie together parts in the west with parts in the east, etc. And, of those seven targets, we determined that: one had been destroyed or severely damaged; that four had been damaged, degraded – performance degraded significantly or vacated; and that there had been no or minor damage on two. So, that's basically looking at the targets at fifteen, how it sorted out.[36]

At 4 am EDT, coalition warplanes began patrolling the expanded no-fly zone near the outskirts of Baghdad.

Analysis

The Iraqi invasion of Irbil posed a particularly difficult dilemma for American policymakers. It was clearly in America's interest to prevent Saddam from invading the city. Iraqi intervention on behalf of the KDP would have further split the two Kurdish factions, thus thwarting American efforts in the region to build a credible and unified opposition to the regime in Baghdad. For this reason, American officials undertook extensive diplomatic measures to dissuade Saddam from taking military action.

Once the invasion took place, however, the entire strategic equation changed. While it was certainly an important interest to have kept the Iraqis out of Irbil before they attacked, it was not considered to have been of vital interest to the United States to repel the Iraqis after they had occupied the city. Changing the situation on the ground would probably have required the insertion of American ground troops and almost certainly would have embroiled the United States in another shooting conflict with Iraq. This was not a desirable outcome. Therefore, the use of ground forces was never seriously considered. In short, once the approach of diplomatic deterrence failed, American policymakers were forced to reevaluate their interests in the area and their approach to the crisis.

In one sense, the approach that American policymakers decided to take against Iraq might not properly be called a strategy. The ends desired were certainly ambiguous. Public statements from administration officials focused on two things. First, they wanted to "exact a price" from Saddam for his conduct – that is, they wanted to punish him. Second, they wanted to deter Iraq from future aggressive behavior against Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. There are problems with both of these approaches.

The problem with punishment as a strategy is that it is extremely subjective.

The use of punishment presupposes three things: (1) that a rule or law has been broken; (2) that the consequences for violating the law are just; and (3) that the party meting out the punishment has the authority to do so. Yet each of these assumptions was in doubt in this case. To be certain, American officials claimed that Iraq violated UN Security Council Resolution 688 when it attacked Irbil.[37] Although the UN Secretary-General rescinded a proposed oil-for-food program because of the Iraqi attack, the UN Security Council passed no resolution condemning the action. Furthermore, many nations argued publicly that Iraq was responding to an internal uprising within its territorial borders. Hence, reprehensible though the action may have been, the United Nations did not recognize that it violated international law. Even if a rule of international law had been broken, it is questionable whether or not the "punishment" was just. There are no guidelines in international law to suggest what action a third state may take to redress a violation of UN Resolution 688. There is a general principle in international law that suggests that any use of force against a state may only be answered by the offended state with a use of force that is proportional to the original aggression. But that principle presupposes that the state issuing the "punishing" force was attacked, not that it is responding to a use of force against some other state. Even if the American action had been just in a legal sense, there was no legal basis for the United States to undertake the action. The Charter of the United Nations expressly forbids the use of force by one state against another. The only exception is a use of force authorized by the Security Council when a nation is found to pose a threat to international peace and security. No such determination was made in this case, and the UN did not authorize America to use force against Iraq. Although the legal staff in the National Security Council made an argument justifying the American use of force,[38] a very strong argument can be made to the contrary as well.

The second strategic problem concerns the idea of deterrence. Schelling argued that a successful strategy of deterrence must do several things.[39] First, it must present the adversary with an unacceptable cost if he undertakes a particular action. Second, the threat must be backed by the credible will of the deterring state. Finally, the threat must be clearly communicated to the adversary. Yet the deterrent strategy employed in this case was less than textbook perfect. It was employed in two phases. The first attempt was to deter Iraq from invading Irbil in the first place. It is clear from public statements made by American officials that the threat was made clear to Iraq that invasion of Irbil would be met with serious consequences. Because the communications between the Iraqi and American governments are classified, it is not known exactly what those "serious consequences" would have been. Furthermore, it is not known whether the United States threatened any specific action. Whatever the threat, it may be assumed that it was not sufficient to deter Iraq from attacking Irbil. The second phase is much more problematic. The stated goal was to deter Iraq from mounting future attacks against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. Yet deterrence promises future consequences in order to deter future

action. That was not what occurred. Instead, the United States destroyed a portion of Iraq's air defenses so that it would launch no attacks in the future.

