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# AMERICA'S VICEROYS

THE MILITARY AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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Edited by  
Derek S. Reveron



# AMERICA'S VICEROYS

Also by Derek S. Reveron

*Promoting Democracy in the Post-Soviet Region*

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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AMERICA'S VICEROYS

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*In memory of LT Kylan Jones-Huffman, USNR (1972–2003), who gave  
his life implementing U.S. foreign policy in Iraq*

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Part of my argument in chapter 5 was originally published by Taylor and Francis (<http://www.tandf.co.uk>) in the June 2002 issue of *Defense and Security Analysis*. I thank Martin Edmonds, editor of *Defense and Security Analysis*, for providing useful feedback on my initial argument.

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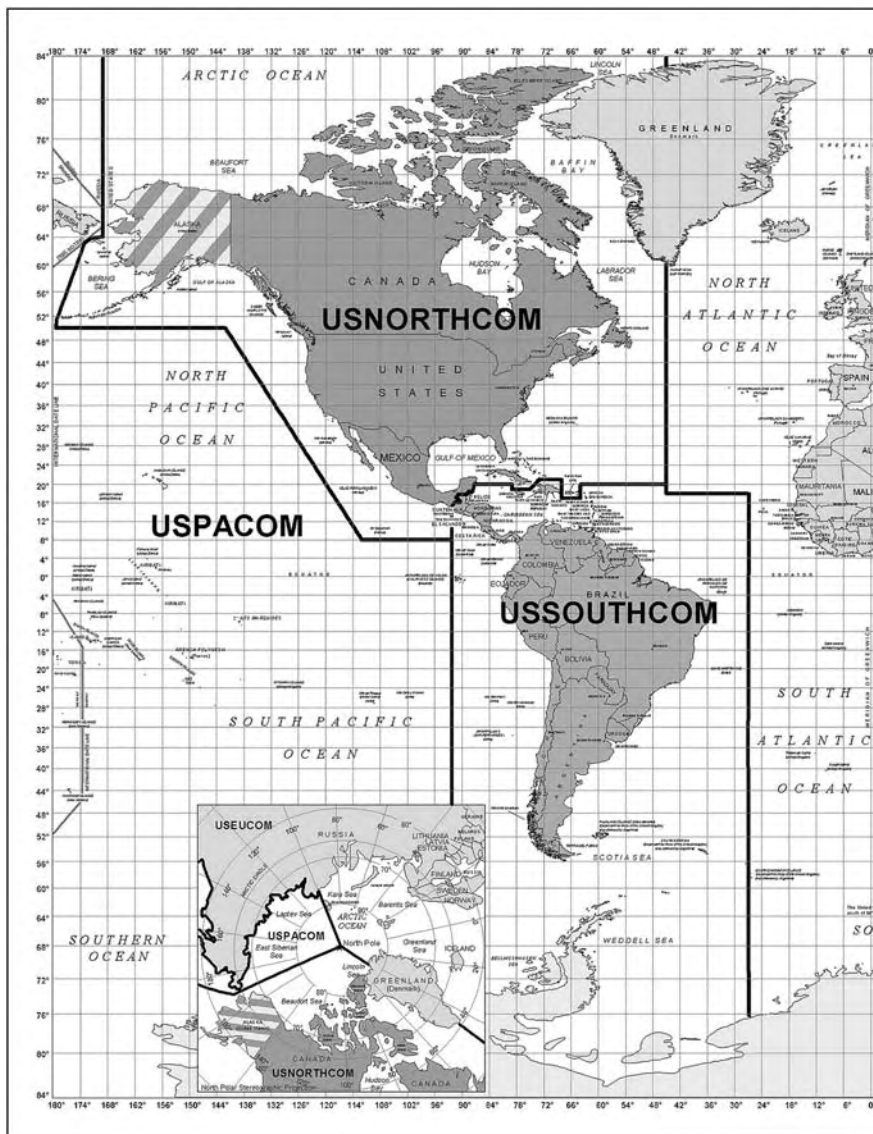
Finally, without David Pervin, Erin Ivy and the editorial staff at Palgrave Macmillan and Newgen this book would not appear in print.

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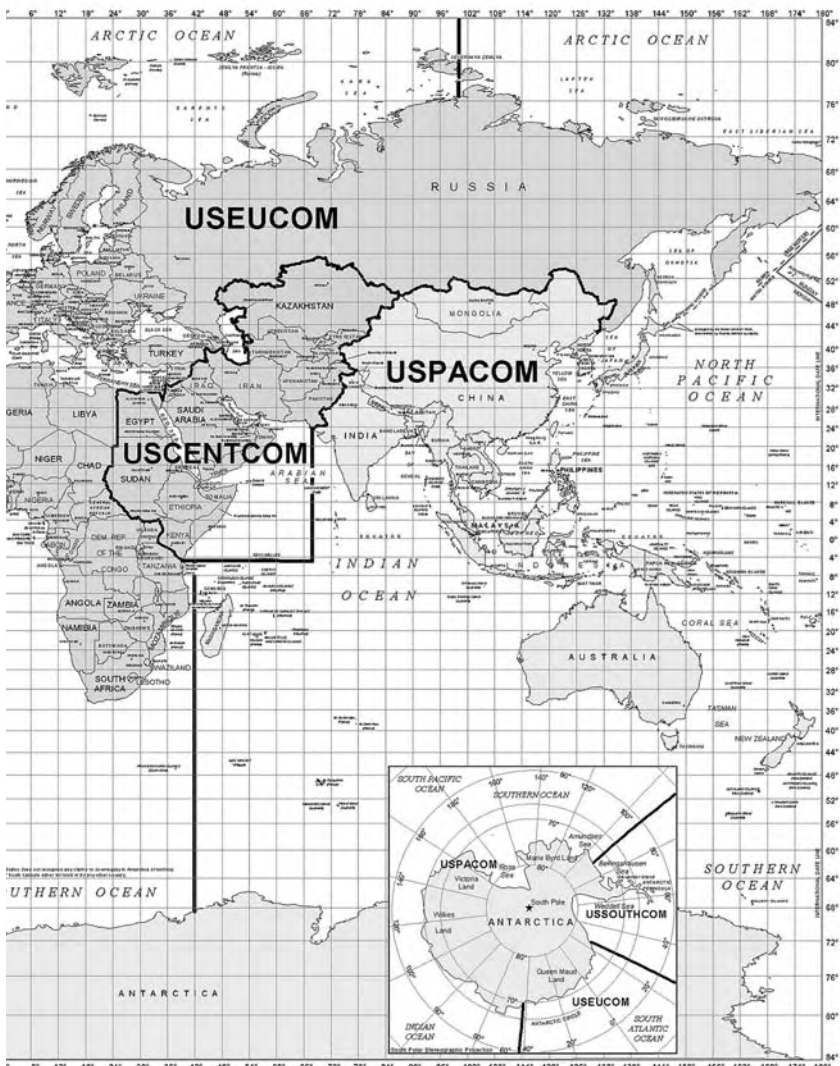
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Combatant commanders' areas of responsibility.

Source: Map prepared and published by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency. Boundaries reflect the 2002 Unified Command Plan.





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# CHAPTER 1

## AMERICA'S VICEROYS

*Derek S. Reveron and Michelle D. Gavin*

At his 2003 change of command ceremony, the incoming Marine Corps commandant paid homage to his predecessor who would become the new supreme allied commander of Europe.<sup>1</sup> It was not simply idle praise bestowed upon a great Marine; rather it was recognition that the heads of the armed services are not as powerful as they once were. The real power in the military today is in the field leading one of America's five geographic combatant commands.

When General Jones went from being the administrative head of the Marine Corps as commandant to becoming the senior American military officer in Europe, it was a promotion, and illustrates the importance of geographic combatant commanders. General Jones shared his thoughts on the ceremony with reporters, saying, "never in my wildest dreams or expectations did I think I would be standing before you today. The tradition is that Commandants drift softly and gently into the night."<sup>2</sup> Jones didn't drift gently into the night, but instead he assumed the second largest command in the Defense Department (DOD) with several active military operations in his area of responsibility (AOR). General Jones did move to a superior position.

The decreased power of the Marine Corps commandant and the increased power of the combatant commanders was a consequence of changes made after World War II that saw revolutionary transformations in the processes and institutions related to U.S. foreign policy. These continuing processes are rooted in the 1940s. The global nature of World War II compelled the military to reevaluate its command structure. Previously organized around the Army or the Navy, the new command structure emphasized "jointness," that is, a single commander responsible for all Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps forces

within a specific geographic area.<sup>3</sup> These new leaders known as regional combatant commanders can wield extraordinary influence in U.S. foreign policy and are America's viceroys.

The diplomatic nature of combatant commanders is evidenced in the positions combatant commanders pursue later in retirement. There are many combatant commanders who enter the formal diplomatic corps for the State Department. For example, Admiral Crowe represented the United States as ambassador to the Court of St. James in London. Admiral Preuher used his experience as Pacific commander to represent the United States in Beijing as the U.S. ambassador to China. After retiring from leading Central Command, General Anthony Zinni served as a special envoy to the Middle East for President George W. Bush. And, for those that doubt that the military adequately prepares one for diplomatic service, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell advanced to the pinnacle of diplomatic service by becoming secretary of state in 2001.

### Combatant Commanders and Foreign Policy

The bulk of the literature on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy does not recognize the growing influence of the combatant commanders. Their stature and influence has grown significantly over the course of the last two decades, aided by official actions like the 1986 Goldwater–Nichols Act, by budgetary increases as friends in the neoconservative movement sought to increase the Pentagon's power at the State Department's expense, and by advances in technology that allow commanders to meet with heads of state easily. Despite this growing power, prior to this volume, no scholarly analysis of the extent to which the commanders actually influence policy formation existed.

In her September 2000 *Washington Post* series, Dana Priest highlighted the important role combatant commanders play in foreign policy. Noting the importance of now retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni of Central Command, Priest reported that General Zinni routinely engaged in foreign policy activities such as hosting a conference for Persian Gulf states to regionalize defense issues, providing counterterrorism training for Kyrgyzstan, and establishing an engagement strategy with Uzbekistan. Throughout his travels in his 25-country "kingdom" General Zinni behaved like a U.S. ambassador. He promoted U.S. interests while falcon-hunting with Saudi royals, discussed U.S. policy while dining with kings in Africa, and provided American equipment while drinking vodka and eating horse meat with the Uzbek defense minister.

Because the central commander is responsible for an entire region, he takes a macro view of U.S. interests to coordinate policy with 25 countries in mind. Noting the importance of the central commander to U.S. foreign policy, Zinni remarked that U.S. government agencies “don’t have a way to say, ‘Okay, Central Asia is a problem, let’s all get together, each agency, and build a program.’ The geography of the agencies [doesn’t] even match up. If I go over to the State Department, I have four bureaus to visit.”<sup>4</sup> The situation is not much better at the Pentagon where he would have to visit two bureaus: the Office of African Affairs and the Office of Near East and South Asian Affairs.

With the shortcomings of the D.C.-based bureaucracies, combatant commanders have a distinct advantage. They are forward deployed, have more flexibility than D.C.-based institutions, and have robust travel budgets to frequent countries throughout each commander’s AOR. Having one commander responsible for an entire region allows combatant commanders to develop a foreign policy with all of his countries of responsibility in mind.

For example, foreign policy developed by Central Command was critical to ensuring military success in Afghanistan in 2001. Since it is a part of his territory, the central commander paid attention to Central Asia before it mattered in 2001 to prosecute the war on terrorism. When it was time for the United States to request basing rights in Central Asia, the United States already had a solid foundation on which to build to secure bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

A comparable diplomatic dimension of a combatant commander’s duties can be found in the Pacific Command. Before he retired in 2001, Admiral Dennis Blair led America’s Pacific forces and proved that he was a valuable American diplomat. When the United States and China confronted each other over the collision between an American reconnaissance aircraft and a Chinese fighter aircraft, Admiral Blair was the point man for the U.S. government who worked directly with the Chinese government to secure the aircrew’s release.

These two examples highlight the increased importance of combatant commanders in U.S. foreign policy making. As a single voice, a regional commander provides clear, unambiguous policy to an entire region. No other office in the U.S. government is as sweeping or as well funded as the regional combatant commands are. Through military-to-military contacts, weapons transfers, and combined training activities, combatant commanders can reward cooperative governments and increase U.S. access to other countries’ bases, intelligence, and resources. Further, since militaries play important roles in many societies, senior

American military officers can command more respect than civilian ambassadors might when dealing with Jakarta, Bogotá, or Ankara. With combat experiences that cut across national lines, military leaders share a common language that is used by the DOD to create and maintain a global network of military bases.

### *Engagement Tools*

Combatant commanders have a broad array of tools at their disposal. Through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs, combatant commanders train about 8,000 international military officers from 125 countries a year. The objectives of the IMET programs are to establish military-to-military relations to increase defense cooperation between the United States and other countries, to provide training to augment the capabilities of foreign militaries, and to instill democratic values and a respect for human rights in foreign military and civilian defense officials.

Under the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), combatant commanders offer direct military assistance. Using special operations soldiers, combatant commanders teach foreign militaries how to combat insurgencies, interdict drug traffickers, and rescue terrorist hostages. The benefit to the American soldiers is training in new environments and building relations with their foreign counterparts. The obvious benefit to the international participants is American training and financial assistance.

Augmenting military training is the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program that supplies grants and loans to finance American weapons and military equipment. The State Department oversees the program, but combatant commanders manage the program on a day-to-day basis. As Admiral Crowe discusses in chapter 4, Philippine President Marcos cared more about American arms transfers, than American concerns for human rights abuses by the Philippine military. Admiral Crowe recounted a typical Marcos response, “I appreciate your thoughts, Admiral. I know your heart’s in the right place. But what’s of more significance, I think, is when you are going to deliver those helicopters you promised us.”

In addition to IMET and FMF, combatant commanders operate four “military colleges” around the world. The George C. Marshall Center in Europe, for example, is designed to promote defense reform among the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Situated in the beautiful Bavarian Alps, the Marshall Center provides a comfortable setting for former East Bloc military personnel to consider how national

security is developed and maintained in democratic states. In Honolulu, the Asia-Pacific Center brings together military representatives from the Pacific Rim to focus on human rights, economic development, and regional security issues.

Since all the engagement tools are allocated through defense appropriations, Congress does play an important role in granting the combatant commanders autonomy, but it also limits their power.

### *The Role of Congress*

Schoolchildren learn early on in American government classes that the real power of Congress is the power of the purse. Later on, many are acquainted with the apocryphal quotation attributed to former Senate Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen: "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money." For fiscal year 2005, the Administration requested some \$401.7 billion (plus Iraq supplemental) in discretionary budget authority for the DOD, and about \$30 billion for the international affairs budget for the Department of State and related programs. If congressional power comes from spending authorities, then Defense appears to have far stronger support from the powerful. If political significance is calculated in billions, then engaging with the Pentagon rather than the State Department appears to promise far greater political impact. The raw numbers would suggest that the DOD wins out in any power struggle with the Department of State on Capitol Hill.

But while it is true that the Departments of State and Defense do compete for power and influence in Congress, the story is actually more complex than the numbers would suggest. Defense does enjoy a number of advantages over State, but it does not always prevail, in part because Congress's own bureaucratic interests sometimes clash with the Pentagon's will. This interaction serves as an important balance to the role combatant commanders play in foreign policy.

### Advantages of the Defense Department

Broadly, defense issues are simply more politically compelling than foreign policy issues for elected officials. Members of Congress have an obvious interest in courting the significant pool of military voters and their families (over five million in the DOD family), but they also have an interest in associating themselves with ideas of patriotism and strength. These ideas are more frequently invoked in discussions of military spending than in floor statements focused on the activities of

the United States Agency for International Development or the State Department. The conventional wisdom indicates that while defense spending is understood to be a matter of national security, foreign assistance spending and support for public diplomacy simply sound less urgently necessary to American voters. And if senior military officers identify problems or request programs, Congress is happy to oblige much of the time. In 2006, combatant commanders are expected to control \$30 billion compared to \$400 million in the past.

### *Committee Dynamics*

Senate committee activities help to illustrate some of these political dynamics between Defense and State. For example, the *prestige* and *power* of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have declined over the past decades, as others committees have grown more prominent. Senate rules prohibit members from serving on more than one of the four “Super A” Committees—Appropriations, Armed Services, Finance, and Foreign Relations. But government spending, trade and tax policies, and military basing and contracting issues all have far more obvious and prominent constituencies than international relations issues do, making them far more attractive politically. The result has diminished interest among senior and powerful members in serving on Foreign Relations.<sup>5</sup>

To some degree, congressional perceptions regarding the importance of foreign policy issues affected the sense of urgency surrounding authorizing committee work, and in many ways it lost relevance. Congress has not passed a major foreign assistance authorization bill since 1985, leaving the work of crafting policy and shaping initiatives to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. In contrast, defense authorization bills are reliably taken up annually and passed. Even the committee budgets reveal a disparity, with the Senate allocating \$9.9 million to the Armed Services Committee for the period March 1, 2003–September 30, 2004, and in the same period allocating only \$7.9 million to the Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Defense is in a relatively strong position in seeking authorities and resources from Congress in part because the military has established an impressive infrastructure designed to cultivate relationships on Capitol Hill. For example, each service maintains liaison offices on both the House and Senate sides of the Hill. The military personnel staffing these offices are “embedded” in the Congress and are a part of its culture. They regularly provide useful services to Members of Congress and to harried staff, fostering a sense of partnership and gratitude by providing offices timely information about constituents deployed

overseas, clarifying contracting rules for a home-district business hoping to sell to the military, and even assisting with congressional travel arrangements—sometimes to the point of providing the plane, the crew, and a helpful military escort.

### Disadvantages of the State Department

In contrast, for years the Department of State had no such on-the-ground outpost. In testimony before the House Budget Committee in March 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell made this issue a part of his overall effort to bolster support for the State Department, telling the committee, “I want to have a better relationship with Congress. I’m desperately trying to find room up in Capitol Hill now so that I can put a congressional liaison presence on Capitol Hill. We can take care of all your consular constituent needs, and I can have people up here who can help the Congress understand what we’re trying to do.”<sup>7</sup> But with office space at a premium, even a high-profile plea from an extraordinarily popular secretary of state faced an uphill battle. By November of 2001 a three-person State Department liaison office opened in the Rayburn Building on the House side of the Capitol. But by June 2003, no room had been found for the State Department in the Senate, which has distinct authorities not found in the House, including authorities relating to treaty ratification and the confirmation of ambassadorial nominees and key State Department officials.

### Straddling the Divide

The advantages of the DOD and disadvantages of the State Department facilitate the ability of combatant commanders to influence policy. The pursuit of power, and particularly zero-sum struggles for power between the two departments play out against this backdrop and within the arcane processes of authorization and appropriation on Capitol Hill. Most traditional military assistance programs are authorized in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961<sup>8</sup> (here one finds authority for IMET among other programs) or the Arms Export Control Act of 1975<sup>9</sup> (which includes authorities for Foreign Military Financing), both of which fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations and House International Relations Committees rather than the Armed Services Committees. Appropriations follow suit, going through Foreign Operations rather than Defense Subcommittees. These programs may be administered by the DOD, but the Office of Political-Military Affairs at the State Department retains control over the resources and therefore



many of the programs. This arrangement provides some limits on the combatant commanders when they use these engagement tools.

However, other significant military-to-military contacts, such as the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), are authorized and appropriated through military accounts. This removes them from oversight bodies responsible for coherence in foreign policy, and frees JCET from restrictions that Congress may have applied through foreign relations authorizing and appropriations processes. In 1998, *The Washington Post* revealed that many JCET exercises were being pursued in countries that Congress had banned from receiving military assistance overseen by the State Department.<sup>10</sup> For example, the *Post* reported that U.S. special operations conducted 41 training exercises in Indonesia between 1991 and 1998. Yet during that same period, Congress had, through the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, banned IMET for Indonesia because of the military's history of human rights abuses.<sup>11</sup> The scandal caused some to question the diligence of congressional oversight,<sup>12</sup> but it also revealed how congressional procedures and jurisdictional limits can create blinders in the oversight process, leading to a policy that sent mixed messages. Further, it reveals an important dimension of autonomy available to the combatant commanders—Indonesia provides a good example.

In 2001, Congress was anything but passive in seeking to evade legislative restrictions on military assistance to Indonesia, which had been strengthened in the wake of the violence that accompanied East Timor's vote for independence in 1999. Foreign Operations Appropriators had prohibited Indonesia access to major military assistance programs, but DOD Appropriators established a new Regional Defense Counterterrorism Fellowship Program, which funds foreign military officers to attend U.S. military educational institutions and selected regional centers for training. No restrictions were established to limit country eligibility. Admiral Dennis Blair, then combatant commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, praised this initiative in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2002, noting, "current restrictions on our interaction with the TNI [Armed Forces of Indonesia] limit our effectiveness. However, the newly established Regional Defense Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program may offer us a valuable tool to provide TNI mid-grade officers non-lethal training focused on counter-terrorism and combating transnational threats."<sup>13</sup>

In fact, counterterrorism training in general tends to straddle the divide between State and Defense jurisdictions in Congress. The State

Department (and therefore the Foreign Relations, International Relations, and Foreign Operations Committees) oversees Anti-Terrorism Assistance, the Terrorist Interdiction Program, and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement initiatives. But the DOD has requested new authorities in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and to some degree these requests have been accommodated by the Congress (see chapter 6 by Dean Cook on Southern Command).

The history of the 2003 Supplemental Appropriations bill helps to illustrate the point. In March 2003 the Bush administration requested that Congress appropriate \$74.8 billion in emergency supplemental funds to help finance military operations in Iraq and to help finance the ongoing campaign against terrorism. Part of the request included a \$150-million fund to be available to the secretary of Defense to support "indigenous forces" outside any existing congressional restrictions. Congress rejected this request, but did provide half of the \$50 million request for Defense funding to provide counterterrorism assistance to regular foreign forces, essentially creating a new foreign assistance program under the control of the DOD.<sup>14</sup> It appears that in the end, Congress was uncomfortable with some of the broad authorities and minimal oversight provisions sought by Secretary Rumsfeld.

### Limits Imposed by Congress

Despite resources that dwarf those of the State Department, Defense does not always win, in part because Congress has its own set of internal agendas that do not always work to the Pentagon's advantage. The authorizing committees with jurisdiction over most international affairs issues have a vested interest in keeping sensitive programs under their own purview, because for authorizers, jurisdiction equals power. Already faced with the reality of far smaller budgets, authorizing committees have no desire to see any portion of their empires siphoned off to the Armed Services Committee.

These interests sometimes clash with those of congressional appropriators with responsibility for foreign operations spending. Certainly appropriators, like authorizers, prefer to protect their turf rather than cede it to others with jurisdiction over the DOD, but they also recognize the appeal of relatively lavish Defense budgets. If one wants to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on combating AIDS, for example, it is tempting to permit some portion of that initiative to be farmed out to the DOD to work with militaries ravaged by the pandemic, rather than

raiding accounts for refugees or increasing access to primary education in order to fund all of the new initiative.<sup>15</sup> But as appealing as this might be when faced with tight budgets, it means relinquishing power, which is never an attractive option.

Finally, it is important to note that all members of Congress, regardless of their committee assignments, derive power to some degree through restrictions and conditions attached to spending and to spending authorities. These legislative bells and whistles allow Congress to direct policy far more effectively than it could by simply matching dollar amounts to Administration requests, and perhaps most importantly, they provide fodder for oversight in the future by establishing clear guidelines and standards to which the executive branch can be held accountable. Therefore the “slush fund approach,” in which executive requests for funding envision vague authorities and few restrictions on how and when to allocate resources, meets with little approval on Capitol Hill. These requests essentially seek to keep Congressional limits, and to a degree Congressional oversight, to a minimum. Rarely is any branch of government eager to make itself less relevant, and Congress is no exception. Bureaucratic self-interest often wins the day in Congress just as it does in the executive branch, and this acts as a bulwark against the trend toward increased foreign policy authority and autonomy in the hands of the military.

### Book Outline

This book provides first-hand accounts and detailed explanations of the importance of combatant commanders in U.S. foreign policy. Our book looks beyond Washington to America’s viceroys. The development of America’s viceroys is complex, but is rooted in fundamental changes in the law, declining State Department budgets, Republican congressional preference for the DOD, and the forward presence of combatant commanders. With large budgets, planning staffs, training and education opportunities, and theater presence, the combatant commanders stand out and above their peers at the State Department.

We highlight the increased influence of combatant commanders in foreign policy because they are largely overlooked by analysts and scholars. Our book complements the growing literature on the ideological gap between the military and civilian population. Since combatant commanders are not subject to democratic recall, the importance of their autonomy in foreign policy underscores a necessary oversight role for Congress. This oversight might be complicated by the high level of trust the

American people place in the military relative to Congress and that fewer people in government have had military experiences to rebut the power combatant commanders possess. Only 35 percent of Americans believe that they can trust members of Congress to tell the truth, while 65 percent believe that they can trust members of the military.<sup>16</sup> Armed with a strong command of their regions, distinguished military careers, and the trust of the public, combatant commanders are granted much access to the policymaking structure in Washington and international capitols. Through contemporary case studies, this book examines the relationship between politicians and senior military officers.

The succeeding chapters represent many months of research and years of reflection we as military officers and professors of national security studies had in capacities as the Pacific commander in Admiral Crowe's case, working on the Quadrennial Defense Review in Commander Garbesi's case, supporting a policy staff in Dean Cook's case, and supporting the supreme allied commander of Europe during war in my case. We feel that the volume contributes to the underappreciated role combatant commanders play in U.S. foreign policy and provides case studies to understand the role military commanders play in day-to-day diplomacy, during war, and formulating foreign aid programs.

Since 1946, there have been 20 unified command plans and numerous interim adjustments. Many of the revisions reflected changes in executive agent authority, military command structure, operational control of forces, and inactivation or establishment of unified commands to reflect changes in DOD structure and changes in strategic threat assessments. In chapter 2, Gregg Garbesi explores the basic framework through which combatant commanders operate. Before the unified command structure existed, conflicts over strategy, resources, and territory inhibited the military's effectiveness. The difficulty of joint warfare is best emphasized by the World War II conflict between General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz in the Pacific. Based on the World War II experience, President Truman attempted to limit military service rivalry by creating a distinct command and control structure called the Unified Command Plan (UCP). This chapter briefly examines precursors to the UCP and its evolution through legislation and executive policy in more detail. Basic terminology is defined and overviews of each of the current combatant commands, as designated in 2002, are provided, accompanied by illustrative diagrams and charts.

In chapter 3, Chris Fettweis attempts to place the combatant commanders in the context of the overall process of U.S. foreign policy. Many observers do not seem to appreciate the growing importance that

the commanders exert not only for micro or tactical-level decisions, but also those on the macro or “strategic” level. A variety of factors from the passage of Goldwater–Nichols in 1986 to almost a decade of Republican congressional control to the evolution of communications technology and presidents with little military experience contributed to a rapid growth in combatant commanders’ influence over all levels of U.S. foreign affairs. This chapter describes how and why their role is changing, and discusses how the process could be adapted to take better advantage of the growing power of America’s viceroys. Since the modern unified commanders are as much diplomats as they are warriors, increased cooperation between the regional commands and senior levels of the State Department is necessary to better coordinate U.S. foreign policy as the new century unfolds.

In chapter 4, Admiral Crowe begins the case study section of this book and offers a first-hand account of his day-to-day life as a Pacific commander. Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr. served as commander of all U.S. Pacific Forces from 1983 to 1985. Historically, the Pacific commander was the Paul Revere of the Pacific. He went around shouting, “The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming,” and quoting alarming figures on the expansion of the Soviet Pacific Fleet and the Soviet buildup at Camranh Bay, Vietnam. His inevitable conclusion was that the Pacific should get more funds, more ships, and more weapons. But when Admiral Crowe first reported to his headquarters in Hawaii, he made a concerted effort to step back and look at the region with an objective eye. With this objectivity, Admiral Crowe helped restructure American thinking about Soviet aims and facilitated warming relations with the Soviets under Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Further, Admiral Crowe served as an emissary to developing countries throughout the region. Admiral Crowe later took this experience and objectivity to the Pentagon where he served as the eleventh chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the United Kingdom where he served as the U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James.

In chapter 5, Derek Reveron explores the European Command during wartime. During the Cold War, U.S. European Command was responsible for preventing or defeating a Soviet invasion of Europe. Since the Soviet Collapse, the Command transformed itself to deal with new contingencies in Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. At its helm is the dual-hatted American European commander who is also NATO’s supreme allied commander. Throughout its history, the European commander always served as a diplomat to maintain consensus within NATO against the Soviet Union. With the Soviet threat

gone, the commander continues to build consensus to shape Alliance policy in the absence of an overwhelming threat. Tragedy in the Balkans in the early 1990s provided the supreme allied commander the impetus to restructure the European Command and test NATO's new strategic concept. Leading the Alliance into war for the first time in its 50-year history, General Wesley Clark's experience highlighted the difficulties military commanders face in multinational settings. In particular, the supreme allied commander was confronted with two interrelated missions: to compel Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to submit to the international community's demands for Kosovo and to maintain diplomatic support for the air operation among NATO allies, including the United States. This chapter addresses the difficulties of coalition warfare and the steps General Clark took to maintain the Alliance while prosecuting an air campaign.

In chapter 6, Dean Cook provides an account of a combatant commander's role defining American foreign policy toward Colombia. During General Charles E. Wilhelm's tenure as commander of U.S. Southern Command from 1997 until 2000, he led a sea change in U.S. policy toward Colombia. Before he took the helm of Southern Command, U.S. engagement with the Colombian military was minimal, due to a poor Colombian track record on human rights and perceived incompetence and corruption in Bogotá. Before General Wilhelm retired in 2000, U.S. Army Special Forces had trained the first of three U.S.-equipped Colombian Army Counterdrug Battalions and Congress had approved a \$1.3 billion aid package for Colombia, the majority of which was earmarked for the Colombian military. While changes in Colombia's political landscape provided a rationale for rapprochement and a deteriorating security environment provided an impetus for policy change, General Wilhelm, through behind-the-scenes advocacy and personal diplomacy in Bogotá and Washington, proved to be the most influential force in determining the shape and direction of that policy change. His role as a primary architect of this massive shift in U.S. policy toward Colombia demonstrates the growing importance of the regional combatant commanders in shaping—rather than merely implementing—U.S. foreign policy.

