

Military Pundits: Retired but Still Serving?

**A Monograph
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Abstract

MILITARY PUNDITS: RETIRED BUT STILL SERVING? Major Christopher P. Taylor, U.S. Army, 64 pages.

In September of 2001, 90% of America received most of their news on the terrorist attacks against the United States from television; a number that would hold steady at 89% throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). In April of 2003 while the United States led the coalition of the willing in OIF, many retired officers stated on television that the Department of Defense had not planned and resourced the war properly, resulting in an operation that would proceed longer than expected. Unsecured supply lines and a shortage of troops involved in the campaign were the largest criticisms, earning these pundits a sharp response from the Secretary of Defense, members of Congress and other general officers, both retired and serving. As America fights her first war of the twenty-first century, one that has exceeded the length of World War II, Americans will continue to turn to the television for news, and along with the news, they will continue to hear commentaries and opinions from retired military leaders. With public opinion so important in America's Global War on Terrorism, are these pundits shaping opinion to the extent that they are affecting policy within the executive branch of the government? Is this effect positive or negative and should these pundits be banned, encouraged or coached? With such disparate opinions, there is bound to be debate, and in the absence of a constitutional amendment, the experts are here to stay. This monograph will explore both sides of the issue and attempt to answer the question: Through appearances on television, do military pundits influence public opinion and how does that affect military policy during times of conflict within the executive branch of the government?

To prove that pundits do not influence policy within the executive branch of the government, but rather echo and support public opinion and add to the friction of war, the monograph will use Clusiewicz's "paradoxical trinity" as a framework and use three case studies, Desert Storm, Allied Force and OIF, to show the role and relevance of pundits during times of conflict. The comments alluding to the utility and professionalism of punditry made by Secretary Rumsfeld, Senator Warner and General Myers deserve a closer look, so the monograph will next briefly explore the professional ramifications of punditry. Finally, the findings and recommendations will address the impact of pundits and discuss ways they can be used to America's advantage in the future.

Throughout the three case studies of Desert Storm, Allied Force and OIF, one can find numerous examples of how pundits opined, but there is very little evidence that their discourse had any direct effect on policy or public opinion. In each case however, their commentaries accomplished three things: They informed the public, spurred debate, and added to the war's friction in the executive branch. Informing the public was a constant, whether in triumph or adversity, the public could count on military analysts to explain what was happening and why. However, the nature of each war dictated the amount of criticism and debate the pundits spurred, and the three factors that influenced this was public support, the tactics employed and the clarity of the political strategy. While their commentaries may have shaped existing public opinion, there is no evidence that supports pundits creating public opinion.

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INTRODUCTION

My concern is, why do we need all of this punditry? What void is it trying to fill?¹

Richard Noyes

General Peck said he thought that many [pundits] provided a valuable service by helping ordinary Americans understand an often-arcane subject, and active duty officers noted that if retirees did not do commentary, the news program would rely, as he put it, “on some kid from Brookings who has never served a day of his life.”²

Allessandra Stanley

Not to stifle freedom of speech, but I think they should follow the tradition of presidents, the commanders-in-chief. You do not see former presidents criticizing a sitting president during a war.³

Senator John Warner

In September of 2001, 90% of America received most of their news on the terrorist attacks against the United States from television; a number that would remain at 89% throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).⁴ In April of 2003 while the United States led the coalition of the willing in OIF, many retired officers stated on television that the Department of Defense had not planned and resourced the war properly, resulting in an operation that would proceed longer than expected. Unsecured supply lines and a shortage of troops involved in the campaign were the largest criticisms, earning these pundits a sharp response from the Secretary of Defense, members

¹ Quoted by James N. Thurman, “TV’s Pundits: Often Wrong, Rarely Repentant,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 June 1999, 1.

² Alessandra Stanley, “Retired Officers Raise Awareness on Television and Hackles at the Pentagon,” *New York Times*, 3 November 2001, sec B, 3.

³ Quoted by Dan Trigoboff, “*Target: TV Analysts*,” *Broadcasting and Cable*, 7 April 2003, 1.

⁴ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press “Public Confidence in War Effort Falters,” (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=177> 07 October 2005.

of Congress and other general officers, both retired and serving. As America fights her first war of the twenty-first century, one that has exceeded the length of World War II, Americans will continue to turn to the television for news, and along with the news, they will continue to hear commentaries and opinions from retired military leaders. With public opinion and support so important in America's Global War on Terrorism, are these pundits shaping opinion to the extent that they are affecting policy within the executive branch of the government? Is this effect positive or negative and should these pundits be banned, encouraged or coached?

Just who are these experts and what effect do they have on U.S. policy during times of conflict? Are they graying and less attractive cheerleaders for the Pentagon or Monday morning quarterbacks who would have done it anyway but the way one just saw? More importantly, do their comments and opinions change the way the public thinks and does that affect how the executive branch fights wars? With such disparate opinions, there is bound to be debate, and in the absence of a constitutional amendment, the experts are here to stay. This monograph will explore both sides of the issue and attempt to answer the question: Through appearances on television, do military pundits influence public opinion and how does that affect military policy during times of conflict within the executive branch of the government?

The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, made clear his thoughts on the utility of these experts. As Thomas Ricks wrote: "He [Rumsfeld] specifically criticized "retired military officers" who opined on television and newspapers "that constantly, you know, blare big headlines of: 'Henny Penny: The Sky is Falling,' 'It's Just Terrible,' 'Isn't It Awful?'"⁵

Was this in defense to what Rumsfeld may have considered personal attacks against him or was it for the good of the country, to ease the fears of a nation at war and to ensure that the public was behind the Department of Defense, OIF and the soldiers on the ground? In the first war since our

⁵ Thomas E. Ricks, "Rumsfeld, Myers Again Criticize War Coverage; Ex-Military Officers Are Singled Out" *Washington Post*, 18 April 2003, sec A, 28.

independence that features an all-volunteer military, public support is critical to success and second-guessing may not be the best course for the nation. As General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during OIF stated, “I think some retired military to opine as aggressively as some have done is just not helpful. I mean, its one thing to have an opinion; it is another thing to express such dissatisfaction with quote, “the plan,” that its just not very helpful,”⁶ telling the pundits in no uncertain terms that their advice was neither helpful or needed.

On the other hand, there are foreign policy experts such as Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institute who stated just the opposite: “These critics of the critics are wrong. Vigorous debate is not only eminently American, it is good for the way we wage war.”⁷ Freedom of speech is a constitutional right, and the public has a right to know how the government is spending their tax dollars and lives of their citizens. General (Retired) Barry McCaffrey, one of the retired officers often seen on NBC, stated: “I’m quite proud to be part of an attempt to explain to the American people what’s happening to their young people. This war is too important to be left to the secretary alone. At the end of the day I think they ought to value my public opinion.”⁸ To prove that pundits do not influence policy within the executive branch of the government, but rather echo and support public opinion and add to the friction of war, the monograph will first provide a brief overview of pundits including their history and motivations. Then it will establish a link between the television news media, public opinion and policy followed by a description of the “Paradoxical Trinity” that will be used as a model throughout the paper, and a definition of key terms. Next, the monograph will provide an analysis of three campaigns: Desert Storm, Allied Force and Iraqi Freedom, showing the role and relevance of pundits during times of conflict. The comments made by Secretary Rumsfeld, Senator Warner and General Myers alluding to the utility and professionalism of punditry deserve a closer look, so the monograph

⁶ “A Nation at War,” *New York Times*, 2 April 2003, sec B, 10.

⁷ Michael E. O’Hanlon, “General Disagreement,” *Baltimore Sun*, 30 April 2003.

⁸ Jim Rutenberg, “Ex-Generals Defend Their Blunt Comments,” *New York Times*, 2 April 2003, sec B, 1.

will next briefly explore the professional ramifications of punditry. Finally, the findings and recommendations will address the impact of pundits and discuss ways they can be used to America's advantage in the future.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

What did the US armed forces learn from this [Vietnam] experience? They definitely learned that they needed the support of the American people – trying to hide two parts of Clausewitz’s strategic triangle from the third didn’t work. That became the story. What the military failed to see was the importance of the media as a conduit to the people.⁹

Margaret H. Belknap

BACKGROUND

Before going any further, it is important to find out just who these pundits are, what they do and why they do it. With some exception, they are retired general officers from the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines who media outlets hire as consultants and subject matter experts. Generally, the larger audience the media can reach, the higher the rank of the consultant. This monograph will focus only on television, which is why most of the pundits referenced are retired flag officers.

Military pundits are not new, what is new is the number of them, a society more interested in foreign affairs and a heightened competition in the news industry. “There have always been military experts, real or otherwise,” stated Dr. John Shy of the University of Michigan. “Television gives them a visibility and a means.”¹⁰ Most analysts became household names during Operation Desert Storm, when America watched the war on CNN and networks realized that they needed someone to explain not only what was going on, but what it meant. Analysts began to replace anchors as the experts. As mass media and 24 hour news services grew, so did the need for pundits. While numbering less than a dozen during Desert Storm, there were more than twenty during the first few weeks of Allied Force (Kosovo)¹¹ and up to

⁹ Margaret H. Belknap, “The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?” *Parameters* 32, (Autumn 2002): 103.

¹⁰ Kelly Heyboer, “The Pundit Corps,” *American Journalism Review* 21, (June 1999), 36.

¹¹ Ibid.

seventeen working for CNN, FOX and MSNBC alone during Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) in November 2001.¹² As a society, Americans are realizing that the more they know, the more they need to know and nothing piques their curiosity more than a war.

To answer Richard Noyes' question in the opening epigraph, networks and news channels need these pundits for a variety of reasons, but chief among them is to provide "first hand familiarity with battle and military planning and translate sometimes baffling jargon."¹³ Except for a small number of specialists in the field of national security, Americans must rely on the media for national security information.¹⁴ Even during OIF, 89% off all Americans received most of their news about the war from television,¹⁵ so the reasons that a reputable news channel would hire these experts, some at more than \$1,500/day in 1991 are obvious.¹⁶ For as little as one appearance during OIF, less prominent analysts made \$500.¹⁷ The analysts can explain the terms and procedures as well as what is happening the same way a retired quarterback can call a football game. Not only can they tell the viewer what is going on, but also because of their experience, they can describe the effects of technology, terrain, and weather. In the case of some of some analysts, such as General (Retired) McCaffrey, they may have fought on the same terrain. Finally, they may be able to predict what will happen next, on both the enemy and friendly side. The news networks know they may not always be right, but with the exception of someone on active duty there is no one who is better qualified.

Despite the advantages, there are some downfalls for the networks. They can pay for these analysts, but not their beliefs and loyalties. As the *New York Times* reported, "On the other

¹² Stanley, 3.

¹³ Heyboer, 36.

¹⁴ Stephen Aubin, *Distorting Defense: Network News and National Security* (Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 11.

¹⁵ Lee Raine, Susannah Fox and Deborah Fallows, *The Internet and the Iraq War*. (Washington: Pew Internet and Life Project, 2003), 2. Accessed at www.pewinternet.org 22 August 05.

¹⁶ Elisabeth Kastor, "Ten-Hut! It's the Network's March of the War Experts," *Washington Post*, 22 January 1991, sec B, 1.