The theoretical problem with that approach is that it exacts a price in the present rather than retaining the possibility of a threat in the future. The practical problem with the action is that it is not necessarily a credible threat. When Iraq had previously threatened Kuwait in October 1994, it did so by sending several Republican Guard divisions to the area of Basra, some 20 miles from the Kuwaiti border. It used no aircraft in that feint. As a credible deterrent to Iraq, the United States did not destroy Iraqi air defenses. Rather, it sent 30,000 troops to Kuwait to repel a potential attack. Given the size of the American deployment and the absence of Iraqi aircraft in the 1994 action, it is difficult to understand how two salvos of forty-four missiles and the loss of an additional 60 miles of airspace would prevent Iraq from sending more forces southward if it so chose.

Therein lays the fundamental problem with strategies of punishment and deterrence. Neither of them requires positive action from the adversary. Thus, it is difficult to determine when they have been effective. How much "punishment" would have been enough to make Saddam Hussein pay a price for an action that the United States was not willing to reverse? Alternatively, measuring the effectiveness of a deterrent strategy is very difficult. An adversary may refrain from taking an action simply because it is inherently not in his interest to do so, not because a deterring state has made such action manifestly more costly.

Nevertheless, punishing Saddam Hussein was the main objective of Operation Desert Strike. There was no coercive element in the American action. That is, it was not designed to force the Iraqis to take a particular action. Most public statements from American officials at the time suggest that this was the case. Subsequent interviews with officials involved in the action affirmed this assessment. The collective judgment of senior administration foreign policy officials was that, if Saddam Hussein were able to apply force in Kurdistan with impunity, he would be emboldened to apply force elsewhere. Thus, America launched an attack designed to deprive him of additional airspace and to destroy prized military equipment. Yet the nature of the attack begs the question: why were cruise missiles used, as opposed to other weapons?

The logic of using cruise missiles for the attack can be addressed on three levels: tactical, strategic, and political. Each of these areas will be addressed with the aim of understanding two things. First, how did the availability of cruise missiles alter the logic to use force? Second, what are the ramifications of using force in this manner?

Tactical

The military option to use cruise missiles against Iraqi air defenses was designed by military planners at the US Central Command. This reflects two prime considerations. First, the accuracy of the missiles gave planners considerable

confidence that the targets would be destroyed. Most of the targets were mobile missile systems or command and control vans that could be eliminated by the 1,000-lb warhead carried by the Tomahawk. Some of the targets, however, were underground bunkers that were reinforced with concrete. Destroying them required the heavier 1,500-lb warhead carried by C-ALCMs from B-52 bombers. Additionally, attacking the targets with precision weapons meant that fewer strikes would have to be launched. If the sites were attacked with unguided or "dumb" bombs, then multiple strikes would have to be made in order to ensure that the targets were destroyed.

The second tactical consideration was the risk of American lives. Clearly, a major advantage of using cruise missiles is that the targets could be attacked with impunity. Both the naval ships and the air force bombers that launched the attack were hundreds of miles from their targets, making retaliation impossible. Thus, as long as there was a possibility of achieving the mission without risking American lives, military planners chose the less dangerous option. There is precedent for this decision. When allied forces began the air campaign of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, they did so by first dismantling the air defenses around Baghdad. This mission was so dangerous that initially only cruise missiles and stealth aircraft armed with precision-guided munitions (PGMs) were used. Once the air defenses were destroyed, allied aircraft could attack other targets with impunity. The same logic applied in this case. Once Iraqi air defenses between the 32nd and 33rd parallels were destroyed, coalition aircraft could then patrol that area without sustained risk and implement the broader strategic objective of further constraining the regime in Iraq.

Strategic

As has been demonstrated, the strategy pursued in Operation Desert Strike was essentially a punitive act of reprisal. The primary value of cruise missiles in pursuit of that strategy was that they allowed the United States to exact a price without receiving any direct retaliation in return. They demonstrated to Saddam Hussein that not only would the United States ensure that there would be consequences for his aggressive actions in the future, but also that he could take no measures to respond in kind. Again, it is very difficult to assess the success of this strategy. Theoretically, it is impossible to prove a negative, so the mere absence of further aggressive behavior by Iraq cannot necessarily be attributed to the actions of the United States.