In chapter 7, James Robbins explores the diplomatic nature of U.S. Central Command. With 50 years of American foreign policy focused on containing the Soviet Union, little attention was paid to the Middle East until the mid-1980s. Conditioned by the fact U.S. Central Command was a relatively new combatant command in an area in which there was little permanent U.S. military presence, the combatant commanders

needed to take an active role in establishing this presence. This was further conditioned by events such as U.S.-flagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers during the Iran–Iraq War, the Gulf War in 1991, the war in Afghanistan in 2001, and the war against Iraq in 2003, which placed U.S. Central Command at the center of U.S. national security and the global war on terrorism. Thus the strong diplomatic role was not the result of design like the European commander, but of necessity of the combatant commanders filling a vacuum in the region.

In chapter 8, Stephen D. Wrage examines the case study chapters of this book to consider the impact of institutional restraints placed on combatant commanders. He suggests that the trendy term “proconsul” used to describe the power of the combatant commanders is overstated and misleading. Combatant commanders have neither the autonomy nor pose a threat to the center as the Roman proconsuls did, who always presented a threat to Rome. Though General Tommy Franks, General Wesley Clark, and General Charles Wilhelm were significant policy actors, they were never truly as autonomous as Caesar was. Though referred to as the American Caesar, even General Douglas MacArthur was fired by President Truman. Combatant commanders are highly dependent on their chains of command, particularly the secretary of Defense, accountable to Congress, and limited by their short terms of command lasting only two to three years. However, with the military assuming a dominant role in American foreign policy through the global war on terrorism and post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, the potential for the combatant commanders’ power, or at least the DOD’s, to grow will increase unless checked.

### Notes

1. The heads of the armed forces (commandant of the Marine Corps, chief of Naval Operations, Army Chief of Staff, and Air Force Chief of Staff) do not command or direct operational military forces. Instead, all operational forces are assigned to combatant commanders who wield extraordinary influence and are the subject of this book. The power of combatant commanders came at the expense of the service chiefs who are primarily administrators who recruit, train, and equip military members.
2. Linda D. Kozaryn, 2003, “Gen. James Jones Becomes First Marine EUCOM Commander,” January 16, *American Forces Press Service*, <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/nato/03011701.htm>.
3. The idea behind “jointness” is to expand officers’ loyalties beyond a single service to the whole military. To those outside the military, the idea of “jointness” must seem strange. Many do not understand that there are deep cultural, operational, and organizational differences among the Army, Navy,

Air Force, and Marine Corps. The rivalries are not only on "game days" between the football teams of the service academies, but also in the Congress and on the battlefield. Services compete with one another for budgets and operational deployments. For example, I remember arguing with an Army friend who was convinced that the Marine Corps was ineffective because it lacked the heavy armor of M-1 tanks that the Army has. Wearing my navy hat, I retorted that Marine Corps effectiveness is based on its ability to move quickly and deploy rapidly something the Army is not very capable of doing. Of course, the joint approach sees the Marine Corps as the lead force with the Army providing follow-on combat sustainment.

4. Quoted in Dana Priest, 2000, "An Engagement in 10 Time Zones; Zinni Crosses Central Asia, Holding Hands, Building Trust," *The Washington Post*, September 29.
5. Sonni Efron and Janet Hook, 2002, "Lugar Now the Man in the Middle," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 23.
6. United States Senate, 2003, *A resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2003, through September 30, 2003, October 1, 2003, through September 30, 2004, and October 1, 2004, through February 28, 2005*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., S. Res. 66.
7. March 15, 2001, Hearing of the House Budget Committee on State Department FY 2002 Budget.
8. 22 USC Sec. 2151.
9. 22 USC Sec. 2751.
10. Dana Priest, 1998, "U.S. Military Trains Foreign Troops," *The Washington Post*, July 12, 1998, "A Tutor to Every Army in Latin America," *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1998, "U.S. Faces Surprises, Dilemma in Africa," *The Washington Post*, July 14.
11. Dana Priest, 1998, "Free of Oversight, U.S. Military Trains Foreign Troops," *The Washington Post*, July 12.
12. See for example Mary McGrory, 1998, "In Joint Training, a Singular Failure," *The Washington Post*, July 26.
13. U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 2002, *FY2003 Defense Authorization: Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., March 5.
14. Public Law 011, 2003, 108th Cong., 1st sess., April 16, *Making emergency wartime supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003, and for other purposes*.
15. For example, the Defense Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002 included \$14 million for prevention programs designed to fight AIDS in African militaries (P.L. 107-117).
16. Harris Poll 0417515 released on November 27, 2002, and Harris Poll 0417504 released on November 27, 2002, Roper Center at University of Connecticut.



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## CHAPTER 2

# U.S. UNIFIED COMMAND PLAN

*Gregg Garbesi*<sup>1</sup>

The Unified Command Plan (UCP) is the “big picture” document, signed by the president, that establishes the nation’s Unified Commands and assigns them geographic areas of responsibilities and missions. In a sense, the UCP is the “Constitution” of the military’s joint organization that defines the current U.S. military command framework. The UCP was first implemented by President Harry S. Truman in 1946 and has been updated at least 20 times, most recently by President George W. Bush in 2002. While the principles of military command and control within each unified combatant command have changed very little since the National Security Act of 1947, the importance of unified commands has increased significantly. Originally creatures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, unified combatant commanders are now powerful and independent actors in both military and political matters. Their growth in power is a product of legislative, executive, and bureaucratic actions taken during the last 50 years.

### Separate Services

The history of America’s military command and control arrangements mirrors the development of joint warfare in the U.S. military. Warfare in early American history was “divided along the water’s edge,”<sup>2</sup> allowing the Army and the Navy to operate independently of one another. This operational independence was replicated in both the military command and legislative oversight structures. Both services reported to separate civilian secretaries (the Army to the secretary of war and the Navy to the secretary of the Navy) who then reported directly to their only common superior, the president.<sup>3</sup> There was no secretary of defense

or Joint Chiefs of Staff to coordinate defense policy. Congress also mirrored the disconnected military framework and maintained separate committees (Military Affairs and Naval Affairs) to oversee the two services.<sup>4</sup>

While the services developed independently of one another and enjoyed autonomy in employing their forces in combat, there were many instances of effective interservice cooperation in early American history. Admiral MacDonough's naval operations on Lake Champlain were a vital factor in the ground campaigns of the War of 1812;<sup>5</sup> the capture of Veracruz in 1847 was praised for "close inter-service cooperation";<sup>6</sup> and Union riverine operations to take the Confederate Forts Henry and Donelson were a testament to close Army–Navy coordination.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, during the same period there were just as many instances of interservice dissension, often with disastrous results. In contrast to Admiral MacDonough's conduct on Lake Champlain, Captain Chauncey on Lake Ontario "refused to divert forces to support the Army in order not to fall prey to 'any sinister attempt' to make his forces 'subordinate to, or an appendage of, the army'";<sup>8</sup> during the Civil War, the Union's first attempt to take Fort Fisher failed, largely due to poor relations between the Army and Navy commanders;<sup>9</sup> and efforts to take Fort Sumter in 1863 were "plagued by acrimonious Army–Navy relations."<sup>10</sup> As late as 1983, during the invasion of Grenada, the Army and Marine Corps could not coordinate their assault and simply agreed to split the island down the middle. And in 1999, there was an inability to integrate Army attack helicopters with Navy and Air Force fixed-wing aircraft during operations against Yugoslavia.

### *Cultural and Technical Differences*

The bureaucratic tendency is for each service to view policy, weapons acquisitions, and military planning from its own perspective. The Navy cares primarily about Naval and maritime issues. The Army cares mainly about Army and ground issues. And the Air Force predominately cares about Air Force matters. Since each service wants to demonstrate its unique capabilities, it is sometimes difficult to bring the services together around an operation. To bring them together around a common weapons system is next to impossible.

To be sure, reluctance for jointness is cultural and is a product of an officer's career and indoctrination in a single service. It is rare for junior officers to be assigned to joint activities. Almost all of the joint billets in the military are for officers at the rank of O-4 and above. A Marine

Infantry Officer will not be assigned to a joint command until he is likely a veteran of ten years or more. After ten years, the strong biases for an officer's service developed during the formative years in the military are difficult to overcome. A Marine sees the Marine Corps as an agile, effective combat force compared to the large, cumbersome, and oversized Army. Likewise, a Naval aviator sees Naval Aviation as a robust, self-contained air force that is completely self-sufficient compared to an Air Force that needs long runways at bases with golf courses.

There are some technical and mission reasons for a bias against joint warfare, particularly when it comes to military hardware procurement. For instance, though the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all will purchase the Joint Strike Fighter from Lockheed Martin, due to unique mission requirements of the services, the aircraft will be produced in three variants, of which only 80 percent is common. In comparison to the Air Force version, the Navy version needs to be capable of landing on aircraft carriers and thus has a larger wingspan that provides increased range and improves low-speed handling characteristics. The Marine Corps version requires a short takeoff and vertical landing capability that the Air Force and Navy do not need. In spite of the 20 percent differences among the aircraft, it is a large accomplishment and the first time that the three services came together to purchase a single aircraft. Not only is the acquisition a triumph for joint warfare, but it is also touted as a budgetary necessity. With a common airframe, all three services expect to save a substantial sum on replacement parts, even on the most expensive weapons program in history.

Some services are more open to joint warfare than others. Former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe, criticized his own service's culture that is rooted in the idea of independent command at sea. "Ever since then [1949] the Navy has been the least eager among the services to endorse any move toward unification; anything that might give someone outside the Navy control over maritime forces is instinctively opposed. The Navy has traditionally opposed anything that looked, sounded, or smelled joint."<sup>11</sup> Paying a compliment to the Army, which is rare for a naval officer, Crowe remarked that the command structure in southeast Asia where a Navy admiral was the Pacific commander and responsible for the military campaign in Vietnam "forced the Army to scrap some of its parochialism and to take jointness more seriously."<sup>12</sup> Further, recent successes of joint warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq underscore the importance of the Army and the Air Force working together well. Army Special Forces relayed targeting information to Air Force bombers and Navy attack aircraft greatly increasing their effectiveness.

*Joint Doctrine*

In the absence of any formal doctrine governing joint Army–Navy operations, interservice cooperation was always ad hoc at best and largely dependent upon the personal working relationship of the commanding officers involved. Before recent reforms, every military operation seemed to suffer from lack of coordination across services. Despite the successes of Army–Navy teamwork and the failures pursuant to dissension on the battlefield, it was not until the early 1900s that efforts were made to formalize command relationships and institutionalize service cooperation. Experiences in the Cuba campaign during the Spanish–American War (1898) were the catalyst for increased Army–Navy coordination. While America prevailed in the campaign, the Army and Navy commanders publicly disputed the proper course of action to capture Santiago and the Army performed dismally, losing more than four men to “the negligence or incompetence of Army officers” for every one man killed by the enemy.<sup>13</sup> Relations between the Army and Navy at the close of the war were so sour “that the army commander refused to turn captured Spanish ships over to the navy or allow a navy representative to sign the surrender document.”<sup>14</sup>

Following the unimpressive cooperation between the Army and the Navy in the Spanish–American War, the secretary of war and the secretary of the Navy created the Joint Army and Navy Board in 1903 with the charge to address “all matters calling for cooperation of the two Services.”<sup>15</sup> The Joint Army and Navy Board (JANB) was chartered as a standing body to plan for joint operations and resolve problems of common concern for the two Services. However, the JANB accomplished little, because it lacked authority to direct implementation of new concepts or enforce decisions. Also, the scope of the Joint Board’s work was limited to commenting on problems submitted to it by the secretaries of the two military departments. It was described as “a planning and deliberative body rather than a center of executive authority.”<sup>16</sup>

After World War I, the service secretaries attempted to revitalize the Joint Board. Membership was expanded to include the chiefs of the two Services, their deputies, and the chief of War Plans Division for the Army and director of Plans Division for the Navy. Additionally, a permanent working staff (named the Joint Planning Committee) was authorized. The 1919 version of the JANB could initiate recommendations on its own, but was given no more legal authority or responsibility than its 1903 predecessor. One of the few products of the JANB was the 1935 publication “Joint Action Board of the Army and Navy,” which “prescribed that the fundamental method of inter-service coordination

was *mutual cooperation*.”<sup>17</sup> Ironically, the Army and Navy commanders in Hawaii supported this policy of coordination through cooperation during the period leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. However, the congressional inquiry following the attack found that there was a “complete inadequacy of command by mutual cooperation” and that the conduct of operations was in a “state of joint oblivion.”<sup>18</sup>

## World War II

With the first attempt at Joint Coordination discredited, “ad hococracy” of military command arrangements, influenced mainly by the personalities of the engaged commanders, reasserted itself. One institutional change, however, was implemented by executive order. In February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The initial composition of the JCS mirrored the British arrangement, largely because the JCS was tasked with coordinating the war effort in Europe with their allied counterparts. However, the organization operated by consensus, and agreement among the three service chiefs was difficult to reach. Hampered by interservice rivalry, the lack of consensus undermined the American war effort. A British air marshal observed, “The violence of inter-service rivalry in the United States had to be seen to be believed and was an appreciable handicap to their war effort.”<sup>19</sup>

Emerging from World War II as a military power with both global reach and global responsibilities, the United States sought to design a command and control structure equal to the challenges of U.S. supremacy that were already clearly developing throughout the world. The debate over the fundamental nature of this new command structure was colored by two very different experiences during the war: the campaign in the Pacific conducted by General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz and the campaign in Europe led by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. In the Pacific theater, there was no unity of command for U.S. forces and attempts at joint warfare were largely unsuccessful. The Army commanded one area, while the Navy commanded three different areas. However, the campaign in Europe under General Eisenhower was more organizationally coherent. There was not only unified command of U.S. forces, but also combined command with our Allies as well. Eisenhower’s model of command became the template for the postwar Unified Command Plan.

*Lessons from Europe*

The true unified command for U.S. military forces that developed in the European theater during World War II was a natural result of the system of a combined (U.S.–Allied) command established early in the war by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Because the British allowed its forces to be subordinated to American leadership and the commanding American general was headquartered in London, there was a clear chain of command and consistent unity of effort. However, General Eisenhower at various times did voice frustration with managing both American and British officers. “I am tired of dealing with a lot of prima donnas. By God, you tell that bunch that if they can’t get together and stop quarreling like children, I will tell the Prime Minister to get someone else to run this damn war. I’ll quit.”<sup>20</sup> Eisenhower frequently found himself balancing the competing demands of his generals who had rival needs and war aims. For Ike to be successful, he used diplomacy to preserve unity of effort. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill consistently supported him and complimented him as “more than a general—he’s a born politician and [an] innate diplomat.”<sup>21</sup>

Though unified on paper, commands have their quirks. As supreme commander in Europe, Eisenhower was responsible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and two governments. Eisenhower observed that seven different organizations from four nations (the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia) “cannot possibly operate at maximum effectiveness so long as cooperation alone dictates their employment, no matter how sincere a purpose may inspire the cooperative effort.”<sup>22</sup> To bring balance was always a challenge and he found it difficult to satisfy his subordinate generals. Of particular note was Eisenhower’s relationship with the British General Bernard Montgomery. Though Montgomery technically worked for Eisenhower, Eisenhower had little choice but to cooperate with the “difficult and exasperating British general.”<sup>23</sup> This caused much angst from one of Eisenhower’s key American generals, George S. Patton. Patton wrote in his diary, “Ike is bound by hand and foot by the British and does not know it. Poor fool. We actually have no Supreme Commander—no one who can take hold and say that this shall be done and that shall not be done.”<sup>24</sup> For Eisenhower to be successful, he had to not only maintain good relations with Prime Minister Winston Churchill, but also had to rely on his tactful nature to keep his generals focused on fighting the Germans instead of each other. British Field Marshall Alan Brooke observed that Ike seemed to be “an arbiter balancing the requirements of competing allies and subordinates rather than a master of the field making a decisive

choice.”<sup>25</sup> Of course, history judged Eisenhower’s style as successful and proved to be a model for the postwar military command structure.

After the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff saw utility in retaining a unified command system even in peacetime. The Service chiefs agreed that when General Eisenhower’s combined headquarters (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force) was dissolved, he would then become the commander of all U.S. forces in Europe. Soon after V-E Day on June 28, 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a directive appointing General Eisenhower the commanding general, U.S. Forces, European Theater.<sup>26</sup> This command later evolved into the dual command structure of today: the European Command and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. Eisenhower’s thoughts on his job became a good guide for future combatant commanders. “In a place like this the Commanding General must be a bit of a diplomat, lawyer, promoter, salesman, social hound, liar (at least to get out of social affairs), mountebank, actor, Simon Legree, humanitarian, orator and incidentally (sometimes I think most damnably incidentally) a soldier.”<sup>27</sup>

### *Lessons from the Pacific*

In contrast to the European theater where General Eisenhower could control competing agendas, there was no one in the Pacific theater of operations who could control the professional rivalry between General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Achieving unified command for the entire area proved unattainable. Service interests and personal inclinations barred the subordination of either of the two major commanders in that area.

Instead of appointing MacArthur or Nimitz the supreme commander of the Pacific, President Roosevelt decided that the theater was big enough for two supreme commanders. During the final campaigns in the Pacific, therefore, these two officers held separate commands. MacArthur served as commander in chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific (CINCAFPAC), and Nimitz served as commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC).<sup>28</sup> Air Force Major General St. Clair Streett, a Joint Chiefs of Staff member at the time, indicated he thought the president should have appointed a single commander and that it was a mistake to grant MacArthur his own theater of operations. He went on to say: “At the risk of being considered naive and just plain country-boy dumb, the major obstacle to any ‘sane military solution’ of the problem was General MacArthur himself. Only with MacArthur out of the picture



would it be possible to establish a sound organization in the area.”<sup>29</sup> MacArthur’s reputation for seeking the limelight and single-minded focus on returning to the Philippines conflicted with many senior officers who wanted to attack Japan directly.

MacArthur did voice his opinion on the need for unity, but saw himself as the right person to lead all American forces in the Pacific.

Of all the faulty decisions of the war perhaps the most unexplainable one was the failure to unify the command in the Pacific. The principle involved is perhaps the most fundamental one in the doctrine and tradition of command. In this instance it did not involve an international problem. It was accepted and entirely successful in the other great theaters.

The failure to do so in the Pacific cannot be defended in logic, in theory, or even in common sense. Other motives must be ascribed. It resulted in divided effort, the waste of diffusion and duplication of force, and the consequent extension of the war with added casualties and cost.

The generally excellent cooperation between the two commanders in the Pacific, supported by the good will, good nature and high professional qualifications of the numerous people involved was no substitute for the essential unity of direction of centralized authority.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of having outright command of the Pacific, MacArthur had to use his political skills to ensure his operational plans were supported. At a July 1944 meeting in Honolulu, President Roosevelt met with his Pacific commanders to discuss a final strategy to win the war. Admiral Nimitz and the Navy advocated attacking Formosa (Taiwan) or even southern Japan. Remembering his parting words to the Filipinos, “I shall return,” General MacArthur argued strongly for attacking the Philippines to cut off the flow of raw materials, including oil, to Japan. Through this strategy, MacArthur argued, there would be no reason to follow Nimitz’s plan or risk mass American casualties (predicted at one million) by invading Japan directly. He told Roosevelt, “the blockade that I will put across the line of supply between Japan and the Dutch East Indies will so strangle the Japanese Empire that it will have to surrender.”<sup>31</sup> Nearly convinced of the Navy’s plan proposed by Nimitz, Roosevelt almost resisted MacArthur. However, MacArthur’s private meeting ultimately swayed the president. MacArthur said, “you hope to be reelected President of the United States [in four months], but the nation will never forgive you if you approve a plan which leaves 17 million Christian American subjects to wither in the Philippines under the conqueror’s heel until the peace treaty frees them.”<sup>32</sup> By appealing to

Roosevelt as a politician, MacArthur illustrated that military commanders must be politically savvy to be successful. Ultimately, the Philippines were recaptured, but Japan did not surrender as predicted until more than a year later after two atomic bombs were dropped.

### The First Unified Command Plan

The momentum for the creation of a postwar system of worldwide unified command over U.S. forces “stemmed from the Navy’s dissatisfaction with this divided command in the Pacific,” a situation characterized by the chief of Naval Operations in a memo dated February 1, 1946, as “ambiguous” and “unsatisfactory.” The Navy proposed establishing a single command in the Pacific theater—excluding Japan, Korea, and China—whose commander would have a joint staff and would exercise “unity of command” over all U.S. forces in the theater.<sup>33</sup>

This proposal was opposed by representatives of the Army and Army Air Forces, who favored unity of command on the basis of function, rather than geography. There was concern that the chief of Naval Operations’s plan would deny General MacArthur control of ground and air forces he might need for his mission to occupy Japan.<sup>34</sup>

After considerable discussion, a compromise emerged as part of a comprehensive worldwide system of unified command for American forces under control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. President Truman approved the resulting “Outline Command Plan,” which was in effect the first UCP, on December 14, 1946. The plan called for the eventual creation of seven unified commands, as an “interim measure for the immediate postwar period.”<sup>35</sup>

### *Legislative Requirements*

In accordance with the National Security Act of 1947 and Title 10 of the U.S. Code, the president, with the advice and assistance of the secretary of Defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, signs the UCP, which establishes combatant commands. The unified command structure generated by the UCP is flexible and changes as required to accommodate evolving national security needs. Title 10 of the U.S. Code requires that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at intervals not to exceed two years, “review the missions, responsibilities (including geographic boundaries), and force structure of each combatant command” and make recommendations to the president, through the secretary of Defense, any changes that may be necessary.<sup>36</sup> For example,

in 2002, Northern Command was established to be responsible for homeland security. The Command includes the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and adjoining waters to approximately 500 nautical miles. Like its civilian counterpart of the Department of Homeland Security, the Command will serve as a single point of contact for support to civil authorities.

### *Specified and Unified Commands*

The UCP establishes two types of combatant commands: *specified and unified*. According to Title 10, a specified combatant command is a “command which has broad continuing missions and which is normally composed of forces from a single military department.” There are currently no specified combatant commands, but the Military Airlift Command, in existence from 1977 to 1988 and composed solely of units from the United States Air Force (USAF), was an example of such a command.

Also discussed in Title 10, a unified combatant command is defined as a “command which has broad, continuing missions and which is normally composed of forces from two or more military departments.”<sup>37</sup> United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) is an example of a unified combatant command. Central Command is responsible for 25 countries from the horn of Africa to Central Asia. Though it had a modest beginning in the 1980s (see chapter 7), Central Command fast emerged as the most important theater in the 1990s. In addition to the smaller operations it conducts, Central Commander waged two successful wars against Iraq and one against Afghanistan.

### *Geographic and Functional Commands*

The combatant commands are organized in one of two ways: by *geography* or by *function*. Geographic combatant commands are assigned a specific geographic area of responsibility (AOR) and are responsible for all operations within their designated areas. There are currently five combatant commanders with geographic responsibilities: Central Command (USCENTCOM), Pacific Command (USPACOM), Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), and European Command (USEUCOM). Each command’s AOR is detailed in the UCP (see table 2.1). Forces are assigned annually to the unified commanders by the “Forces for Unified Commanders” memorandum signed by the secretary of Defense. These forces are utilized by the unified commanders to carry out their

Table 2.1 List of geographical combatant commands

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Full name</i>	<i>AOR (Area of Responsibility)</i>	<i>HQ</i>
USCENTCOM	Central Command	Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, plus the Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, and Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean from 068° E, south to 05° S, and west to Kenya/ Tanzania coastal border, including the Seychelles	McDill AFB, Florida
USEUCOM	European Command	All of Europe including Russia and the region around the Caspian Sea. Nations in the AOR are: Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, the Ireland, the U.K., Austria, Belgium, Montenegro, Germany Italy, the island of Crete, Greece, Bulgaria, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Responsible for waters off the Western Coast of Africa and Europe to the U.S. East Coast including the Mediterranean Sea, Caspian Sea, and Atlantic Ocean	Patch Barracks, Vaihingen, Germany
USNORTHCOM	Northern Command	Extends from Alaska and includes all of the territory of North America including support to Canada, extending across the U.S. homeland, and south to northern Caribbean and Northern Mexico. Command stood up on 10/01/2002	Peterson AFB, Colorado
USPACOM	Pacific Command	Responsible for the entire Pacific Ocean from 500 miles off the U.S. West Coast including Hawaii and Guam, to the Eastern Coast of Africa and the Asia Major (Russia/China) coastline. Includes Asia including as far West as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, Korea, and China. The AOR also covers all the Polynesian islands as well as Australia and New Zealand. The neutral territory of Antarctica is in the AOR of PACOM as well	Honolulu, Hawaii
USSOUTHCOM	Southern Command	Responsible for Central and South America	Miami, Florida

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 compiled from information provided by DOD: <http://www.defenselink/specials/unifiedcommand/> and MILNET: <http://www.milnet.com/milnet/us-mil-commands.htm>

normally assigned missions. These forces can be transferred to other commanders only when approved by the president. This is a common practice, during the 2003 war against Iraq, Central command was the primary combatant command, but European command and Pacific command provided some of their forces to augment USCENTCOM.

Functional combatant commanders are assigned worldwide responsibilities and are not bounded by geography. There are currently four functional combatant commands: Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) (see table 2.2). Functional combatant commands specialize in combat-supporting functions. Joint Forces Command is the “transformation laboratory” of the U.S. military that serves to enhance the unified

*Table 2.2* List of functional commands

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Full name</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>HQ</i>
USJFCOM	Joint Forces Command	Tasked to continue joint weapons and doctrine development especially that of military transformation, focused on personnel and technology issues	Norfolk, Virginia
USSOCOM	Special Operations Command	All U.S. special operations including air, ground and sea based elite units for spec ops. Includes training operational doctrine, giving one command the responsibility for creating, maintaining force strength and capability for immediate deployment of special warfare as directed by the National Command Authority in some cases within 24 hours. Assumed assets of the Ready Response Force	MacDill AFB, Florida
USSTRATCOM	Strategic Command	All strategic and combat elements related to strategic deterrence. Following the merger with USSPACECOM on October 1, 2002, also responsible for all space borne and ground control elements for military use as well as cyber warfare and computer security and computer development for the services.	Offutt AFB, Nebraska
USTRANSCOM	Transportation Command	All air and sea lift capabilities for U.S. military. Operates transport aircraft and ships	Scott AFB, Illinois

commanders' capabilities. Joint Forces Command develops and tests concepts, educates joint military leaders, trains joint forces, and makes recommendations on how military forces can better integrate their warfighting capabilities. It does not fight wars.

### *Command Missions*

The UCP also establishes the missions of the combatant commands. In accordance with UCP 2002, all combatant commanders are assigned the following missions:<sup>38</sup>

- Deterring attacks against the United States, its territories, possessions and bases, and employing appropriate force should deterrence fail.
- Carrying out assigned missions and tasks.
- Assigning tasks to, and directing coordination among, the combatant command's subordinate commands to ensure unified action in the accomplishment of the combatant commander's assigned missions.
- Planning for and executing military operations as directed by the president or the secretary of Defense in support of the National Military Strategy.
- Maintaining the security of and carrying out force protection responsibilities for the command, including assigned or attached commands, forces, and assets.

Combatant commands with geographic responsibilities are assigned the following additional missions:<sup>39</sup>

1. Planning and, as appropriate, conducting the evacuation and protection of U.S. citizens and nationals and, in connection therewith, designated other persons, in support of their evacuation from threatened areas overseas; reviewing emergency action plans within the commander's geographic AOR.
2. Providing for U.S. military representation, within the commander's general geographic AOR, to international and U.S. national agencies unless otherwise directed by the secretary of Defense. The U.S. military representatives will provide advice and assistance to chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions in negotiation of rights, authorizations, and facility arrangements required in support of U.S. military missions located within the commander's AOR.

3. Providing the single point of contact on military matters within the assigned AOR. Unless otherwise directed by the secretary of Defense, whenever any combatant commander undertakes exercises, operations, or other activities with the military forces of nations in another combatant commander's AOR, those exercises, operations, and activities, and their attendant command relations, will be as mutually agreed among the combatant commanders. If required, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall prepare directions for the approval of the secretary of Defense.
4. Providing military assessments of the security assistance programs within the commander's assigned security assistance area.
5. Ensuring the coordination of regional security assistance matters under command responsibility with affected chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions.
6. Commanding, supervising, and supporting the security assistance organizations in matters that are not functions or responsibilities of the chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions.
7. Carrying out advisory, planning, and implementing responsibilities relating to security assistance within the commander's assigned security assistance areas.
8. Assuming combatant command, in the event of war or an emergency that prevents control through normal channels, of security assistance organizations within the commander's general geographic AOR or as directed by the secretary of Defense.
9. When directed by the secretary of Defense, commanding U.S. forces conducting peace or humanitarian relief operations within the commander's general geographic AOR, whether as a unilateral U.S. action or as part of a multinational organization; or supporting U.S. forces that have been placed under the authority, direction, or control of a multinational organization.
10. Providing the single Defense Department (DOD) point of contact within the assigned geographic AOR for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in support of nonproliferation policies, activities, and tasking.
11. Exercising force protection responsibilities for all combatant and noncombatant military forces in the commander's AOR (except DOD personnel for whom the chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions have security responsibilities by law or interagency agreement).

12. Planning and conducting military security cooperation activities within the assigned AOR.
13. Planning for, supporting, and conducting the recovery of astronauts, space vehicles, space payloads, and objects within the combatant commander's AOR, as directed.

### Command Structure

Within each unified command, the command structure the unified commander uses to exercise control over the forces assigned to him to execute his missions has changed very little since 1947. A joint staff composed of personnel from each Service directly supports the unified commander. Units from each of the Services are assigned to the unified commander as "components." Each component consists of units from one Service and is commanded by an officer of that Service who is known as the "component commander." For example, the commanding officer of Army units is known as the land component commander and the commanding officer of Naval units is known as the naval component commander. Commanders of component forces answer directly to the unified commander for all operational matters, but communicate directly with appropriate Service headquarters on matters such as administration, training, supply, expenditure of appropriate funds, and authorization of construction, which are not the responsibility of a unified command. In spite of commanding all forces within his theater, the combatant commander can still be frustrated by one of the Services. For example, in 1999, the European Commander General Wesley Clark requested a task force of Apache attack helicopters to be used in the war for Kosovo. Though Task Force Hawk was deployed to Albania, the Army thwarted Clark's efforts to use the helicopters in combat and prevented the helicopters use in combat. The Army feared that the Apache was too valuable an asset to be risked for potentially low gains.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide examples of the current command structure for a geographic combatant commander and a functional combatant commander, respectively. Note that component commanders are not always assigned. The war for Kosovo again provides a negative example where joint warfare was limited at the strategic level. Because it was decided that it would be an air war, a land component commander was never designated, which prevented any serious efforts to plan a ground campaign and inhibited joint warfare by not integrating air assets from



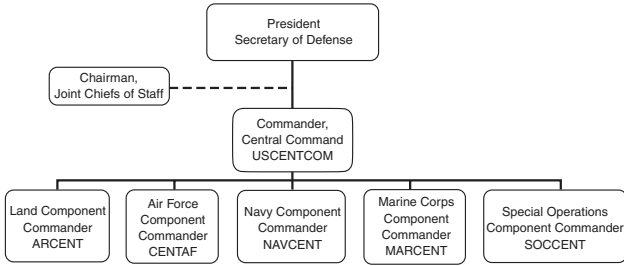


Figure 2.1 Geographical command structure.