¹⁷ John H. Cushman, "Iraq War Keeps Generals Busy, Even the Ones Who Have Retired," *New York Times*, 25 March 2003, sec B, 15.

hand, their evident sympathies with the current commanders, not to mention for the military and respect for the military and immersion in its doctrines, sometimes seem to immunize them to the self-imposed skepticism of the news organizations that now employ them.”¹⁸ In 1998, Air Force Major General (Retired) Perry Smith, who had been working as a consultant for CNN for seven years, went so far as to resign in protest over a controversial report that the United States had used nerve gas against American defectors in Laos. “You’ve taken away my credibility as a military analyst because people will assume that if it went on the air, Perry Smith must have approved.”¹⁹ While there are many disgruntled “experts” who have left the service because of retirement or other reasons, the real experts earned their rank and value their reputation, so it is fair to say that their opinions are their own.

Why do these retired officers comment on television? There are a variety of reasons, but for many of them, the primary reason is a continuing sense of duty. They want to describe to the American public what their sons and daughters are doing, some of whom they may have trained, and show that their resources are being well spent. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, General (Retired) Joseph Ralston, described it best, “The job is to explain a complex military situation to the American public. There is some clarity we can bring.”²⁰ Congruently with these pundits’ sense of duty is their desire to make sure that the press accurately reports and interprets facts and events as they unfold. MG (Retired) Smith, who knows firsthand the value of integrity in the military profession and has a personal relationship with General (Retired) Norman Schwarzkopf, commented on Schwarzkopf’s integrity when reporters questioned the accuracy of battle damage assessments during Operation Desert Storm.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “CNN Analyst on Military Steps Down After Report,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1998, sec A, 22.

²⁰ Trigoboff, 1.

²¹ Perry Smith, *How CNN Fought the War*. (New York: Carol Publishing, 1991), 26.

A second reason why retired officers become analysts is to encourage policy, such as Lieutenant General (Retired) William Odom. “I’m on Hudson’s payroll. Hudson wants to encourage public policy, as all think tanks do.”²² This particular instance was during Operation Allied Force, when LTG (Retired) Odom tried to make the point that there were no ground troops, too much focus on air and sea power and not enough resources devoted to the Army.²³ Tied into this is the desire to spur debate, not necessarily to criticize the government or their former colleagues, but to ask questions and make the public aware of issues that they deem important. For example, the types of units currently in the Army and the size of the force the United States used in the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq is a controversy that had not subsided. General (Retired) Frederick J. Kroesen, who did not appear on television during the war, stated during OIF:

I still maintain that the campaign carried some very big risks. I just know that in the 3rd Division Commanders shoes, I would have felt very lonely on occasion, not having a reserve force to bail me out of trouble. That was the essence of all TV General’s complaints – we did not have the force in being that could absolutely guarantee success. As it turned out, we didn’t need it, but what if we had?²⁴

In many cases, it appears that these retired generals stated things that their comrades on active duty only wish they could.

Finally, a very small percentage, though often the most outspoken, may have a political agenda or may have a personal issue with the operations that are being planned and conducted or a grudge with the current leadership. There may be no better way to obtain paid publicity. General (Retired) Wesley Clark, the commander of NATO during Operation Allied Force, was an analyst during Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and a Democratic candidate for

²² Quoted in Heyboer, 37.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ricks, 1.

president in 2004. “General Clark, whose meetings with Democratic activists have fueled speculation that he wants to run for president, may be the smoothest and most urbane Generals to have turned, as Churchill may have put it, from war-war to jaw-jaw.”²⁵ General (Retired) Clark was not the first general to run for the nation’s highest office nor will he be the last. He was, however, the first to do it during a war in the information age.

There are some things that most of these retired officers will not do. Seldom will they criticize the conduct of the war, a review by the New York Times revealed in March of 2003.²⁶ “Don’t ask me to second guess the military. I deplore it when I see former military people acting as Monday morning quarterbacks,”²⁷ said Lieutenant General (Retired) Bernard Trainor. Most of these analysts have literally walked a mile in their comrades’ shoes, and because they are not privy to all the information their active duty peers have, are loathe to pass judgment. Trainors’ thoughts are echoed by his peer, Lieutenant General (Retired) Odom, who stated, “Second guessing is not something I like to do...They want you to do it all the time, and that puts a lot of us in a bind.”²⁸

Analysts are also quick to point out that they will do nothing to put the safety of troops or the operation in danger. General (Retired) Clark stated during OIF:

The other military analysts and I continue to hear feedback that people are still concerned that somehow we’re giving away plans. And you know, I just want to reassure everybody that we’re sensitive to that, that none of us have seen those plans. And we wouldn’t ask our military colleagues about them. We’re hypersensitive to the safety of soldiers.²⁹

Finally, even though these analysts may have been in their comrades’ shoes and are still competent officers, most will not predict specifics. During OIF, General (Retired) Ralston

²⁵ Cushman, 15.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Heyboer, 38.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Cushman, 15.

recalled a conversation he had with an anchor who asked him what to do if he were Saddam Hussein. “I said it was impossible to answer that. But I’m not going to give Saddam Hussein any good ideas, just in case he hasn’t thought of them.”³⁰

In order to answer the research question, it is important to establish two critical links. First, that television news influences public opinion, and second that public opinion affects policy. If both of these conditions exist, it is a logical conclusion that television news influences policy. That the news influences public opinion is obvious, what is not as obvious is the extent to which news competes with things like personal bias, political affiliation, age, how and where one is brought up and a host of other factors. “If the news media are consistently doing their job, the public will have an ever growing reservoir of fact and opinion that they can use in making their decisions about the need for war, as well as other policy matters.”³¹ War generally tends to make citizens more interested in current events, and most Americans feel it is their moral obligation to have an opinion on everything. Television news provides a basis of fact for those opinions. Even among Internet users, 87% of Americans received their news about OIF from television.³² With numbers like this, it is safe to say that more Americans receive their news from television than anywhere else.

So does public opinion affect policy? George F. Kennan, the preeminent diplomat, described American policy as “controlled by popular emotional impulses, particularly ones provoked by the commercial television industry.”³³ America is and always has been a

³⁰ Trigoboff, 1.

³¹ Phillip Seib, *Distorting Defense: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 1.

³² Raine, 3.

³³ George F. Kennan, “Somalia, Through a looking Glass Darkly.” *New York Times*, 30 September 1993. Quoted by Jonathan Mermin “Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy.” *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (1997): 385-403.

democracy “of the people, by the people, for the people.”³⁴ The executive branch of the government, specifically the President, with the advice and extent of the Senate, is responsible for foreign policy. This representation provided by their Senators allows Americans to express their like or dislike with current policies and exert influence through their elected representatives. If the Senators do not adequately represent their constituents, or the majority does not agree with how the current administration is running the government and representing their interests, they can change the administration at the next election.

In America, as in ancient Greece, public opinion is at the root of policy. Clausewitz emphasized that:

If war is part of policy, policy will determine its character. As policy becomes ambitious and vigorous, so will war...Political considerations do not determine the posting of guards or the employment of patrols. But they are the more influential in the planning of war, the campaigns, and often even of the battle.³⁵

Beginning with Thucydides and the Spartan debate, there are many examples of public opinion moving a nation to war or its conduct during a war. Even in America’s own history, one can find many examples, such as the sinking of the *USS Maine*, the Spanish – American War, Pearl Harbor, and even the events of September 11th 2001. Public opinion plays a part in the first component of Clausewitz’ trinity, the people:

This shame and humiliation, which must be distinguished from all other psychological consequences of the transformation of the balance, is an essential part of victory. It is the only element that affects public opinion outside the army; that impresses the

³⁴ Speech of Abraham Lincoln. Speech at Gettysburg 19 November 1863. Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations. Accessed on-line at <http://education.yahoo.com/search/bfq?lb=q&p=num%3A448.10> 08 September 2005.

³⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 606.

people and the governments of the two belligerents and of their allies.³⁶

This shame and humiliation, affecting public opinion, adds friction because it may cause the people to want commander and the army to increase or decrease the intensity of the war when it may not be operationally sound or possible.

Before leaving this discussion of the media's influence on policy, it is important to note that this is a two-way street. The executive branch, especially an administration that enjoys a high approval rating, can also influence the media, therefore while the media can influence policy, so too can policy influence media.³⁷ This ability to influence the media will become important if the Department of Defense wants to use pundits as part of their public affairs operations.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the role pundits play a role in policy making it is important to understand the relationship between the people, the government and their army. To explain this relationship, and how pundits affect each component of the trinity, this monograph will use Clausewitz' "paradoxical trinity," he described it:

As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of three aspects concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 234.

³⁷ A full discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this monograph. For more information, see Jonathon Mermins article "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy" and Douglas V. Johnson's study "The Impact of the Media on National Security Policy Decision Making" published by the US Army War College.

³⁸ Clausewitz, 89.

Clausewitz wrote about a monarchy and America is a democracy, so the government in this case is the executive branch of government, which for the purposes of this monograph consists of the President and his Cabinet, with a special emphasis on the Department of Defense. In order to avoid confusion and provide a common understanding of terms, the monograph will propose a few definitions before proceeding further:

Influence – Cause someone to consider or commit to a point of view or opinion.

Inform – Pass on news or facts.

Military Pundit – Merriam Webster defined a pundit as 1: A learned person 2: Critic.³⁹

For the monograph, a former member of the military who is commenting on or analyzing military events on television.

Television News – Any medium for broadcasting news over television. This can include all purpose networks such as ABC or all – news networks such as CNN, broadcast over cable, satellite or traditional airwaves.

Media analysts often call Desert Storm the “CNN War” because it was the first war watched and reported on as it happened, and this war was the beginning of modern military punditry on television. For these reasons and the fact that the American public as well as the world supported the war, the analysis will start with this conflict. Operation Allied Force, unique in that it was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s first and only war in Kosovo, as well as a war fought without ground troops, will be the next conflict examined. The last campaign examined will be the main effort for America’s Global War On Terrorism, Operation Iraqi

³⁹ *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam Webster, [2004]) 585.

Freedom, where America tried new tactics, went against the wishes of the United Nations and most of the world and so far has had outcomes different than what America would have desired.