Political

During the course of the crisis, the President made it clear to his advisors that there was to be no discussion of the impact of his decision to use force on domestic politics. This position was particularly important as the United States was engaged in a presidential campaign at the time of the Iraqi attack on Irbil.

But as one senior official remarked, "[when making foreign policy decisions] domestic politics is a bit like sex in Victorian England: no one discusses it but it's on everybody's mind."

The political benefit of using cruise missiles to enact the strategy did not enter the equation except at the very highest levels of decisionmaking. Military planners devising options for the civilian leadership did not consider the political ramifications of losing a pilot to enemy anti-aircraft fire. Conversely, neither did the President specifically request the use of cruise missiles from his military staff because of political concerns he may have had.[40]

Nevertheless, there were at least three considerations that were largely political in nature which the use of cruise missiles helped address. The first was the concern for collateral damage. Public statements suggest that the President was very concerned with potential damage to unintended targets. In addition to any humanitarian interest he may have had, there was precedent for this stance. During the June 1993 Tomahawk strike against the Iraqi intelligence headquarters, one missile went astray and inadvertently destroyed the house of an artist prominent in the Arab world. She was killed in the incident. Given the tenuous public support that the Americans were receiving from other countries, any other such accident may have undercut the position of the United States internationally. Thus, the improved accuracy of the cruise missiles used in the attack, as well as the relative geographic isolation of the targets, must have had political ramifications that contributed to the President's decision.

The second political consideration was the risk to American aircrews. No American President can responsibly order American forces into combat unless it is in the vital national interests of the United States to do so. More importantly, he could not order such an action if there were other ways of accomplishing the mission without risking American lives. Using cruise missiles instead of manned aircraft also prevented the possibility of the Iraqis capturing a pilot and using him as a political bargaining chip as they attempted to do in the Persian Gulf War.

The third political consideration was the concept of proportionality. As the stated American goal of the attack was to punish Saddam, it was important that the attack be viewed as proportional to the provocation. The use of cruise missiles to attack military targets with precision allowed the President to claim that he had taken a "measured, very disciplined and firm approach" to the problem.[41]

Conclusion

The political circumstances that initiated Operation Desert Strike were extraordinarily complex. The factional fighting between the KDP and the PUK frustrated American efforts to foster a peace settlement between the parties. Thus, it was very difficult to build unified opposition in Kurdistan against

Saddam Hussein. Moreover, the KDP's invitation to Iraq to intervene seriously constrained American options in dealing with the crisis.

While the United States had an interest in preventing Iraq from placing ground forces inside Irbil, that interest was not cogent enough to allow America to pose a credible threat to Saddam Hussein to deter his aggressive action. Neither was it important enough to justify the use of American ground forces to repel the Iraqi invasion.

Nevertheless, senior American policymakers were unanimous in their thinking that permitting Saddam Hussein to use force without paying a significant price would simply embolden him to use force elsewhere. Such a possibility could not be accepted, so the United States had to act. But there was no positive objective sought by America in this conflict.

The fundamental problem, however, was that geopolitical constraints on the ground prevented the United States from taking direct action to force Saddam to withdraw. Similarly, broader political constraints prevented the United States from using ground forces anywhere else in Iraq to "exact a price" for Iraqi behavior. In effect, there was a situation in which the Iraqi action was too strong for America to ignore but not strong enough for it to respond with ground troops. The use of cruise missiles helped to fill this strategic gap.

The cruise missile attacks were not designed to force Iraq to take a particular action. That is, they were not used as a method of coercion. Despite official statements to the contrary, their use as a deterrent in this case is doubtful. Without an honest assessment from the adversary, it is difficult to know which one of any number of conditions deterred him from taking a particular action. Furthermore, most experts agree that weapons are a better deterrent when their use is reserved as a threat, leaving the adversary to calculate future costs, rather than when they are actually employed.