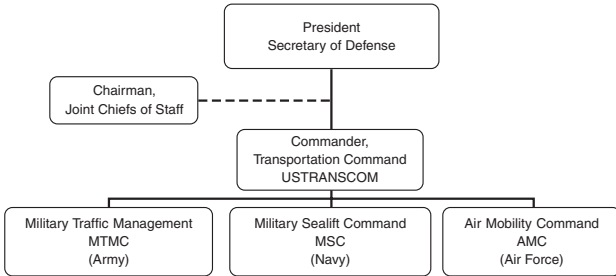


Figure 2.2 Functional command structure.

the Army and the other Services. There was no established joint procedure for employing Army attack helicopters without ground forces in conjunction with fixed-wing air operations.<sup>40</sup>

### *The National Command Authority*

While the command structure below the unified commander remains relatively unchanged since the inception of the UCP, the command structure above the unified commander has changed significantly since 1947. These changes help explain the transformation of the unified commanders from regional commanders subservient to the Service chiefs to strong, independent actors answering directly to the secretary of Defense and the president. The combatant commanders are only one

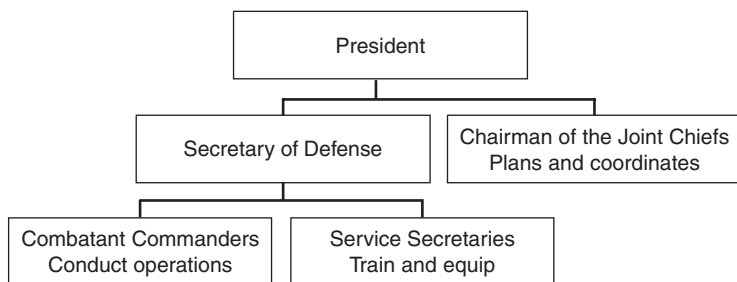


Figure 2.3 Relationship to National Command Authority.

level removed from the President and do not fall under the purview of their respective Service Secretaries (see figure 2.3).

When the U.S. concept of unified command first developed—primarily in the European Theater during World War II—there was no command structure outside the theater of operations to unify command below the president. Underneath the president was a dual structure consisting of the secretary of the Navy who, with the chief of Naval Operations, exercised control over all naval forces, and the secretary of war who, with the Army Chief of Staff, exercised control over all Army and Army Air Forces. As a matter of practicality, the practice of designating one of the Service chiefs as the “executive agent” overseeing all forces within a theater developed during the war. As the executive agent, the designated Service chief (subject to the approval of the president) controlled all forces assigned to a specific theater of operations and made strategic decisions regarding operations in that area. Forces to conduct operations in each theater were assigned by agreements made between the Service chiefs.

Although a stated purpose of the National Security Act of 1947 was the “authoritative coordination and unified direction under civilian control” of the armed forces, the command structure implemented following World War II did little to enhance civilian control of the military.<sup>41</sup> The power of the newly created secretary of Defense as head of the National Military Establishment (precursor to the DOD) to determine military strategy or to direct combat operations was not entirely clear. The National Security Act of 1947 empowered the secretary of Defense to “establish general policies and programs for the National Military Establishment” and to “exercise general direction, authority and control.”<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the Act established a “War Council”

headed by the secretary of Defense and consisting of the Service secretaries and the Service chiefs.<sup>43</sup> The War Council's charter consisted of advising the secretary of Defense, who possessed approval authority, "on matters of broad policy relating to the armed forces" and consideration and reports "on such other matters as the Secretary of Defense may direct."<sup>44</sup>

In contrast to the vague strategic and combat powers afforded the secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, subject to the authority and direction of the President and the secretary of Defense, were, among other things, specifically authorized to

- prepare strategic plans and provide for the strategic direction of the military forces;
- establish unified commands in strategic areas when such unified commands are in the interest of national security;
- act as the principal military advisers to the president and the secretary of Defense.<sup>45</sup>

Inclusion of the phrase "President *and* Secretary of Defense" when designating authority and establishing procedures for military advice gave the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in effect, a legitimate direct channel of communication to the president that did not require the secretary of Defense's inclusion or concurrence. In other words, the Act gave the Service chiefs autonomy from their civilian boss at the Pentagon.

The Outline Command Plan signed by President Truman in 1947 further underscored the powers of the Service chiefs. Under this plan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff exercised strategic direction over all elements of the armed forces. They were empowered to assign forces to the unified commands and prescribe the missions and tasks of those commands. The individual Services would retain operational control of all forces not specifically assigned by the Joint Chiefs. The informal practice, started in World War II, of assigning unified commands an executive agent from the Joint Chiefs continued. Each unified command operated under a designated Service chief acting as executive agent for the Joint Chiefs of Staff: the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; the chief of Naval Operations; or the commanding general, Army Air Forces (CG, AAF) (later Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force).<sup>46</sup> This informal practice became a matter of formal executive policy when the president signed and issued the Key West Agreement of 1948 on April 21, 1948.<sup>47</sup> This agreement, known primarily for establishing distinct "roles and missions" for each Service, also recognized Joint Chiefs of Staff responsibility for—and

authority over—the unified commands. This system of unified command under the executive control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff remained in effect until 1953, and represented the zenith of power and influence for the Service chiefs and the Joint Chiefs of Staff over combat operations.

### Controlling the Military

General Dwight Eisenhower, who pioneered the practice of unified command as supreme allied commander in Europe during World War II, did not entirely approve of the command arrangements established by the National Security Act of 1947 and the Key West Agreement. He described the DOD as “little more than a weak confederation of sovereign military units.”<sup>48</sup> During his successful presidential campaign in 1952, Eisenhower promised to review DOD organization. The new president was convinced that he must reduce the power of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and civilian heads of each service. He attempted to strengthen civilian control of military forces by concentrating more power in the secretary of Defense.

Once elected, he established the Rockefeller Committee to develop recommendations for DOD reorganization. One result of the Committee’s work was the decision to modify the Key West Agreement of 1948 by transferring the authority to appoint executive agents for unified and specified commands from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the secretary of Defense, who would name the secretary of a military department to act in this capacity for each command. The secretaries, however, were authorized to delegate this responsibility to the military chiefs of their Services, which became common practice. This change, according to the president, would strengthen civilian control because “the channel of responsibility and authority to a commander . . . will unmistakably be from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the designated civilian secretary of a military department.” It would also allow the Joint Chiefs of Staff “to concentrate on strategic planning and policy advice by freeing them from operational responsibilities.”<sup>49</sup>

The transfer of authority to name executive agents was accomplished by revising the Key West Agreement. The secretary of Defense approved the revision on October 1, 1953; and on January 15, 1954, he designated the following executive agencies for the unified and specified commands: the Department of the Army for the Far East Command, Caribbean Command, and U.S. European Command; the Department of the Navy for the Atlantic Command, Pacific Command, and U.S. Naval

Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean; and the Department of the Air Force for the Alaskan Command, U.S. Northeast Command, U.S. Air Forces, Europe, and Strategic Air Command.<sup>50</sup> While these changes may have consolidated civilian control over the military in theory, in practice there was no effective change, particularly since the civilian secretaries delegated their responsibilities to the military Service chiefs, just as had been done for decades.

### *Limiting Interservice Rivalry*

President Eisenhower also figured prominently in the next revision of unified command arrangements, which took place in 1958. With the launch of Sputnik in 1957 and the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles forming an alarming backdrop, President Eisenhower formed several advisory groups to review how the DOD might be altered to best deal with these new and rapidly emerging threats. He also gave DOD reorganization and civilian control of the military a top priority in his State of the Union address on January 9, 1958. He stated that there must be “clear subordination of the military services to duly constituted civilian authority. This control must be real; not merely on the surface.”<sup>51</sup> Further, the president was very concerned about rivalries among the services that inhibited unity of effort and jointness.

The first need is to assure ourselves that military organization facilitates rather than hinders the functioning of the military establishment in maintaining the security of the nation.

Since World War II, the purpose of achieving maximum organizational efficiency in a modern defense establishment has several times occasioned action by the Congress and by the Executive.

The advent of revolutionary new devices, bringing with them the problem of overall continental defense, creates new difficulties, reminiscent of those attending the advent of the airplane half a century ago.

Some of the important new weapons which technology has produced do not fit into any existing service pattern. **They cut across all services, involve all services, and transcend all services,** at every stage from development to operation. In some instances they defy classification according to branch of service.

Unfortunately, the uncertainties resulting from such a situation, and the jurisdictional disputes attending upon it, tend to bewilder and confuse the public and create the impression that service differences are damaging the national interest.

Let us proudly remember that the members of the Armed Forces give their basic allegiance solely to the United States. Of that fact all of us are certain. But pride of service and mistaken zeal in promoting particular

doctrine has more than once occasioned the kind of difficulty of which I have just spoken.

I am not attempting today to pass judgment on the charge of harmful service rivalries. But one thing is sure. Whatever they are, **America wants them stopped.**<sup>52</sup>

With the advent of ballistic missiles, President Eisenhower determined that this pressing new threat demanded a more unified and streamlined chain of command than the arrangement implemented in 1953 to deploy and direct combat forces. President Eisenhower insisted “a major purpose of military organization is to achieve real unity in the Defense establishment in all the principal features of military activities.” In short, interservice rivalries must give way to joint cooperation and unity of command.

### *Clarified Chain of Command*

The existing chain of command from the 1953 reorganization had expanded from the service secretaries to the point that Eisenhower considered the “chain of command cumbersome and unreliable in time of peace and not usable in time of war . . . . Clearly, secretaries of military departments and chiefs of individual services should be removed from the command channel.”<sup>53</sup> For Eisenhower, the critical goal was to clarify the chain of command from the president to the combatant commanders in order to avoid ambiguity of authority and dispersion of responsibility. Toward this end, the president proposed the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 amending the National Security Act of 1947, and the Congress enacted it on August 6, 1958.<sup>54</sup>

The new law moved the authority to establish unified and specified commands from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the president. Further, it also empowered the president to assign missions to the unified and specified commands and to determine their force structure. On an operational level, the law specifically addressed the deficiencies of unified commands that limited the authority of combatant commanders over component commands. In an effort to reduce the influence of the Service chiefs over forces assigned to combatant commanders, the latter were made directly responsible to the president and the secretary of Defense for fulfilling their missions and were granted full operational command over units assigned to them. Additionally, once forces were assigned to a combatant commander, they could not be transferred without the approval of the president.<sup>55</sup>

The president also initiated executive action through the secretary of Defense to remove the Service secretaries and Service chiefs from the

operational chain of command, thus ending the practice of assigning either the military or civilian head of a military department to act as the executive agent for unified and specified commands. This action had the effect of marginalizing the judgment of senior military officers. By strengthening the power of the secretary of Defense, the president received less input from the armed services, which greatly reduced the checks against a strong-willed Defense secretary. For example, the Joint Chiefs only met with President Johnson twice before he decided to escalate ground force commitments to Vietnam in 1965.<sup>56</sup> Further, the net effect of the new law and executive action was a chain of command in which authority over combatant commanders originated with the president and flowed directly to the combatant commanders through the secretary of Defense.

### The Need for Change

Although the reforms of 1958 clearly intended to remove the Joint Chiefs of Staff from the operational chain of command for the combatant commanders and to reduce the influence the Service chiefs wielded, the intent of Eisenhower's reforms remained largely unrealized until passage of the Goldwater–Nichols Act (Public Law 99-433) in 1986. Each of the two previous reforms eroded the control that the Service chiefs exercised over the combatant commanders. However, the Service chiefs continued to wield power beyond that statutorily assigned to them because they largely controlled the budgetary process. The Goldwater–Nichols Act, a sweeping reform of DOD only second to the National Security Act of 1947 in scope, sought to correct this problem, as well as numerous others—many of which have received much more attention over the years than the modification of the defense budget process. Prompting the change was a string of military failures beginning with Vietnam, but clearly evident with Desert One.

#### *Desert One*

In April 1980, the United States attempted to rescue Americans held hostage in Tehran, Iran. With more than six months of planning and training, the military launched Operation Desert One. From the operation's outset, it was clear that the mission would fail. Only six of the eight helicopters necessary for the operation arrived at the rendezvous point in the middle of Iran, but the sixth was made unusable by mechanical failure. Without enough transport capacity the mission was cancelled, but as the force departed, a helicopter collided with a cargo aircraft that resulted in eight casualties.

The failure in Iran highlighted a number of serious problems in the U.S. military. According to James Locher, the primary Senate staffer who developed Goldwater–Nichols, “there was no contingency plan, no planning staff with the required expertise, no joint doctrine or procedures, and no relevant cross-service experience.”<sup>57</sup> The joint task force commander had no operational experience with the other services. The participating service units trained separately and only met for the first time at the rendezvous point. Further, there was no clear chain of command. Colonel James Kyle, U.S. Air Force, who was the senior commander at Desert One, would recall that there were “four commanders at the scene without visible identification, incompatible radios, and no agreed-upon plan, not even a designated location for the commander.”<sup>58</sup>

### *The Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986*

The process that led to Goldwater–Nichols began when chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones testified on February 3, 1982, “The system is broken. I have tried to reform it from inside, but I cannot. Congress is going to have to mandate necessary reforms.”<sup>59</sup> In response to this plea and the problems revealed by military operations in Vietnam, Iran, Lebanon, and Grenada, Senator Sam Nunn, Senator Barry Goldwater, and Congressman William Nichols led a bipartisan effort to strengthen unity of command and repair the flawed military structure. Senator Goldwater provided the conservative credentials for Republicans to support defense reform against President Reagan’s administration’s wishes, while Congressman Nichols provided the energy to bring five years of thinking into legislation.

### Legislative Goals

Goldwater–Nichols reinforced the intent of previous reforms by clearly spelling out in the legislation what was often left unsaid. For instance, secondary documents and the president’s own notes state the intent of Eisenhower’s 1958 reform was to establish a clear chain of command from the president through the secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders, but the legislation and the executive order do not explicitly state that. Goldwater–Nichols did not alter the command arrangement intended in 1958, but the Act unequivocally spells out what was intended: “Unless otherwise directed by the President, the chain of command to a unified or specified commander runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of the combatant command.”<sup>60</sup>



Furthermore, it clarifies in no uncertain terms the executive authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "The Joint Staff shall not operate or be organized as an overall Armed Forces General Staff and shall have no executive authority."<sup>61</sup> In fact, one of the great strengths of the Act is that it collected together, in formal legislation, a comprehensive listing of what was supposed to be common knowledge, but was not actually written down anywhere.

In addition to the higher goals of strengthening civilian control, improving military advice, and other improvements to Defense operations, Goldwater–Nichols targeted the DOD budgeting process with the intent to establish the combatant commanders as at least equals of, if not superiors to, the individual Services when setting budget priorities. According to James Locher, a staffer on the Senate Committee on the Armed Services during passage of Goldwater–Nichols, prior to 1986 "vague and ambiguous DOD objectives permitted service interests rather than strategic needs to play the dominant role in shaping resource decisions."<sup>62</sup> On the bill's passage, Congressman Nichols said that this bill "fulfills the aims of President Eisenhower, who said almost three decades ago, 'Separate ground, sea, and air warfare are gone forever . . . Strategic and tactical planning must be completely unified, combat forces organized into unified commands . . . ' Congress rejected President Eisenhower's appeals in the 1950s. Today, 36 years later, we can now report: mission accomplished."<sup>63</sup>

Even though many of the policy provisions existed prior to 1986, the legislation was received with great controversy and suspicion in defense circles. The Service chiefs and the secretary of Defense initially opposed the proposed changes. They objected to empowering the chairman's office by increasing his authority. The chairman could now bypass the secretary of Defense to advise the president on military matters. As a compromise, the law authorizes a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to present "advice or an opinion in disagreement or in addition to advice provided by the Chairman."<sup>64</sup> They objected to Title 4 that established a distinct cadre of officers who were to specialize in joint assignments. And they objected to criticisms that the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization was inefficient and parochial. At various points in the debate, discussion became acrimonious. At a breakfast meeting with Congressman Nichols and the Service chiefs, the Chief of Naval Operations Jim Watkins told Nichols, "you know, this piece of legislation is so bad it's, it's . . . in some respects it's just un-American!"<sup>65</sup> In spite of objections like these, the Defense establishment and the Reagan administration decided it was better to support the legislation to influence it, instead of opposing the change that was going to happen.

*Empowering the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

As part of the general move in Goldwater–Nichols to empower the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to act independently of the Services and to enhance the quality of advice provided by the Joint Staff to the secretary of Defense, the chairman was assigned several new critical duties. Three of these are of critical importance in enhancing the influence of the combatant commanders on the budgetary process.

First, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is required to advise the secretary of Defense “on the priorities of the requirements identified by the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands.”<sup>66</sup> Where previously the Services decided personnel and weapons needs, the combatant commanders now provided direct budgetary input.

Second, the chairman must advise the secretary on

the extent to which the program recommendations and budget proposals of the military departments and other components of the Department of Defense for a fiscal year conform with the priorities established in strategic plans and with the priorities established for the requirements of the unified and specified combatant commanders.<sup>67</sup>

Third, the chairman is responsible for providing to the secretary of Defense “a budget proposal for activities of each unified and specified combatant command.”<sup>68</sup>

*Combatant Commanders*

Goldwater–Nichols did have a profound effect on strengthening the power of the combatant commanders. Previously, combatant commanders had difficulty directing their component commanders (Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps) in joint military operations. In 1984, the political scientist Samuel Huntington observed, “Each service continues to exercise great autonomy. . . . Unified commands are not really commands, and they certainly aren’t unified.”<sup>69</sup> James Schlessinger later testified, “In all of our military institutions, the time-honored principle of ‘unity of command’ is inculcated. Yet at the national level it is firmly resisted and flagrantly violated. Unity of command is endorsed if and only if it applies at the service level. The inevitable consequence is both the duplication of effort and the ultimate ambiguity of command.”<sup>70</sup>

Senator Goldwater foreshadowed increasing the military’s power in a statement he made in a July 1983 hearing. “I realize the sanctity of the idea of the civilian being supreme [in military matters]. . . . The question

in my mind is, can we any longer afford to allow the expertise of [the professional military] . . . to be set aside for the decisions of the civilians whose decisions have not been wrapped in war? We lost in Korea, no question about that, because we did not let the military leadership exercise military judgment. We lost in Vietnam . . . If that is the way we are going to do it in the future, I think we are in trouble.”<sup>71</sup>

Additionally, the previously discussed duties of the chairman, in effect, afford the requirements of the combatant commanders a privileged status in the budgetary process. Ideally, this system provides them with an independent forum for stating their needs and an honest broker to advise the secretary of Defense as to how the Services are fulfilling those needs through resource allocation. Perhaps most importantly, Goldwater–Nichols allows the combatant commanders to have their budget requests submitted directly via the chairman, instead of through one of the Services as under the old “executive agent” system. These adjustments to the budgeting cycle have served to empower the combatant commanders to the point where many now perceive that combatant commanders are aggressively setting the agenda instead of acting as passive recipients of what the Services offer.

Further, combatant commanders can bring these requests directly to Congress. The combatant commanders annually testify before key congressional committees. The hearings allow the combatant commanders to assess the security situation in his AOR, to sketch a strategy for defending U.S. security interests in his region, and to identify key resource requirements or shortfalls for executing the strategy. This last task provides the combatant commanders an important check on the Service secretaries.

On an operational level, Goldwater–Nichols tightened control of force deployments. The Act required that only unified combatant commanders assign forces. The Services could no longer move forces in and out of regional commands. (An investigation after the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut found that 31 units in Beirut had been sent there unbeknownst to the commander in chief, U.S. European Command.<sup>72</sup>)

### Empowering Eisenhower’s Concept

The lessons of World War II underscored how damaging the parochial nature of the military services can be during wartime. This was particularly evident in the Pacific theater where President Roosevelt refused to appoint a single commander for all forces as he did in the European

theater. In Europe, General Eisenhower illustrated that unity of command is essential, but difficult to maintain. With competing national agendas, focused service agendas, and clashing personalities, unified commanders must not only be adept strategists, but also consummate diplomats. In the aftermath of World War II, and again in 1986, Congress reorganized the DOD to bring unity and to reflect the global nature of warfare.

One consequence of the legislative changes was strengthening the role combatant commanders play in foreign policy. With a direct line to the secretary of Defense and the president, combatant commanders are empowered to not only conduct the country's wars, but also to engage in diplomacy to facilitate the conduct of wars. The military has a need for overseas basing, compatible foreign militaries, and reliable military partners. Being forward deployed in their areas of responsibility, combatant commanders assumed a decidedly diplomatic role to achieve these aims.

#### Notes

1. The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.
2. Gordon N. Lederman, 1999, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, Westport: Greenwood Press, p. 5.
3. United States, 2000, National Defense University Joint Forces Staff College, *Joint Forces Staff College Pub 1*, Washington: Government Printing Office, pp. 1–2.
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5. United States, *Joint Forces Staff College Pub 1*, pp. 1–2.
6. Paul C. Clark and Edward H. Mosely, 1995–96, “D-Day Veracruz, 1847—A Grand Design,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 10 (Winter): 102–115.
7. Scott W. Stucky, 1994–95, “Joint Operations in the Civil War,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 6 (Winter): 99–104.
8. Lederman, *Reorganizing*, p. 6.
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43. *Ibid.*, Sec. 210.
44. *Ibid.*, Sec. 210.
45. *Ibid.*, Sec. 211.
46. United States, *The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946–1993*, pp. 13–14.

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48. Alice C.D. Cole et al., eds., 1978, *The Department of Defense: Documents on Establishment and Organization, 1944–1978*, Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, Historical Office, p. 177.
49. United States, *The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946–1993*, p. 22.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
51. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, “1958 State of the Union Address.”
52. *Ibid.*
53. Jablonsky, “Eisenhower and the Origins of Unified Command,” p. 29.
54. Public Law 85–599.
55. Public Law 85–99, Sec. 5.
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57. Locher, “HAS IT WORKED?”
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Public Law 89–433, Sec. 162(b).
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62. James Locher, III, 1996, “Taking Stock of Goldwater–Nichols,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 13(Autumn): 9–17.
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64. Public Law 99–433, Title II, Sec. A.
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66. Public Law 99–433, Sec. 153.
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CHAPTER 3  
MILITARIZING DIPLOMACY:  
WARRIOR-DIPLOMATS AND THE  
FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

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The combatant commanders are not typically included in analyses of the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Many observers and scholars do not seem to appreciate the growing influence that the military commanders exert on both micro- or “tactical”-level decisions and also those on the macro or “strategic” level. Since the passage of Goldwater–Nichols in 1986, the regional commanders in chief have steadily grown in importance in all levels of U.S. foreign affairs. When Republicans became the majority in Congress in the 1990s, according to one observer, “the military came to outrank its civilian chain of command in influence, authority, and resources in many parts of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the evolution of communications technology and great respect for the Department of Defense (DOD), that growth in influence is unlikely to be reversed anytime soon.

This chapter attempts to place the combatant commanders in the context of the overall process of U.S. foreign policy, describes how and why their role is changing, and discusses how the process could be adapted to take better advantage of the growing power of America’s viceroys. Today the combatant commander is virtually excluded from the interagency process, at least in the upper levels of our government, despite his increasing dual role as diplomat and warrior. Increased cooperation between the regional commands and senior levels of the State Department—“jointness” among the bureaucracies—is necessary to coordinate all aspects of U.S. foreign policy as the new century unfolds.



### The Formulation of U.S. Foreign Policy

Modern scholarship on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy usually does not consider the influence of the regional combatant commanders, especially at the macro levels where decisions regarding “grand strategy” are made. When mentioned at all, these men (and to date all have been men) are treated as little more than mouthpieces for decisions that have already been made in Washington, or as operatives that are called upon when battle plans must be forged and wars waged, but who are rarely consulted in times of peace. They are key players in military campaigns, but their role in peacetime engagement is off the radar screens of most foreign policy analysts.<sup>2</sup> To the extent that regional commanders are covered at all in analyses of U.S. foreign policy, it is at the edges, in micro policy, the tactical level of diplomacy rather than the grand strategic level. It often seems that combatant commanders are to the DOD what ambassadors are to the Department of State—regional operatives whose function is to relay information and implement, but not, in general, to design policy.

But as the other chapters in this volume argue, while today’s combatant commander is as much a diplomat as a warrior, his effect on U.S. diplomacy is underappreciated and underanalyzed. The combatant commanders not only implement policy, but they are also often critical actors in the foreign policy formulation process itself. With larger budgets and a broader perspective than U.S. ambassadors, combatant commanders wield influence inside and outside the regions they command.

### The Combatant Commanders and the Executive Branch

While Harry Truman may have been exaggerating slightly when he declared, “I make American foreign policy,” it is certainly true that the president is the most powerful actor in the process of policy formulation.<sup>3</sup> Both the Constitution and centuries of historical precedent put the president at the center of U.S. decisionmaking, for it is up to him to make the hard choices about the direction of foreign policy actions. The president is commander in chief of the Armed Forces and chief diplomat, and shapes the organization of the process to fit his managerial style. However, since foreign affairs is just one of many presidential responsibilities, in practice he has to rely on his subordinates to make most of the day-to-day decisions that make up the bulk of U.S. foreign policy.

*Interagency Process*

Most U.S. foreign policy decisions are the result of an interagency deliberation process. At least in theory if not always in practice, U.S. foreign policy emerges after negotiations between the executive agencies, especially the Departments of State and Defense, that are moderated by the president or his staff and that draw upon information gathered by the many agencies that make up the intelligence community. The most important and often most difficult decisions are made at meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), which is a group made up of the heads of the various agencies involved in the foreign policy process.<sup>4</sup> These meetings are presided over by either the president or the National Security Advisor.

Similar meetings occur at all levels of the government. Representatives from the agencies involved in a particular issue meet to discuss what avenue policy should take, all bringing their institutional expertise and prejudices along with them. Meetings occur at the “undersecretary level,” “assistant secretary level,” and further down the bureaucratic line. If a problem cannot be solved or a decision reached at the lower levels, it is “kicked upstairs,” perhaps eventually reaching the “principals group,” the NSC. At this level, final decisions are reached by cabinet officials and the president. The process is designed to produce policy that draws upon the knowledge and combines the interests of the various agencies, and by doing so it hopes to attain a balance between our diplomatic, political, military, and other interests. The interagency process is the federal government’s version of the “jointness” that has been introduced to our sometimes unwilling military in the wake of the Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986.

The combatant commanders are rarely involved in the upper levels of this centralized interagency process. Their views are theoretically represented by DOD officials in Washington, which can mean in practice either a civilian defense department official or uniformed military officer, such as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For the first few decades of the existence of the regional commands, the combatant commanders were not able to directly affect the interagency process that spawns most of the foreign policy decisions of this government, the decisions that they were often charged with executing.

*Foreign Policy Actors*

Figure 3.1 is a commonly used conception of relative influence in the foreign policy process. The president is by far the most important figure in U.S. foreign policy, and influence of the other actors is more or less directly related to their distance—both institutionally and, in some sense, physically—from him.

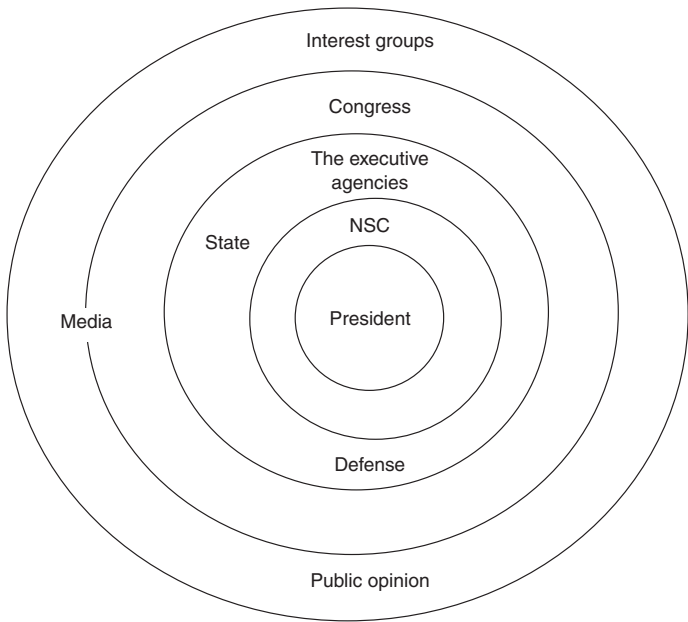


Figure 3.1 Foreign policy actors and their relative influence.<sup>5</sup>

The closest actor is the NSC, which is a term that today has two distinct meanings. The NSC today is simultaneously the uppermost group of advisors to the president for national security affairs that is described above, and to the staff of the National Security Advisor. This staff, whose size has grown from a handful in the 1960s to over a hundred today, is not subject to congressional oversight or confirmation. The president can appoint anyone he wants to be on his personal staff for foreign policy, whose office is located next to the White House in the Old Executive Office Building. The NSC is the closest group to the president in both proximity and ideology, and it therefore exerts more influence on U.S. foreign policy than any other group.<sup>6</sup>

Next in order of importance in the foreign policy process are the executive agencies, especially the Departments of State and Defense, that round out the executive branch. State is supposed to be “first among equals” in the cabinet—the secretary of state is after all the first cabinet member in the line of presidential succession, and the first to enter the chamber before the State of the Union and other major

presidential addresses—especially when it comes to the formulation of foreign policy. But, as will be discussed below, a powerful and growing intellectual current is arguing that its role, and its influence on policy vis-à-vis the DOD, is in need of a major overhaul. The power of the Pentagon in general, and of the regional commanders in particular, over the direction of policy stands to grow in response to any diminution of that of Foggy Bottom. In many cases DOD concerns over basing rights overshadow the State Department's concerns for human rights.