These three case studies will focus on the three components of the trinity. The best way to represent the “primordial violence and enmity”⁴⁰ is public opinion, so the case studies will use public opinion to describe the desire of the American people to go to war and their attitudes throughout the campaign. The campaign overview and the military objectives will describe the second component, the commander and his Army, “the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam.”⁴¹ The third component of the trinity, the government, “its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone”⁴² links the desire of the people and the abilities of the Army to political goals. Clausewitz wrote:

The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.⁴³

Various policies, strategies and speeches provide the best examples of these political aims, and the case studies will make full use of them. In answering the research question, this monograph will explore how pundits influence each of these components, whether or not they cause the government to change its policy and finally, whether or not they add or subtract to the friction of war.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, 89.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

CASE STUDIES

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/ DESERT STORM

You know who I feel sorry for? The one retired military general who didn't get a job as a consultant for the networks this week.⁴⁴

Dennis Miller

In 1990, after eight years of fruitless and bloody war with Iran, Saddam Hussein's country of Iraq was \$80 billion in debt, \$15 billion of it to the Kingdom of Kuwait. With a civilian economy suffering because of war, Iraq maintained a large standing army and in 1990, Iraq had a \$12.9 billion dollar defense budget, 99% of its previous year's oil revenues. With a 40% inflation rate and a 72% taxation rate, Saddam Hussein knew he had to generate some income and re-start his economy. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so Saddam looked south. In late July 1990, he began his campaign against his southern neighbor with an information operation, accusing Kuwait of various charges: illegally drilling for oil diagonally into Iraq, exceeding OPEC quotas and seizing several hundred square miles of Iraqi territory during the Iran – Iraq War. Although Kuwait offered to share oil revenues with Saddam and cut back its oil production, the result was pre-ordained. Saddam was broke, had a large army with nothing to do, and a rich neighbor to the south so in his mind, an attack was justified. On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded its southern neighbor, Kuwait. With Kuwaiti combat power at less than 16,000 soldiers, 250 tanks and 450 armored vehicles, the fight was one-sided and by the end of the day on 3 August 1990, Iraq controlled the Kuwaiti Kingdom.⁴⁵ With one country already conquered, Saddam's Republican Guard began massing on the Kuwait – Saudi-Arabia border and all indications pointed towards a continued attack into Saudi Arabia.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Kastor, 1.

⁴⁵ Thomas Houlahan, *Gulf War: The Complete History* (New Hampshire: Schrenker Military publishing, 1999), 3-5.

In response to the threat on his border on 6 August, the King of Saudi Arabia invited American forces to his country. Immediately following the King's invitation on 8 August, President George Bush announced that the United States would commit forces to defend the Kingdom, and drew his line in the sand. With the arrival of the first brigade of American combat power on 9 August, Saddam paused and the United States continued to build not only its combat power but a coalition as well. In this coalition, the partners would not only be America's European allies including the British and French, but also Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Syria, Morocco and Qatar. In all, 37 countries contributed to the coalition.⁴⁶ August of 1990 also gave the first example of people's desire, 80% approved President Bush's decision to send troops to Saudi Arabia.⁴⁷

By the middle of November, the commander and his army were preparing for war in Saudi Arabia. The United States Army's XVIII Airborne Corps, the Marine Corps' 1st Marine Division and other members of the coalition were closing in assembly areas in Saudi Arabia, while General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and his staff continued their initial campaign planning. Due to a variety of factors including strategic and operational objectives as well as the enemy and terrain, the need for an additional armored corps it became apparent, and on 8 November, the President announced that the Pentagon had alerted the VII Corps in Germany for deployment. Concurrent with these deployments, Congress authorized the activation of more than 400,000 reservists.⁴⁸ The defense industry mobilized as well, with contractors such as Raytheon working three shifts to produce enough missiles for the Patriot batteries that would prove decisive in protecting troops and the coalition. The first component of the trinity continued to speak, at this

⁴⁶ United States Central Command *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm Executive Summary* 11 July 1991, 1. Accessed on-line at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/> 18 September 2005.

⁴⁷ John Mueller, *Policy and Public Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 193-200.

⁴⁸ Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War*, (Washington: Brassey's 1997), 391-393.

point, with all the forces either deployed or deploying but prior to the air war, 62% of America approved of the way President Bush was handling the situation in the Gulf and 78% said he had done at least a fair job of explaining why we were there.⁴⁹ A key player in this war, the United Nations Security Council issued resolutions not only condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait but authorizing the use of kick the Iraqis out. Operation Desert Shield became not only a national effort but a global effort.

The missing component of the trinity is the government, and National Security directives filled the void and gave clear guidance and objectives. With these documents in hand, the Central Command planners were able to begin to formulate their campaign plan. They started with the objectives stated in National Security Directive 45, "the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government to replace the puppet regime installed by Iraq, a commitment to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf and the protection and lives of the American citizens abroad."⁵⁰ National Security Directive 54 provided additional guidance on how to achieve these purposes, "defend Saudi Arabia and other GCC states against attack, preclude Iraqi launch of ballistic missiles against neighboring states and friendly forces, destroy Iraq's chemical biological and nuclear capabilities, destroy Iraq's command, control and communication capabilities, eliminate the Republican Guards as an effective fighting force and conduct operations designed to drive Iraq's forces from Kuwait, break their will, discourage use of NBC, encourage defection and weaken Iraqi support for current government."⁵¹

From this guidance, the planners finalized the campaign: shape the battlefield with airpower and two shaping operations on the ground, one in the East with the Marines and Arab

⁴⁹ Mueller, 193-200.

⁵⁰ George H.W. Bush. *National Security Directive 45*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 20 August 1990), 1. Accessed at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/> 18 September 2005.

⁵¹ George H.W. Bush. *National Security Directive 54*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 15 January 1991), 1. Accessed at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/> 18 September 2005.

coalition and a second in the West with XVIII Airborne Corps. The VII Corps would be the decisive operation in the center. By 15 January, Central Command had a solid plan; the forces were nearly in place and the UN imposed deadline expired.

On 17 January 1991, Operation Desert Shield became Operation Desert Storm and for 39 days, the coalition air forces attacked the Iraqi forces. On 24 February, the coalition began their ground attack and 100 hours later, coalition forces defeated the Iraqis in a war that they had been training to fight for nearly 40 years. On 28 February, the coalition initiated a temporary cease-fire that the Iraqis agreed to on 3 March.⁵² Operation Desert Storm was over, and while there were casualties, this campaign would prove to be the model for future wars. Relatively speaking, the war was quick, painless and successful.

As outlined above, the policy of the United States government was clear, leaving little for the pundits to criticize. Eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait and restore the legitimate government. Central Command was able to take this guidance and translate into a clear four phased operation aimed at the destruction of Iraq's centers of gravity, identified as: leadership and command and control, chemical, biological and nuclear capability, ballistic missiles and the Republican Guard.⁵³ While there were some political considerations that planners had to take into account at the outset of the war, such as the Kuwaiti Army being the first to enter Kuwait City and preserving the Arab coalition by keeping Israel out of the war, there were few other constraints or restraints placed on Central Command by the political leadership of the coalition.

Without the support of the people, neither the Bush Administration nor the military would have been as successful in prosecuting the war. Public opinion, again representing the people and the first component of Clausewitz' trinity, was clearly behind the war. On 16 January, 76% of Americans either approved either strongly or somewhat strongly of the decision to go to

⁵² Scales, 393.

⁵³ Central Command, 10.

war. On the first day of the ground offensive, that number rose to 85% and at the conclusion of hostilities that number was at 82%.⁵⁴ The American people were behind the war and with a 92% approval rate for the five days following the war, they were behind Bush.⁵⁵

What were the pundits doing during this conflict? With some exception, they were either analyzing reports or speculating. Although Vietnam may have been America's first TV war, media had never been able to cover a war as extensively as this. Desert Storm was the first war briefed in real time.⁵⁶ With reporters such as Peter Arnett actually in Baghdad and reports and briefings coming from Saudi Arabia literally hourly, someone had to describe what all of these reports actually meant. CBS went so far as to set up a "war room" filled up with maps, charts and it their very own pundit, General (Retired) George Crist.⁵⁷ The more information people received, the more they needed, and CNN became the "War in the Gulf Channel."⁵⁸ In his book *How CNN Fought the War*, MG (Retired) Perry Smith stated that the first reason networks used analysts was to provide instant analysis of fast breaking events, and used describing gun camera footage as an example.⁵⁹ MG (Retired) Smith was not the only pundit to share that opinion. To LTG (Retired) Odom, what seemed utterly elementary to him was revelatory to the public and his television bosses, "I guess on the whole we are raising the public military literacy fairly remarkably."⁶⁰

The analysis provided by these pundits actually proved to be a great advantage. Inaccurate reporting decreased, giving the public an accurate view of not only the capabilities of U.S. weapons systems but also a true representation of the lengths the coalition was going to avoid needless casualties, both civilian and military. During Desert Storm, problematic reports

⁵⁴ Mueller, 202.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 194.

⁵⁶ Aubin, 170.

⁵⁷ Kastor, 1.

⁵⁸ *The People, The Press and The War in The Gulf*, by Donald S. Kellerman, Director (Washington D.C: Pew Research Center, 31 January 1991), 2.

⁵⁹ Smith, 103.

⁶⁰ Kastor, 1.

for military operations declined from an average of 32.0% to 6.6%, a decrease Dr. Stephen Aubin, an expert in national security affairs and communications as well as the author of the book *Distorting Defense: Network News and National Security*, partly attributes to the presence of outside experts.⁶¹ The pundits agreed. “I guess I do think that we keep grossly erroneous impressions about the operations from taking hold. We’re able to correct those” stated LTG (Retired) Odom. “CBS, like most of the news organizations, was frightfully ignorant of the military. None of the reporters covering the story have fought in any wars. They really had no base from which to come,” echoed General (Retired) Crist.⁶² MG (Retired) Perry nearly quit CNN for their depiction of the bombing campaign as relentless, and error he said was wrong in both a factual and normative sense, and the only reason he stayed was to provide a accurate analysis and balance the story.⁶³ For the people, the first component of the triangle, pundits informed the public but because the war was so popular, they did not influence or add friction by casting doubt on the serving military experts.

The other role of the pundits was speculation. The United States had not been in a major conflict since Vietnam and no one knew how the military would perform. Pundits, both civilian and retired military, as well as think tanks such as the Brookings Institute, predicted casualties in the thousands. Even Colonel (Retired) Trevor Dupuy, who wrote a book on how to defeat Saddam Hussein, predicted 1,300 casualties.⁶⁴ Other doomsday predictions included the use of chemical weapons and a shattering of the coalition. The Pentagon ordered body bag production accelerated, and the staff at the military mortuary at Dover Air Force Base quadrupled in size and

⁶¹ Aubin, 168.

⁶² Kastor, 1.

⁶³ Smith, 83.

⁶⁴ Joel Achenbach “The Experts, In Retreat; After the Fact Explanations for the Gloomy Predictions,” *Washington Post*, 28 February 1991, sec D, 1.

stockpiled over 16,000 body bags, but because of the Pentagon's own battlefield calculus, not because of the predictions of these pundits.⁶⁵

In his book, MG (Retired) Smith discussed seven benefits media can play, two of them directly related to analysts:

...a fifth is to criticize. A sixth is to help decision makers make better policy. A seventh is to encourage decision makers to become better planners, strategists, and visionaries...Criticism is a useful journalistic tool, but predictions and suggestions may be even more helpful. Criticism often causes top decision makers to become very defensive, while helpful suggestions are sometimes more readily received and acted upon.⁶⁶

MG (R) Smith cited two examples of how he may have influenced policy, for both the military and the government, with one instance in the United States and the other in Israel. For the United States, he suggested that Saddam was winning the propaganda war, and the wise thing to do was release photographs to offset Iraqi propaganda, which the coalition eventually did. The Israeli example involved a debate he had on CNN with the Minister of Health, Ehud Olmert over Israel's decision not to launch retaliatory strikes on Iraq for launching Scud missiles. When Olmert asked how Smith would feel if Scuds were hitting Washington, Smith replied he was in Pearl Harbor in 1941 and knew exactly what was like. While he acknowledged it may never be clear if he had any impact on either situation, it certainly helped move both process forward.⁶⁷

Operation Desert Storm may have brought pundits to television but because the pundits had little effect on the people there was little effect on policy, their primary contribution was education. What commentary they had may have been slightly pessimistic but was generally supportive of the war and administration. The world condemned Saddam and formed the largest coalition since World War II to liberate Kuwait. The administration deployed the military, formed the coalition and defeated the Iraqis with overwhelming public support. Central

⁶⁵ Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of The Persian Gulf War*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 183-184.