Rather, cruise missiles were used in attacks that punished Iraq and sent a signal to Baghdad not to use aggressive force again. The particular characteristics of precision and remoteness were ideal for this purpose. They allowed the United States to send a signal and to exact punishment within the strategic constraints that the situation posed. To be certain, American policymakers would have done something to send a forceful signal had cruise missiles not been available. But given the availability of other types of force and the constraints of the situation, the cruise missiles reduced important risks to American pilots while also providing strategic options to American policymakers that may not otherwise have existed.

9

CONCLUSION

> Unlike mathematics, war is an empirical matter. War is history; this means that its laws are deductions to be made only after the event.
>
> Jean Dutourd, *Taxis of the Marne*, 1957

The examples of Tomahawk strikes explored in this work are linked by the constraints that led to their use. In each of the cases, senior decisionmakers had to grapple with the need to use force in support of a policy objective while preventing losses of American service personnel, which might have undermined domestic political support, and limiting inadvertent harm to civilians, which might have undermined the strategic objectives for which force was being used.

In each of the case studies presented, policymakers were confronted with at least one of four types of constraints. They consisted of: (1) domestic political constraints related to the loss of American service personnel in combat; (2) international political constraints regarding sensitivity to civilian casualties resulting from military force; (3) constraints on viable options presented by an adversary with whom conventional diplomacy has been, or is likely to be, unsuccessful; and (4) tactical constraints on the ability to bring to bear significant military assets against a particular target. The use of Tomahawk cruise missiles in conjunction with a strategy of limited war was not an inevitable option in any of these cases. Nevertheless, they were chosen, by and large, because they offered policymakers the greatest flexibility in addressing these crises within the constraints they faced.

The possibility of incurring casualties among American service personnel was a real concern for senior policymakers in each of the four scenarios. Having endured the capture of American aircrews during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, advisors in the first Bush administration were very wary of repeating that experience in January 1993. With only a matter of days left in their administration, they did not want to risk having another American pilot shot down and used by the Hussein regime as a bargaining chip either with the United Nations in negotiating an end to its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, or with the incoming Clinton administration as it formulated its own Iraq policy. Similar concerns about the political exploitation of captured pilots informed the choices of Clinton administration officials, particularly in 1996. The occurrence of such a scenario during a presidential campaign

was very much on their minds as policymakers formulated a response to Iraqi military action in Kurdistan.

In addition to past interactions with Iraq, decisionmakers in the Clinton administration had been similarly shaped by their own collective experience in the use of force, which arguably contributed to a certain risk aversion regarding military casualties. The debacle in Somalia in October 1993 in which eighteen US soldiers were killed and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu had a chilling effect on American approaches to the use of force. In the short term, it scuttled the US operation in Somalia as domestic popular support for the putative humanitarian mission evaporated when American soldiers were killed by militants in a country they were trying to help out of famine. More broadly, it demonstrated just how difficult it could be to intervene in the emerging ethnic wars of the 1990s. Many wondered whether or not it was proper or prudent to risk American lives in such conflicts which, arguably, were not in the vital national interests of the United States. It was precisely this calculus that was at work as American policymakers contemplated their approach to intervening in the war in Bosnia. Even though they decided that the use of force with NATO allies would be an essential component in forcing the Serbs to the negotiating table, most Clinton administration officials were categorically opposed to the introduction of American ground forces. Images of Mogadishu were not far from their minds, and they knew that sustaining domestic support for a humanitarian intervention in a brutal ethnic conflict with which most Americans had no familiarity would prove very difficult, if not impossible, if the military endured significant casualties.

In addition to the constraints from domestic public opinion on US military casualties, US policymakers also had to factor in international public opinion on non-US civilian casualties. A pair of laser-guided 2,000-lb bombs that struck the Al Firdos command bunker in downtown Baghdad during Operation Desert Storm had accidentally killed over two hundred Iraqi civilians who, unbeknown to American intelligence, had been using it as a bomb shelter. Widely condemned for this incident, US military planners quickly realized that precision munitions, including Tomahawk, were only as good as the intelligence used to program them. Thus, it was important to know as much as possible about the intended target at the time of the strike. This consideration was very important in the 1993 strike against the *Mukhabarat* headquarters. The building that housed the Iraqi Intelligence Service was struck at night in order to minimize harm to any innocent civilians in the area. Alternatively, it might have been struck during the day to inflict greater damage on Iraq's intelligence capability by killing officials who would have been in the building during the working day. The choice of a night-time strike reflects, among other things, a serious concern for inadvertent harm done to civilians.