Congress is far from the president in the model and far down on the ladder of influence on policy. For reasons that will be elaborated upon below, virtually all scholarship on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy recognizes that the power of the Legislative Branch is a distant second to that of the Executive when it comes to international affairs. On the periphery of the diagram and of policymaking are outside actors like the media, the public, and interest groups, which, although at times important, do not exert anywhere the kind of steady influence on U.S. actions as do the actors inside the government.

The combatant commanders are theoretically represented in the model by the DOD. Their nontrivial distance from Washington and from the president mirrors their distance from the formal policy-formulation process, at least according to traditional analysis. For example, the combatant commanders are mentioned in only three of eight of the most widely used undergraduate textbooks on U.S. foreign policy, and then only in passing, during discussions of Goldwater-Nichols and/or to clarify the military chain of command.<sup>7</sup> Students of the process of policy formulation are told that the combatant commanders are instruments of policy execution rather than formulation, as if these senior officers merely follow orders conceived in Washington. The “policy entrepreneur” role of the combatant commanders is off the radar screen of higher levels of scholarly analysis as well, not having been the subject of academic book or journal-length treatment prior to this volume.<sup>8</sup>

Scholarship on foreign policy may omit the combatant commanders entirely, but, as is described in the other chapters of this volume, in practice their influence over both short- and long-term policy is important and growing. A new assistant secretary of Defense called *Washington Post* reporter Dana Priest to complain about the actual influence of the commanders that he encountered. “I went to graduate school and earned a doctorate in international relations,” he said. “I worked in government for 10 years, and no one mentioned these guys to me. I get over here and they are the elephant in the living room!”<sup>9</sup> With a reputation of getting

things done and being the men in the field, those elephants are likely to grow even larger and wield more influence on U.S. foreign policy.

### Combatant Commanders and the Congress

The combatant commanders have long been employed as mouthpieces for the administration's policies in testimony in front of congressional committees and subcommittees. Through this, they have always been able to have some effect on the long-term direction of foreign policy. But that dialogue with committees does not have a great deal of import for short-term foreign policy, because the Congress has far less immediate impact upon foreign policy than it does on domestic. Although it can quite effectively influence long-term policy through appropriations and oversight over both appointments and execution of policy, short-term and especially crisis policy is outside the realm of the Congress. Even though, as one observer has recently noted, since the end of the Cold War "everyone agrees that Congress is more active in foreign policy."<sup>10</sup> Since prior to World War II its influence is severely limited by some of its inherent organizational weaknesses, and should not be overstated.

Members of Congress simply lack the expertise, and the interest, to remain involved in foreign policy issues—after all, for them "all politics is local," not international. Members gain few votes by being experts in the details of foreign policy situations, and in fact the perception of such expertise can often hurt, for it can be seen, or portrayed by opponents, as evidence of skewed priorities.<sup>11</sup> The Congress cannot match the resources available to the executive branch, which has 35,000 people working full-time on foreign relations at any given time, and has more immediate access to intelligence than the legislature does not. As a result, Congress usually defers to the president in foreign affairs, which the debates over Operation Iraqi Freedom clearly demonstrated.

Although it can hardly be said that the ideal situation where "politics stops at the water's edge" always exists, to a large degree the Congress will allow the president some free reign in the execution of foreign policy. So any influence with the Congress that the combatant commanders may have does not necessarily translate into influence over the direction of U.S. foreign policy, which is made primarily in the executive branch. "The preferred stance" of Congress, said Lee Hamilton, then the chair of the House Foreign Relations Committee, "is to let the president make the decisions and, if it goes well, to praise him, and if it doesn't, criticize him."<sup>12</sup>

Congress has more influence over long-term policy through its power of appropriations and the so-called “procedural powers,” which allow it to shape the executive branch through legislation. In the mid-1990s, for example, when conservative Republicans were running some of the key congressional committees, both the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development were folded into the State Department, greatly diminishing their power and the emphasis that the United States put on arms control and foreign aid in its policies.

The combatant commanders have generally enjoyed a good relationship with the Congress, especially the Republican-controlled Congresses of the 1990s, and as a result they have been able to have an impact on the budgetary process. For example, General Charles Wilhelm testified before congressional committees 17 times in his attempt to persuade Congress to increase funding for drug interdiction efforts in his area of responsibility (AOR); likewise General Wesley Clark testified 14 different times over roughly the same period related to, among other things, the crisis in Kosovo. General Clark recently wrote about the importance he placed on his relationship with Congress.

From the beginning of my tour of duty, I had made it a practice to try to see every visiting congressional delegation, usually by flying in to link up with them wherever they were, and to convey my personal view of the problems and progress in the theater. While I had complete confidence in my commanders at each location, none had the personal engagement with the leaders in Europe that I did. The Congress, I had found, depended heavily on personal relationships.<sup>13</sup>

The combatant commanders have also been able to procure large personal budgets, which they operate virtually free of oversight. “There is no reliable accounting of the hundreds of millions of dollars the CINCs [commander in chiefs] spend each year,” one observer noted, “and congressional oversight committees have not asked for one.”<sup>14</sup> The combatant commanders regularly fly—on their own aircraft—throughout their territory to meet with international leaders, accompanied by entourages that dwarf those of ambassadors. On these trips, they cultivate relationships that may be beneficial to future DOD needs.

### The Combatant Commanders and Other Actors

The last of the concentric circles contains the various elements outside the government that have an impact on the policy process. Interest groups, public opinion, and the media all affect the decisions that

executive branch members make, and the combatant commanders have had an increasing presence with these groups, too. The American people might not know that Norman Schwarzkopf was technically in charge of Central Command, but they knew he was the leader of Desert Storm in 1991. In 2003, Tommy Franks as central commander filled Schwarzkopf's shoes by briefing the world on operations against Iraq. Wesley Clark was an omnipresent figure in the media coverage during the Kosovo crisis, and "knew that feeding the information machine was critical to sustained public support of the campaign."<sup>15</sup> And Admiral Dennis Blair, who was the leader of the Pacific Command in 2001, was quite visible throughout the Sino-U.S. EP-3 crisis. The new generation of combatant commanders seems to realize the power that the media have, and they have been able to use it in a much more effective or, some would argue, self-promotional fashion than their predecessors. The increased influence of the regional commanders has not been merely an unintentional result of institutional or technological evolution, but also of an institutional mission.

The Pentagon puts a much greater emphasis on public relations than does Foggy Bottom. Due partly to the nature of its business and also to negative images produced by the experience in Vietnam, the U.S. military makes a point to sell itself and its mission and its image to the American public in a way that the State Department does not. For example, before he became head of the European Command, General Clark traveled with State Department Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke on diplomatic missions throughout the Balkans. He was ordered by his superiors to stay beside Holbrooke and appear in as many photographs as possible, and told not to carry a briefcase, which seemed unbecoming of a warrior.<sup>16</sup>

*Washington Post* reporter Dana Priest was able to gain extensive access to four combatant commanders while writing a three-part article about them in 2000, but when she attempted to do a similar story covering senior diplomats in the field, State Department officials immediately rebuffed her.<sup>17</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that Congressional Republicans ran into little public resistance as they slashed State Department funding in the 1990s. The State Department has simply not done as good a job of defending its turf in the court of public opinion as have their counterparts in Defense.

### The Growing Role of the Combatant Commander

Over the past decade, the role of the combatant commander has been changing. While the original emphasis was on operations and on the

day-to-day command of their AOR, combatant commanders are becoming increasingly influential in the formulation of U.S. strategic policy. Chapters 4 and 6 contain cases where combatant commanders were instrumental in supporting DOD policy preferences to skeptical civilians in the executive branch and in Congress, helping them to be adopted by Washington. Also, chapter 5 presents a case where a combatant commander disagreed with both his uniformed and civilian superiors, and promoted a different agenda. All demonstrate the degree to which these officers can be very influential voices, both when they agree and when they disagree with the Pentagon.

This growth in power is due to several factors: the passage of the Goldwater–Nichols Act in 1986, which reorganized the DOD in favor of what were then referred to as the CINCs; the Republican-controlled Congresses of the 1990s, which were much more friendly to our warriors than to our diplomats; and the advancements in technology that have made it possible for the combatant commander to be involved in every step of the policy process. Those same advancements have also made it possible for Washington to insert itself in many aspects of the regions in ways it could not before. The next few decades may see the steady rise of the combatant commander’s influence in macro-level policymaking, but simultaneous diminution of his autonomy in his region as new technologies present micromanagement opportunities for Washington that may prove irresistible.

### Congressional Actions

The power of the combatant commanders began to grow in 1986, the year Congress passed the Goldwater–Nichols Act that reorganized the military chain of command to institutionalize “jointness.”<sup>18</sup> A congressional investigation into the botched Iranian hostage rescue mission in 1980 concluded that poor interservice cooperation or “jointness” was in part to blame for the disaster. This encouraged a prolonged discussion of the need to reform the military, at least at the highest levels, to improve jointness. A congressional report argued that “operational deficiencies evident during the Vietnam War, the seizure of the *Pueblo*, the Iranian hostage rescue mission, and the incursion into Grenada were the result of the failure to adequately implement the concept of unified command.”<sup>19</sup> Radios, tactics, terminology, and even maps used by the different services were often incompatible.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps most famously, army personnel in Grenada found themselves unable to make contact with navy pilots who were providing air support, and were forced to find a pay phone and make a call to their



superiors in the United States using an AT&T calling card in order to request assistance.

Congress called the unified combatant commands weak and “unified in name only,” and therefore less efficient than optimal.<sup>21</sup> In an effort to force a greater degree of jointness on a resistant military, Congress increased the power of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of the regional combatant commanders. The regional heads of the individual services, who up to then had been reporting directly to their branch chiefs in Washington, were placed under the direct control of the regional commanders, who finally became unified in both theory and practice. Their ability to control and coordinate strategy within their AORs grew precipitously.

In addition, the post–Goldwater–Nichols combatant commanders could take their problems and budget requests directly to the chairman rather than to their Service chiefs, which gave them direct input into resource allocation decisions within the DOD. Prior to Goldwater–Nichols, analysts noted, the concerns of the combatant commanders had “little or no visibility” within the decisionmaking bodies of the Pentagon, and therefore their priorities stood “little or no chance of being recognized.” In the 1980s, “procedures were implemented to give visibility to CINC requirements at all levels.”<sup>22</sup> The funding priorities of the regional commands were rarely identical to those of the individual services, and Goldwater–Nichols gave the commanders more freedom to address their own needs. For example, when Marine Corps General Peter Pace, who was at the time commanding the Southern Command, testified in March 2001 in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee about the need for expansion of the military budget for his region and of Plan Colombia in general, he did not have to concern himself with having to first clear these requests with his Service chief, the Marine Corps commandant.<sup>23</sup>

The combatant commanders came away from Goldwater–Nichols with more control over the forces in their regions, more prestige, and a direct link to the top decisionmakers in Washington. “In the past,” David Halberstam noted,

The job as the head of a service—army chief of staff or chief of naval operations—had been the ultimate reward for a successful career. But Goldwater–Nichols changed that. It significantly upgraded the power and leverage of the commanders and made the job of service chief more of a support and logistical position. All the real rewards and pleasures—all the fun, if that is the word—went to the CINC, as one military analyst said, ‘and all the shit jobs went to the service chiefs.’ Of the chiefs, only

the chairman had seen his power enhanced by Goldwater–Nichols, although when the shooting actually started, power tended to pass to the CINC, because he was the man on the spot. Colin Powell had great authority during the [1990–1] Iraqi crisis until the war began, and then the power tended to flow to the CINC, Norman Schwarzkopf.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1991 war in the Persian Gulf, General Schwarzkopf was able to structure and coordinate the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine forces in his AOR to a far greater extent than had been possible a decade before. The effect this had on the conduct of the operation was important enough to inspire some analysts to give Goldwater–Nichols credit for being “one of the primary factors of our success.”<sup>25</sup>

The impact of the combatant commanders on macro-level policy decisions grew compared to both what it had been before Goldwater–Nichols, and also relative to the rest of the military. The Service chiefs, who stood the most to lose, were vociferous in their objections to the Act’s passage, but opposition also arose in many other corners of the Pentagon where influence was perceived to be at risk. Former secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, argued, “we don’t need them [the combatant commanders] more involved in contracting, budgeting, and programming. That’s not their job. Their job is to fight the forces and operate the forces.”<sup>26</sup> An analyst commented recently with only slight exaggeration, “it was almost over then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger’s dead body that Congress passed the Goldwater–Nichols defense reorganization act in 1986.”<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless the Act passed, and with it came a significant increase in power for the combatant commanders over their own regions and, as the experience of the next decade would show, over the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

That power increased substantially as the 1990s progressed, helped once again by Congress. The DOD benefited vis-à-vis the State Department in many ways when mid-term elections brought a conservative element of Republicans to power in both houses in 1994. Many of the most powerful congressional foreign policy posts were filled by members of the party’s so-called neoconservative wing, which was led in spirit by Newt Gingrich. Neoconservatives have long harbored a profound distrust of the Department of State, which they saw as dominated by an elite, liberal, effete element that espoused timid and outdated policies, which were too reliant upon cooperation with allies, sometimes at the expense of their interpretation of the national interest. Neoconservatives like Jesse Helms, who came to chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had far different views of the proper direction for U.S. policy than both his Democrat

predecessors and more moderate “centrist” or “establishment” Republican figures as well. Perhaps most importantly, they were far more unilateral in their approach to foreign affairs, and far more inclined to trust the men and women in uniform rather than those in Foggy Bottom. As a result, State Department budgets were slashed throughout the 1990s, leading to a decrease in both effectiveness and morale.

The combatant commanders generally maintained a good relationship with this conservative Republican congressional leadership throughout the decade, and as a result while many sectors of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus have seen their budgets shrink since the Cold War, the resources and influence of the regional commands have expanded—the budget for each of the combatant commanders increased by at least 35 percent between 1990 and 2000.<sup>28</sup> Senator Helms may have been an enemy of the State Department, but he was a consistent friend of the military, and of the combatant commanders. Few were surprised when, upon his retirement, Senator Helms was given the Medal for Distinguished Public Service by the Pentagon while Foggy Bottom remained relatively silent.

The rapid conclusion to the second war in Iraq has strengthened the power of the neoconservatives in and out of the Bush administration, who wasted little time in renewing their assault on the Department of State. In April 2003, Newt Gingrich, who by then had found a new home on the quasi-official but very influential Defense Policy Board, called State a “broken bureaucracy of red tape and excuses” whose performance in the crisis ranged from “ineffective and incoherent” to “pathetic.”<sup>29</sup> “Now,” he continued, “the State Department is back at work pursuing policies that will clearly throw away all the fruits of hard won victory.” In contrast, the former speaker noted, “The *military delivered diplomatically* and then the military delivered militarily in a stunning four week campaign” [emphasis added]. That both war and diplomacy are better handled by the military is an underlying principle of Gingrich’s proposed “equivalent of a Goldwater–Nichols reform bill for the State Department,” which would fundamentally alter the relationship between the two agencies charged with running the foreign affairs of the United States.

Whether the neoconservatives are successful in mounting a reorganization of the State Department along the lines (and the philosophy) of that of Defense that is occurring under Secretary Rumsfeld remains to be seen. What does seem clear however is that to the extent that unilateralism becomes the dominant philosophy of the foreign policy of the United States, the prestige and efficacy of the State Department will

proportionately diminish. The regional commands will be called upon to perform many of the kinds of tasks that were once the exclusive purview of State, and the power of the regional commanders is likely to grow apace.

### Technology, a Double-Edged Sword

The rise of the power of the combatant commanders cannot be solely attributed to legislative action. Technological advancements of the kind that have contributed to the much-vaunted “revolution in military affairs” threaten to have a dual effect on the role of the regional combatant commanders. Although not quite a “revolution in diplomatic affairs,” developments in communications and, to a lesser extent, transportation technology have allowed for greater centralization for decisionmaking at all levels. As a result of this centralization, the commander of the future is likely to be more involved with grand strategy, while ceding some control over the day-to-day micro-decisions that once were his purview alone.

Today physical presence is no longer necessary to be able to participate in a meeting, or see the events unfolding on a battlefield. Real-time information can be relayed to the Pentagon just as easily as it can be to Central Command headquarters in Tampa, for instance, or to Honolulu where the Pacific Command is located. Thirty years ago the telephone was the main method that helped Washington see through the fog of war on a far-flung battlefield, or that helped the combatant commander understand the political situation back home—the distance and simple forms of communication facilitated the combatant commander’s autonomy in his region, and kept him out of debates in Washington. In 1999, by contrast, General Clark led daily meetings during the Kosovo crisis with a video teleconference system. Participants in Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Washington weighed in daily on the operation. Today there are many more ways for both sides to be kept up to date, both inside and outside official channels. Modern decision-makers get more of their information from the 24-hour media than they would probably like to admit. Norman Schwarzkopf became a household presence due in no small measure to his charismatic briefings in front of the omnipresent TV cameras.

The case studies in this volume attest to the degree to which the combatant commanders today are able to affect the policy process. This ability is in no small part aided by the communications technologies that allow for greater coordination between the center and the periphery.

To extend the metaphor introduced in the model above, these communication technologies can effectively overcome the handicap that tremendous physical distance to the president can have upon the ability of the combatant commander to influence policy.

But that distance has shrunk for both sides. As the combatant commander gains power on the macro level, he risks losing it on the micro level. General Clark had to deal with superiors in Washington and NATO allies questioning and often criticizing his every step, because everyone had real-time access to the events in Kosovo. This tendency to micromanage, or merely to direct the operation from the Pentagon, will likely increase as the ability to do so effectively evolves. Complaints by commanders in the field of meddling and micromanagement by their superiors for political purposes are of course nothing new. Perhaps most famously (or infamously), the individual bombing targets during the war in Vietnam were subject to approval by LBJ himself. So when Clark complained of micromanagement during the operation in Kosovo, his concerns echoed those of his predecessors.

But what is new is the *ability* of Washington to manipulate the proceedings. Smart-bomb technology and real-time video feed allow for a greatly increased ability for micromanagement, should the center decide to do so. So despite all the talk of lessons learned by the military in Vietnam about the destructive nature of political micromanagement, the heavy hand of Washington (or the Pentagon) in the operational battlefield is a fact of twenty-first-century information-age warfare that is not likely to go away.

To this point, the influence of technology on the influence of the combatant commanders has been more theoretical than demonstrable. But twenty-first-century technology has been embraced by the U.S. military much more aggressively than it has by our diplomatic corps. At the very least, improvements in the speed of communication and the flow of information open new windows of opportunity for the inclusion of the combatant commander in macro-level decisions, and of Washington into those on the micro-level.

### Backlash

The Pentagon has been more than happy to use the growing power of the combatant commanders to influence the policy process in Washington in cases where its policy preference matched those of the regions. But disagreements between the center and the periphery were inevitable, and a sharp one arose between the Pentagon and the

European Commander over America's Kosovo policy. General Clark was much more hawkish than Secretary of Defense Cohen or the Joint Chiefs, and despite being far from Washington he was able to steer the strategic political dialogue away from the direction favored by his bosses, toward military action against Yugoslavia. His predecessors did not enjoy the same kind of power. The Clark experience convinced the Pentagon to take steps to try to rein-in the growing power of the regional combatant commanders.

These steps began while General Clark was still supreme allied commander of Europe, in an attempt to counteract his power. After Clark met with some State Department officials on a trip to Washington during the height of the debate over Kosovo policy, Secretary Cohen and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Shelton required him to submit detailed itineraries prior to his next trips home, so they could keep track of whom he was seeing. Clark, however, ignored this restriction, and kept meeting with State Department and congressional officials in Washington.<sup>30</sup> In the end, he saw the option for which he lobbied become policy, a military campaign that was by most measures a success. But for Clark, success came with a price—he was replaced and forcibly retired not long after the hostilities came to a conclusion.

No recent administration has been more focused on central control of information and of the process in general as that of Bush 43.<sup>31</sup> A clear indication of this came when, as part of his general attempt to reassert central (and civilian) control over the DOD, Secretary Rumsfeld abolished the title of "CINC" in November 2002. Rumsfeld argued that there is only one commander-in-chief, the president, and from now on those that held the title of CINC would be referred to as "combatant commanders." This largely symbolic move pleased some outside analysts, like Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, who commented that the regional commanders had "gotten a little over-glorified."<sup>32</sup> However, it is doubtful that a mere title change will reduce the influence of combatant commanders in the foreign policy process. But as Wraga argues in chapter 8, secretaries of Defense can and do assert control over combatant commanders.

### The Combatant Commanders and "Jointness"

Over the past two decades, the military has put a sincere emphasis on "jointness" or increased cooperation among the services. Such "jointness" is also an important component for successful interaction among the agencies that formulate American foreign policy. It should not be a surprise that analyses of the formulation of U.S. foreign policy tend to

omit the role of the combatant commanders, for the process as it is currently organized leaves little room for these men to affect the macro-level interagency process, which has sometimes caused frustrated commanders to attempt to circumvent departmental restrictions. U.S. foreign policy needs to adjust, to integrate these warrior-diplomats into the process in a manner that befits their growing power and capabilities as diplomats. There is little benefit in continuing to keep these influential voices outside the interagency process. The interagency process theoretically ensures that cooperation exists among the bureaucracies, but unlike what has happened within the military, the overall foreign policy mechanism has not been forced to adjust when jointness has broken down. Such an adjustment is needed today, especially within the Department of State.

### *Micro-Level Jointness*

There is little interagency interaction on the micro or tactical level, where the influence of the regional commander is greatest. Today the combatant commander has a political advisor or “POLAD” appointed by the State Department, but, as a group of senior analysts recently argued, the position is not particularly influential and is not necessarily seen as a “career enhancer” for diplomats.<sup>33</sup> The POLAD could theoretically play a very important coordinating role between the assistant secretaries and the regional commands, but as of now their job is not quite like the interagency bridge that is needed.

In theory ambassadors outrank the combatant commanders who are in practice often treated with greater deference by foreign officials. At times the United States may not be sending clear messages to foreign governments about who exactly is articulating and running our policy. When he was central commander, General Zinni attended a conference in Bahrain in the summer of 2000 along with six U.S. ambassadors who theoretically outranked him, but he was the only one that rode in the lead car of the U.S. procession and slept in a luxurious hotel.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps foreign officials can be excused for being confused about which is the more important post.

The combatant commanders have much more material power at their disposal than do ambassadors, and in reality they also have a great deal more influence on the direction of U.S. policy. Ambassadors do not command enormous military forces, a fact not lost on many foreign leaders. Their superiors—the assistant secretaries—are headquartered in Washington, and as a result spend far less time in the region for which they are responsible. The combatant commander has much more “face

time” to develop personal relationships with local officials, and therefore often emerges as not only the head military actor but also the lead U.S. diplomat in his AOR.

Face time for a combatant commander is likely to be of a different character than it would be for his civilian counterpart, especially in countries that do not have the same separation of civilian and military spheres as does the United States, or where uniformed officials run the government directly. Sometimes common tactical experiences make military people on both sides more comfortable dealing with their counterparts in other countries.

When the main avenue of interaction between states is between militaries, there is a danger that the relationship itself can become militarized. Bismarck warned against the formation of extensive military-to-military contacts. When generals get together, thought Bismarck, the relationships built are never free of suspicion—sometimes the knowledge of another state’s commanders and capabilities can lead to paranoia about its intentions. Bismarck thought that state-to-state contacts ought to be left to the diplomats.

Thus from a process point of view, it is not altogether clear that it is desirable to have the combatant commanders formulating U.S. policy at the micro level. One of the advantages of the interagency process is that it combines traditional points of view, mixing advice from the diplomats and the warriors to allow the president to make an informed choice. If one single agency creates policy on its own, then that policy will carry with it the biases that come from that agency. Just as State Department officials are likely to give more weight to the diplomatic aspects of problems and recommend diplomatic solutions, the combatant commanders and their staffs are likely to focus on military aspects and see military solutions. To the extent that these warrior-diplomats create policy, it is likely to be a policy more focused on the military than it would be if an interagency deliberation process had taken place.

In theory, therefore, one would expect policies generated and espoused by unified commanders to be predominantly military in focus and execution. At times this is the case. For example, the development of “Plan Colombia” occurred as the Southern Command was struggling to find a *raison d’être* in the post-Cold War world that would avoid a decrease in its budget and resources. In a real sense, the war against drugs replaced the war against communism for General Wilhelm, who used his influence to help convince Congress to provide funding that would have been far less forthcoming were it not for the military element. Aid to Colombia is not seen as “throwing money down foreign rat holes,” as



Senator Helms has described other kinds of foreign aid, because “Plan Colombia” is a predominantly military operation, as will be elaborated upon in chapter 6 of this volume. Since a military man took the lead in policy formulation, that policy has taken on a military emphasis. One can imagine how different Plan Colombia would be if a representative of USAID had been its primary champion with the Congress—but such an outcome is unthinkable, for USAID could never have convinced Congress to appropriate more funds for development and the peace process. In this case, only the military had the power to affect the formulation of U.S. policy, and the policy became more militarized than it otherwise would have been.

But the militarization of policy is not the inevitable outcome of the growth in power of the unified commanders. To the chagrin of unilateralists and their Pentagon superiors, often the combatant commanders themselves have proven to be concerned with this tendency to emphasize the military side of our policies at the expense of other levels of interaction. Since the combatant commander is often the person in the U.S. government that understands his region better than anyone else, they often have a sense of the complex needs of their region that go beyond what can be addressed through military cooperation and aid. Both Zinni and Clark, for example, reported being quite distressed at the inattention that their areas of responsibility received in the State Department. The organization, coordination, and overall goal-orientation found in the military was absent in the civilian agencies with which these men were supposed to cooperate. The only means for effectively engaging the countries of their regions on any level, or for pursuing U.S. interests in general, were military.

Whether or not they become forces for the militarization of U.S. policy, many of the combatant commanders of the 1990s were strong advocates for aggressive, multilateral engagement, which often put them at odds with their primary allies in government, the unilateralist neoconservatives. When President Bush sought an envoy to the Middle East in the spring of 2002, he chose General Zinni, who had retired from the Marine Corps the year before but retained his extensive contacts and trust in the region. The choice of a military man may have been more palatable to conservatives, who tend to distrust diplomats, at least at first. As the crisis went on, however, and as the preparation for the war in Iraq began, General Zinni often found himself at odds with neoconservatives in and out of the Bush administration. Zinni and many of the other unified commanders seem to be ideologically aligned with multilateralists in the State Department, while remaining somewhat professionally dependent upon unilateralists in

the Pentagon. They sometimes find themselves in the awkward position of being in fundamental disagreement with their primary allies and lacking influence with their supporters.

### *Macro-Level Jointness*

As it stands, the combatant commanders have little contact with the high senior officials at the State Department, who are their *de facto* civilian equivalents. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, and to a lesser degree the Joint Staff, are the only ones that regularly interact with State on what can be considered the “strategic level” in Washington, where direction of policy is determined. As former ambassador, Robert Oakley, explains,

The CINCs are supposed to deal with the civilian agencies at the tactical level, with ambassadors and country teams. In between is the operational level, which is the CINC. The CINC combines the operational level, if you will, and to some degree, the tactical level in terms of contact with civilian agencies. But the operational level of civilian agencies is in Washington at the Assistant Secretary and Under Secretary level. Yet a CINC is discouraged from having contact with the operational level of the civilian agencies because they are here in Washington co-located with the strategic level.<sup>35</sup>

The formal foreign policy process has not yet recognized the growth of the power of the combatant commander, much to the frustration of the men who hold that post. It should not be surprising, therefore, that such frustration has resulted in actions such as General Clark’s “end-run” around the system.

The regional coordinators for State Department policies that are the equivalent of today’s combatant commanders are the assistant secretaries. Six of these positions exist, which act as the State Department’s leading official in their respective regions. The combatant commanders are their natural equivalent in the DOD, but coordination between the two is not only absent, but also *discouraged*, by both sides.<sup>36</sup> Further, the geographic responsibilities do not even line up. The combatant commanders that spoke to Dana Priest told her that they were frustrated with the lack of interagency cooperation and wanted the system adjusted, and were embarrassed about “having to creep around the Pentagon to meet with State Department [officials] and getting their hands slapped when they were discovered.”<sup>37</sup>

The State Department continues to think in terms of bilateral, rather than regional, relationships to a far greater extent than does Defense. Perhaps what is needed then is the creation of regional ambassadors,

functional and operational equivalents of the combatant commanders, who would be stationed in their regions and would have equal amounts of “face time” with the governments of their regions. If the State Department determines that the assistant secretaries are the wrong people to interact with the *de facto* regional diplomats of the DOD, then a new structure needs to be created.<sup>38</sup>

As was discussed above, Congress has the power to create the kind of interagency cooperation through its so-called procedural powers, which allow it to shape the inner workings of the executive branch. Should the executive branch fail to integrate the combatant commanders at the upper levels of decisionmaking, Congress would have the authority to intervene and ensure that it happens. Just as Goldwater–Nichols greatly increased jointness among the services, a Diplomatic Reorganization Act could create regional ambassadors as counterparts to the combatant commanders to increase strategic jointness among the agencies.

As the essays in this volume attest, the ability of the combatant commanders to influence the process of policy formation, when the Pentagon agrees and when it does not, is growing. The State Department of course resists any encroachment on what they see as its territory, so its relationship to the unified commanders is often not sunny, ideological compatibilities notwithstanding. That the State Department might have to someday rely on its powerful ally the combatant commander perhaps says as much about the weaknesses in organization and imagination of Foggy Bottom as it does about the regional commands. But the unified commanders are unlikely to ever find a very willing ally in the State Department, and will usually lose power struggles with the Pentagon, so they must tread lightly in their strange middle role.

The combatant commanders have been asked to take on more and more responsibilities that fall outside their area of expertise. They have often been asked to lead engagement in their AOR on all levels—diplomatic, environmental, economic, developmental—not just military. In every case, despite initial resistance at times, the commanders have “saluted” and have done their best to succeed in these missions that are normally outside their purview.<sup>39</sup> This is asking too much of these men and it is a waste of resources, especially since the U.S. government trains people in these other areas of expertise and funds nongovernmental organizations for these tasks. The growth of the power of the combatant commanders is just as much a story about the diminution of the other agencies that are supposed to handle foreign policy.

Newt Gingrich is correct in his suggestion that the State Department is in need of reorganization, even if he is surely not the man to do it.

Rather than a drastic reduction of State Department responsibilities, which would be the inevitable outcome of a neoconservative reorganization (perhaps by creating an “Undersecretary of Defense for State” or the equivalent), what is needed is an expansion of State Department responsibilities, in order to bring other levels of engagement on par with the military, for a more balanced foreign policy.