⁶⁶ Smith, 125.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Command planned a traditional, linear war that closely followed doctrine. Finally, once the coalition launched its attack, there was daily progress and few casualties. The war was brief, bloodless and brilliant and because there was little to criticize, there was little policy to change.

OPERATION ALLIED FORCE

On April 28, a majority of the House of Representatives voted against a declaration of war; against withdrawal from the war; for requiring congressional approval prior to the dispatch of and ground forces; and, in a 213-213 vote, against a resolution in support of the air war. House leaders then proceeded to work toward giving the pentagon twice as much money as it asked for to pay for the war. The senate effort was bipartisan but not much better: Leaders of both parties agreed to a token debate before tabling a resolution that would authorize ground forces. So the bombing proceeds not only without the sanction of Congress but against its expressed will.⁶⁸

Robert L. Borosage

Frustrated with the human rights violations occurring in Kosovo and Slobodan Milosevic's non-compliance with their demands, NATO and the United States made history on 24 March 1999. It was the first time NATO went to war and it was the first time the United States went to war without soldiers on the ground. Although the first bombs of the campaign did not fall until 1999, as early as 1992, the Bush Administration recognized the potential for Kosovo to become another flashpoint in the tumultuous Balkans. Serbians and Albanians have been fighting for hundreds of years over Kosovo, and when the Serbian Slobodan Milosevic became President of Serbia in 1987, he did nothing to stop it. On the contrary, he continued to exacerbate the situation by stripping Kosovo of its autonomy and continuing to oppress the Kosovar Albanians, who made up the majority of the population. Recognizing that violence in Kosovo would destabilize the already tempestuous region, President George H.W. Bush gave Milosevic the Christmas warning in December of 1982, which stated "in the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force in Kosovo

⁶⁸ Robert L. Borosage "The Nation; Government; A 'Splendid Little War' Collides with the War Powers Act." *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1999, sec M, 2.

and in Serbia proper.”⁶⁹ The Clinton Administration repeated this warning within a month of taking office, and in 1997, Milosevic became president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

A newly formed Kosovo Liberation Army, recognizing that the best way to draw international attention to their desire for an independent country was violence, launched small scale attacks against Serbian officials such as police officers. In March of 1998, Serbian forces retaliated by killing eighty-five Kosovar Albanians and it became apparent that without intervention of some sort, the Kosovar Albanians would begin fighting with Milosevic’s Serbian nationalists. The initial response was from a six-nation contact group, formed to minimize disagreements over Bosnia that consisted of the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. Demands on Milosevic from this group included him ceasing all actions by Serb security forces against civilians, withdrawal of all special police units from the territory, allowing humanitarian groups into Kosovo and an unconditional dialogue with the Albanian community. Failure to follow these demands would result in an arms embargo, denial of travel visas for senior Yugoslavian officials, freezing assets and moratorium on export credits for trade and investment.⁷⁰ On 31 March, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1160, placing an arms embargo on Yugoslavia, and on 29 April, the contact group, less Russia, agreed to their sanctions place on Milosevic for non-compliance.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1998, Milosevic continued to pay lip service to the demands of the UN, NATO and the United States. NATO continued to plan options for dealing with Milosevic, including Operation Determined Falcon, when eighty-five planes from thirteen countries conducted a show of force within fifteen miles of Serbia and the contact group banned all commercial air to and from Yugoslavia. These measures would be of little consequence to Milosevic.

⁶⁹ Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo*, (Washington: Brookings Institute, 2000), 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 24.

From 18-21 July, Serbian forces launched an attack that forced 12,000 Kosovars from their homes. In response to this, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1199 on 23 September, demanding a cessation of hostilities by Serbian forces, withdrawal of security units used for civilian repression, safe return for refugees and displaced persons, international monitoring and progress on the talks with Albanians. On 3 October, the UN found Yugoslavia in substantial non-compliance and on 5 October Richard Holbrook, an ambassador from the United States, began to meet with Milosevic. On 13 October, NATO issued an activation order for an air campaign within 96 hours, and based on that threat, Milosevic agreed to the UN resolution, as well as reconnaissance flights over Kosovo and 2,000 unarmed monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The situation was progressing well, Milosevic withdrew 4,000 members of his secret police and the OSCE established their verification mission. Unfortunately, Milosevic's good will only lasted until 24 December 1998, when his Serbian forces had enough and launched an assault near the town of Podujevo and followed it up with a massacre in the village of Racak, where the Serbs executed at least forty-five people, including three women and a 12 year old boy.

United States and NATO's strategy continued to evolve, and negotiations went forward with additional demands such as self-governance for Kosovo and fair elections, which NATO backed by continued implicit threats of air attack. Peace conferences opened in Rambouillet on 6 February, and Kosovar Albanians consented to the agreement in principle. On 15 March, the peace conferences moved to Paris, and the Kosovar Albanians signed it. Milosevic did not; his main objection was foreign troops on Serbian soil.

Though not in an overwhelming manner, Milosevic's obtrusiveness finally frustrated the citizens of the United States and other member countries of NATO enough to cause them to demand the action that brought about his demise. A 21 March Gallup Poll indicated that 58% of Americans believed that the United States had a moral obligation to intervene in Kosovo to stop

the killings, and President Clinton chose to do so.⁷¹ On 23 March, the Secretary General of NATO ordered General Wesley Clark to begin bombing Kosovo and the United States consented, agreeing to the bombing with a 58-41 vote in the Senate.⁷² When the House of Representatives voted a month later, the resolution was so contradictory it was meaningless, as demonstrated in the epigraph to this case study.

Because this war was not as widely supported as Desert Storm, the executive branch played a greater role in determining the conduct of the war. While this was primarily a NATO war, the United States provided the bulk of the combat power, so the policy examined will be that of the United States. On 24 March, the day the campaign began, President Clinton outlined his three objectives: demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose, to deter an even bloodier offense by Yugoslavia against innocent civilians in Kosovo and if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to make war in Kosovo.⁷³ Also at the beginning of the campaign, the Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana announced NATO's military goals of the campaign "Alliance military action is intended to support its political aims. To do so, NATO's military action will be directed towards halting the violent attacks being committed by Yugoslav army and security forces and disrupting their ability to conduct future attacks against the population of Kosovo."⁷⁴

Knowing these goals and policy aims, and restricted to using only air assets, General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and NATO developed his plan, including what he called "Measures of Merit." The first measure of merit was "not to lose aircraft,

⁷¹ Quoted in Program on International Policy Attitudes, *Americans in Kosovo: A Study in US Public Attitudes*, (Washington, Program on International Policy Attitudes, 1999). Accessed at http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/Kosovo/Kosovo_May99/Kosovo_May99_rpt.pdf 02 November 2005.

⁷² Daalder and O'Hanlon, 231.

⁷³ Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, *CRS Report RL30374: Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation Allied Force*, report prepared by Paul E. Gallis, 19 November 1999, 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 3.

minimize the loss of aircrews.”⁷⁵ This measure addressed several concerns of the Alliance, including the air forces concern over crew loss, targeting and the political aspects of friendly casualties. The second measure of merit was to “impact Yugoslavian military and police activities on the ground as rapidly and effectively as possible.”⁷⁶ This measure of merit directly addressed what the military would do to accomplish the political objective. The third measure of merit was “protect our ground forces – and in the case of SFOR, the elements of the international community – from retaliation or other attacks by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or other associated elements.”⁷⁷ This measure addressed force protection for the forces in Bosnia and Macedonia. Additionally, General Clark had a political measure of merit to retain Alliance solidarity and the full support of regional partners. In the next two days, these measures of merit developed into lines of effort that lasted with little change throughout the campaign: air strikes, force protection, maintaining support of the key front lines states of Macedonia and Albania, maintaining allied cohesion, isolating the theater, and humanitarian assistance.⁷⁸

The campaign began and Milosevic responded, not by cowing to the demands of NATO, but rather the bombing served to strengthen his resolve. He had been planning his ethnic cleansing for months, and his forces conducted them with brutal efficiency and speed when NATO bombs began to fall. Refugee reports and other intelligence indicated that Serbian forces drove out the majority of Kosovar Albanians from their homes within the first week of the war.⁷⁹ Milosevic may have realized the inevitable but he did not show it, the more bombs fell the harder he worked to kick the Kosovar Albanians out.

⁷⁵ Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the Future of Combat* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 183.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 189.

⁷⁹ Daalder and O’Hanlon, 112.

More than anything else, these actions by Milosevic rallied the people of the United States to support the war, but still not enough to support sending ground troops. In a Pew Research poll conducted from 24-28 March, 60% of Americans supported an air war in Kosovo, and 70% thought that preventing the killing of innocent civilians was an important reason for military action. The same week a separate *Newsweek* Poll 60% of Americans thought that the air war would not be enough and ground forces would be required to force Milosevic to comply. A CBS poll said 62% of the people opposed using troops to try to end the fighting in Kosovo. As with all wars, once the violence began, interest in the conflict rose, with public interest going from 11% to 41%.⁸⁰ This support gave NATO the opportunity to respond in several ways: increasing aircraft numbers and sorties, moving a carrier battle group into the region, adding target sets such as civilian infrastructure, and sending Task Force Hawk, a task force built around Apache gunships. While the public agreed with the war, ground troops were becoming a contentious issue and with more and more people following the war, NATO would have to adjust its political policy to accommodate the military tactics that the alliance would need to win the war.

The defiance of Milosevic forced NATO to not only continue its bombing but also to refine their policy. In April, they established five goals that would last throughout the campaign: Stop all military action, violence and repression in Kosovo; withdraw from Kosovo his [Milosevic's] military, police and paramilitary forces; agree to the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence with NATO at its core; agree to the return of all refugees and access to them by humanitarian aid organizations; and provide assurance of willingness to work on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords to establish a political framework agreement for

⁸⁰ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Support for NATO Air Strikes but with Plenty of Buts," (Washington: Pew Research Center, 1999) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=68>. 28 September 2005.

Kosovo.⁸¹ The ground option never left the table, with President Clinton authorizing a call up of reservists and the continued increase of NATO ground forces in Albania and Macedonia. The bombing campaign had an effect, but not all of it was positive. The Serbians managed to shoot down a stealth bomber and there was a large number of collateral damage. NATO inadvertently bombed a passenger train, a convoy and the Chinese embassy. An Apache gunship crashed on a training mission resulting in the only two NATO fatalities of the war.