The concern for civilian harm was also very evident in Operation Deliberate Force in 1995. Waged to stop the violence against innocent Bosnian civilians, it was a political imperative for NATO to avoid harming non-combatants

during their air strikes as much as possible in order to maintain legitimacy for the war in their home countries. Hence, a bombing campaign built around the use of precision-guided munitions against targets in populated areas was a viable option for intervention in the war. Tomahawk cruise missiles were an important part of that effort.

Almost by definition, armed conflict results only when the parties cannot reach a non-violent diplomatic resolution to a dispute. Clearly that was the case in each of the instances examined here. American policymakers in both the Bush and the Clinton administrations believed that Saddam Hussein could not be successfully engaged using conventional diplomacy. However, the particular circumstances leading to this conclusion differed in each strike. Having just fought a war with Iraq, the first Bush administration believed that only robust, multilateral sanctions backed by the use of force could convince Saddam to comply with UN Security Council resolutions relating to his purported WMD stockpiles. The Clinton administration concluded that an assassination attempt against a former American head of state should not be handled with a demarche or some other diplomatic maneuver. In such a case, there was nothing to negotiate. Only a response involving the use of force was in order, as the US argued at the United Nations, citing its right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. In 1996, the Iraqis were able to execute a military *fait accompli* by intervening in Kurdistan. Caught flat-footed and unable to reverse the action, the Clinton administration used military force to improve their ability to enforce the no-fly zones in Iraq, thus increasing the constraints on the country and minimizing their ability to take such action in the future. The Bosnia case represents a situation in which armed force was used not only because the adversary (i.e., the Serbs) did not respond to negotiation, but also to actually encourage the adversary to be more responsive to diplomatic overtures.

Finally, tactical constraints were an important part of the decision to use cruise missiles in each of the scenarios presented. Their deployment on ships and submarines on constant patrol in the Persian Gulf and in the eastern Mediterranean Sea made them readily available to policymakers contemplating the use of force. Furthermore, their seaborne deployment meant that it was not necessary to depend on land-based aircraft, with their concomitant logistical complications or political support required to secure overflight rights from sovereign states while en route to their targets. The long range of the land attack Tomahawk allowed it to reach locations several hundred miles inland, and its accuracy inspired confidence that it would destroy the intended target with minimal collateral damage. These technical characteristics provided policymakers with a much greater degree of flexibility in the employment of Tomahawk, as opposed to other forms of armed force, to achieve specific strategic objectives.

As important as these constraints were in framing the options available to policymakers, of equal significance were the plans for overcoming them. In

each of the cases studied, policymakers opted for a strategy of limited war in which the use of force was measured in scope and intensity in order to achieve a very specific objective at an acceptable cost. For instance, Operations Southern Watch and Deliberate Force were classic examples of coercive diplomacy. Both used limited force to persuade adversaries to take a particular action. In Southern Watch, the objective was to persuade Saddam Hussein to comply with UN resolutions to relinquish his WMD program. In Deliberate Force, it was to persuade the Serbs to negotiate an equitable end to the war in Bosnia. While the strategy of coercive diplomacy failed in the former case (because Saddam did not comply) but succeeded in the latter one (as the Serbs agreed to negotiate), both instances demonstrated the appeal of an approach that gave policymakers the prospect of achieving their objectives through the use of force without risking the lives of American service personnel. Similarly, the limited war strategy of reprisal was the basis for Operation Bushwacker in 1993. To be certain, the destruction of the *Mukhabarat* headquarters sent a signal of American displeasure in the wake of the Iraqi assassination attempt against the first President Bush. Finally, Operation Desert Strike may be viewed as an act of reprisal as well. The strike had no hope of reversing Iraqi military action in Kurdistan. Nor was it intended to persuade the Iraqis to take a certain action. Although one of the rationales for the strike was the need to strengthen the containment regime on the Iraqi military so that it could not take similar action in the future, in the broader view, Desert Strike was an effort to demonstrate to the Iraqis that aggressive military action would have costs. Convinced that such a message would not be adequately conveyed through conventional diplomacy, a limited use of force was the option of choice.