This begins with more money, not less—as a recent study pointed out, throughout the 1960s, the diplomatic budget for the United States amounted to 4 percent of the total budget, but by the 1990s it had shrunk to 1 percent.<sup>40</sup> The shrinking budget in real terms will not only soon force “unacceptable foreign policy choices” to underfund key diplomatic priorities, it certainly will provide little room for the kind of re-imagination that is needed to return the Department of State to a position where it can deal with Defense on more of an equal basis.

Goldwater–Nichols addressed the failures of “jointness” among the services—what is needed today is reform to address the similar failures of jointness among the agencies that develop and implement U.S. foreign policy. The influence of the combatant commander is growing, and so will his frustration if not formally included in the process by which U.S. foreign policy is made. Interagency cooperation with the assistant secretaries, or perhaps through the creation of regional ambassadors, would allow the growing power of the combatant commander to be integrated into the process, which would be to the great benefit of the decisions that will need to be made in the new century.

### Conclusion

The bulk of the literature on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy does not recognize the growing influence of the unified combatant commanders. Their stature and influence has grown significantly over the course of the last two decades, aided by official actions like the Goldwater–Nichols Act, by budgetary increases as friends in the neoconservative movement sought to increase the power of the Pentagon at the State Department’s expense, and by advances in technology. Despite this growing power, prior to this volume no scholarly analysis of the extent to which the commanders actually influence policy formation existed.

In many ways, the combatant commanders are experiencing a process that parallels that of the battlefield commander in today’s post-RMA military.<sup>41</sup> Just as local commanders have less autonomy when the battle can be conducted from headquarters miles from the front, so

regional combatant commanders will have to deal with increased micro-management from Washington now that technology has rendered such micromanagement more feasible. Wars can be conducted from the Pentagon just as easily as they can be from Tampa or Belgium.

But that same technology has given the combatant commander the ability to influence the policymaking process in a way that he has not been able—or perhaps not willing—to do to this point. As shown by the experiences of Clark, Wilhelm, and others, the role of the combatant commanders (or whatever their title turns out to be) will be quite different as this century unfolds. Their traditional ability to make autonomous regional decisions may well shrink, but it will be replaced by a greater ability to have an impact on the formulation of policy and strategy, and truly become a “policy entrepreneur.”

### Notes

1. From Dana Priest's remarks at the State Department Open Forum entitled “The Changing Roles of the Regional Commanders In Chief,” March 23, 2001, accessible at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/tr/3719.htm>.
2. Former CINCPAC Joseph W. Prueher discusses the growing peacetime role of the combatant commander after the Cold War in 1996: “Warfighting: CINCs in a New Era,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 13 (Autumn): 48.
3. Quoted by Louis W. Koenig in 1981, *The Chief Executive*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 211.
4. The National Security Council is the highest-level interagency meeting. Its statutory and nonstatutory members are the president, the vice president, the National Security Advisor, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the director of Central Intelligence, and the secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense. The heads of other executive departments and agencies, such as the attorney general, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the president's Chief of Staff, are invited to attend National Security Council meetings when appropriate.
5. Figure 3.1 is an adaptation of a concept first introduced by Roger Hilsman, 1967, *To Move a Nation*, New York: Doubleday, pp. 541–544.
6. For much more on the practical and theoretical aspects of the National Security Council, consult the “National Security Council Project” of the Brookings Institution, codirected by Ivo H. Daalder and I.M. Destler, <http://brookings.edu/dybdocroot/fp/projects/nscc.htm>.
7. The textbooks reviewed were: Charles W. Kegley, James M. Scott, and Eugene R. Wittkopf, 2002, *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process*, 6th ed., New York: Wadsworth; Donald M. Snow and Eugene Brown, 2000, *United States Foreign Policy: Politics Beyond the Water's Edge*, 2nd ed., New York: Bedford/St. Martin's; Fraser Cameron, 2002, *U.S. Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?* New York: Routledge; Jerel A. Rosati, 1999, *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed.,

- Belmont, CA: Wadsworth; James M. McCormick, 1998, *American Foreign Policy and Process*, 3rd. ed., Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock; William H. Baugh, 2000, *United States Foreign Policy Making: Process, Problems, and Prospects*, New York: Harcourt College; Loch Johnson, 1995, *America as a World Power: Foreign Policy in a Constitutional Framework*, 2nd ed., New York: McGraw Hill; and Bruce W. Jentleson, 2000, *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century*, New York: WW Norton.
8. The only book that spends a significant amount of time examining the CINCs has been written by a journalist—Dana Priest, 2003, *The Mission: America's Military in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: WW Norton.
  9. From Priest's remarks in "Open Forum."
  10. James M. Lindsay, 1994, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 2.
  11. For more on this, see Jeremy D. Rosner, 1995–96, "The Know-Nothings Know Something," *Foreign Policy*, 101 (Winter): 116–129.
  12. Quoted in one of the most widely used undergraduate foreign policy textbooks, Kegley et al., *American Foreign Policy*, p. 403.
  13. Wesley K. Clark, 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, p. 168.
  14. Dana Priest, 2000, "A Four-Star Foreign Policy? U.S. Commanders Wield Rising Clout, Autonomy," *The Washington Post* (September 28): A1.
  15. Clark, *Waging Modern War*, p. 442.
  16. David Halberstam, 2001, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals*, New York: Scribner, pp. 349–350.
  17. Discussed by Priest in "The Changing Roles of the Regional Commanders In Chief," March 23, 2001, accessible at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/tr/3719.htm>.
  18. For the full story of the passage of Goldwater–Nichols, see James R. Locher, III, 2002, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater–Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon*, College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.
  19. U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, 1985, *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, Senate Report 99-86, 99th Congress, 1st sess., p. 650.
  20. See Otto Kreisher, 2001, "The Quest for Jointness," *Air Force Magazine*, 84, no. 9 (September).
  21. Quotation is from James R. Locher, III, 1996, "Taking Stock of Goldwater–Nichols," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 13 (Autumn): 13.
  22. James A. Coggin and John B. Nerger, 1987, "Funding the Sinews of War: The CINCs," *Armed Forces Journal International*, 125 (October): 98.
  23. Testimony made on March 27, 2001, during the "Hearing on U.S. Military Strategy and Military Requirements," Senate Armed Services Committee.
  24. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 455.
  25. Katherine Boo, 1991, "How Congress Won the War in the Gulf (Implementing The Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization Act in the Persian Gulf War)," *Washington Monthly*, 23, no. 10 (October). See also Malcolm S. Forbes, 1991, "Two Heroes: Barry Goldwater and Bill Nichols, Heroes of the Persian Gulf War," *Forbes*, 147, no. 6 (March 18): 23–24.

26. Quoted by Coggin and Nerger, "Funding the Sinews of War," 104.
27. Harlan Ullman, 2002, "Bin Laden, Bond and Bush," *Washington Times* (November 27): op-ed.
28. Priest, *The Mission*, p. 71.
29. Newt Gingrich, 2003, "Transforming the State Department: The Next Challenge for the Bush Administration," Speech at the American Enterprise Institute, April 22, available at [http://www.aei.org/news/newsID.16992,filter./news\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/news/newsID.16992,filter./news_detail.asp).
30. For more on this, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 436–437.
31. It has become rather standard practice in some circles to refer to the first Bush administration (1988–92) as "Bush 41" and the second as "Bush 43," a reference to the number president each Bush was.
32. Quoted by Vernon Loeb, 2002, "One 'Chief' Commands; Others Are Out of CINC; President Alone Has Title, Rumsfeld Says," *The Washington Post* (October 29): A19.
33. Edward E. Meyer and Thomas R. Pickering, cochairs, 2001, *Forward Strategic Empowerment: Synergies Between CINCs, the State Department, and Other Agencies*, Washington DC: Center for the Study of the Presidency. Among the many intriguing recommendations of the working group to foster greater interagency cooperation was the creation of a "MILAD," or military advisor to the assistant secretaries.
34. Incident related by Dana Priest, 2000, "The Proconsuls: Patrolling the World," *The Washington Post* (September 29).
35. Comments made at the State Department Open Forum, "The Changing Roles of the Regional Commanders In Chief," March 23, 2001, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/tr/3720.htm>.
36. Ambassador Oakley discussed how both the State and Defense Departments act as impediments to greater interagency cooperation during the question and answer session of the State Department's Open Forum, "The Changing Roles of the Regional Commanders in Chief."
37. From Priest's remarks at the "Open Forum."
38. Ambassador Oakley discussed alternate structures during the question and answer session of the "Open Forum."
39. Discussed by Priest in *The Mission*, p. 45.
40. Richard N. Gardner, 2000, "The One Percent Solution: Shirking the Cost of World Leadership," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 4 (July/August): 2–10.
41. In military jargon, "RMA" refers to the "Revolution in Military Affairs," which supposedly has brought qualitative changes to the U.S. Armed Forces. Due to revolutionary changes in precision munitions and information technology, proponents of the idea of an RMA argue that the US military is significantly more advanced than those of any potential competitors. For more on the RMA, see John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1997.

CHAPTER 4  
U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND:  
A WARRIOR-DIPLOMAT SPEAKS<sup>1</sup>

*Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (ret.)*

In 1983 I was appointed CINCPAC—Commander in Chief, Pacific forces. In some ways the nomination was out of the ordinary. If there was a pattern for those who reached the upper levels of Navy command, I did not fit it. I was not prominent in my warfighting community; I was a diesel submariner in a nuclear community. Although I still wore my dolphins, I had had nothing to do with the submarine force since my days with Division 31, 16 years earlier. Many nuclear submariners, I knew, didn't even consider diesel veterans as submariners at all. I had had little direct experience in building the Navy. I was not an equipment specialist or a weapons technician. My career did little to stamp me as a traditional "Navy Man." I received a Ph.D. from Princeton instead of going to nuclear power school. On the other hand, I did have substantial joint, strategic, and command experience. Before moving to the Pacific, I commanded NATO forces in southern Europe. The Pacific Command was a major joint organization with broad political responsibilities in a region I knew well. I felt especially prepared to assume command of all American military forces in the Pacific theater.

But while my experience qualified me for the job, other factors had also conspired toward my appointment. A year earlier a different position had opened up—CINCLANT, Commander in Chief Atlantic forces. From my standpoint as NATO commander for southern Europe, CINCLANT had seemed to be a logical move. Because it was a NATO job as well as a U.S. position, I would have been able to build on my three years of work with the Alliance. A joint command as well as a Navy job, it would have exercised my bent for interservice cooperation. But, the Navy rarely does things that make sense.



My principal advocate inside the Pentagon was Richard Perle, assistant secretary of Defense for International Security Policy. Among his various briefs, Perle had responsibility for Europe and NATO, and we had gotten to know each other during his frequent visits to Italy. Perle already had a reputation in Washington as a skilled strategist and gifted debater. He was, I thought, the brightest man I had met in government. The Atlantic commander in chief was the senior military man Perle had to deal with. We had experience working together and we saw eye-to-eye on many issues.

But Perle did not make the decision; that was in the hands of the secretary of Defense, who was advised by the chief of Naval Operations and the secretary of the Navy. John Lehman was secretary of the Navy then, and Perle and Lehman did not get along. In point of fact, they did not even speak to each other. Prior to Ronald Reagan's election, they had been business partners, and the dissolution of their company had left the two men with a strong mutual dislike.

Perle did have Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's ear, and after some spirited dialogue Weinberger and the Navy Department worked out an agreement. Wesley McDonald, an old friend and classmate of mine was appointed the Atlantic commander. Allegedly, the quid pro quo was that when Admiral Robert Long retired as Pacific commander, I would be seriously considered for that post. A year later, Long's term came to an end, and Shirley, my wife, and I found ourselves on our way to Oahu, Hawaii.

### The Pacific Command

The Pacific commander's area of responsibility (AOR) extended from the west coast of the United States to the Far East, from the Aleutians to Antarctica, then into the Indian Ocean to the eastern coast of Africa. Ashore, the commander's responsibilities extended to the western border of India. This immense and diverse area composes over 50 percent of the earth's surface and gave the Pacific commander the largest unified command in the U.S. military structure.<sup>2</sup> From his headquarters in Hawaii, the Pacific commander enjoys a macro view of the entire Pacific Rim and beyond. The U.S. had a security alliance with six countries in the Pacific Command: Thailand, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> Forces operated in the Bering Sea, the Arctic Ocean, and the Indian Ocean. Key global flashpoints are also located in the Pacific Theater: the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, Indonesia, and India (Kashmir). Finally, an important maritime

chokepoint is located in the Pacific Command. The Malacca Strait is the world's second busiest commercial shipping lane through which an average of 200 ships pass daily.

Historically, the Pacific commander was the Paul Revere of the Pacific. He went around shouting, "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming," and quoting alarming figures on the expansion of the Soviet Pacific Fleet based in Vladivostok and the Russian buildup at Camranh Bay, Vietnam. His inevitable conclusion was that the Pacific should get more funds, more ships, and more weapons. But when I first reported to Hawaii, I made a concerted effort to step back and look at the region with an objective eye. It was not possible to completely discard my predispositions, but I made an honest attempt to assess our situation without emotion or greed. To what extent were we actually threatened by the Soviet presence in the Pacific?

In the course of my survey, I found myself especially drawn to the work of Robert Scalapino, director of the Asian Studies department at the University of California, Berkeley. One of Scalapino's fundamental themes was that the Soviets were hardly players in the vast Asian marketplace. American trade with Japan alone at that time was reaching toward \$80 billion a year. The Soviets did less than \$10 billion in the entire region. Their products simply were not attractive enough to draw Asian buyers. The more I looked at it, the more it seemed to me that the Russians were bankrupt in East Asia. The single element that distinguished their position in the region was military strength, in particular, their nuclear submarine force. In every other sphere, the Soviets came off poorly. Of course, Soviet decay became more obvious, leading to collapse in 1991. The Russian lease for use of Camranh Bay expired in 2002, while the Russian navy today rarely deploys out of its local operating area.

### *Engagement*

On the other side of the ledger, by the early 1980s the United States had thrown off the humiliation of Vietnam and was solidly ensconced once again as the leader of the free nations of the Pacific Rim. Since the war, American political, social, and military policies had been tailored to the area and well integrated. Our presence in the western Pacific had prevented Soviet intimidation and allowed our allies and friends to nurture their interests in their own fashion and at their own pace. Most of our allies in the region were making political progress and moving toward pluralism (even if movement on this front was often not as fast

or consistent as we would have preferred). At the same time they were experiencing tremendous affluence. South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines were ripe for democratic change that ultimately occurred in the late 1980s and mid-1990s.

While Vietnam was still kicking up dust in Cambodia and spasmodically quarreling with China, East Asia was remarkably peaceful overall. Even North Korea had backed off from its more alarming rhetoric and, except for the occasional verbal volley or attempts to land subversives, they seem uninterested in disturbing the waters. Our relations with Beijing were steadily improving, and the Chinese had made it clear that they favored American forces in the Far East as a counter to the Soviets. In essence, our forward deployed posture and network of alliances had neutralized the Soviets' penetration of the region. My general conclusion was that we were better off here than anywhere else in the world. In the Pacific our long-term policies had succeeded remarkably well. The United States contained the Soviet Union, bolstered American trade, and fostered democracy and capitalism in the region. At the end of 2003, 18 of the region's countries are considered free.<sup>4</sup>

National leaders throughout the region told me, when I began visiting them, that without our presence their achievements would not have been possible. It was, I thought, an excellent example of the utility of military force and how it can be productively employed in peacetime. George Shultz later said he felt that the diplomatic and military arms of the government worked together more closely in the western Pacific than in any other part of the globe. We were so successful, in fact, that other problems had become ascendant. Japan and Korea were already serious trade competitors and our future difficulties in the region were almost surely going to be economic. As a military commander I could not generate a particularly alarmist view of the Soviet threat in the Pacific.

### A New Way of Thinking

This was not the traditional Pacific commander approach, and not everybody appreciated it, but that was my assessment. I was not in favor of reducing our armed forces, because I believed that American military capacity and cooperation with the Pacific nations was an important element of our success. Moreover, I thought our current posture was just about right. But I did not go around preaching that Soviet might was growing out of control and would eventually overwhelm us. I did not believe it would.

Bob Long, my predecessor as Pacific commander, had initiated an imaginative reorientation of our Pacific planning that markedly

increased the effectiveness of the forces we had in place. For years, contingency plans for the Pacific called for substantial reinforcement in the event of war with the Soviet Union. But if we ever did find ourselves in a fight with the Soviets, it seemed clear to Long (as it did to me) that any early reinforcement of our Pacific forces would be doubtful. Western Europe would be the centerpiece of a massive conflict, and that theater would claim whatever resources were available. Reminiscent of World War II, Europe's freedom was still America's priority. The Pacific was still an economy of force theater.

Building on Long's efforts, my staff and I devised a whole new way of looking at a potential conflict in the Pacific and prioritizing missions so that we had a reasonable prospect of countering the USSR without reinforcement. We reworked plans to take maximum advantage of American air and sea superiority. We prepared our forces to throw up a barrier across the northern Pacific and protect the logistics lines between the United States, Japan, and China. We were ready to help build up Chinese capabilities and put pressure on the eastern Soviet Union. By the time we were finished reorganizing we were confident that we could box off Soviet forces and deal them considerable damage without detracting from the main effort in Europe. In my view it was a quantum leap forward both in terms of credibility and effectiveness.

The heart of our strength in the region was the forward presence we maintained. We were well placed to project influence, starting with Clark Air Base in the Philippines, working up through Okinawa, the Korean peninsula, and central and northern Japan. We were in an excellent position to defend Korea, support Japan, and project immediate military power anywhere in the area. We did not have large forces available, but we could react quickly. Our forward deployed posture was part of our overall policy; in fact it was the heart of our overall policy. As Secretary of State Shultz once put it, our "military provided the umbrella underneath which all our diplomatic cards were played."

From a military perspective, the truth was that the Soviet Pacific Fleet was never as powerful as many believed. They had carriers, but they were anti-submarine and helicopter carriers that do not represent anything like the power of our aircraft carriers with their squadrons of fixed-wing aircraft that can carry substantial weapons. Moreover, none were permanently in the Pacific. Soviet ships would have been hard pressed in any clash with the U.S. Fleet and would not survive long. The Soviets did have a significant submarine presence, though, and a very capable land-based air presence; they were the main danger. But waging naval warfare is in one sense similar to waging land warfare—you have

to deal from strength. A country that does not have the will or the economic base to support it cannot successfully carry on war. In those areas the Soviet Union was clearly deficient, even in 1983.

The problem with the “Russians Are Coming” syndrome, as I saw it then, was that it distorted the rationale for an American military presence in the region. If we founded our presence on the need to counter the Soviets, and then the Soviets dwindled or disappeared, we would have no argument for staying. But the Soviets were never the only reason for us to be there. Predictably, in the annual press for funds the DOD found the Soviet specter the most effective crowbar for prying open government coffers. Unfortunately, this practice became habit and created the impression that the Soviets were the sole reason for our deployment. Now, with the USSR gone and Russia more or less prostrate, the traditional case is considerably weakened—many say it has disappeared altogether. However some within defense circles argue that China replaced the USSR as the main threat to regional stability. In 2001, commander of the Pacific Command Admiral Dennis Blair testified to Congress “The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is modernizing and making organizational changes in all branches of service to strengthen homeland defense, expand regional influence and support sovereignty claims to Taiwan and the South China Sea.”<sup>5</sup> Though not labeled an enemy of the United States, China is seen as a potential rival in the region.

Indeed, there is no tangible threat in the Far East at this moment. But a rational policy is one that takes full account of the fact that this world is replete with uncertainty. Developments of vast moment have a habit of materializing unexpectedly. No one predicted the Iran–Iraq war, just as no one foresaw Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. Our policy of being forward deployed in order to deal with unforeseen events and uncertainties and to express interest in our friends’ welfare has been consistently successful in the past and should not be lightly cast aside.

If there is no Russian Fleet to contend with, we will not have to concentrate on protecting our blue-water lines of communication as we used to. But given our vital stake in the region, we still have to maintain a modicum of strength and use it thoughtfully. In essence, that was the keystone of the case for our military presence in the past (despite the discourse), and it still applies as we face new and changing circumstances. Perhaps the size, shape, and disposition of our forces will change—even be reduced substantially—but the merit of the basic argument remains unchanged. The Pacific Command covers greater than half of the earth’s surface and about 60 percent of the earth’s population.

Today, about 300,000 military personnel or 20 percent of active duty military is assigned to the Pacific Command. Almost two-thirds of this force is composed of the Navy with 130,000 sailors and the Marine Corps with 70,000 Marines. The Air Force and Army comprise the remainder of the force allocated to the Pacific with 40,000 airmen and 37,000 soldiers.

### Making the Rounds

Once I took up command in Hawaii, I began regular tours of the region, accompanied by my executive assistant, Joe Strasser, and by John Helble, a first-rate Foreign Service officer and Asian expert who acted as my political adviser. With my own aircraft and a responsibility to promote American interests in the Pacific Rim, I made every effort to reach out to many countries in my area of responsibility. On my route were some of America's key allies: Thailand, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines.

#### *Thailand*

I spent considerable time in Thailand, where we were quite concerned about the threat from Cambodia. General Kamlantek Arthit was the supreme commander of the Thai forces, and he and I continued the close cooperation that was in place when I took over, including combined military exercises. These were useful, although one occasion I observed was not carried out quite as I expected.

The highlight of the year was a combined exercise code-named Cobra Gold. Cobra Gold is a regularly scheduled joint/combined exercise of the U.S.-Thai militaries designed to ensure regional peace and strengthen the ability of the royal Thai armed forces to defend Thailand or respond to regional contingencies. The purpose of Cobra Gold is to improve U.S. and Thai combat readiness and combined-joint interoperability. The larger aim was to enhance security relationships and demonstrate U.S. resolve to support the security and humanitarian interests of friends and allies in the region. Additionally, all Cobra Gold exercises include humanitarian activities such as providing medical, dental, and veterinarian clinics in villages throughout the exercise areas, in addition to numerous civil construction projects.

Arthit invited me to observe the amphibious portion of the Cobra Gold exercise, which involved a landing operation by Thai and U.S. Marines. We drove together to the beach where this landing was to take place. Gradually, the area seemed to take on a kind of county fair atmosphere.

Leaving the car parked on the road above the beach, we made our way through an ever-denser mass of people among whom ice cream vendors and other salesmen were plying a brisk business. When we got to the beach itself there was what looked to me like a cordoned-off royal pavilion, a raised dais covered by a thatched roof on which sat two elaborately carved high-backed wooden chairs. It took me a moment to realize that they were intended for Arthit and me, and that it was from here that we would be observing the exercise.

Amphibious landings ordinarily take place around sunrise, but this one was set for midmorning. By the time the landing ships appeared offshore, the beach area was thronged with people, including what seemed to be a large number of very attractive young Thai women wearing the common slit skirts. There were so many people that when the Marines disembarked from their craft it was all the police could do to push the crowd back sufficiently for them to come ashore. Once they did make a lodgment, they tried to follow the exercise objectives and establish a perimeter up near the road, but merrymakers and vendors quickly engulfed them. The operation had turned into a festive affair. Arthit and I were likewise immersed, and I was strongly tempted to buy a Popsicle, though in the end my dignity persuaded me not to.

The holiday atmosphere of Cobra Gold that year stood in stark contrast to the tense and dangerous situation along the Thai-Cambodian border, where I visited a number of times to get a firsthand feel. Here the Vietnamese regularly attacked the border refugee enclaves that were run by the two non-Khmer Rouge opposition factions. Bombarding the hospitals and refugee camps with artillery, they wreaked indiscriminate slaughter. The sight of crippled and dismembered children was simply devastating. It was impossible not to feel the deepest sympathy for the Cambodians who were undergoing this heartrending ordeal. Nor could I get over the selflessness of the volunteers from around the world who manned the camps and hospitals, allowing some kind of order to emerge from horror and chaos.

Although the border situation was worrisome, the Thais seemed to contain it fairly well, even while they funneled supplies to the two factions of the resistance they were supporting. Of course, Beijing was contributing the lion's share of support to the resistance, but their client was the Khmer Rouge, which had by far the most effective fighting force. It was not a pleasant situation and we did not like it. But neither did it appear to be getting out of hand. We had been worried that the Vietnamese, who had consolidated themselves in Laos, were going to do the same in Cambodia. In that event they would have emerged as a

major regional power. But it was becoming apparent that Hanoi's leaders had already overstepped their resolve and resources and were not able to generate the staying power they had exhibited in South Vietnam. In 1989, Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia; in 1995, Vietnam and the U.S. normalized relations.

### *Australia and New Zealand*

My travels in Southeast Asia ranged widely. I visited our friends in Australia often and tried to improve ties with Malaysia and Indonesia. Australia remains America's closest ally in the Asia Pacific region. In 1999, Australian armed forces not only took the lead in East Timor operations, but they were the largest part of the UN security force there. Through diplomatic and economic agreements, Australia has committed to the development and stabilization of East Timor. They also evacuated civilians and provided peace monitors in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. The Australian government has been active in promoting the return of democracy in Fiji and in promoting security and peaceful development throughout the archipelagic states of Southeast Asia and the south Pacific. Australia has also constructively engaged in dialogue with China and North Korea to promote peace in northeast Asia.<sup>6</sup>

In the war against terrorism, Australia has proven itself a trusted ally. Australia was the only country besides the United Kingdom to supply a significant number of troops, about 2,000 to fight in Iraq. In the post-conflict reconstruction phase of Iraq, Australia will play a critical role.

New Zealand was another port of call, but the agenda there was more eventful than I anticipated. (I did not start off on the right foot in New Zealand. I initiated my first press conference there by declaring, "it's good to be back in Australia." Although I corrected myself immediately, the slip made press copy for a week.)

When I first arrived in New Zealand, Prime Minister Robert Muldoon was in power. He had an oversupply of confidence and a disposition to match. Fiercely pro-American, he went to great efforts to ensure that the bilateral relationship remained healthy. But new elections in 1984 brought David Lange to power. Lange was a clergyman who had gone into politics but had neglected to bring the ethics of his church with him. He was not the first misrepresenter I had met in high places, but he was the most proficient. In his campaign he had bitterly criticized U.S. nuclear weapons and promised to prevent American ships from calling in New Zealand ports unless they declared that no nuclear



weapons were aboard. There had always been a strong antinuclear faction in New Zealand's Labor Party, and Lange may have been a closet member of this group. In any event, he co-opted this plank from their platform.

That was well and good as long as Lange was in the opposition and merely scoring political points. But as so often happens in democracies, the political balance shifted and he managed to replace Muldoon as prime minister. The storm signals went up immediately, and Secretary of State Shultz quickly undertook a number of meetings with Lange. I likewise met with him. The new prime minister hinted broadly that the problem could be worked out and that he would engineer a solution satisfactory to both parties. But his actions did not bear out his words. I was appalled in my own discussions with him to find that Lange did not understand the difference between nuclear power (for propulsion) and nuclear weapons; moreover, he was entirely uninterested in the distinction. His confusion was accompanied by constant assurances that he was a firm ally of the United States. In his heart, though, he just did not want our ships in his ports, saw nothing inconsistent in the two positions, and could not understand why we were so exercised.

Shortly after Lange took office, New Zealand banned our warships from its ports unless we would give the desired assurances on nuclear weapons. This demand ran directly contrary to the "neither confirm nor deny" policy we had adhered to for over 30 years. We simply could not live with that ultimatum. As a member of ANZUS (the Australia, New Zealand, U.S. security pact) we were pledged to defend New Zealand, but Wellington was now refusing to welcome the American ships, which would help carry out that defense. The result was that Washington withdrew its defense commitment and severed its ANZUS ties with New Zealand (though the term ANZUS remained in use as a shorthand for the residual Australian-U.S. relationship). Even after President Bush's 1991 announcement that U.S. surface ships do not normally carry nuclear weapons, New Zealand's legislation prohibiting visits of nuclear-powered ships continues to preclude a bilateral security alliance with the United States.

There was a serious public debate about whether we had taken the right course in canceling the commitment to an old ally. I, for one, believed it was the right thing to do. To the United States, having New Zealand as a formal ally made no military difference whatsoever. The Chicago police force is bigger than New Zealand's Army. The ANZUS alliance was originally formed to counter the Japanese military threat, which had disappeared almost four decades earlier. I am not even sure

that it makes sense for New Zealand to be in an alliance with the United States. New Zealand is an isolated land, consumed with its domestic affairs and little concerned with broad geopolitical issues. New Zealanders have an idyllic, beautiful country that is steaming along in its own semi-socialist way with an economy built around sheep. They have no great incentive to be involved in world politics. If they were ever attacked, the United States would likely support them for a variety of reasons, treaty or no treaty. With the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR, the need for an alliance has now become even less evident than it was formerly.

But Pacific commanders are not supposed to talk that way. Commanders instinctively want everybody in an alliance. My initial reaction was that the New Zealanders were putting themselves at risk, but that if they were imprudent enough to do it, it would serve them right. The more I thought about it, though, the more I thought that perhaps it was not a disaster. Maybe it was for the best, for New Zealand and for us. Why should they involve themselves, I thought, and why should we expend energy and resources to hold together an arrangement whose primary incentive had ceased to exist? It is unclear to me why we still talk so hard about New Zealand coming back into ANZUS. In May 2001, the government announced it was scrapping its combat air force. Further, they are not going to return to ANZUS and I am not sure what the rationale would be today for a military relationship; aside from cosmetics, we have no reason to be worried about them. We have fashioned a new relationship with New Zealand now, which is rather comfortable for both parties and we should leave it at that. New Zealand states it maintains a "credible minimum force," although it necessarily places substantial reliance on its defense relationship with Australia.

### *Japan*

Japan was the main nation on the Pacific commander's beat, and here a *laissez faire* attitude was neither possible nor desirable. Japan hosts nearly 41,000 U.S. armed forces personnel and serves as a forward deployed site for about 14,000 additional U.S. naval personnel. This arrangement provides bases and financial and material support to our forward deployed forces, which are essential for maintaining stability in the region. Under the U.S.–Japan treaty of mutual cooperation and security, a carrier battle group is homeported in Yokuska, the III Marine Expeditionary Force, the 5th Air Force, and elements of the Army's I Corps also operate from Japanese soil.