On 15 April, four weeks into the war, Secretary of Defense William Cohen finally stated the United States' military objective for Operation Allied Force: "Our military objective is to degrade and damage the military and security structure that President Milosevic has used to depopulate and destroy the Albanian Majority in Kosovo."⁸² The military objective went from halting in March to degrading in April, mostly because the air campaigns were not stopping the genocide and bringing Milosevic to the table as fast as NATO has hoped. Public support at this point was relatively unchanged. 62% approved of the air strikes and 69% thought that preventing the killing of Kosovo citizens was a very important reason for using U.S. troops in the region. The largest change came in the opinion about the effectiveness of the war. 52% of Americans doubted the strikes will make the Serbs agree to a peace plan in the end and 42% opposed sending ground troops.⁸³ The public began to realize the same thing Secretary Cohen and the military pundits had, the air campaign would not win by itself. "Air power alone cannot stop the recalcitrant individuals that are going house to house and torching the homes and pulling people

⁸¹ Ibid, 3.

⁸² U.S. Congress. Senate. Secretary of Defense William Cohen speaking on Operation Allied Force to the Senate Armed Services Committee. 105th Cong. Accessed at <http://armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/1999/c990415.htm> 28 September 2005.

⁸³ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Continued Public Support for Kosovo, but Worries Grow," (Washington: Pew Research Center, 1999) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=64> 28 September 2005.

away from their wives and kids and taking them out into the street and shooting them. Air power can't target that sort of thing," stated Vice Admiral (Retired) Richard Allen.⁸⁴

As the war continued, public opinion dropped and only 53% approved of the bombing in Kosovo and now 50% opposed sending troops.⁸⁵ The war was not progressing well, and despite General Clark and the pundits asking for ground troops, NATO and Washington were hesitant to make a decision. The threat, however, was on the table. In a 23 May Op-Ed to the *New York Times*, President Clinton stated that air strikes would continue and he would rule out no options.⁸⁶ The Serbian forces must leave Kosovo. In May, with public confidence waning, strike sorties increased and NATO began hitting more categories of targets. Task Force Hawk was in Albania and NATO was moving more ground troops to the region. Because of the political cost of losing the war, the United States and NATO had no choice but to begin bombing more targets, including civilian infrastructure, again adjusting policy and tactics to support the will of the people. "In the end, most targets were approved...as the alliance collectively realized that the gloves would come off if Milosevic was to be defeated."⁸⁷ By June, NATO had increased its daily strike sortie rate tenfold from the beginning of the war.⁸⁸ Firepower and bluffing eventually prevailed. On 3 June, after 78 days, nearly 40,000 combat sorties flown against him, a coordinated attack by the Kosovo Liberation Army and the continued threat of a ground attack Milosevic and the Serbian Parliament agreed to NATO's peace plan, and on 10 June NATO suspended its bombing. The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1244, which authorized international security forces in Kosovo and Operation Allied Force was over. Milosevic capitulated and in the end, the

⁸⁴ Rowan Scarborough "Military Experts See a Need for Ground Troops," *Washington Times*, 30 May 1999, sec A, 1.

⁸⁵ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Americans disengaging from Kosovo" (Washington: Pew Research Center, 1999) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=62> 28 September 2005.

⁸⁶ William Jefferson Clinton, "A Just and Necessary War," *New York Times*, 23 May 1999, Sec 4, 17.

⁸⁷ Daalder and O'Hanlon, 119.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 144.

people got what they wanted; 62% of the people approved of the air strikes, 68% said the United States and NATO did the right thing but only 46% said NATO and the United States accomplished its goals.

While NATO and the United States did accomplish their mission, there were some policy changes throughout the campaign, mainly in defining success and targeting criteria. How much of these changes did the pundits cause? There were three main themes: Whether military force was the right decision, whether or not to use ground troops and how NATO ran the bombing campaign. In two out of the three areas, pundits clearly had no effect. Even with the Joint Chiefs of Staff arguing against it, the United States and NATO went with a military option. “I think it’s safe to say that the Joint Chiefs had reservations,” stated a senior military officer with direct knowledge of their talks. “But you know, you make your case, and that’s why we have civilian control over the military.”⁸⁹ Despite the best efforts of General Clark and an army of pundits, there were no ground troops. NATO had to change the third area, the prosecution of the air campaign, to win, but the pundits’ advice coincided with the serving officers running the campaign.

The decision to use military force was the first issue that the pundits would weigh in on. Madeline Albright, the Secretary of State believed that politics alone would fail to make Milosevic comply and believed that the bombing campaign would be a quick one. Because of the political considerations, ground forces were never a serious consideration. Was an air war with Milosevic the right decision? The Powell Doctrine, which holds that the United States should only intervene militarily when the nation’s vital interests are at stake, with decisive force and only when there is a clear goal and a defined strategy for getting out, said no. Secretary Albright, who told Powell, “What’s the point of having this superb military that you’ve been talking about if we can’t use it” when she was the United States’ Ambassador to the UN, believed that the United

⁸⁹ Bradley Graham, “Joint Chiefs Doubted Air Strategy,” *Washington Post*, 5 April 1999, sec A, 1.

States should use its military power in more flexible ways to achieve practical, if limited, goals.⁹⁰ Once the campaign was underway, this debate would turn to ground troops and whether or not airpower alone constituted the overwhelming force the Powell Doctrine called for.

The second point pundits made both at the onset of the war and as the campaign progressed and Milosevic thumbed his nose at the bombings was the decision not to use ground troops. Serving officers, supported by pundits, re-invigorated the debate about ground forces and policy makers were beginning to see that air power might not win the war. Even General Powell, who had retired in 1993 and was the highest-ranking retiree to speak out, stated “The challenge of just using air power is that you leave it in the hands of your adversary to decide when he’s had enough...so the initiative will remain with President Milosevic.”⁹¹

The final point pundits made was that NATO was incorrectly employing airpower. Concern over loss of aircraft and collateral damage forced the alliance to get permission from all their partners and due to that NATO often could either not strike valuable targets in a timely fashion or not strike them at all. Instead of the violent, knockout punch on the first night that doctrine called for, the campaign would escalate slowly. “The way the air war has been designed suggests that it was a very bureaucratized, compartmentalized and not a very competent approach,” stated Colonel (Retired) John Warden. “The target list has not been clearly designed to have a systematic impact on Serb forces...This is very unprofessional on the part of the various political authorities.”⁹² To remedy this situation, the Air Force unofficially used retired officers to make their point. As Dana Priest reported in the *Washington Post*:

Some Air Force officers were so critical of the war’s execution that they encouraged retired colleagues to speak out. The Air Force public affairs staff at the Pentagon quietly fed information to a group of retired generals, according to

⁹⁰ Eric Schmitt, “The Powell Doctrine is Looking Pretty Good Again.” *New York Times*, 4 April 1999, 5.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² William Drozdiak and Dana Priest, “NATO’s cautious Air Strategy Comes Under Fire.” *Washington Post*, 16 May 1999, sec A, 26.

two spokesmen. On television and in newspaper articles these “senior statesmen” asserted that airpower was being used improperly and might well fail.⁹³

Obviously, the Air Force thought the situation so dire they had to obtain assistance from outside the normal chain of command.

While these policy changes took place, the pundits assisted the process but did not cause it. Faced with the prospect of failing in their mission without ground troops, and losing public support, NATO and the United States had to change their policy and the commander had to change the way he fought the war. Because the policy of the government limited the commander’s ability to fight the war, NATO was not winning. The people, represented by public opinion, recognized that NATO was not winning the war and voiced their concerns. Pundits provided the facts, evidence and opinions that the people needed in support of this assertion. Because of this loss of public support as well as the lack of success in the war, the political leaders of the United States and NATO realized that they had to change the policy they were using to prosecute the war. This change in policy, including the new targeting guidance, led to new tactics, which gave General Clark and the military alliance the ability to win the war.

⁹³ Dana Priest, “The Battle Inside Headquarters; Tension Grew with Divide Over Strategy Series,” *Washington Post*, 21 September 1999, sec A, 1.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Americans are asking: How will we fight and win this war? We will direct every resource at our command...This will not be a war like the war against Iraq a decade ago. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in Combat...Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen.⁹⁴

President George W. Bush

While Operation Desert Storm accomplished its mission of ejecting the Iraqis from Kuwait, it did not change the regime of Saddam Hussein. The country's most lethal formation, the Republican Guard, escaped intact. President Bush lost his re-election the following year and Saddam was still in power so in Saddam's mind, he had won. Twelve years later, when Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began in March of 2003, Saddam and his regime would be the main objective.

From the time the coalition left Iraq in 1991, Saddam Hussein was a thorn in America's side. While he did not use chemical weapons in 1991, he used them against the Iranians and his own people, and the Western world suspected he still had them. Part of the cease-fire agreement in 1991 was an agreement to allow the United Nations to find and destroy any capability he may have, a clause that would ultimately bring about the end of Saddam's regime. An attempt to kill President Bush the elder in 1993 earned him a cruise missile attack, and his continued brinksmanship in the 1990s caused a myriad of responses from the United States including Intrinsic Action deployments as well as occasional repositioning of carrier battle groups. In 1999, Saddam refused to cooperate with the UN Special Commission team sent to enforce the arms control and the United States retaliated with a four-day air campaign called Desert Fox. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein continued to misuse the Oil-for-Food program and sold oil on the

⁹⁴ George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," 20 September 1991. Accessed on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> 04 October 2005.

black market in defiance of the sanctions placed on his regime. Last, but not least, as the United States enforced no-fly zones established as part of the 1991 cease-fire, he engaged aircraft with surface to air missiles.

The Clinton Administration responded with no more than air strikes in the past, and Saddam Hussein was confident that for all his transgressions, limited air strikes were all the response his actions would evoke, a price he was willing to pay for the freedom he had and the luxuries he received from his pilfered money. Saddam was winning the game and paying an acceptable price for his transgressions, but on 11 September 2001 Osama bin Laden changed the rules, providing America and its new administration the inspiration it needed for war in the 21st Century. In announcing his post 9/11 policy goals during his 29 January 2002 State of the Union Address, President George Bush put Saddam on notice:

Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction...Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens -- leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections -- then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.⁹⁵

President Bush suspected Saddam on two counts: first, the development of weapons of mass destruction and second, as a state sponsor of terrorism. By this point, General Franks had already had his first conference with President Bush on what became Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁹⁶

At this point, the American people were clearly in favor of war. With 73% of the people in America favoring the use of force in Iraq and guidance from the Commander in Chief, General

⁹⁵ George W. Bush, "State of the Union," 29 January 2002. Accessed on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> 04 October 2005.

⁹⁶ Tommy Franks, "American Soldier," (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 356.

Franks' Central Command and the subordinate commands continued planning.⁹⁷ What evolved was a plan that capitalized on maximum firepower from minimal boots on the ground, involving precision munitions and overwhelming speed. There would be no protracted air campaign as there was in Desert Storm, in this war air and ground would attack simultaneously. Because of the speed, firepower and technology the coalition would bring to the fight, as well political considerations about the number of troops, this would be a leaner war, with less than 300,000 soldiers compared with Desert Storm's nearly half a million. The coalition was different as well. During Desert Storm, most of Europe either participated or supported the United States, during Operation Iraqi Freedom most protested. Conspicuously absent was the Arab coalition. England, as always, was the greatest contributor of forces. As early as September 2002 in congressional testimony, retired officers voiced concerns about UN sponsorship. General (Retired) Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated, "We must continue to persuade other members of the Security Council of the correctness of our position, and we must not be too quick to take no for an answer."⁹⁸

The policy of the government was clear; remove Saddam Hussein and his regime from power and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and as the beginning of the war drew closer, General Franks worked diligently to ready the army and complete his plan. Central Command's overall objective was regime change, and in support of this goal, the component commands received their orders. The land component, Joint but centered on the Third Army, would be the main effort and attack out of Kuwait to defeat the Iraqi forces, remove the regime and transition to security operations. The air component would support the main effort and would be responsible, with the support of Special Forces, for denying the Iraqis the ability to launch SCUD

⁹⁷ The Pew Research Center for the Public and the Press "Americans Favor Use of Force in Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and..." (Washington, Pew Research Center, 2002). Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?pageID=185> 03 November 2005.