These various strategies of limited war were chosen by policymakers to cope with the series of constraints confronting them as they sought to address diverse foreign policy challenges. Yet the success the strategies promised was predicated not simply on their internal logic but also on the means of their implementation. In this sense, the availability of the Tomahawk land attack cruise missile enabled limited war strategies by providing the technical capability to modulate the use of force while preserving American and non-US civilian lives to an unprecedented degree. The range, accuracy, and tactical flexibility provided by Tomahawk allowed policymakers to strike precisely those targets that they believed would lead the adversary to take a desired action. Unlike conceptions of limited nuclear war, the use of the Tomahawk in this way could allow policymakers to claim credibly that they were using "measured" force commensurate with a particular provocation.

The utility of the Tomahawk both in limited war scenarios and also in broader military campaigns is borne out by its performance in strikes undertaken after the ones examined here. It was used in decapitation strikes in a limited use of force against Al-Qaida targets in Afghanistan, as well as in a reprisal strike against an alleged chemical weapons facility in Sudan, as part of Operation Infinite Reach on 20 August 1998. Although part of a broader military

campaign, Tomahawk was used in an effort to decapitate the Iraqi leadership in the first days of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March/April 2003, and also struck a variety of other targets in total wars of conquest in Iraqi Freedom as well as in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in late 2002. Further, in an attempt at reprisal/punishment against the Iraqi regime for refusing to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors, and as a coercive measure to force the Iraqis to accept an inspection regime, the United States launched Operation Desert Fox in December 1998. With 332 weapons launched, it was the largest Tomahawk salvo launched at that point until the initiation of Iraqi Freedom. Finally, the Tomahawk was an integral part of NATO's Operation Allied Force to stop Serbian aggression in Kosovo. The 78-day air war was a prolonged exercise in coercive diplomacy, in which the bombing campaign was designed to coerce Serbian compliance with international demands to withdraw forces from Kosovo, rather than a strategy of conquest that would have forcefully ejected Serbian forces from the region.

The reason for the repeated use of the Tomahawk in conjunction with broader air campaigns in strategies of total war is self-evident. As an unmanned weapon of considerable accuracy and range, it has repeatedly played a vital role in destroying air defense networks that threaten missions by manned aircraft. It has also been employed against a wide variety of other targets such as command and control facilities, munitions depots, armored units, and leadership residences. In this sense, the Tomahawk represents merely a formidable addition to an existing arsenal used in conventional approaches to warfare.

Yet the repeated use of the Tomahawk in strategies of limited war calls for greater explanation, particularly in light of criticism of this approach as an instrument of US foreign policy. Put another way, why have American policymakers persisted in their pursuit of limited war strategies using Tomahawk cruise missiles when such strikes have achieved, at best, limited strategic success over time? What does their repeated reliance on this method say about the future of American approaches to the use of force?

Some critics argue that the only responsible strategy is the so-called "overwhelming force" doctrine made famous by former US Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Colin Powell. The difficulty of such an approach, however, is that it ignores the salience of domestic and international constraints on the use of force. In essence, the overwhelming force doctrine suggests that either a situation rises to the level of a threat to the vital national interest, in which case policymakers should commit whatever level of force is necessary to eliminate the threat, or a provocation is not a vital threat and therefore not worthy of the risk in American blood and treasure necessary to address it.

While neat in concept, the binary choice this doctrine presents to policymakers is not entirely practical in a real world with complex threats. As demonstrated by events in the 1990s from the Balkans to Iraq, there are many serious foreign policy situations that may not immediately rise to the level of a threat to vital national interests. Still, they may present serious challenges to

American foreign policy, or even existential threats to innocent civilians. Furthermore, they can defy solution through conventional diplomacy yet demand a forceful response.