The U.S. military and the Japanese self-defense force have a close relationship and participate in several training exercises a year. The largest exercises are Keen Edge and Keen Sword. Occurring biennially, the exercises test the interoperability of the Japanese self-defense force and the U.S. military. During the exercise, the participants practice defending Japan, disaster relief, and defensive readiness. Tokyo's forces also participate in Rim-of-the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises. In RIMPAC 2002, Japan participated with seven other countries and contributed five of the 30 ships that trained.

I believed it was wrong that Japan spent only one percent of its GNP on security while we financed its defense umbrella. A country with Japan's economic strength and potential should share more of the burden. Consequently I argued vigorously at every opportunity in favor of Japan increasing its defense appropriations. I am sensitive to the disadvantages inherent in a Japanese military buildup—chiefly the opposition of the other Asian countries that have such bitter memories of World War II. But I still think Tokyo can and should take more responsibility for its own security and that we should continue to press them on it. If they cannot see their way to spending more on their own defense, then they should be providing more funding to assist our effort. There are imaginative ways to spend money indirectly in support of American help—especially when the Japanese GNP is more than \$3.5 trillion. Since my tenure as Pacific commander, considerable progress has been made. Japan now contributes \$4.86 billion in host-nation support, more than any other U.S. ally.

Surprisingly enough, considering the long relationship, operational cooperation between Japanese and American forces was almost nonexistent until the early 1980s. There was good rapport, but the two militaries did not work much with each other. That situation began changing during the tenure of Bob Long (my predecessor) as Pacific commander. Since then we have engaged in joint planning and exercises, a budding cooperation I did everything in my power to foster.

While U.S.–Japanese military ties have strengthened, we have not succeeded in breaching the barrier between the Japanese and Koreans. Both governments have given considerable lip service to the idea of moving closer together, but the animosities still run deep, and close military cooperation is more than the relationship can bear. Nevertheless, until these two nations are willing to operate bilaterally, fashioning a realistic, cohesive security plan for the area will remain a serious problem. The relationship between the Japanese and the South Koreans has been warming in recent years. Both countries have been

instrumental for developing a new relationship with North Korea. Specifically, Japan and South Korea provide North Korea a significant percentage of its food and energy needs. Additionally, the United States is cooperating with Tokyo and Seoul in countering a potential North Korean ballistic missile attack. With these efforts, we hope to build a sturdy bridge between Tokyo and Seoul.

### *The Korean Peninsula*

While Japan is the key American interest in East Asia, South Korea provides the starkest illustration of our role in the region's power balance. My first visit there as Pacific commander was a bone-chilling introduction to the hatred that had divided the peninsula since the conclusion of World War II. In spite of warming relations between the North and the South, North Korea's military training cycle remains robust. North Korea continues to maintain 60 percent of its forces within 100 km. of the Demilitarized Zone or DMZ.

The bus that transports personnel from Camp Kittyhawk, the U.S. base in the DMZ, to the Joint Security Area at Panmunjon passes through the small village of Tassondory, the one South Korean settlement permitted in the DMZ by the truce agreement. Each of the farmers of Tassondory has 17 acres to till, as compared to the average South Korean farmer, who has one. The extra 16 are compensation for living so close to the northern border.

Camp Kittyhawk itself is home to American and South Korean soldiers who serve as guards and observers in Panmunjon, the meeting place between the two sides since the Korean War ended. Established at the end of that conflict as a neutral site for the airing of truce violations and other differences, the Joint Security Area (JSA) is today a half square mile where both sides have built compounds for their delegations and where strict regulations govern life. Each side is allowed no more than 5 officers and 30 enlisted people in the area at a time; visitors must be escorted; automatic weapons are prohibited.

The regulations have not prevented angry clashes over the years and, in several instances, fatalities. In June 1975 the North Koreans attacked Major William Henderson in the JSA and inflicted permanent brain damage. In 1976 the infamous "poplar tree" incident took place, in which two American officers, Captains Art Boniface and Frank Dorrett, were beaten to death with hoes and clubs. North Korean guards frequently seek opportunities to insult or even shove their American counterparts.

On the bus from Camp Kittyhawk I was accompanied by the colonel in charge of the American detachment, who briefed me on the conduct that would be required while we were in the JSA. We were forbidden to speak to northern personnel, to make any gestures that might be interpreted as threatening, even quick movements. During our stay we would be under constant observation from northern guard posts. We could expect them to be taking our pictures.

The moment we got off the bus, tension descended. Standing on the other side of the road, North Korean soldiers and officials had hate written all over their faces—almost as if they had rehearsed for hours to project contempt and revulsion. Everyone moved slowly and deliberately, careful not to provoke some unintended reaction. In few other places in the world was the East–West conflict reduced to such tangible antipathy. For anyone who visits Panmunjon it is hard to forget the atmosphere that oppresses that historic junction. It penetrates right to the marrow.

To this day the regular meetings of the Korean Armistice Commission are distinguished by shouting and invective. “Running dogs” and “capitalist pigs” are only two of the epithets frequently in the mouths of the North Koreans, while the Americans respond with icy silence and the coldest formality. An officer assigned to this unpleasant duty has to have an iron stomach, also an iron bladder. Neither side displays weakness by using the latrine during the marathon meetings.

Despite several recent border incursions the relationship between North and South Korea has been warming. Much of this can be attributed to South Korean President Kim Dae Jung’s “sunshine policy,” which advocates dialogue, cooperation, and renewed relations with the north. There has been an increase in trade and other interactions between the two states. At the same time, border incursions have not stopped. North Korea continues to “test” South Korean and American defenses. For example, in June 2002, North Korean naval vessels engaged South Korean ships that resulted in one lost South Korean patrol boat and five deaths. In 2003, North Korean fighter jets intercepted an American reconnaissance aircraft flying in international airspace.

Militarily, South Korea was one of my major responsibilities as Pacific commander. The threat from the North, although it was receding to a degree even in the early 1980s, could not be ignored. Like all U.S. commanders in the region (past and present), I followed events in northeast Asia closely and was sensitive to the potential for having to support the peninsula quickly if tensions heated up.

Dealing with the South Koreans regularly as Pacific commander, it seemed to me that they had their minds firmly set on their own welfare (not surprising in light of their northern neighbor's historic aggressiveness and concentration on building military muscle, including atomic weapons). Their intention then, as well as now, was to keep the United States committed as fully as possible for as long as possible. I have been associated with things Korean for over 20 years and have been told time and again that if the South could just be assured of our presence for another five years they would become independent and have no further need for American support. They were saying that in 1970. They are saying it today. The South Koreans have been extremely successful at wooing Americans to their cause. In fact, post-Cold War defense planning centered around two major regional wars: one with Iraq, the other with North Korea. But the fact is that their situation is not as bad as they picture it. They are, for example, much better postured militarily than they would have the outside world believe. The government spends about 3.2 percent of GDP on defense and maintains 683,000 men under arms with 4.5 million men in reserve.

Nevertheless, the South Koreans dread the prospect of an American retreat or withdrawal so acutely that they can hardly contemplate it. Regardless of shifts in the region's actual balance of power, Seoul has an insatiable appetite for American support. But it is also true that the support has borne fruit; on the military, diplomatic, and political fronts our joint efforts have met with substantial success.

The Korean fixation on American support concerned me because, having responsibility for the entire region, I did not like the idea of committing my limited forces exclusively to one mission. I especially resisted pressure to preposition material there. I knew that things had a tendency to disappear into the Korean maw and never be seen again. This syndrome was often aided and abetted by our commander in Korea, who looked at it much the same way as the Koreans did. He wanted everything in there he could get, which has been the reason for one of the perennial frictions between the Pacific commander and the United States Forces Korea Command (USFK).

There was nothing particularly sinister in all this. On the contrary, it was a natural phenomenon. All governments and organizations work this way; it's just that the Koreans were more skilled than most. Korea is a successful, prosperous country today primarily because of its relationship with the United States. I do not believe we owe the Koreans any apologies whatsoever if we want to keep our forces available for other contingencies in other locations, or devote more resources to different

regional objectives. That does not mean that in the event of aggression across the DMZ our support would be diluted. On the contrary, the full weight of our capability in the Pacific would be brought to bear with no reservations.

The South Koreans, of course, believe in their hearts that while American interests might be global, there is in fact only one true threat to peace, and that threat lies across their northern border. They are correct to the extent that Pyongyang's thinking is not particularly rational, though probably the Kim Jong Il government is not quite as crazy as we often declare. If the Northerners could get a large return on their investment by attacking Seoul, they would do it. But the world has changed since Kim II Sung came to power and his son succeeded him, and of course the moderating trends have accelerated with unexpected suddenness in the last several years. Throughout the world, countries, which once relied on support from Moscow and its allies in pursuing confrontationalist objectives, have had to thoroughly reassess their policies, and North Korea is no exception. At this writing, Pyongyang may be undergoing just such a reappraisal, and while the signals are still mixed, we are at least seeing the beginnings of a relaxation in the peninsula.

### *The Philippines*

Without a doubt, the most troublesome ally with whom I dealt as Pacific commander was the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos. At the time, the country was in the midst of a progressively more dangerous insurgency, fed by ethnic groups in the southern districts and communist guerrillas in the central islands. I visited often to assess the state of the Philippine armed forces and to advise my counterparts on steps to increase their effectiveness. But the situation deteriorated continually, and there were no signs that any turnaround was likely.

Despite consistent diplomatic support for Marcos from Washington, by the fall of 1983, I became convinced that he had lost touch with the realities in his country. He persisted in actions that were damaging to his cause and was impervious to advice. His continued presence at the helm, I thought, could lead only to a quickening breakdown and ultimate disaster. Eventually I concluded that the longer we waited to move Marcos out of power the worse it would be for both the Filipinos and for our own position in that country.<sup>7</sup> Once I was fully persuaded of this I began voicing my assessment in cables and reports to the Pentagon and the secretaries of Defense and State. As one message expressed it, "I think there is no way that working through Marcos we can expect the

government to prevail in the insurgency or to get the policies we want to have in place. The time has come when we must begin considering ways to have him step down or to remove him from office.”

I had not come to this point easily. My visits to the Philippines always began with a personal call on Marcos, and he was invariably courteous and friendly. Normally he received me at the Malacanang Palace in the heart of Manila, a collection of baronial buildings that in colonial days had housed the American high commissioner but which have served as the official residence of Filipino presidents since independence. An imposing cast-iron fence surrounded the spacious grounds, which were replete with beautifully tended exotic tropical plantings. But everywhere, it seemed, the lush shrubbery partially concealed heavily armed security people.

Marcos's office was on the second floor and opened onto a spacious hall with a series of meeting rooms on either side. It was in these rooms that visitors were kept until they were called for. The president's windowless office was filled with artificial plants, which seemed to confirm the story that Marcos suffered from a wide variety of allergies. Inside his office, Marcos had installed his desk in the middle of a dais, elevating it above floor level. Callers always found themselves looking up at the president, like supplicants. Behind the desk was a large screen, and it was obvious that someone was behind the screen. Often no pretense was made and the persons behind the screen scurried in and out without any attempt to hide their presence. I had no idea what was going on behind the screen. My assumption was that they were providing security or recording conversations, or perhaps both. I did know that refreshments were often prepared back there, and then brought out to Marcos on order. My curiosity about the people behind the screen never flagged, nor was it ever satisfied.

Marcos was a very sick man. For some time we were not sure what was afflicting him, though we eventually learned that he was on kidney dialysis. The first thing I would look for at our meetings was his condition that particular day. Was he alert or woozy? Sometimes his eyes were glazed over and he was barely able to speak. When he was up to it, Marcos would be sociable and expressive, talking at length about World War II. But always he sounded imperial, like a man who was running the country, and running it very much for his own benefit.

Over time I became quite familiar with the Philippine military, and I felt I had a good handle on what was wrong with it. I studied its operations and spent a substantial amount of time with various commanders. I met often with Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver to



discuss the general state of the insurgency and the various military assistance projects the United States had under way. I had known his deputy, Eddie Ramos, since 1975, when I was serving in the office of the secretary of Defense and he was heading the Philippine constabulary. Ramos was easy to talk to, straightforward, and a solid military professional.<sup>8</sup> Ramos seemed to have a feel for the problems and a practical-minded approach to dealing with them. But his boss, Ver, was a farce, an intelligence officer who had been chief of the Palace Guard (Marcos's personal security) for years and had been appointed to head the military because of his loyalty to the president rather than because of any expertise in commanding troops. He was corrupt and unscrupulous; the rumor was that he had murdered people who stood in the way of his advancement. I had no idea if this was true, but it was certain that he was widely feared. It was also certain that he had almost no concept whatsoever of military affairs. He was presiding over the dissolution of the Philippine military as it suffered under Marcos's stifling grip and struggled to hold off the rebels in Mindanao and the southern district.

In my meetings with Ver, I would always start off with a list of things I thought they should be doing. I would note the training and other improvements they needed, and I would describe what the United States would do to support them as they took these steps. Ver would always agree with me on each point and assure me that he would see to it. But he would do nothing. I soon concluded that he had no intention of accepting advice. His chief personal interests were in delivery dates for American equipment and in developing avenues for direct money inputs from the United States. He seemed to believe that the secret to military success lay in extracting as much American assistance as possible, preferably in the form of gifts.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Army had battalions that had been out in the field for six or seven years straight and that had never had any training courses at all. They couldn't shoot; they couldn't move; they couldn't communicate. They needed trucks, basic communications equipment, and all the training in small-unit tactics they could get. But though they desperately lacked the fundamentals, the Army was so beleaguered that they could never afford to bring troops out of the line. There was not even a rest and recuperation system or a leave schedule. Even worse, the Army did not reward the people who were doing the fighting. If an officer wanted to advance in the Philippine military, he did not go to the battlefield; he went to work at a headquarters in Manila, if possible for Fabian Ver.

With Ver unwilling or unable to move, I began going to Marcos directly with my unaddressed agenda. I always took a gift along, which

I would present while we exchanged amenities. Then I would start off with what he really wanted from me—a worldwide tour d’horizon. I would describe for him what the Soviets were doing and what our analysis was of their various moves, particularly in the Far East. I would tell him how the arms control talks were proceeding and brief him on other international developments. Marcos was quite interested in all this and frequently interrupted with questions or comments. In fact, it was evident to me that he would have far preferred for me to stop when I was finished with my global assessment and then go away.

Instead I would start talking about the Philippines. I would tell him where I intended to go and what problems had arisen since my last visit. “Mr. President,” I would say, “I must tell you that you are not doing very well with this insurgency. If you want to prevail, you have to take some positive steps, and this is what I recommend that you do.” Then I would list my top four or five agenda items, which my staff in consultation with the American advisors in the Philippines and the U.S. ambassador in Manila had developed.

At this Marcos would invariably get a little testy. “I appreciate your thoughts, Admiral. I know your heart’s in the right place. But what’s of more significance, I think, is when you are-going to deliver those helicopters you’ve promised us.” Or those mortars or APCs. He always knew precisely how much equipment he was getting from the United States and what the delivery schedules were. “And, you’re also behind on your training money,” he’d continue, sidetracking the conversation even further. Marcos was not even remotely interested in advice about how to run his Army. (I had a certain amount of sympathy for his attitude; no doubt it is demeaning to have a foreigner insist on injecting himself into your business. But affairs had deteriorated to such an extent that I felt I had no choice, and of course the United States had a significant stake in the outcome of the insurgency and the health of the Philippine military.) Finally he would start discoursing about the time he spent as a guerilla during World War II, the clear implication being that he was the one who knew how to fight guerillas, while we had amply demonstrated in Vietnam that we did not.

He would also convey to me how well he knew the present situation. I know that young lieutenant colonel so-and-so down there, Marcos would say. I put him in that job. He’ll do just fine. You’re wrong, Admiral. We are doing well down there. I know, I talk to that lieutenant colonel every day. And the fact was that he did talk to his young officers every day by phone, often bypassing their commanders. One day while I was in his office he was on the phone with a junior officer. “You know,”

said Marcos, "I'm going to promote you. I wanted you to know that, and I want you to remember who promoted you. Your boss doesn't know about it yet, but I'm going to call him shortly and tell him." The whole system was personalized, and it was clear to me that nothing was going to change that; neither Ver nor Secretary of Defense Johnny Enrile had any desire to confront Marcos. I called on Enrile once just after he had returned from a trip to Mindanao—where his army was fighting for its life. He told me it was the first time he had been there in eight years.

Occasionally Marcos's conversation would veer off in other directions, discourses about the communists or ruminations on the stupidity of anyone running against him in future elections. "Nobody can run this country except me," he would say. "I'm the only one who knows how to save this country. It's nonsensical to think differently." Then he would turn to the evil and mistaken notion that he was corrupt, growing increasingly excited until his speech was little more than ranting and raving. I would report these exchanges with my assessment in some detail to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the secretary of State, and to the secretary of Defense.

On my final call to the Philippines in September 1985, I carefully prepared my litany of observations on the Philippine military and a set of recommendations. It was my intention to bear down hard. Even though I had not succeeded in breaking through Marcos's armor in almost three years, I was determined to make a valiant last effort. But he completely outflanked me. He canceled our appointment at the last moment, then called back to invite my wife, Shirley, and me to have breakfast with him and his wife Imelda the following morning.

When we arrived at the palace we were ushered into a sumptuous private dining room lushly carpeted and heavily decorated with artificial flowers. Enrile was also there, but with Imelda and Shirley present it was clearly not appropriate to embark on an argument about military matters. Besides, neither Shirley nor I could get a word in edgewise. On the wall behind us was an imposing painting of a young Marcos addressing the Philippine Parliament. The conversation immediately turned to "the old days," specifically to how Marcos had bested the forces of evil and corruption and had pulled the country back from disaster single-handedly. Enrile sat silent while this was going on, but Imelda found an opportunity to deplore the dirtiness of politics, announcing with a straight face that she was a "simple housewife" who did her best to stay away from that kind of thing. On the other hand, the press had publicly accused her of many deeds of which she had absolutely no knowledge, and so it was not altogether possible to keep her distance.

Imelda was articulate and had an attractive presence, but suddenly the breakfast was over and we were ushered out, as if Marcos had divined that despite the setting I might be about to break in with my usual unwelcome remarks. In saying goodbye, I told him that I did have a number of items I had wanted to discuss. Since time did not permit, I would put them in a personal letter to him. His demeanor did not change, but it seemed to me he was thinking, will this damned Admiral never quit harping at me.

Shortly afterward I sent him a written assessment of the Philippine Army and my view of what must be done if the military was to survive as a viable organization. I did this, emphasizing the need to decentralize authority so that the commanders in the field had some authority and latitude. Nobody in the military was doing a thing unless Marcos said they could do it, and the man was only working half days. The whole country was at a dead stop. But, predictably, this effort, like my previous ones, had no effect.

Over a period of time a few others were arriving at points of view similar to mine, in particular the American ambassador to Manila, Michael Armacost, and his successor, Stephen Bosworth. When Armacost left the Philippines, he returned to Washington as undersecretary of state for political affairs, so his voice had special significance. Secretary of State George Shultz had an open mind on the subject, and he listened with increasing responsiveness to Armacost's arguments, especially since Assistant Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was also drawing similar conclusions.

But the Marcos problem was undeniably complex, and not everyone was swayed. There was, after all, no assurance that with Marcos gone the Philippines would not descend into civil war, or that a new, even less palatable dictator might not emerge. Iran was a recent and painful example of the unexpected and potentially disastrous consequences that could attend the fall of an entrenched strongman. This was Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's basic position. "Who will replace him?" he wanted to know. "At least Marcos is ours. Before I espouse anything like what you are suggesting I want to know who is going to replace him."

I had no answer to that, but I was convinced that we were in a steadily deteriorating situation. The more time passed, the less chance there was for some form of democratic or even stable succession. "I don't know who is going to replace him," I argued. "But one thing I can say is that the longer we wait the more traumatic it's going to be, and the more problematic it's going to be. The Philippines are going to be lost to this insurgency. As long as Marcos is running the country there is no

way to reverse it. We cannot save him. We cannot make him healthy and enable him to do what is necessary to run that country. It just cannot be done.”

Weinberger was reluctant to accept that, as were many others in the administration. That line of thought did not become policy for many months, in fact until after I came back to Washington as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At that point I regularly expressed myself in policy councils, joining my voice with those of others who had arrived at the same conclusion.

The growing sentiment put President Reagan in a bind. He and Marcos were friends. They attended parties together and socialized. Imelda was friendly with Nancy. And Reagan, of course, was a member of the school that said you give your friends the benefit of the doubt. You stick with them to the end if you possibly can. But by now George Shultz had taken up the cudgel, encouraged by Armacost, Assistant Secretary for East Asia Paul Wolfowitz, State Department Director of Intelligence and Research Mort Abramowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage, and myself. Eventually the National Security Council discussions began to shift.

In reaction, the administration began sending envoys to see Marcos, which I considered a waste of time though probably a necessary part of the political minuet. Each of them encountered the same problem I had: they found themselves talking to an irrational man. The last envoy was Senator Paul Laxalt, an old political colleague and close friend of the president's. Reagan told Laxalt that he wanted him to undertake a delicate political mission to the Philippines and invited him to a National Security Planning Group meeting in the White House. In addition to the president, Vice President Bush was there, along with Weinberger, Shultz, Armacost, Wolfowitz, Armitage, National Security Adviser John Poindexter, and myself.

Looking at Laxalt, the president started the meeting off. “Paul, we have some serious problems in the Philippines. We've just got to get a handle on Marcos and I want you to see him. I trust your capability, Paul, and your diplomacy. It's a sensitive mission.” Laxalt looked suitably flattered by this assessment and it seemed to me that he did not completely hide his satisfaction. “Now we've been meeting,” Reagan went on, “and all these people know Marcos and have been working on this problem for quite some time. I'd like them to describe the situation for you, so you can get the sense of the table here and some idea of what we want you to do.”

Shultz then took up the discussion and made some comments along the same lines, indicating how severe the Marcos problem had become,

though never saying outright exactly what the nature of Laxalt's mission would be. Then they got to the working people, Armacost and the rest of us. When my turn came I told Laxalt that we had arrived at the point where there was no alternative but for Marcos to leave. "You've got to convey to him that he can come to the United States if he wants to, there are many other places he can go, but you've got to tell him that he has to step down."

As the discussion went forward, Laxalt's expression transformed itself. Reagan had invited him in to discuss a diplomatic mission, but this was turning into something quite different. By the time we stopped talking, his countenance had taken on a different cast altogether. "You want me," he said, "to go over there and tell a head of state that he's got to step down and get out of his own country?"

"Well, yes, Paul," said Reagan. "I guess that's what we're saying." Laxalt had not bargained for this and he was obviously appalled by the prospect. I had great sympathy for him; I was glad Reagan hadn't chosen me. In the end Laxalt did visit Marcos, but though he implied and hinted and made veiled allusions, I do not believe he ever delivered the explicit message.

It was not until after Marcos's attempt to subvert the presidential election in February 1985 that President Reagan finally made it clear that he would have to give up power. In the end, a deal was cut in which we guaranteed Marcos's safety and evacuation in return for his abdication. I always felt, then and afterward, that I had played a role in freeing the Philippines of Marcos and allowing the Aquino government to come in, although I am not sure that Mrs. Aquino ever looked at it quite that way.

### Notes

1. An early version of this chapter appeared as chapter 5 in William J. Crowe, 1993, *The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
2. The 2002 Unified Command Plan changed the Pacific Command Area of Responsibility (AOR). The AOR is defined as the Pacific Ocean from Antarctica at 092° W, north to 08° N, west to 112° W, northwest to 64° N, 169° W, north to 90° N, the Arctic Ocean west of 169° W and east of 100° E, the Indian Ocean east of 042° E (excluding the waters north of 05° S and west of 068° E and excluding the Seychelles); Japan; the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; the People's Republic of China, Mongolia, the countries of Southeast Asia and the southern Asian landmass to the western border of India; Madagascar, Antarctica, and all islands in its assigned water areas. In addition, normal operations other than air defense in Alaska.

3. The U.S.–New Zealand security relationship ended in the mid-1980s.
4. See *Freedom in the World: The Democracy Gap*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2002/essay2002.pdf>.
5. Prepared statement of Admiral Dennis C. Blair, U.S. Navy, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command before the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, March 28, 2001.
6. *Ibid.*
7. This prediction in fact came true in a surge of post-Marcos Philippine nationalism. The Philippine constitution was amended to include a clause that prevents foreign troops from engaging in combat in the Philippines. The U.S. naval base at Subic Bay was closed in 1992 and Clark Air Force Base closed in 1991. However, relations have steadily improved and are based on the 1951 Philippine–U.S. mutual defense treaty. Since 2002, about 1,000 U.S. military personnel are in the southern Philippines to train and advise the Philippine military in their fight against the Abu Sayyaf Group. Additionally, relations have been warming between the U.S. and the Philippines. President George W. Bush promised Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo a substantial increase in security assistance to nearly \$100 million for fiscal years 2001–02.
8. In May 1992, Ramos was elected president of the Philippines.

CHAPTER 5  
U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND:  
GENERAL WESLEY CLARK AND  
THE WAR FOR KOSOVO<sup>1</sup>

*Derek S. Reveron*

Historically the most important theater, U.S. European Command was responsible for preventing and defeating a Soviet invasion of Europe. Since the Soviet collapse, the Command transformed itself to deal with new contingencies in Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. At its helm is the dual-hatted American European commander who is also NATO's supreme allied commander. Throughout its history, the European commander always served as a diplomat to maintain consensus within NATO against the Soviet Union. With the Soviet threat gone, the commander continues to build consensus to shape Alliance policy in the absence of an overwhelming threat.

Tragedy in the Balkans provided the European commander the impetus to restructure the European Command and to test NATO's new strategic concept. In 1999, the new structure and strategy were tested when NATO attacked Yugoslavia. The air strikes highlighted the difficulties military commanders face in multinational settings. In particular, the supreme allied commander was confronted with two interrelated missions: to compel Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to submit and to maintain diplomatic support for the air operation. This chapter provides an analysis of the diplomatic aspects of being the European commander, addresses the difficulties of coalition warfare, and highlights the steps taken by General Wesley K. Clark to maintain the NATO Alliance while prosecuting an air campaign against Yugoslavia.



### Historical Significance

When World War II ended, General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, became the European Command. The purpose of the reorganization was "... to place in the hands of a single commander responsibility for the conduct of military operations of the land, naval and air forces."<sup>2</sup> Operations were aimed at defeating a Soviet invasion of Europe. Although the European Command was planned as a joint command, it did not become one until recently. Always leading the defense against the Soviet Union was an Army general.<sup>3</sup>

In 1951, the position of the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) was created, and Air Force, Navy, and Army forces were unified under a single commander. Then, the mission included: providing combat-ready forces to support U.S. commitments to NATO, planning military operations, administering military assistance programs (including those in the Middle East), and negotiating basing rights throughout the region. With U.S. and NATO troops under his command, the European commander was responsible for not only shoring up Western defenses against a very large Soviet military, but also ensuring unity among European countries on defense issues. From its outset, the position of European commander was diplomatic in nature.

#### *An International Command*

Until 1949, the commander of the European Command was responsible for administering Germany, but as the Soviet threat became clear, the European Command quickly evolved into an operational headquarters designed to deter and, if necessary, defeat a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Headquartered at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany, the European Command emphasized land warfare. At its peak, over 300,000 soldiers were stationed in Europe, primarily in Germany.

With the U.S. military headquarters located in Germany, and NATO Headquarters located in France (now Belgium), General Eisenhower invested much power in his deputy located in Germany. General Eisenhower informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "A matter of great importance will be the rank, previous experience and ability of the officer who will be selected as my Deputy. Since, under my concept, this officer will have a maximum of delegated authority... consulting me only on matters of fundamental policy and critical problems, it is essential that

he be of four-star rank . . .”<sup>4</sup> Today, the deputy commander of the European Command is the senior officer in Germany and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the command, while the European commander is located in Belgium at NATO’s military headquarters where he principally serves as NATO’s commander. In this position, diplomatic skills are a must to deal with all NATO countries. To assist him, he has an international staff with a deputy, typically British, and a chief of staff, typically German.

### *A Changed World*

When the Cold War ended, the European Command was reconfigured to reflect new global realities and a more proactive U.S. foreign policy. U.S. forces in Europe declined from 360,000 to about 120,000, and a non-Army officer finally became commander of the European Command in 2000. When Marine Corps General Jones assumed command in 2003, it became clear that the Army no longer “owns” the European Command and the position is truly joint. Further, the change in tradition highlights that the Command’s emphasis on land warfare has given way to expeditionary warfare, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement operations. The change reflects the thinking of U.S. national planners who see that “future strategic challenges may include asymmetrical conflicts, terrorism with no definable state roots, and ethnic, religious and separatist movements.”<sup>5</sup> In his capacity as both American and NATO commander, the U.S. four-star is assigned multiple missions: to support and to advance U.S. interests and policies throughout the area of responsibility (AOR), to provide combat-ready land, maritime, and air forces to Allied Command Europe, and to conduct operations unilaterally or in concert with coalition partners.<sup>6</sup>

### *Area of Responsibility*

The AOR of the U.S. European Command covers the entire continent of Europe (including all of Russia, the Caspian Sea, and Greenland), the Caucasus countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, and Israel), and all of Africa except Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, and the Horn countries of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti.<sup>7</sup> Naval forces operate in three oceans (Atlantic, Arctic, and Indian), the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, and surrounding waters, while land forces can operate on three continents (Europe, Africa, and Antarctica).

The addition of Russia to the European Command became effective on October 1, 2002 and represents a departure from previous Defense Department (DOD) policy, which left Russia unassigned. Previously the European Command and the Pacific Command monitored Russia at the operational level and Strategic Command, located in Nebraska, monitored it at the strategic level.<sup>8</sup> Now that Russia is a part of the European Command's geographic territorial responsibility, the United States can more fully engage Russia through NATO and through bilateral military activities. The assignment of Russia to the European Command also reflects a significant change in Russia's status from enemy to partner. Evidenced by this is an official Russian military presence at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe in Mons, NATO subordinate commands throughout Europe, and a NATO office in Moscow.

#### *U.S. Interests in the European Command*

Though the Soviet Union disappeared in 1991, the European Command did not. In fact, the operational tempo within the European Command increased dramatically after 1991, and the European Command's importance increased dramatically as NATO transformed itself in the mid-1990s. At the heart of U.S. interests in theater is stability. With a wider Balkan war threatening Europe, NATO launched its first offensive strikes in 1995 when it attacked Serb targets in Bosnia-Herzegovina for ten days. Four years later, NATO attacked Serbia with voracity for over 78 days to prevent Balkan instability and to protect the Kosovar Albanians. The fear of genocide and two million refugees motivated European countries to intervene in Kosovo. As of 2003, NATO is deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina as SFOR, in Serbia (Kosovo) as KFOR, and Afghanistan as ISAF.