⁹⁸ Eric Schmitt, "3 Retired Generals Warn of Peril in Attacking Iraq Without Backing of UN" *New York Times*, 24 September 2002, sec. A, 16.

misses out of the western desert. Special Forces would be responsible for fixing Iraqi forces in the north.

Planning never ends, and with refinement underway, more and more forces moved into the theater daily. At this point, in January of 2003, 68% of America favored going to war with Iraq, although only 42% thought President Bush had made his case for war clearly.⁹⁹ With public opinion high, President Bush reiterated the people's desire and the policy of the government, giving Saddam Hussein another warning during his State of the Union Address on 28 January 2003. "If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him."¹⁰⁰ One month later, after the Secretary of State presented the case to the United Nations, 52% of Americans thought that President Bush had made a strong case for the war. More importantly, while 68% favored military action, 57% wanted a U.N Resolution before going further and only 37% said that the U.S. had enough international support for the war. This war was still not as well supported at home as Desert Storm and was still controversial abroad.¹⁰¹

On 17 March, without the full backing of the United Nations, President Bush delivered Saddam his final warning. "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing."¹⁰² Saddam did not heed the warning, and President Bush was true to his word. On 19 March, the coalition believed they had a firm location of Saddam Hussein and the first bombs fell. The bombs missed

⁹⁹ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Public Wants Proof of Iraqi Weapons Programs," (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?ReportID=644> 05 October 2005.

¹⁰⁰ George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address," 28 January 2003. Accessed on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html> 06 October 2005.

¹⁰¹ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press "U.S. Needs More International Backing," (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=672> 05 October 2005.

¹⁰² George W. Bush, "President Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours," 17 March 2003. Accessed on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html> 07 October 2005.

Hussein, and on 20 March the coalition ground forces attacked, in what General Franks described as "...a campaign unlike any other in history, a campaign characterized by shock, by surprise, by employment of precise munitions on a scale never seen, and by the application of overwhelming force."¹⁰³ The progress of the war would decide if the force was overwhelming enough.

The Army's 3rd Infantry Division breached the berm separating Iraq and Kuwait and seized Tallil airbase as well as the bridge over the Euphrates River near the town of An Nasiriyah. The British quickly secured the southern oil fields and the city on of Umm Qasr. The initial success of the war kept the pundits busy commenting on the war and explaining how the military was fighting it, but with the amazing speed of the campaign and low casualties, there was nothing new for the pundits to criticize. The American people were behind the war and confident in its progress; on 22 March, public opinion reached the highest point of the campaign with 71% of America believing the war was going well and 70% still believing that the use of military force was the right decision.¹⁰⁴

The next day, the war took a turn for the worse. Now, with the friction of war at its greatest, the pundits added to it. The commander and his army had some setbacks and the public and the pundits took notice. On 23 March 2003, a day described in *On Point* as the darkest day for coalition forces, a number of things went wrong: A Patriot missile shot down a British Tornado, Iraqi forces and fratricide killed 18 marines in An Nasiriyah, and two Apaches were lost during an attack against the Iraqi Medina Division.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the ambush of a convoy from the 507th Maintenance Company resulted in 11 killed Americans and the capture of Jessica Lynch. Public perception plummeted, with 52% saying the war was going well on 23 March and

¹⁰³ Quoted in Murray and Scales, 88.

¹⁰⁴ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press "Public Confidence in War Effort Falts," (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=177> 07 October 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degan and David Tohn, "On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom," (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2004), 89.

dropping even further to 38% on 24 March. Early in the planning, there was some concern about the length of supply lines from Kuwait to Baghdad, but the rapid pace of the operation would mitigate that risk. Now it appeared that the risk was greater than imagined and the commentaries began. General (Retired) Wesley Clark told CNN “Our boots on the ground strength is low. The command believes they can do the job, and I don’t know the details, but I trust their judgment. But if you ask me, as an old soldier, I like to have an insurance policy.”¹⁰⁶

The events of 23 March highlighted the biggest criticism that pundits had, that the decision by the Department of Defense to use fewer troops meant that there were not enough troops to secure the supply lines and insufficient mass to overwhelm the Iraqis. This unfortunate turn of events was also the not the first time the executive branch heard about it. As early as September 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed reservations about the number of troops and the long lines of communication in a National Security Council meeting.¹⁰⁷ General Eric Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, expressed concern about the force levels, principally due to the occupation requirements he predicted in the post-war Iraq. President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld went with the advice of their senior commanders, who told him that with the capabilities the military had, they could win the war. Precision weapons, mobility and speed would make up for boots on the ground. Central Command was addressing General Shinseki’s concerns for stability in post war Iraq by moving additional troops to theater. The retired generals, as well as some of the serving generals, may have had a vote but it did not count. After Saddam Hussein’s last warning but prior to the war, the commanders received a final chance: “General,” George Bush asked him, [LTG McKiernan] “you got everything you need to win?” “Yes, Sir.” “Satisfied with the strategy?” “Yes, Sir.”¹⁰⁸ President Bush asked each of the

¹⁰⁶Quoted in Cushman, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Franks, 394.

¹⁰⁸ Franks, xi.

component commanders, as well as General Franks, and to a man they all told him they had what they needed.

As the war developed, so did the enemy. LTG William Scott Wallace, the V Corps commander, stated “The enemy we're fighting is a bit different from the one we wargamed against.”¹⁰⁹ Sandstorms slowed the advance and negated many of the technological advantages the coalition had. Nonetheless, the coalition continued their attack into Baghdad. Lieutenant General David McKiernan, the Land Component Commander, committed the theater reserve and the 2 Armored Cavalry Regiment (-) deployed to secure lines of communication while the 4th Infantry Division arrived in Kuwait to prepare for combat. With additional forces arriving in theater and securing the supply lines, the Iraqi Army continued to disintegrate and the coalition regained momentum. On 29 March, President Bush reiterated his strategy in a radio address that “our mission is clear, to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people.”¹¹⁰ Public perception of the war stabilized; 39% of America thought the war was “going well,” and 69% still thinking that war was the right decision.¹¹¹ The Army and Marines continued their attack and on 9 April, Baghdad fell, and while public perception soared with 93% thinking the war was going fairly to very well and 76% saying it was the right decision, it appeared that General Shinseki’s prediction that we did not have enough troops might come true, 69% of America thought we had not won the war yet.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Bernard Weinrub and Thom Shanker “Rumsfelds Design for War Criticized on the Battlefield” *New York Times*, 1 April 2003, sec A, 1.

¹¹⁰ George W. Bush, “President Bush Discusses Beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” 22 March 2003. Accessed on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030322.html> 04 October 2005.

¹¹¹ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press “War Concerns Grow, but Support Remains Steadfast,” (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=693> 07 October 2005.

¹¹² The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press “60% War’s Going Very Well, 69% we Haven’t Won Yet,” (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=700> 07 October 2005.

After President Bush announced the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003, the war continued and added validity to the pundits claim that there were not enough troops. With the regime removed, there was a vacuum of power and looting and crime ran rampant. Iraqis seeking revenge on the regime and a re-distribution of wealth now targeted civilian infrastructure that precision targeting spared during the war. The police fled and there were not enough soldiers to establish and enforce rule of law. Pundits continue to comment on this, including General (Retired) Zinni, who as the previous commander of Central Command had an outstanding appreciation of the situation in Iraq. In an appearance on 60 Minutes in May 2004, he commented on how the low number of troops affected the situation in Iraq:

I think it's critical in the aftermath, if you're gonna go to resolve a conflict through the use of force, and then to rebuild the country...The first requirement is to freeze the situation, is to gain control of the security. To patrol the streets. To prevent the looting. To prevent the 'revenge' killings that might occur. To prevent bands or gangs or militias that might not have your best interests at heart from growing or developing.¹¹³

Even more than a year after President Bush announced major combat operations were over, General Shinseki's and Powell's predictions were still valid.

Despite all of the input from retired officers, there is little evidence that pundits influenced the executive branch of the government in either of their two points, the timing and conditions to go to war or the number of troops required to fight the war. Despite public opinion in America and abroad, lack of UN support as well as concerns from experts such as General (Retired) Shalikashvili, the Administration went to war in March because that is when the serving officers told them was the best time. If the Chief of Staff of the Army, as well as the Secretary of State, who was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Desert Storm, could not influence the Administration's decision about the number of troops required, no one would. While they did not influence the Administration, the pundits informed the public, translated jargon into

¹¹³ Anthony Zinni, "Gen Zinni: 'They've Screwed Up'" interview by Steve Kroft (60 Minutes: 23 May 2004. Accessed on line at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/05/21/60minutes/main618896.shtml> 08 October 2005.

something the public could understand and commented on the war when it was going well, and criticized its shortcomings when it went bad. The analysis the pundits provided may have contributed to the public perception that the war was not going well in late March, but overwhelmingly, it was simply the basic reporting of facts. Desert Storm, Allied Force and other interventions established a standard of short, bloodless wars, and America had not suffered this many casualties in combat since Vietnam. America demanded answers, and in the instances where the military failed to provide adequate explanations, the public turned to the pundits.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION

The “integrity of the military profession,” I said, means that we must have an officer corps of such character and competence as will provide the highest professional and spiritual leadership to our citizen armies...Finally—and this is the essential point—I said that the civilian authorities must scrupulously respect the integrity, the intellectual honesty, of its officer corps. Any effort to force unanimity of view, to compel adherence to some politico-military “party line” against the honestly expressed views of responsible officers, I pointed out, is a pernicious practice which jeopardizes rather than protects the integrity of the military profession... Under no circumstances, regardless of pressures from whatever source or motive, should the professional military man yield, or compromise his judgment for other than convincing military reasons. To do otherwise would be to destroy his usefulness.¹¹⁴

General Matthew Ridgway

Recognizing the importance of public opinion, identified as the American center of gravity during the Vietnam War, the comments made by the Secretary of Defense and the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may be justified.¹¹⁵ With senators questioning the professionalism of former officers by suggesting that they keep their thoughts and opinions to themselves, this issue warrants a brief discussion on the professional implications of retired military officers performing as analysts for the media.

The United States’ Constitution specifies civilian control over the military. Whether the military likes it or not, elected officials or their appointed representatives dictate the nature of the nation’s military campaigns. War is, after all, “a continuation of policy by other means.”¹¹⁶ The elected leadership may not always agree with the military, but the military profession is the basis of the expert advice the administration has to manage the nation’s wars. The military has jurisdiction over the professional knowledge of war fighting.