It may prove either difficult or impossible to achieve a definitive resolution to these dilemmas regardless of the strategy adopted. Nevertheless, policymakers must have a variety of options for response even if they do not result in a decisive "victory." This is especially true when confronted with domestic political constraints on the use of force relating to US military casualties, and international constraints relating to civilian casualties. Such considerations are serious. They do not originate from the weakness of decisionmakers uncomfortable with the realities of combat. Rather, they come from a democratic society that demands accountability for the commitment of its soldiers to combat, and an international community concerned about innocent civilians everywhere. Defying these constraints may result in real political and strategic consequences, ultimately undermining the very reasons for resorting to the use of arms. Hence, regardless of the shortcomings, the use of the Tomahawk cruise missile (and future weapons like it) in conjunction with strategies of limited war will remain a vital instrument of statecraft for American policymakers contending with complex crises in an uncertain world.

Beyond its ability to provide options in the midst of constraints, the Tomahawk–limited war approach is part of something more significant in American military practice. Using humanity as a weapon of war is an attempt to turn strategic constraints regarding civilian protections into strategic enablers. In other words, it seeks to derive strategic advantage from the adherence to humanitarian norms that hitherto had been largely seen as constraints on military action. While they may have had ethical merit, such constraints were regarded, at best, as largely lacking in strategic value from a military perspective.

American military forces engaging in military practices to protect civilians in one way or another is not a new phenomenon. Nor is it a novel development for them to perform activities designed to win the "hearts and minds" in order to garner tactical support from the local population in a particular theater of war. What is new, however, is the use of information campaigns designed to convince international audiences beyond the battlefield about the benevolence of American power and interests even in the midst of combat operations. For example, in 2002, US General Tommy Franks, commander of the US Central Command, said at a news conference about Operation Enduring Freedom, "This has been the most accurate war ever fought in this nation's history."[1] His public comments on this issue of civilian protection, and those of other senior officials, were not merely statements of fact. Arguably, they were part of a deliberate information campaign to show the world that, even as it responded to Islamist-inspired terror attacks against its citizens, the United States was not waging war against Islam or Muslims *per se* but against terrorists and the regimes that harbored them. Conveying this message successfully was crucial in a war such as the Global War on Terror, which is not simply a clash of

arms but a battle of ideas. Furthermore, Gen. Franks could credibly make that claim because of the extensive use of precision-guided munitions and their careful targeting designed to avoid civilian casualties as much as possible as allied aircraft, and Tomahawk cruise missiles, prosecuted their campaign.

Precision strike warfare is only one part of using humanity as a weapon of war. To this approach, one might also add the provision of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population by military forces engaged in combat in the same theater of operations. A prime example of this approach is the distribution of millions of humanitarian daily rations (HDRs) by American aircrews during Operation Enduring Freedom flying in the same theater where American and British pilots were flying strike missions against Taliban targets. Similarly, coalition forces have engaged in substantial post-conflict reconstruction projects in both Afghanistan and Iraq following the end of "major combat operations" in both countries in order to contribute to the basis for a sustainable post-conflict civil society. In all of these cases, the US did more than simply conform to humanitarian norms and standards regarding the civilian population. They actively *advertised* their activities as a means of demonstrating American goodwill to skeptical audiences around the world. In doing so, American policymakers have attempted to turn international concern for civilian casualties to their strategic advantage in order to support the broad objectives for which they initiated the Global War on Terror. Although they have met with mixed success, such efforts may prove as invaluable as tactical battlefield victories in a war where perceptions matter.

Much theoretical and empirical work remains to be done both on the efficacy of limited war strategies and on humanity as a weapon of war. They represent important counterpoints to the decisive victory/total war/overwhelming force doctrine in American strategic thought. This will prove to be increasingly true as domestic and international constraints regarding military and civilian casualties endure over time. As the United States continues to face international challenges around the world, it will doubtless continue to rely on its "weapon of choice," the Tomahawk.

NOTES

PREFACE

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1 INTRODUCTION

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3 George H.W. Bush, "The UN: World Parliament of Peace," address to the UN General Assembly, New York, 1 October 1990, in Dispatch (US Department of State), vol. 1, no. 6 (8 October 1990), p. 152. Quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York: Touchstone Books, 1995, p. 805.
4 Christopher Coker, *Humane Warfare*, Routledge: New York, 2001, pp. 15–23.
5 Many of the people interviewed for this work have changed their position and title since then. For example, Lt-Gen. Peter Pace was the Commanding Officer of Marine Expeditionary Forces – Atlantic when he was interviewed in 1998. At the time of the publication of this work, he had been promoted to the rank of full General and was serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For Gen. Pace and others, the title and rank attributed to them in the text are those that they held at the time of their interview.