The European Command provides a forward U.S. presence in Europe. With strike platforms, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, amphibious units, and Special Forces, the European Command can conduct timely and effective military operations. Since 1991, the European Command has planned and executed over 80 operations, the longest being Operation Northern Watch (enforcement of the Iraqi no-fly zone), and the most intense being Operation Allied Force (the defense of Kosovar Albanians).<sup>9</sup> In 2003, the European Command provided combat units to support the invasion of Iraq.

European Command forces serve in the Balkans in support of NATO peace operations, patrol the eastern Mediterranean, and support the war on terrorism throughout the theater. Additionally, the U.S.

European Command is executing a strategy of regional engagement focused on shaping the international security environment and preventing conflict. In 1997, former European Command commander, General Wesley K. Clark, testified to the Senate that part of the European Command's mission is to "promote stability, democratization, military professionalism, and closer relationships with NATO in the nations of Central Europe and the New Independent States."<sup>10</sup>

Further, with European disagreement on the 2003 war against Iraq, the European commander found himself in a position to restore relations with France and Germany. General James L. Jones emphasized,

It is my hope that once this moment passes traditional dialogue will resume and we'll get on with the important business of contributing to our common defense and for the Alliance in a very thoughtful way and I think hopefully when this moment passes that will recede in the distance. But I have to agree with you that the potential for people to come to different conclusions is probably there. I will do everything I can to dissuade them because that's not a basis from which we're operating. [There can be no rift in the Alliance.]<sup>11</sup>

The mission highlighted by Clark and Jones is very different from traditional military planning and emphasizes the diplomatic role the military plays in international relations.

### *Mission*

Though there is no longer an enemy in the European Command, the mission remains fundamentally the same and is composed of four tasks. First, the European Command seeks to assure allies and friends through a visible military presence in the region. American presence through military force commitments illustrates to America's friends and allies that Europe matters to the United States. To provide presence, U.S. naval forces deploy to the Mediterranean and train with European navies. Launched from a Turkish base, U.S. aircraft flew along with British aircraft enforcing U.N. resolutions imposed on Iraq. And the U.S. Army patrols Bosnia alongside allied soldiers, conducts combined training exercises with NATO ground forces, and conducts de-mining operations in Kosovo with Partnership for Peace countries.

These operations necessitate diplomatic sensitivity by the European commander. For example, Operation Northern Watch (ONW) was a Combined Task Force (CTF) charged with enforcing the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq and monitoring the Iraqi military. During its lifetime (1997–2003), more than 40,000 troops rotated

through the Turkish base at Incirlik to ensure Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council resolutions 678, 687, and 688. Because of the international nature of the mission, the European commander had to maintain good relations with the United Kingdom and Turkey. Though the European commander led the operation, it was headquartered at a Turkish airbase, and the operation was codirected by an American general and a Turkish general.

Operation Northern Watch highlights the necessity for America's viceroys to be not only mindful of international politics, but be skilled in practicing diplomacy. The European commander was required to enforce international law determined by the United Nations, to fly with an ally (the British) from a third country (Turkey), and be subject to Turkish national concerns regarding Iraq. To make sure the operation was successful, he not only had to satisfy political concerns in three countries (the United States, United Kingdom, and Turkey), but also had to be responsive to 15 members of the UN Security Council who could end the operation. In fact, the operation eventually fell victim to international politics when Turkey terminated Operation Northern Watch when the American offensive began against Iraq on March 21, 2003. Though Turkey denied the United States and the United Kingdom access to Turkish bases for an invasion of Iraq, it did allow the use of Turkish airspace for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The second component of the European Command's mission is to dissuade potential adversaries. With the Soviet Union gone and with strong relations with Russia, Europe does not face a credible continental conventional threat. Instead, U.S. presence in Europe provides a forward location from which to operate, to support peacekeeping, to train foreign militaries, and to deter potential enemies. Before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, coalition forces occasionally dropped leaflets near Iraqi forces. The message on the front of the leaflets warned the Iraqi military, "Before you engage coalition aircraft, think about the consequences." The back of the leaflets read, "Think about your family. Do what you must to survive." Through such psychological campaigns, the United States hoped to undermine the morale of the Iraqi military. With little resistance encountered in the war against Iraq, the leaflets apparently worked.

The third mission is to counter coercion. With a ballistic missile threat facing Europe from the Middle East, the European Command still prepares for strategic attack. In 2003, Patriot antimissile batteries deployed to Turkey to counter Iraqi attempts to target Turkey with ballistic missiles.

Finally, if necessary, the European Command trains to defeat any adversary in its AOR. Supporting this mission are about 120,000 military personnel or eight percent of the total uniformed military. The majority of the forces assigned to the European Command are Army, while the Air Force represents about a quarter, and the Navy and Marine Corps only represent 15 percent of the forces assigned.<sup>12</sup> In the war against Iraq, the European Command wanted to establish a northern front through Turkey. General James L. Jones, European commander at the time, actively engaged Turkey for several months to work out the details for basing in southern Turkey. In spite of that effort, the Turkish Parliament twice voted “no” to the request for basing. Instead of using Turkey, forces were rerouted to Kuwait, so no northern front from Turkey was established.

The U.S. presence in Europe is synonymous with NATO and American military activities are conducted in concert with allies and partners. For example, U.S. enforcement of the northern no-fly zone in Iraq could not have been accomplished without Turkish support. Turkey allowed the United States to use its bases and its airspace. Additionally, non-NATO members have contributed personnel and equipment to the fight against terrorism. Georgia, for example, hosts American forces to help the Georgian military develop antiterrorism capabilities. The program in Georgia includes classroom staff training, as well as tactical instruction. Additionally, military equipment will be transferred to Georgia where service members participate in “Georgia Train and Equip.” This program not only had short-term implications for antiterrorism efforts, but can also provide a stabilizing force in a country in a state of civil war for the last decade.

### *Military Exercises*

For the United States to benefit from allies’ contributions, the European commander must ensure interoperability and policy congruity. To do this, the European Command annually sponsors land, sea, and air exercises. In 2002, the European Command sponsored the thirtieth annual maritime exercise Baltic operations (BALTOPS) in the Baltic Sea. In this exercise, intended to improve interoperability with allied and Partnership for Peace (PfP) members, 12 countries’ navies conducted a peace support operation at sea including exercises in gunnery, replenishment-at-sea, undersea warfare, radar tracking, mine countermeasures, seamanship, search and rescue, maritime interdiction operations, and scenarios dealing with potential real world crises. In addition to the exercises, the European Command also administers foreign military sales, conducts

combined training exercises, and offers military education programs. Through contact with international militaries, the United States influences how other militaries are structured, train, and fight. Further, through military-to-military relations, the European Command affects regional stability. For example, historical enemies Greece and Turkey, both NATO members, are included in Mediterranean military exercises. A former NATO Southern commander observed, “I was convinced that if we ever had been confronted with Soviet and Warsaw Pact aggression much of the Greek-Turkish animosity would have disappeared—at least temporarily.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, NATO inclusion of Greece and Turkey allows both governments to focus on common threats and resolve differences through international organizations like NATO.

### *Fighting Terrorism*

After September 11, the European Command in cooperation with Central Command played a significant role in operations associated with the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. The European Command not only provided personnel and logistics, but also prepositioned equipment that supported operations in remote locations. A European Command Air Force base served as a vital staging base for U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) aircraft executing humanitarian assistance through airdrop missions in Afghanistan. Medical facilities in Europe provided care to soldiers wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. A NATO air base in Incirlik, Turkey also played a critical role through forward-based KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft. Additionally, Incirlik served as a logistics hub for the Central Command.

The European Command also coordinated activities of NATO allies in the war on terrorism. Though most people expected the United States to come to the aid of Europe if the Soviet Union attacked it, it is ironic that the first time that NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty was to send forces to help secure American skies. With Article 5 invoked, all 19 NATO members acknowledged that an attack on the United States was perceived as an attack on all 19 members.<sup>14</sup> In response, NATO Airborne Early Warning aircraft patrolled the skies over North America, replacing the U.S. Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) that deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S.-led military operation against terrorist targets in Afghanistan. NATO planes flew more than 350 sorties and logged more than 4,300 flight hours.

Finally, NATO members provide the majority of ground forces for the 5,000-member International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in

Kabul. Since ISAF deployed in January 2002, it has been under the command of NATO members. By providing this stabilization force for Afghanistan, NATO members facilitate reconstruction efforts, but also free American forces for other military operations.

### *Tools of Diplomacy*

As the senior U.S. military officer responsible for Europe, most of Africa, and parts of the Middle East, the European commander has several diplomatic tools at his disposal. Since foreign military leaders play prominent roles in many of the world's countries, it is convenient for the European Command to develop professional relationships with leaders of foreign militaries. At the foundation of these professional relationships is defense cooperation and security assistance. These programs promote interoperability with American forces and help to build professional and capable militaries in friendly and allied nations. To do this, European Command maintains 40 Offices of Defense Cooperation and partners with U.S. embassies throughout the Theater to promote an international coalition capable of fighting terrorism. Specifically, the Offices of Defense Cooperation represent the U.S. European Command and are responsible for coordinating security assistance activities and defense cooperation programs with foreign militaries.

The U.S. European Command supports and maintains active bilateral and multilateral relationships across Europe and the post-Soviet region. Relations with Russia are particularly important to the European Command. General Jones remarked "That Russia could play an important part of that development is beyond question and what we were seeking here is a partnership and we will make sure that we communicate well and capably so there are no surprises with the Russians and that we live up to the spirit of the agreement when NATO expanded to the east."<sup>15</sup>

### The Joint Contact Team Program

Relations are managed through the Joint Contact Team Program that has managed successful engagement programs over the past nine years. The Joint Contact Teams help host nations' militaries become familiar with the culture of the U.S. military, expose other militaries to democracy and civilian control of the military, and train other militaries to U.S. standards. Furthering these efforts is NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.



NATO's PfP program continues to meet its goal of deepening interaction between Western and Eastern Europe. PfP provides consultation mechanisms for participants who feel threatened, assists countries' efforts to democratize, and prepares countries for possible NATO membership. At a minimum, PfP provides a framework for the United States to cooperate with new friends. By including partner nations in NATO exercises, PfP increases coalition interoperability, which allows countries to contribute to NATO operations in the Balkans and provide the structure for regional security initiatives. In 2002, 30 PfP countries provided troops in the Balkans. The greater the contribution from partner countries, the fewer resources the U.S. must provide. In Kosovo, for example, only 16 percent of the force is American.

### Foreign Military Financing

Underlying defense cooperation is foreign military financing. The Foreign Military Financing Program (FMF) provides grants and loans to help countries purchase U.S.-produced weapons, defense equipment, defense services, and military training. The State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs sets policy for the FMF program, while the DOD manages it on a day-to-day basis. The FMF assists nations with the means to acquire U.S. military goods, services, and training. Additionally, FMF also provides access to U.S. expertise in defense restructuring and management. The programs are designed to promote interoperability and to provide resources for modernizing military forces. Particularly, the European Command has greatly influenced the transformation of militaries in European and African countries. In 2000, the European Command helped train five Nigerian battalions, one Ghanaian battalion, and one Senegalese battalion in order to participate in UN operations in Sierra Leone.

### Foreign Military Sales

Foreign Military Sales facilitates the acquisition of American-made weapons. In fiscal year (FY) 2001, \$4.5 billion of American weapons were sold to countries in the European Command. American weapons serve as carrots that the European Command provides to countries within the region. When other countries field American-made weapons, allied and coalition military actions are eased. A good example of this is SFOR, where the U.S. component comprises only 20 percent of the total force. But an American general commands the entire force of 20,000, of which nearly one-third are from non-NATO countries. Using NATO standards and American equipment, international forces can easily integrate.

### International Military Education and Training

Another tool available to the European commander to influence other countries is International Military Education and Training (IMET). The European commander testified in 2002, "IMET is perhaps our greatest tool for promoting long-term beneficial change in foreign militaries, as foreign military and civilian leaders encounter firsthand the American civil-military culture."<sup>16</sup> IMET focuses on professional development, the role of the military in a democratic society, and English language training. In FY01, the program trained almost 1,450 military and civilian international students in U.S. military schools and about 2,000 more through the mobile training program. In Sub-Saharan Africa, IMET is particularly important as it provides educational opportunities that emphasize and reinforce civilian control of the military, which contributes to domestic stability.

To implement military education programs, the European Command created several regional centers for security studies. The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies focuses on regional security cooperation efforts in Western and Central Europe as well as Eurasia. A jointly funded U.S. and German venture, the Center strengthens security cooperation among European nations and serves as an indispensable institution for bilateral and multilateral activities, and military and civilian exchanges throughout the region. The Marshall Center is an important part of U.S. interaction with countries in the region. Over 6,000 military and civilian leaders from North America, Europe and Eurasia have participated in Marshall Center programs since 1994. To date, the Center's largest participating country is Russia (147 individuals), with Romania second (127), and Ukraine third (125). As a result, the Center has helped countries develop national security strategy documents, restructure crisis management programs, improve their defense management resource processes, balance military expenditures, and undertake responsible defense reforms. Marshall Center graduates have moved into influential positions within their defense establishments. Marshall Center alumni include over 50 ministers/deputy ministers of Defense, chiefs/deputy chiefs of Defense, cabinet officials, parliamentarians, ambassadors, and flag and general officers.

Building on the success of the Marshall Center, the European commander established the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) in December 1999 to provide programs designed to promote good governance and democratic values in the African defense and security sectors. However, the Center conducted only two seminars in FY01, and it does not have a permanent site on the African continent. In addition

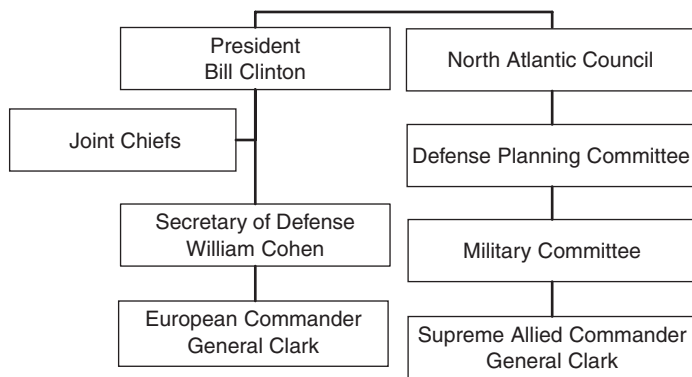
to the center, the European Command created the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) to enhance the training and operational capabilities of African militaries for increased participation in multinational humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations. The program is managed jointly by the Department of State and the DOD, but the European Command is the executive agent for all military training. ACRI has trained militaries in eight African nations to date. The final regional cooperation center is the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA CSS). Located at the National Defense University in Washington, NESA CSS conducts executive-level seminars for military officers and leaders from Near East and South Asian countries. Through these programs, American values are presented to leaders in developing countries.

#### State Partnership Program

A final tool available to the European commander is the State Partnership Program. Under the program, the European commander directs state national guard forces to cooperate with militaries within the European command. Developed by the National Guard Bureau in 1993, the program has five objectives: to demonstrate military subordination to civilian authorities, to demonstrate military support to civilian authorities, to assist in instilling democratic values, to foster open markets, and to promote human rights and American values. Through the program, American states partner with other countries; Illinois and Poland are partners, Utah and Belarus are partners, and Vermont and the Republic of Macedonia are partners. In 1998, the Vermont National Guard participated in 18 events that covered equipment maintenance, environmental protection measures, and medical specialty exchange information. In 1999, the Vermont National Guard demonstrated to the Macedonians the important role women play in the U.S. military.

#### *Dual Command*

The 1986 Goldwater–Nichols Act attempted to clarify the chain of command of the U.S. military establishment. By law, the Joint Chiefs are the president's advisors on U.S. military matters. But there is lack of clarity regarding the different responsibilities American officers have in NATO positions. The American leading the U.S. European Command is also NATO's supreme allied commander. Simultaneously, the same person is responsible to the U.S. secretary of Defense and the heads of state of all NATO countries. The European commander wearing his



*Figure 5.1* Duality of the U.S. European Command.

*Source:* Based on figure 1-17 in JSFC PUB 1.

NATO hat can speak directly to the president of the United States through the North Atlantic Council (NAC; see figure 5.1). This command relationship was important to General Clark during 1998–99, when he used both sides of his chain of command to promote an aggressive NATO policy against Yugoslavia. He wrote, “I always retained the authority as Supreme Allied Commander to speak directly to the head of any NATO government, including the President of the United States. I considered doing so several times. This was a trump card that I knew I could use to get the ground force briefing to the President at the appropriate moment.”<sup>17</sup>

Though he did not have to use his trump card, wearing his NATO hat, he spoke directly to a supportive Secretary of State Madeline Albright to build political support within the Clinton administration. Wearing his American hat, however, he reported to an unenthusiastic Secretary of Defense William Cohen on military force requests such as an Apache attack helicopter squadron. The duality of the position resulted in some friction between General Clark and Secretary Cohen, ultimately leading to General Clark’s retirement.

### The European Commander During War: Operation Allied Force<sup>18</sup>

The diplomatic nature of a geographic combatant commander is easily observed during wartime. When all focus should be on fighting the

enemy, combatant commanders increasingly find themselves in diplomatic positions. General Clark found himself in this position when Operation Allied Force commenced on March 24, 1999. The attack came after several months of negotiation that culminated in failure at Rambouillet, France. With its second foray into the Balkans, NATO launched an impressive air campaign over 78 days. During the air campaign, NATO aircraft flew approximately 38,000 combat missions, 23,000 of which were strike missions. Throughout the air campaign, NATO's commander, General Clark, discovered the difficulties of coalition warfare. To maintain the alliance, General Clark pursued a deliberate strategy that not only pushed the political limits of NATO members at the strategic level, but also involved NATO diplomats in tactical decisions.

The importance of maintaining the alliance in the face of Serb resolve was more critical when Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic did not sue for peace as expected after three days of attack. When initial strikes did not force Milosevic to quit, General Clark used his diplomatic skills to build support for sustained operations. Clark said, "I talked to everybody. I talked to diplomats, NATO political leaders, national political leaders, and national chiefs of defense. There was a constant round of telephone calls, pushing and shoving and bargaining and cajoling, trying to raise the threshold for NATO attacks."<sup>19</sup> Without General Clark's diplomacy, it is unlikely that NATO could sustain 78 days of support for air operations. Thus, Clark fought two wars: an offensive one against Milosevic, and a defensive war against NATO critics.

### *A NATO Operation*

To ensure that the United States would be unopposed in the international community, it asserted that UN Security Council Resolution 1203 gave NATO the necessary authority to use military force in certain circumstances.<sup>20</sup> Leading this effort was NATO's commander, the American General Wesley Clark. Though General Clark was mindful of potential Russian or Chinese interference, he also did not want to repeat the very bruising experience of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia during the 1990s, in which hundreds of European soldiers were held captive as human shields and the limited force could not prevent genocide.<sup>21</sup> Further, General Clark did not think that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was the right organization either. According to General Clark, "the OSCE

mission looked like it was going to place unarmed people at risk, and in addition, it was going to place people on the ground whose very presence would enable them to be taken hostage and, therefore, checkmate the air threat.”<sup>22</sup> With a NATO force under his command, there would be no opportunity for the Serbs to repeat actions against UNPROFOR by taking peace monitors hostage again. The lesson learned from the 1995 Bosnia intervention was to use air power to coerce Milosevic to concede to diplomatic pressure.

In 1999, the diplomatic goal was to compel certain standards of behavior by Yugoslavia. With the threat of 1.8 million Kosovar Albanian refugees, General Clark thought NATO’s threat would deter Milosevic from creating a humanitarian disaster. As NATO’s military commander, Clark had the ability to solicit air contributions from NATO’s 19 members. With such an arsenal at his disposal and political prohibitions against a land invasion of Serbia, Clark exclusively relied on air power to get Milosevic to acquiesce to NATO’s demands for Kosovo. When the threat did not result in Serb concessions, Clark was faced with the task of planning and managing an air campaign to convince Milosevic to accept NATO’s demands. Reluctant allies complicated this process. “For Europe, Operation Allied Force was a significant and pressing conflict. For some of my American colleagues and superiors in uniform, it was at times, a distant and troublesome distraction.”<sup>23</sup>

### *Reluctant Allies*

Allied Force illustrates the importance of the European commander as a diplomat. Not only are there capability differences among air forces, but also there are partners in NATO with different policy agendas. The British were the most vocal in using force, while the Greeks held strong misgivings for the operation. Strobe Talbott, the American deputy secretary of State at the time said, “there would have been increasing difficulty within the alliance in preserving the solidarity and the resolve of the alliance” had the Serbian leader not conceded defeat on June 3, 1999.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the conflict, several allies reluctantly supported the operation, but their concern for the humanitarian situation in Kosovo prevented them from stopping the operation through the NAC in Brussels. To allay concerns and shore up support, General Clark was instrumental to maintaining the alliance. He did this not by silencing opposition, but by encouraging skeptics to pursue their own national agendas and including a broad array of individuals in the planning process.

## Greece

Given Greece's strategic position, only 100 miles away from Kosovo, use of Greek ports and airspace was important to the operation. However, Greek public opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to NATO's actions against Serbia. Over 90 percent of Greeks opposed NATO air strikes because of a common history of fighting the Ottomans and a common religion in orthodoxy. Publicly, the Greek government supported NATO's actions and did not oppose the operation. Underlying its tacit approval against its public's wishes was the government's goal of being a part of Europe. Costas Simitris, the Greek prime minister said, "we are both a Balkan country and a member nation of the European Union," and "We have tried for years to participate in European unification. We are only a breath away from achieving it. We have no right to endanger this."<sup>25</sup> In other words, Greece was fundamentally against the operation, but it would not use its power within NATO to end it. Greece needed to remain allied with Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

From a military perspective, Greek support of the operation was limited to providing access to an airfield on Crete and port facilities at Thessaloniki. Greece opposed Serb military operations in Kosovo, but it did not militarily participate in Allied Force, and even sent medical supplies to Serbia during the conflict. To appease Greek public opinion, the Greek government rescinded its offer to accept 10,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees and reinforced its northern border to prevent illegal entry into the country. After the first day of the air attack, Greek diplomats engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Belgrade and other European capitals that culminated in a Serb cease-fire offer in observance of Orthodox Easter. Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis called the proposal "a first step" for a political dialogue with Yugoslavia, but NATO diplomats rejected the offer as a ploy and the air campaign continued. General Clark was adamant that a bombing pause without Serb commitment to a NATO presence in Kosovo would undermine further negotiations. Clark reasoned that once the bombing stopped, it would be very difficult to start it again. Clark told his British Deputy Rupert Smith and German Chief of Staff Dieter Stockman:

When you pause, people believe you've lost faith in what you're doing. When you want to restart, those that didn't believe in the bombing in the first place are still opposed, and accuse you of failure, not taking advantage of the bombing pause to achieve peace, while those who would have supported you are now confused that you seem uncertain about whether to renew the strikes. And from the military side, the pause lets the enemy recover, reset his defenses, and continue the ethnic cleansing unimpeded.<sup>26</sup>

With this in mind, NATO did not authorize a cease-fire, but intensified the air campaign.

### Germany

Like Greece, Germany opposed Serb actions in Kosovo, but Germany's Nazi past compelled it to participate in NATO attacks. German Defense Minister Scharping summarized German support of the NATO operation, "It [Serb action] is a systematic extermination, which reminds in a terrible way of what happened and was carried under Germany's name . . . at the start of World War II and during that entire war in places like Poland."<sup>27</sup> Because Milosevic was likened to Hitler, and Serb counterinsurgency operations were likened to Nazi genocide, it was easy for Germany to oppose Serb actions. However, pacifist elements in the German government objected to the use of force. German Foreign Minister Joschke Fischer, senior member of the peace-loving Green Party, had to convince his party supporters that pacifism had to be discarded in the face of genocide and ethnic cleansing. But support only went so far. When, after eight weeks of bombing, the United Kingdom discussed ground force options, Germany objected. German Chancellor Schroeder said, "at this point when the NATO strategy is yielding fruits, I do not think it would be wise to change the strategy one way or another—that is to say, either by sending ground troops or by bilateral cease-fires."<sup>28</sup> (It took another four weeks of bombing before a cease-fire was concluded.)

### Italy

While German and Greek diplomats worked to find a peaceful solution, pressure also came from Italy. Given its strategic location and heavy presence of American military resources, Italy was vital to the air campaign's logistics. Roughly 90 percent of NATO sorties took off from Italian territory. Despite its important role, Italian support for the operation was mixed. In May, the Italian Parliament passed a resolution calling for the government to work to suspend NATO's bombing, and Prime Minister D'Alema supported a cease-fire to allow negotiations within the UN Security Council. Again, NATO's commander placed the requirement that a cease-fire be initiated only after a comprehensive agreement was signed and Serb forces had withdrawn from Kosovo.

### Hungary

The enthusiasm of NATO's newest member, Hungary, quickly diminished when the air campaign commenced. Concerned about the



300,000 ethnic Hungarians in the Vojvodina, a northern province in Serbia, Hungarian diplomats requested that the region be spared from NATO attack.<sup>29</sup> Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi reminded NATO that his country has been placed in the agonizing position of going to war against fellow Hungarians.<sup>30</sup> In spite of these concerns, Hungary supported the operation in a limited way. As the only NATO member bordering Yugoslavia, Hungary was critical for air flight clearance and provided basing in the campaign's second month for 24 American attack aircraft in Tazsar and refueling aircraft in Budapest. However, Hungary declared early in the air campaign that it would not allow its territory to be used for a land invasion of Serbia. This statement limited NATO ground planning options to entry through Macedonia and Albania.

With reluctant allies, the operation was always threatened with termination. General Clark summed up the difficulties he faced:

There was a lot of concern among some in the alliance that we might be forced to accept a bombing pause. So one of my responsibilities was to argue against the bombing pause. It would have given the Serbs a chance to recover their defense system. It would have given them a chance to continue the ethnic cleansing campaign on the ground. And it would have made Western political leaders and NATO appear as though we didn't really have a strategy and a program to move ahead. And we couldn't afford any of that—we had to move forward in this campaign. And that position prevailed.<sup>31</sup>

### The United States

General Clark not only faced a lack of enthusiasm from America's NATO allies, but from the United States itself. Clark commented in his 2001 book,

First, the Kosovo operation really did pose significant policy and doctrinal problems for the Joint Chiefs . . . Second, the Services naturally fought to restrict an operation that threatened their longer-term health by disrupting modernization and consuming "ready" units . . . Third, Secretary Cohen had a continuing strong opposition to planning and preparing a ground operation.<sup>32</sup>

Very early in the conflict, President Clinton declared that the United States was only committed to a casualty-free war. With much caution, the United States imposed a target-by-target approval process. Concerned about collateral damage, the Pentagon reserved veto authority to withhold strikes that NATO political leaders approved. This not

only complicated the targeting process, but also resulted in delaying the attack. Clark lamented over this process:

By Tuesday morning, I had learned that the Joint Staff in Washington had apparently disapproved our requests to go after some of the bridge targets that should have been approved as part of the NATO phase II package. There were other targets disapproved as well, including some petroleum storage locations in Kosovo. My staff and I believed that the Joint Staff estimates of collateral damage simply had not been updated, making the bridge targets look much more risky to innocent civilians than we believed to be the case. We would lose at least another day, and more hours of our time, sorting it out.<sup>33</sup>

Further, President Clinton ruled out the use of ground forces. The pressure against ground troops came from within the Pentagon and the Congress. On April 27, 1999, Representative Tillie Fowler introduced House Resolution 1569 “to prohibit the use of funds appropriated to the Department of Defense from being used for the deployment of ground elements of the United States Armed Forces in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia unless that deployment is specifically authorized by law.” The measure did not make it out of the committee for a floor vote, but the resolution articulated growing concern for U.S.-involvement in Yugoslavia. Two House votes the next day further highlight congressional ambivalence for the war. The first vote on House Resolution 151, which would require the president to cease air operations against Yugoslavia, failed 139 in favor to 290 against. With that vote, Congress seemed to have given President Clinton the okay to continue the air operations. However, the same day, the House refused to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 21, which would directly authorize the president to conduct air operations against Yugoslavia. The vote ended in a tie of 213 in favor and 213 against. With almost one-third of the House against the air war evidenced by the first vote on House Resolution 151, and half the House unwilling to grant the president the authority to wage war evidenced by the second vote on Senate Concurrent Resolution 21, the Clinton administration knew that it would be a tough fight on Capitol Hill to gain approval for a ground force option.

Without a ground option, President Clinton and other Alliance leaders indirectly told Milosevic that his way out was to endure aerial bombardment. According to the U.K. House of Commons Defence Committee “Lessons of Kosovo” report, “public pronouncements made throughout 1998 and well into 1999” discounting “a forced entry

ground option as part of [NATO's] military strategy, were in military terms a serious error of judgment."<sup>34</sup> Because of this, Milosevic hoped NATO would make enough mistakes to undermine diplomatic support for the air campaign. Clark's task was to ensure no mistakes were made.

### *Precision Warfare*

Faced with the diplomatic prerequisite of casualty-free warfare, General Clark prevented alliance decay by reducing the possibility of collateral damage and civilian casualties. According to Clark, given the memories of World War II bombings that had high levels of civilian casualties, "We had to convince them [Europeans] of the validity of the targets, the accuracy of the delivery systems, the skill and courage of the airmen, and their ability to deliver weapons with pinpoint accuracy."<sup>35</sup> Targets were studied to determine the effects on nearby civilian facilities. If the risk was too great for collateral damage, the target was avoided or was attacked with a very precise weapon. Lord George Robertson stated, "a balance had to be struck between the risks taken, and the likely results."<sup>36</sup> Acting according to this principle, attacks were explicitly timed to avoid the risk of casualties. For example, military headquarters were attacked after working hours to minimize casualties. The result, in some critics' eyes, was the destruction of empty buildings.