In his essay *Expertise, Jurisdiction and the Legitimacy of the Military Profession*, James Burk identified three prescriptive factors that when found together, mark an occupation as a profession. The first, which he calls expertise, is the mastery of abstract knowledge, which

¹¹⁴ Matthew B. Ridgway, “SOLDIER: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway.” (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), 269-272.

¹¹⁵ Max Boot, “The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power.” (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 316.

¹¹⁶ Clausewitz, 87.

occurs through a system of higher education. Jurisdiction, the second, is the control over a jurisdiction within which expert knowledge is applied. Finally, legitimacy, which links the two together and is the match between the form of professional knowledge and the prevailing cultural belief or bias about the legitimacy of that form compared to others, which is the source of professional status.¹¹⁷ In his book *Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington stated, “The modern officer corps is a professional body, and the modern military officer a professional man.” Huntington then argued that expertise, responsibility (service to society), and corporateness (group identity) were the marks of a profession.¹¹⁸

Current research suggests that an influential shaper of public opinion must have three qualities: personification of certain values, [respected member of the community], competence, and a strategic position.¹¹⁹ These requirements share many of the same attributes of a profession, and because of these similarities when the pundits shape public opinion through their commentaries, they compete with serving officers and cause confusion among the public as to who actually is the professional. This competition and confusion contribute to a loss of professionalism, questions the credibility of the serving officers and adds the extra friction. This competition is not the only cause of friction in war, but accurate reporting and embedded journalists now give the people all the information they need to reach their own conclusions. The friction caused by pundits is redundant and unnecessary.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 stipulated who provides the executive branch with the expert advice needed to manage wars, and gave that jurisdiction to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The website stated:

The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 identifies the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the senior ranking member of the Armed

¹¹⁷ James Burk, “Expertise, Jurisdiction and the Legitimacy of the Military Profession,” in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002), 23.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Burk, 26.

¹¹⁹ Douglas V. Johnson II “The Impact of the Media on National Security Policy Decision Making.” (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 1994), 6.

Forces. As such, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President. He may seek the advice of and consult with the other JCS members and combatant commanders. When he presents his advice, he presents the range of advice and opinions he has received, along with any individual comments of the other JCS members.¹²⁰

This charter specifically gave the Chairman the latitude to present the advice and opinions of someone else, someone of his choosing, and in doing this identifies the chairman or his designated representative as the expert.

The issue of jurisdiction deserves a deeper look. Defined by Webster's as "the power, right or authority to interpret the law,"¹²¹ in this case, it means the right or authority to provide expert advice to the Secretary of Defense or the President. In his essay *Officer Professionalism in the Late Progressive Era*, Lance Betros wrote "professionals compete for jurisdiction by a variety of means, most effectively to by demonstrating their ability to solve problems related to the occupation. If successful, they may convince society of the relevancy of their work and thereby solidify their professional status."¹²² The higher ranking military pundits undoubtedly won and deserved their jurisdiction, but upon assuming other duties, including a change of duty or retirement, turned over jurisdiction in that particular area to their successor. When a professional in another field such as medicine or law moves on, seldom do they compete for that same jurisdiction again. They do, however, come back by invitation to consult or advise.¹²³

While debate is invaluable in a democracy, these pundits may be inadvertently undermining the professional advice that the military provides the executive branch of the government, calling into question their legitimacy and violating the sanctity of the profession. General (Retired) McCaffrey said that the current war is too important to be left to the secretary,

¹²⁰ General Peter Pace, "Chairman Responsibilities", Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Website accessed at http://www.jcs.mil/chairman/chairman_resp.html 09 October 2005.

¹²¹ *Merriam-Webster*, 396.

¹²² Lance Betros, "Officer Professionalism in the Late Progressive Era," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002), 283.

¹²³ The idea for discussing jurisdiction came from a conversation the author had about strategic leadership with COL Mike Schneider.

but Georges Clemenceau, the premier of France during World War I stated, “War is too important to be left to Generals.”¹²⁴ In his book *Supreme Command*, Elliot Cohen described the interaction between leaders and generals who have been successful in war, such as Abraham Lincoln or Winston Churchill as an ‘unequal dialogue’ where both sides expressed their views freely, but unequal in that the final authority of the civilian leader was unambiguous and unquestioned.¹²⁵ This unequal dialogue is important, it is the cornerstone of America’s civil-military relations, but its basic structure is that it is a dialogue between two persons or groups of people. The comments and critiques by the military analyst add a third party and may cause the President or Secretary of Defense to doubt his military expert. If what is at issue is unsound advice in the military expert’s jurisdiction, whether it be a combatant commander or the Chairman, he is subject to relief or replacement. If what is at issue is the politics of the strategy, the Commander in Chief and his Cabinet is subject to the next vote. Most of the criticism during the campaigns analyzed was on issues that had policy implications, rightly decided on by the civilian leadership.

With public opinion as important as it is, retired officers of any rank should pay close attention to the messages they are sending. As part of their oath, military officers promise to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. In her essay *Infusing Normative Civil-Military Relations Principles in the Officer Corps*, Marybeth Ulrich wrote “the profession’s first obligation is to do no harm to the state’s democratic institutions. Usurping or undermining the decision-making authority of civilian decision makers is a clear violation of the responsibilities inherent in each actor’s constitutional role.”¹²⁶ Active officers, as well as retired officers, can cause this damage to the state’s democratic institutions and the profession as a whole, by not only second-guessing each other or the administration, but by providing half-truths, such as the

¹²⁴ Quoted in Elliot Cohen, “Supreme Command” (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 54.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 209.

¹²⁶ Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, “Infusing Normative Civil-Military Relations Principles in the Officer Corps,” in *The Future of the Army Profession*, 2d ed, eds. Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 659.

circumstances surrounding NFL player turned Army Ranger Pat Tillman's death or the Abu Ghraib controversy. The use of their military titles on television, though certainly earned, may cause confusion among the public as to who actually is providing the expert advice to the executive branch, especially when it contradicts the Department of Defense's leadership or press releases. The opinions and commentaries that contradict the press releases by the Department of Defense may discredit serving officers, causing the profession to lose legitimacy when it needs it most and inviting criticism on a profession that they were once a part of.

CONCLUSIONS

For the most recent issue [of Media Watchdog magazine Brill's Content], Mr. Colton [senior writer] drove to New Jersey, where a chimpanzee was made to answer yes or no on a range of news topics. The magazine reported that Chippy the chimp scored a .500 average, while Mr. [George] Will in recent months has scored a .333.¹²⁷

James Thurman

FINDINGS

Throughout the case studies of Desert Storm, Allied Force and OIF, one can find numerous examples of how pundits opined, but there is very little evidence that their discourse had any direct effect on policy or public opinion. In each case however, their commentary accomplished three things: They informed the public, spurred debate, and added to the war's friction in the executive branch. Informing the public was a constant, whether in triumph or adversity, the public could count on military analysts to explain what was happening and why. However, the nature of each war dictated the amount of criticism and debate the pundits spurred, and the three factors that influenced this corresponded to the Clausewitz trinity: public support, the tactics employed and the clarity of the political strategy. While their commentaries may have shaped existing public opinion, there is no evidence that supports pundits creating public opinion. When the coalition defeated the Iraqis in 100 hours during Desert Storm, a retired general did not need to tell that America the war went well. Likewise on 23 March 2003, a retired general did not need to tell America OIF was going badly. With respect to Clausewitz' trinity, they helped inform the people, who used public opinion to influence policy, which drove how the commander and his army fought.

The highest public approval of any of the campaigns studied was a distinct advantage for the government during Desert Storm. The people perceived the war as just, Saddam Hussein

¹²⁷ Thurman, 1.

invaded a sovereign kingdom and the world, including the United Nations, recognized the crime for what it was and demanded punishment. Moreover, Saddam Hussein represented a threat that could continue, as he was poised to invade the Kingdom of Saud and his troops committed war crimes by the score. He was an evil tyrant and recognized as such in the free world. Tactics in this war were straightforward, other than the capabilities of the new technology, there was nothing unexpected. This was the war that all the generals, retired and serving, trained for, understood and were comfortable with. This was the AirLand Battle they developed and grew up with. Finally, President George H.W. Bush announced his strategy forthright and stuck to it. Saddam Hussein must leave Iraq. Because the policy was clear and the doctrine sound, the people supported the war and the pundits had very little to criticize.

The second war, Operation Allied Force, was more contentious. Public approval at the outset of the war was lower than Desert Storm and continued to drop as the campaign evolved. As the war progressed, less and less of the people thought that bombing was the right option forcing the United States and NATO to change their methods to end the war quickly. Military leaders, both retired and serving, were uncomfortable with the tactics NATO employed. Air power alone had never won a war and no one believed that airpower alone could win this war. Successful wars always featured ground forces to close with the enemy and cause them to move, facilitating aerial targeting and this war did not. Shifting and ambiguous political strategy caused concern and presented more opportunities for critique. As a result, the government received additional help in the way democracies work; by people exercising their right to speak out. Pundits became less of announcer and more of a criticizer. As stated earlier, the pundits were not only critical of initiating the bombing campaign, but also the methods used. Fortunately, they were wrong. As James Thurman wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “Indeed, the punditry not only failed to foresee Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic’s capitulation, but it was also wrong in insisting it would never happen unless NATO sent in tens of thousands of ground

troops.”¹²⁸ While the advice of the professional officers may have initially been ignored, their competence and commitment persevered and NATO won the war.

The last war, Operation Iraqi Freedom, continues to this day and is the most controversial war since Vietnam. As a result of 9/11 and the accusations of WMD and the links to terror, public approval started out higher than Allied Force but continued to drop. In a July 2005 Pew Research poll, public support dropped from 72% at the start of the war to about 50% in July of 2004 and had held around there for the past year.¹²⁹ The tactics were very controversial and the plan called for about half the combat forces of Desert Storm, with enormous lines of communication. As the perceived success of the war went down, the commentaries went up. Although precision weapons and Special Forces were successful in Operation Enduring Freedom, this was not the AirLand battle doctrine that the pundits were familiar with, won Desert Storm with, and advocated for this campaign. The coalition was not the same as it was in Desert Storm and finally, the strategy, while grandiose and just, lacked an endstate and exit strategy. Although the pundits were wrong about the time required to defeat the regime, the United States has not left yet and troop commitments have not decreased significantly. General (Retired) Shinseki was correct about the number of troops required to defeat and then rebuild Iraq; precision weapons and Special Forces contributed to the initial victory but large numbers of troops were still required to secure key terrain and rebuild the country.

If war is “not a case where two mutually destructive elements collide, but one of tension between two elements, separate for the time being, which discharge energy in discontinuous shocks;”¹³⁰ what causes this “nonconducting medium, this barrier that prevents a full

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press “Most Say Iraq War Hurts Fight Against Terrorism,” (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2005) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=979> 07 October 2005.

¹³⁰ Clausewitz, 579.

discharge;”¹³¹ and how do pundits fit in? “The barrier in question is the vast array of factors, forces and conditions in national affairs that are affected by war.”¹³² Clausewitz called this friction, and friction is what separates the limited wars America fights from absolute war. While the pundits may not directly affect policy, the debates pundits spur add to this friction of war, especially in the government, the third component of his trinity.