2 HUMANITY AS A WEAPON OF WAR

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2 "1. Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature . . . . 2. The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power . . . 3. Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is

universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all . . . . 4. . . . There can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action. Realism, then, considers prudence – the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions – to be the supreme virtue in politics. Ethics in the abstract judges action by its conformity with moral law; political ethics judges action by its political consequences . . . . 5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe . . . . 6. The difference, then, between political realism and other schools of thought is real, and it is profound . . . . [The political realist] thinks in terms of interest defined as power . . . ." Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, brief edition, Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1993, pp. 3–14.

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5 James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr, *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th edition, Longman: New York, 2001, pp. 81–2.
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7 Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "Neorealism and Neoliberalism," *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 2, January 1988, pp. 242–3.
8 Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996, pp. 22–3.
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10 For example, see Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, Goldstein and Keohane, eds, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 3–30.
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53 Fleck, *The Handbook of Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflicts*, p. 63. "Combatants may fight within the limits imposed by international law applicable in international armed conflict, i.e., they may participate directly in hostilities, which members of medical or religious personnel and 'non-combatants' may not do because they are excluded – the former by international law and the latter by a legal act of their party to the conflict – from the authorization to take a direct part in hostilities." The precise legal definition of a combatant under international humanitarian law is found in AP I, Art. 43, para. 2.

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of this study. It is for this reason that the technical discussion of cruise missile capabilities in this chapter focuses on Tomahawk.

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Rather, the missile hit an unintended target because it was shot down by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire and veered off course. One could argue that the flight path on which it was routed through downtown Baghdad was necessitated by its dependence on TERCOM and DSMAC guidance and that, had more advanced guidance been available, it would not have had to rely on distinctive urban landmarks to make its way to its target. Indeed, this problem would be corrected with the introduction of Tomahawk Block III missiles with GPS guidance systems. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suggest that, had the missile not been forced off course, it would most likely have hit its intended target and not struck a hotel packed with civilians.

39 It is worth noting that, even at the height of the Gulf War, the allies only used stealthy, radar-evading F-117A fighters and Tomahawk cruise missiles against targets in and around Baghdad. Although allied planes had attacked various targets within the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq in Operation Southern Watch, those targets were far away from civilian centers, and they tended to be anti-aircraft batteries which were attacked by special suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD) aircraft designed for that purpose. Furthermore, Iraq had been required under Resolution 687 to remove air defense batteries from the no-fly zone, but there was no similar requirement for the removal of air defenses in and around Baghdad where the Zaafaraniyah facility was located, thus making such a mission very dangerous for manned aircraft.

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> [German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich] Genscher forced the EC to act by announcing that Germany would unilaterally recognize Croatia's independence. Bowing to German pressure, the EC thereupon agreed to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia effective January 15, 1992 . . . .
>
> The German position disregarded the Badinter Committee's insistence that Croatia fully respect the rights of the Serbian minority within its boundaries. German support for unconditional recognition thus translated into a tacit endorsement of Croatian national chauvinism at the expense of its Serbian population.
>
> The role of Germany and the EC in pushing for recognition of the breakaway republics has been hotly debated. Some critics, particularly those with a pro-Serbian or anti-German orientation, blame the outbreak of the war in Bosnia largely or exclusively on Germany, citing historic German antipathy toward Serbia and sympathies for Croatia and Bosnia dating back at least as far as World War II. This is too simple an explanation, for the primary impetus for the Bosnian war in early 1992 came not from Western diplomats but from forces ineluctably at work within Bosnia itself.

6 Donia and Fine, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*, p. 238.
7 The purpose of this section is not to provide a chronological history of the war in Bosnia. Rather, it is to describe the general conduct of the war from its beginning to the summer of 1995 in order to provide a historical and political context against which the use of cruise missiles in Operation Deliberate Force can be analyzed.
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INDEX