THE PEOPLE’S DESIRES

As identified earlier, while pundits do not create public opinion, they can play an important role in shaping it. America will be at war for the foreseeable future, and if the government wants the continued support of the people, it is imperative to provide them the information that they need to know as their sons and daughters are pursuing the nation’s goals. An August 2005 Gallup Poll commissioned by the McCormick Foundation presented data that could yield interesting opportunities for the military. First, the poll showed that 64% of the military and 66% of the media think that American citizens have a ‘not too well’ or ‘not well at all’ understanding of the role of the military in the world.¹³³ Second, over 90% of both the military and media think that it is important to keep the public informed on military issues by speaking to the public.¹³⁴ Third, 47% of the public thinks that the military and the media share equal responsibility for keeping the public informed on military issues, but only 12% of the public thinks that the military keeps them ‘very well informed.’¹³⁵ Finally, 83% of the media thinks they have inadequate access to military officials to cover military related stories.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ The Gallup Organization “The Gallup Organization for the McCormick Tribune,” (Gallup, Princeton, 2005), 7. Accessed on-line at <http://www.rrmtf.org/mtf/2005%20McCormick%20Report.pdf> 04 September 2005.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 9.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 14.

Besides keeping the public informed, the poll has another section relevant to this study, the military as a source for journalists. In the poll, 49% of the media said that retired officers make the best sources, as opposed to 36% who said that press conferences were the best sources.¹³⁷ In all fairness, serving general officers, public affairs officers and on site reporters all rated higher, but the fact remains that the media prefers pundits to press conferences. Additionally, 73% of the public thinks that television news organizations should employ retired officers as analysts or commentators.¹³⁸ This data clearly points out that the people think the military can do better.

The last section of the poll relevant to the analysis, embedding, reinforced the obvious. Overwhelmingly, the military, media and the public stated that embedding enhanced their understanding of OIF. Indeed, it is hard to find anything negative about embedding at all. If embedding media with the military worked, so will embedding a representative of the military in the media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.¹³⁹

President Theodore Roosevelt

As former military leaders, few people appreciate the efforts of the soldiers in the arena more than military pundits do and the military can do better to leverage this. These analysts and

¹³⁷ Ibid, 37.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 38.

¹³⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Man in the Arena," Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, France 23 April 1910. Accessed on-line at <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trmaninthearena.html> 10 October 2005.

their motivations can be divided into two broad categories. The first category is the ones who opine and criticize for their own interests. This criticism may be an axe to grind with the current commander or administration, to achieve notoriety or gain publicity, or these pundits may criticize at the behest of some disgruntled comrades still on active duty who would like to change what they think is an unjust or unsound policy. Not much can be done to dissuade this group. In 1914, President Wilson, seeing it “highly unwise and improper”¹⁴⁰ that this sort of punditry occur, had the War Department issue General Order 60, ordering all officers, active and retired, “to refrain from public comment on any kind upon the military or political situation on the other side of the water.”¹⁴¹ Such an order would be unthinkable in the twenty-first century; not only would the analysts protest, but even the anti-war protesters would protest.

The second category is the ones that are still serving, the ones that are trying to make the press and the public more aware of events as they unfold without causing undue friction. Major General (Retired) David Grange explained:

I’ve had some opportunities to do quite a lot of operations around the world, which has given me a little insight. You just take some of that experience and tie it into emails and newspaper articles...So when events are reported on a 24/7 cycle of who/what/where/when, I enjoy explaining the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ for an anchor or a reporter for a newspaper.¹⁴²

Grange went on to elaborate, saying what helped form his opinions were twice a month invitation only briefings at the Pentagon, the only known reference to these briefings.

To leverage this appreciation for soldiers currently serving for the good of a nation at war by the pundits still wanting to serve their country in a positive manner, the monograph has four recommendations. First, develop a system to accredit pundits. Second, establish guidelines and agreements with news and broadcast networks for their use. These two recommendations culminate in the third, embedding the military with the media. With operational deployments

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Betros, 275.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Quoted by Alicia C. Shepard, “Narrowing the Gap: Military, Media and the Iraqi War,” (Chicago: McCormick Tribune foundation, 2004), 55.

keeping the active duty military busy, the resident expertise and experience in the nation's retired officer corps make them a perfect fit. Finally, integrity of the military profession requires a continued exploration the professional ramifications of punditry, both the positive and negative aspects.

The first step, accreditation, requires the participation of both the Department of Defense and the analysts. The analysts would have to be willing to sign an agreement agreeing not to second-guess leaders in the field, divulge classified information or disparage the administration, almost the same stipulations they had on active duty. Dr. Aubin stated in an interview that one trend he has seen was a willingness of these pundits to take on the existing leadership, and accreditation would slow that down.¹⁴³ Part of the agreement would be a requirement to stay in his or her area of expertise. For example, no one needs a destroyer captain talking about an insurgency. In return for this accreditation and the promise of better information, their marketability would increase and they would have the satisfaction of still serving. Reputable news outlets hire reputable sources. Once they recognized that the Pentagon was accrediting analysts, news channels would recognize those who were not accredited for what they are, political fomenters, and this group would only be hired only by news channels that are looking for experts to support their controversial opinions. The Department of Defense will have some requirements as well. The first and most import requirement is an agreement to provide timely, accurate, and honest information briefings. Training them in existing doctrine would not be required, but in order to keep the analysts relevant, training in new equipment and tactics is imperative. A Pew Research Poll in April of 2003 indicated that 36% of America thought that there was too much commentary by ex-military.¹⁴⁴ By accrediting only the best and the brightest,

¹⁴³ Dr. Stephen Aubin, interview by author, 3 September 2005, e-mail.

¹⁴⁴ The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, *War Coverage Praised, but People Hungry of Other News*, (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2003) Accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=180> 04 September 2005.

the Pentagon would ensure they are not only putting their best foot forward, but also could also limit the number.

The second recommendation, establishing guidelines for the use of analysts, requires the additional participation of the news outlets. As the proponent, the Department of Defense will have to establish the guidelines in close coordination with the media. Accreditation addresses these requirements for the analysts. As Dr. Aubin discussed, when experts started working for the media, problematic reporting decreased. In return for the benefits of accredited analysts, news networks will have to agree to undergo training to address several shortcomings in their methods. First, a Brookings Institute symposium in June 2003 identified a need for journalists to have training in what questions are appropriate to ask retired flag officers and that is a fair requirement for the news outlets.¹⁴⁵ An example of this would be asking only questions that are relevant to the current operation, not asking an analyst to predict specifics, and only comment in his or her area of expertise. Second, in an interview with MG (Retired) Smith, he mentioned news channels had cut his four to five minute interview of Desert Storm down to less than two minutes.¹⁴⁶ Part of the agreement would be to give the analysts enough time to answer the questions completely and provide a full explanation for the event. This additional time would allow the pundits the ability to provide the public with more accurate answers and reduce the possibility of an error of omission, portraying the military in a positive light and continuing to build public trust.

These measures will set the conditions for the third recommendation, embedding the retired military in the media. The public is clamoring for more news and thinks the military is doing a poor job of giving it to them. If these pundits really are retired and still serving, this

¹⁴⁵ *Assessing Media Coverage of the War in Iraq: Press Reports, Pentagon Rules, and Lessons for the Future*, by Ron Nessen, Moderator (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2003). Accessed at www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20030617.pdf 04 September 2005.

¹⁴⁶ MG (R) Smith, Perry, interview by author, 5 September 2005, Leavenworth, e-mail.

program would give the Department of Defense a way to formalize it, advertise it and use it as a tool in the information war, giving the public what they want while presenting a unified message. Additionally, as operations in America's Global War on Terrorism become more complex and controversial, the access and information provided to the pundits will allow them to explain these operations with facts, not informed conjecture. MG (R) Smith provided numerous examples of when he was able to clarify controversial operations or tactics during Operation Desert Storm. Now, the Pentagon will be able to enhance and sanction these explanations. Because the public expects analysts to be critical, pundits could be a useful medium for reporting bad news or trying controversial tactics, such as the use of white phosphorous to screen troops in Fallujah. While the Pentagon would be responsible for implementing this program and accrediting the analysts, because of already formed relationships as well as consulting fees, contracting would still be between the news networks and the individual consultants. The Department of Defense's responsibility would be limited to maintaining an accurate list of accredited analysts by area of expertise: for example, former Air Force officers for aviation operations or issues and former Special Forces officers for counter-insurgency operations.

There are some disadvantages to this program. News stations and the viewing public will initially think that the analysts have a bias towards the military, but that bias is unavoidable and it exists now. Accurate reporting will gradually eliminate this perceived bias and regardless, the military is still one of the most respected institutes in America. Some analysts may not like the idea, but the selfless ones will and once accepted, the program will gain credibility and momentum. News stations might initially show some reluctance. Jeremy Gaines, the vice president of communications at MSNBC, stated they would probably not be interested; MSNBC uses analysts to provide a view that is independent from what the reporters receive at the

Pentagon.¹⁴⁷ However, once it becomes obvious that the pundits are still providing an independent view, just with better access to the facts, that reluctance will gradually disappear.

The fourth recommendation, formation of a review board consisting of flag officers and legal experts from each service, should continue exploration of the professional implications of punditry for two reasons. First, to decide whether to allow it, forbid it as Senator Warner suggested in the epigraph on page one, or regulate it. Second, if a review by this board determines that this analysis should be continued and regulated, the board should continue to police the program, acting as a de facto Inspector General and ensuring that both the Pentagon and analysts are providing honest and accurate information. Tight controls and honest reporting will help maintain the expertise, jurisdiction and legitimacy that the military profession traditionally has enjoyed and requires.

As America continues what President Bush admitted is a long campaign, the continued support of the people is crucial. In the September of 2005 edition of *Foreign Affairs*, Andrew Krepinevich identified three centers of gravity for America's current war; one of them was the American people.¹⁴⁸ If this sounds familiar, it is because it is. It is the same lesson America learned in Vietnam and with a smaller, all volunteer military that America cannot afford to learn it again. To persevere in this war, America must become willing to be a nation at war, as it was 11 September 2001, and not the just the military at war as it is now. Recently, President Bush has used two former Presidents to help spread his message, even crossing party lines, in his quest to relieve suffering in Asia and New Orleans. If President Clinton can still serve, so can some of the retired flag officers. Accrediting and embedding these officers would be a great asset for the Pentagon and the news outlets. The news outlets will have the benefits of hearing the real story,

¹⁴⁷ Jeremy Gaines, statement to author 10 November 2005, Leavenworth, telephone through administrative assistant.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew F. Krepinevich, "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005, 4. Accessed on-line at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050901faessay84508/andrew-f-krepinevich-jr/how-to-win-in-iraq.html> 09 November 2005. The other two centers of gravity were the Iraqi people and the American soldier.

sanctioned by the Pentagon, and with all the expertise and experience resident in the analysts.

The Department of Defense will benefit by having more of an impact in shaping what the news channels say and address the shortfalls found in the August 2005 Gallup poll, such as the performance of the military in informing the public and providing the media with information.

Designed, implemented and marketed correctly, this program will help the Pentagon win the war of ideas and the support of the American people.

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