To reduce the chance for mistakes, there was a very high use of precision-guided munitions or PGMs (8,500 out of 25,000 or 34 percent) compared to just 7 percent during Desert Storm.<sup>37</sup> Former Secretary of Defense Cohen called it "the most precise application of air power in history."<sup>38</sup> Cruise missiles (TLAM and CALCM) were used extensively during the first few days of the conflict. Tomahawk cruise missiles were used against almost 20 percent of all the targets attacked, including almost half the headquarters facilities, almost half of the electrical and power facilities, and one-quarter of the petroleum and oil facilities.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the stealth B-2 bomber made its wartime debut with the delivery of the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) that was very effective for two reasons. First, the B-2 stealth bomber delivered it, which reduced the likelihood of aircraft casualty. Second, the all-weather, GPS-guided weapon was extremely accurate against fixed targets. The weapon is not affected by cloud cover and can be dropped from a higher altitude than other types of weapons. A total of 45 B-2 sorties delivered 656 weapons. JDAM was so preferred that it was expended at its production rate. As a testament to accuracy, of the 23,000 weapons dropped, there were fewer than 20 collateral damage incidents. With high use of precise modern weapons, NATO limited its potential for mistakes and did not

give Milosevic material for his propaganda campaign in Serbia. However, if mistakes were made, targeting became more conservative.

Following an attack on a rail bridge that resulted in the loss of a passenger train, the air campaign commander, General Michael Short, changed the tactics against bridges. He later testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "the guidance for attacking bridges in the future was: You will no longer attack bridges in daylight, you will no longer attack bridges on weekends or market days or holidays. In fact, you will only attack bridges between 10 o'clock at night and 4 o'clock in the morning."<sup>40</sup> The concern was not only to prevent civilian casualties, but also to preserve the unity of the Alliance. If civilian casualties increased, General Short feared that targeting would be severely restricted by NATO's ambassadors.

In addition to reducing the risk of killing civilians, the bulk of NATO's effort against tactical targets was aimed at fielded forces, heavy weapons, and military vehicles and formations in Kosovo and southern Serbia. If the air campaign was to prevent ethnic cleansing, it had to destroy or limit the Serb forces in Kosovo. Many of these targets were highly mobile and hard to locate, especially during the poor weather of the early phase of the campaign. Strikes were also complicated by the Serb use of civilian homes and buildings to hide weapons and vehicles, the intermixing of military vehicles with civilian convoys and, sometimes, the use of human shields. In this way, NATO's concern to avoid civilian casualties was exploited by the Serbs.

In mid-April, NATO pilots misidentified a refugee column as a Serb army column, resulting in the deaths of about 75 refugees. After that incident, pilots exercised greater caution before releasing their weapons. Human Rights Watch estimated that there were 90 incidents involving civilian deaths, in which between 488 and 527 civilians died.<sup>41</sup> NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson summarized the campaign goal: "The concern to avoid unintentional damage was a principal constraining factor throughout."<sup>42</sup> NATO would lose its credibility if it killed the people it was trying to protect.

### *Casualty-Free Warfare*

For General Clark to continue to prosecute the campaign he not only limited collateral damage, but also reduced the likelihood of NATO casualties. Aircrew flew under strict rules of engagement that required aviators to have visual contact with the target. This was greatly hampered by cloud cover. To avoid anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) and

shoulder-fired surface to air missiles (manpads), aircraft flew above 15,000 feet. The trade-off of flying at higher altitudes to mitigate risk, made weather conditions such as cloud layers and visibility more of a factor in daily execution. Many aircraft returned to base without dropping their weapons.

Further, since General Clark could control public relations in the event of American casualties and the United States flew the most sophisticated planes, U.S. aircraft flew the difficult missions. Throughout the air campaign, U.S. aircraft dropped 70 percent of the munitions.<sup>43</sup> British defense minister at the time, Lord Robertson, expressed U.S. dominance in a negative way: "There were some [NATO] countries that felt embarrassed during Operation Allied Force because they could not make the contribution they wanted." For General Clark, it was important to not risk NATO aircraft and public opinion in NATO countries.

Finally, NATO strike packages flew with high levels of support with a combination of active support jamming, High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARMs), and also a variety of precision-guided munitions to destroy key elements of the Yugoslav air defense system. Electronic warfare aircraft suppressed the Serbian air defense system. Without use of its associated radar, the Serbs relied on unguided, ballistic surface-to-air missile (SAM) launches. The average aircrew participating in Operation Allied Force experienced a missile-launch rate three times higher than encountered by the average coalition aircrew during Operation Desert Storm, yet were six times less likely to be shot down.<sup>44</sup> Of the over 700 missiles launched, only two NATO aircraft were hit.<sup>45</sup> Had the Serbs used their radars to launch missiles, casualties might have been higher.

Finally, AWACS provided early warning that resulted in denying Serb pilots the use of their airspace. When Serb aircraft did attempt to fly, continuous combat air patrol by NATO fighters resulted in six Serb fighters being destroyed immediately after take-off. Though enshrined in American war-fighting doctrine, the goal for SACEUR was to keep the casualties low in an effort to not only keep the coalition together, but to keep it an allied operation. General Clark could not take risks that would undermine the allied effort.

### An Allied Operation

With diplomatic and military capability limitations, General Clark did his best to make Allied Force an allied operation. Thirteen Allies contributed 327 aircraft and flew 39 percent (15,000) of the 38,000 missions. After the United States, France was the largest allied contributor with 87 aircraft,

while Portugal contributed the fewest with only 3 aircraft.<sup>46</sup> Greece, Luxembourg, Iceland, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic did not contribute aircraft. However, Greece and Hungary provided territorial overflight access and basing rights that were critical to mission success. Without European airspace, basing, and support facilities, the operation would have been difficult to conduct. In total, 24 bases in Europe were used.<sup>47</sup>

Since there were reluctant allies, General Clark involved ambassadors in the details of the operation. These meetings took place formally in NATO facilities, over the telephone, and even at his chateau. At night, General Clark hosted NATO ambassadors and European military officers at his home to discuss targeting and review progress on the campaign. Sometimes these discussions took place over formal dinners, while other times over billiard games. The individual attention given to various ambassadors helped maintain support for the air campaign, which could have been stopped by NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) at any time.

The NAC reserved the right to approve "controversial" targets on an individual basis. "NATO used this mechanism to ensure that member nations were fully cognizant of particularly sensitive military operations, and thereby, to help sustain the unity of the alliance."<sup>48</sup> The reviews ensured that targets were complying with international law, were militarily justified, and were of minimal risk to civilian lives and property. Though criticized for allowing diplomats to participate in the target approval process, Clark's diplomacy enabled the operation to succeed. According to Clark, "No single target, no set of targets, and no bombing series was more important than maintaining the consensus of NATO."<sup>49</sup> In order to maintain the alliance, General Clark went to great lengths to include reluctant members in the decisionmaking process.

### Threats to the Operation

As previously discussed, the air operation was threatened by the potential for collateral damage and casualties. In addition to NATO actions that could undermine the air campaign, Serb actions presented a challenge to Alliance stability. By controlling refugee flows and standing resolute against NATO, the Serbs forced NATO into a war of attrition. Though NATO outlasted Yugoslavia, the air campaign struggled from the beginning to achieve its objective, which was in the words of General Clark, "going after the forces inside Kosovo and around Kosovo to destroy these forces, to isolate them, to interdict them and to prevent

a continuation of their campaign or its intensification.”<sup>50</sup> NATO’s secretary general stated the objectives of the air strikes: “To prevent more human suffering, more repression, more violence against the civilian population of Kosovo . . . [and] to prevent instability spreading in the region.”<sup>51</sup> If NATO could not prevent a humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, then it severely undermined the use of force. This is true no matter how many times Clark declared “we’re winning, he’s [Milosevic] losing, and he knows it,” or reminded the press that air campaigns can do little to stop a paramilitary campaign.<sup>52</sup>

Throughout the first two months of the air campaign the Yugoslav military (VJ) and interior police (MUP) maintained an ability to expel refugees. This fact undermined the purpose of NATO’s actions for President Clinton, who said it was “to halt an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians.”<sup>53</sup> NATO’s bombing efforts had little effect on the ground situation, as evidenced by the refugee flows. Five days into the air campaign, approximately half of Kosovo’s 1.6 million Albanian population were internally displaced, with nearly 70,000 expelled to Albania. Refugee flows continued to spike throughout the air campaign, particularly during April 15–20 and again during April 30–May 13. Even after seven weeks of bombing, NATO could not prevent the creation of refugees. In mid-April, over 620,000 Kosovar Albanians became refugees; the number increased in mid-May to over 800,000.<sup>54</sup> When the air campaign ended, nearly all of the 1.8 million Kosovar Albanians were either internally displaced or refugees, 600 settlements were destroyed, and there was approximately \$1.3 billion of damage in Kosovo.

### *Weather*

In addition to not limiting the refugee flow, NATO did not limit the activities of the Yugoslav forces. The Serb military was designed by Tito to fight a partisan-style hit-and-run war, both military units and paramilitary forces maintained tactical effectiveness to fight the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK).<sup>55</sup> When NATO did attempt to target Serb fielded forces, the Serbs proved their expertise in concealment. With NATO intentions publicly known, military barracks were deserted and soldiers dispersed into the countryside before the bombing commenced. Heavy weapons were concealed in forests, caves, and civilian areas. Balkan weather also provided a protective shield. For nearly 70 percent of the time, cloud cover exceeded 50 percent, resulting in unimpeded strike operations on only 24 of 78 days.<sup>56</sup> Further, the Serbs used this

type of weather to operate and relocate its forces. Without NATO forces on the ground to compensate for the bad weather, the Serb strategy degraded NATO's ability to conduct air strikes and ensured the survival of Serb forces.

### *Serb Resolve*

During the year preceding NATO's operation and throughout the 78 days, the Serbs displayed tremendous resolve. The Serbs portrayed their enemy, the UCK, as separatists who hid among civilians and used ambush as its main tactic. This tactic appealed to Russians who faced their own problem with Chechen separatists. Once NATO brought the conflict to Serbia's capital, defiance was exhibited on Belgrade's bridges where civilians danced throughout the night with targets pinned to their shirts.

Internationally, the Serbs portrayed themselves as victims subjected to an unprovoked NATO attack. With the exception of ballistic SAM launches, Serbia avoided direct attack on NATO forces in Albania and Macedonia, and it kept its naval forces in Montenegrin ports. Exemplifying frustration with NATO, Serbia filed suit in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). On April 29, 1999, Yugoslavia brought proceedings before the ICJ against Belgium and nine other NATO countries to redress a "violation of the obligation not to use force."<sup>57</sup> The claims were based upon the UN Charter and several international legal conventions, including the 1949 Geneva Convention, its 1977 Additional Protocol 1, and the Genocide Convention. Yugoslavia requested the Court's ruling on the following provisional measure: "The Kingdom of Belgium shall cease immediately its acts of use of force and shall refrain from any act of threat or use of force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia."<sup>58</sup> On June 2, the ICJ stated that it is "profoundly concerned with the use of force in Yugoslavia", which "under the present circumstances . . . raises very serious issues of international law," but the Court declared that it did not have jurisdiction.<sup>59</sup>

### *Threat of Russian Intervention*

Finally, NATO faced the constant threat of Russian diplomatic or military intervention. As a member of the Contact Group, Russia was committed to a peaceful solution to the problem of Kosovo. Using its influence, Russia got the Serbs to accept the political agreement at Rambouillet, but could not get Milosevic to accept a NATO implementation force because of its sovereignty claim. The sovereignty claim



was exacerbated by appendix b, paragraph 8 of the Rambouillet Agreement that states:

NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations.<sup>60</sup>

It is important to underscore the emphasis negotiators placed on NATO having a critical role in Yugoslavia. Reflecting a year after the conflict, Secretary General Robertson explained the emphasis on NATO presence, stating, "President Milosevic had repeatedly failed to honour [*sic*] previous agreements and that an international security presence was essential to guarantee that the Accords would be honoured [*sic*]. Also, without such a presence, the Kosovar Albanian side would not have given their agreement."<sup>61</sup> However, from the Serb perspective, NATO could not be granted full access to the country.

Once the bombing started, the fear of Russian intervention was omnipresent. Russia immediately suspended cooperation with NATO. Russia forced NATO to close its office in Moscow and expelled all NATO personnel from Russia. Russia suspended the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council and withdrew its personnel from NATO headquarters. One week after the bombing commenced, Russia deployed an intelligence-gathering ship (AGI) to the Adriatic. As the second week of bombing commenced, Russia filed a transit request with Turkey for eight warships. However, Russia did not deploy the warships to the Adriatic, but maintained the intelligence-gathering ship to monitor NATO aircraft flight activity. Diplomatically, relations between Russia and the United States were strained. President Yeltsin warned of a new cold war, and a plane carrying Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov to Washington turned back mid-flight in protest of NATO's actions.

The fear of Russian military intervention is best exemplified after peace was reached between NATO and Serbia. After the bombing stopped, a Russian battalion stationed in Bosnia undertook a 14-hour drive to Kosovo on June 11. Knowing that the Russian paratroopers intended to seize the Pristina airfield, General Clark ordered his British ground commander to take the airfield first.<sup>62</sup> NATO planned to use the airfield as the KFOR headquarters and control of the runway would be useful to quickly deploy NATO forces. However, Sir General

Michael Jackson refused the order and told his boss, "I'm not going to start the Third World War for you."<sup>63</sup>

### Commander Diplomacy

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many questioned the relevance of the NATO alliance. However, with the Red Army threat gone, the advocates of the alliance emphasized the political importance of NATO. In essence, NATO shifted its reading of the North Atlantic Treaty from Article V, which stresses unity in the face of attack, to Article IV, which stresses the cooperative aspects of NATO.<sup>64</sup> At the center of the emphasis of NATO as a proactive political and military alliance was the supreme allied commander. In many ways, Operation Allied Force was a test of NATO's new strategic concept. NATO has proven its commitment to military operations other than war through its actions in the Balkans.<sup>65</sup> And NATO has proven its commitment to the Alliance as a political organization with its induction of three new countries in 1999, and seven new countries in 2004.

In terms of Kosovo, General Clark was an active diplomat representing the interests of all 19 members of NATO. Acting on behalf of the NAC, Clark went to Belgrade to speak directly with Milosevic on several occasions. When the talks failed to produce an agreement, Clark was at the center of the final alternative—war. Throughout the conflict, General Clark reassured NATO's ambassadors and made allies' concerns a priority in the operation.

Since he was the military commander of NATO's 19 members, he used his position as the supreme allied commander to build and maintain consensus for air strikes. By including reluctant allies in military planning and through his appeals to the national goals and ambitions of countries such as France and the United Kingdom, General Clark was able to lead not only NATO European countries, but also the United States into battle over Kosovo.

### Consequences of the War for Kosovo

History will judge Operation Allied Force successful. After 78 days of air attack, Milosevic conceded to the Contact Group's demands and a NATO force deployed to Kosovo. However, why Milosevic surrendered is not easy to say. To be sure, the humanitarian crisis was underway before NATO's attack commenced, but the scale of the crisis exploded after the first bomb fell. At the end of the 78-day campaign, nearly all

of the 1.8 million Kosovar Albanians were refugees or internally displaced persons. In spite of the humanitarian tragedy that happened, irrespective of NATO's actions, the alliance remained committed to the operation.

As the operation's commander, General Clark constantly shored up the commitment to the air campaign. By avoiding casualties and collateral damage, NATO implemented a near flawless air campaign. Only two aircraft were lost, and there were no NATO casualties. Collateral damage was limited, with fewer than 600 civilians killed. Further, by including potential critics in the tactical decisionmaking process, Clark co-opted reluctant allies to allow the operation to continue. With no chance of the alliance collapsing, Milosevic was forced to submit. Without a competent diplomat at the helm of its military headquarters, it is doubtful that NATO would have been successful in forcing Milosevic to concede on Kosovo.

### Notes

1. The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.
2. National Security Act of 1947, quoted in European Command History, <http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/presskit/EuropeanCommand%20History.doc>.
3. Because the European Command was primarily conceived as a land theater, the European Command's commander was always an Army general. The only exception was Air Force General Lauris Norstad who served from 1956 to 1962.
4. European Command History, <http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/presskit/EuropeanCommand%20History.doc>.
5. Carl Builder, 1996–97. "Keeping the Strategic Flame," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 14 (Winter): 76–84.
6. European Command, "Mission," <http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECCC/index.htm>.
7. Unified Command Plan 2002, April 30, 2002, Title 10, United States Code, section 161 (b) (2).
8. In 2002, the European Command's AOR increased when Joint Forces Command was relieved of geographic responsibilities.
9. European Command Brochure #1, <http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/presskit/brochure1.pdf>.
10. Wesley K. Clark, 1998, Prepared testimony of General Wesley K. Clark, U.S. Army Commander in Chief, United States European Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 3.
11. General James Jones, 2003, "USEUCOM Defense Information Group Press Briefing," Monday, March 3, 2003—10:30 a.m. CET.

12. As of July 1, 2002. See <http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/presskit/brochure2.pdf>.
13. See pages 87–92 in William J. Crowe, Jr, 1993, *The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
14. Article 5 states: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised [*sic*] by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.” See <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm#Art05>.
15. General James Jones, 2003, “USEUCOM Defense Information Group Press Briefing,” Monday, March 3, 2003—10:30 a.m. CET.
16. European Command, “FY 2003 US European Command Posture Statement,” <http://www.eucom.mil/Command/index.htm?http://www.eucom.mil/Command/Posture/statment.htm&2>.
17. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, p. 456.
18. Section based on Derek Reveron, 2002, “Coalition Warfare: The Commander’s Role,” *Defense and Security Analysis*, 18, no. 2 (June): 107–121.
19. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), “War in Europe,” *Frontline*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html>.
20. While there was no specific authorization for NATO or any other military organization to use force in Kosovo except to protect unarmed monitors (OSCE force) in an emergency, the United States, along with other NATO supporters, asserted that under UNSC Resolution 1203, NATO had the necessary authority to use force to protect civilians in Kosovo and to enforce the cease-fire agreement.
21. From 1992 to 1995, UNPROFOR’s mandate was to support the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, to protect convoys of released civilian detainees, to monitor the “no-fly” zone, and to monitor the UN “safe areas” established by the Security Council around five Bosnian towns and the city of Sarajevo. Because the UN force had limited rules of engagement and was in the midst of a civil war, it suffered 211 casualties, incurred hundreds of European prisoners used as “human shields,” and did not prevent atrocities in Sarajevo, Gorazde, Bihac, and Srebrenica. In Srebrenica alone, over 2,500 bodies were found with thousands still missing. By opening the

Sarajevo airport under UN control, General MacKenzie, UNPROFOR chief of staff, “thought that would cool tempers and create a situation for a negotiated ceasefire.” However, the other elements of the agreement were never implemented and opening the airport “didn’t change the situation at all. In fact, if anything, it started to feed the fighters.” Quoted in Sharon Hobson, 1992, “The Jane’s Interview,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, September 19. For UN casualty totals, see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/fatalities/totals.htm>. For more on the atrocities in Srebrenica, see *Report of the Secretary General Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35: The Fall of Srebrenica*, <http://www.un.org/peace/srebrenica.pdf>.

22. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret), “Interview,” *War in Europe*, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html>.
23. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, p. 456.
24. Mark Urban, “NATO’s Inner Conflict,” *BBC*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_425000/425468.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_425000/425468.stm).
25. Quoted in Hugh Delliios, 1999, “While Government Backs NATO, Greek Hearts Go With Serbs,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 16.
26. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2001, *Waging Modern War*, New York: Public Affairs, p. 223.
27. “NATO Working on Ceasefire Proposal for Kosovo, Bonn Says,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, March 31, 1999.
28. Quoted in “Schroeder Rejects Any Change in NATO Strategy,” *Turkish Daily News*, May 20, 1999.
29. In spite of the request, Novi Sad was subject to frequent attacks.
30. See William Drozdiak, 1999, “Air Strikes Jolt New Eastern Allies,” *International Herald Tribune*, (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France), April 13.
31. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2000, “Interview on Security Issues,” *Policy.Com*, August 8.
32. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, pp. 454–455.
33. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, p. 225.
34. Quoted in “Kosovo Report Highlights NATO’s Shortcomings,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, November 1, 2000.
35. General Wesley K. Clark (Ret.), 2000, “Interview on Security Issues,” *Policy.Com*, August 8.
36. “Kosovo One Year On,” October 30, 2000, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/repo2000/better.htm>.
37. Linda Kozyran, 1999, “Cohen, Shelton Say NATO’s Patience, Precision Paid Off,” *American Forces Information Service*, June 11, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun1999/n06111999\\_9906113.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun1999/n06111999_9906113.html).
38. Quoted in “Yugoslavian Air-Defence System Withdrawn from Kosovo,” *Jane’s Missiles and Rockets*, July 1, 1999.
39. “Serbs launched Sams at Record Rates,” *Jane’s Missiles and Rockets*, March 1, 2000.

40. Lieutenant General Michael C. Short, 1999, Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, October 21, p. 402.
41. "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," Human Rights Watch, February 2000, [http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/nato/Natbm200.htm#P39\\_994](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/nato/Natbm200.htm#P39_994).
42. George Robertson, 2000, "Kosovo One Year On," October 30, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/repo2000/conduct.htm>.
43. Lessons Learned from the Kosovo Conflict—The Effect of the Operation on Both Deployed/Non-Deployed Forces and on Future Modernization Plans. Hearing Before the Military Procurement Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services. House of Representatives. One Hundred Sixth Congress, First Session. [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has292020.000/has292020\\_of.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has292020.000/has292020_of.htm).
44. "Serbs Launched Sams at Record Rates."
45. "Yugoslavian Air-Defence System Withdrawn from Kosovo."
46. See figure 16: "Non-U.S. Aircraft Participating in Operation Allied Force" In Department of Defense, 2000, *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After Action Report: Report to Congress*, January 31, p 78.
47. See figure 5 of Allied Force Lessons Learned.
48. *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After Action Report*, p xx.
49. Clark "Interview on Security Issues."
50. Jamie Shea and General Wesley K. Clark, 1999, "Press Conference," April 13, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/press/p990413a.htm>.
51. Javier Solana, 1999, "Statement by NATO Secretary-General on Air Strikes," March 23, <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/dailynews/solanatranscript.html>.
52. General Wesley Clark, quoted in "Allied Force Chief Cites Success," Linda D. Kozaryn, 1999, *American Forces Press Service*, April 26, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr1999/n04261999\\_9904262.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr1999/n04261999_9904262.html).
53. Allan Little, 2000, "Behind the Kosovo Crisis," March 12, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_674000/674056.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_674000/674056.stm).
54. Rachel Riley, 1999, "The World has Failed the Kosovar Refugees," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, April 9, <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/campaigns/kosovo98/wsjoped.shtml>. U.S. Department of State, *Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo*, [http://www.reliefweb.int/hcic/links/links\\_main.htm](http://www.reliefweb.int/hcic/links/links_main.htm).
55. Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës (UÇK) is known in English as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Formed in the mid-1990s, the UÇK advocated a campaign of armed insurgency against the Serbian authorities. In mid-1996, the UÇK launched attacks on Yugoslav and Serbian police forces.
56. *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After Action Report*, p 60.
57. Case Concerning Legality of Use of Force (*Yugoslavia v. Belgium*); Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, General List No. 105, June 2, 1999. Reprinted at 38 INTERNATIONAL LEGAL MATERIALS 950 (1999).
58. Ibid.
59. "ICJ Rejects Yugoslavia's Request For Order To Halt Use of Force By Belgium, Remains Seized of Case," *M2 Presswire*, June 4, 1999.

60. See *Rambouillet Agreement: Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo*, [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/ksvo\\_rambouillet\\_text.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/ksvo_rambouillet_text.html).
61. <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/repo2000/better.htm>.
62. By occupying the Pristina airfield, Russia guaranteed itself a place in the planned peacekeeping force for Kosovo. In the early days after the bombing stopped, Russian troops in Pristina refused NATO access to the airfield. Despite Russian intransigence, NATO forces supplied the Russian troops with food and water while the negotiations occurred. Russia attempted to use the airfield as a bargaining chip to get its own zone, however, NATO refused because it did not want a *de facto* partitioning of Kosovo into a Serb sector protected by the Russian force and an Albanian sector protected by the NATO force. After a week of negotiations, NATO and Russia agreed that Russian participation in KFOR would be limited to 3,500 soldiers, Russian peacekeepers would not get their own zone, but would operate within a zone led by a NATO member, and Russian forces would not be subordinate to NATO commanders, but operate independently.
63. Quoted in *BBC News*, 1999, "Generals Clashed over Kosovo Raid," August 2, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_409000/409576.stm#top](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_409000/409576.stm#top). Under NATO rules of command, officers can appeal to their national governments on orders they deem questionable.
64. Article V: "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area." Article IV: "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."
65. NATO, 1999, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept" April 24, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>.

CHAPTER 6

U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND:  
GENERAL CHARLES E. WILHELM  
AND THE SHAPING OF U.S. MILITARY  
ENGAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA, 1997–2000

*Dean A. Cook*<sup>1</sup>

Tell me this is not a Vietnam again.

Senator Ted Stevens

Sir, it is not a Vietnam again. I spent 1965, '66, '69 and '70 in Vietnam and I think I'll know it when I see it happening again. When I go to Colombia I do not feel a quagmire sucking at my boots.

General Charles E. Wilhelm, Commander,  
U.S. Southern Command<sup>2</sup>

As commander of the U.S. Southern Command, General Charles E. Wilhelm played a significant role in shaping—rather than merely implementing—a major change in U.S. policy toward Colombia. Before he took the helm of the Southern Command in 1997, U.S. engagement with the Colombian military was stunted. Before Wilhelm retired in 2000, U.S. Army Special Forces had trained the first of three U.S.-equipped Colombian Army counterdrug battalions, and Congress had approved a \$1.3 billion aid package to support a Colombian government initiative known as Plan Colombia, of which nearly 80 percent was earmarked for the Colombian military. This catapulted Colombia into the position of being the third largest U.S. foreign-aid recipient (behind Israel and Egypt), and represented the first step toward active U.S. involvement in Colombia's internal security situation. Furthermore, it marked a major shift from engagement almost exclusively with the Colombian National Police (CNP) to the Colombian military.



Wilhelm's role as a primary architect of this shift demonstrates that under certain conditions, the regional combatant commanders have significant influence on U.S. foreign policy creation. This assertion begs the question: which factors grant policy influence to the regional commanders, and which factors limit that influence? This case study addresses the question by reviewing three aspects of the Colombia case. The first section examines the specifics of the situation in Colombia and the policy environment in 1997, which served as a backdrop for Wilhelm's policy entrepreneurship. The second section discusses the institutional characteristics of the U.S. Southern Command, deriving from the unique characteristics of its area of responsibility (AOR), its history in the region, and organizational characteristics; this section describes the tools at Wilhelm's disposal as he engaged in the policy process. The third section reviews the development of U.S. policy toward Colombia from 1997 through 2000, with particular emphasis on Wilhelm's personal involvement in the process. Each section contains a discussion of the relative importance of the factors being discussed—situation specific, institution specific, and commander specific—in determining Wilhelm's degree of influence in shaping policy.

The case study concludes that while many factors specific to Colombia's situation converged to provide a rationale for the policy shift, Wilhelm's personal advocacy and interest in the situation, combined with his adeptness in policy circles, ultimately ensured Wilhelm and his command an influential role in shaping U.S. military engagement in Colombia. In other words, situation-specific and institutional factors were contributing factors to Wilhelm's policy influence, while his personal experience, convictions, abilities, and drive were determinative.

### Colombia in Crisis

The guerrilla movement is here [in the Caguan Valley] because the government is not. In its absence, the FARC assumes the coercive powers of the state. Narcotics trafficking fills the economic void.<sup>3</sup>

Luis Augusto Castro Quiroga, Catholic Church Official,  
Caguan Valley, Colombia

### *The Absence of Security*

In 1997 Colombia was considered the most threatened nation in the Western Hemisphere, and Clinton administration officials warned of

the potential failure of the Colombian state.<sup>4</sup> The Colombian Army repeatedly found itself on the losing side of combat with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the largest of Colombia's active illegal armed groups. The increasingly despondent Colombian military leadership reacted by withdrawing forces from outlying areas and relocating them to defensive positions near the state infrastructure, leaving more than 40 percent of Colombian territory lawless and unprotected.

The illegal narcotics trade was central to the violence in the countryside. While most of Latin America's leftist insurgent forces withered away or were integrated back into society through negotiated political settlements, in Colombia, two leftist groups—the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN)—adapted to the new environment, funding themselves through a parasitic relationship to—and later, active involvement in—the narcotics trade. With better resources, technology, and weapons than the underresourced, undertrained government security forces, the insurgent groups handed the Colombian Army one humiliating tactical defeat after another.

To complicate the situation, illegal right-wing “self-defense forces,” which historically had protected rural (legal and illegal) economic interests from insurgents, were growing rapidly and were organizing on a national level, forming a country-wide federation known as the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (or by the Spanish acronym, AUC). The AUC's formation added to the intensity of the conflict in the countryside, as elements of the rival illegal armed groups—the FARC, AUC, and to a lesser extent the ELN—struggled for control of the areas that produced coca, the raw material for cocaine. Rural peasants were caught in the middle. State institutions, virtually powerless to curb the escalating violence, lost the confidence of the Colombian public.

Violence, and the state institutions' inability to deal with it, was not new to Colombia. Since colonial times, Colombia experienced periodic eruptions of political violence, including five distinct periods of civil war in the latter half of the nineteenth century. More recently, some violence accompanied a transfer of power from the Conservative Party to the Liberal Party in 1930. But this violence was minor compared to “*la Violencia*”—an entire decade of violence in which tens of thousands died at the hands of political opponents—which began in 1946 with the transfer of power from the Liberals to the Conservatives and skyrocketed with the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, a Liberal leader, in Bogotá in 1948.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps due to the historical prevalence of political violence, Colombians seem quicker than other Latin Americans to resort to

violence as a means of settling disputes. The murder rate in Colombia is 13 times higher than the United States with more than 28,000 murdered annually. The kidnapping rate is the highest in the world, with more than 2,900 Colombians kidnapped annually. In the 1980s and 1990s, the country produced the world's deadliest and most feared "narco-criminals," including drug kingpin Pablo Escobar and other *capos* of the Medellín cartel, who launched a campaign of "narco-terrorism" to intimidate the state. Escobar and his army of thugs were responsible for hundreds of deaths, including dozens of bombings and the mid-air sabotage of an airliner in which all 110 passengers were killed, before the Colombian government—with U.S. help—dismantled the organization.<sup>6</sup>

The illegal armed groups that battled for control of the countryside were rooted in this culture of political and social violence. The FARC, Latin America's oldest active insurgency, grew out of communist-inspired peasant collective security groups in the early 1960s. The ELN formed in the mid-1960s, inspired by the Cuban revolution, and gained sympathy and support from students and union leaders.

The insurgents' war with the state did not escalate abruptly. The FARC had grown from 45 "fronts" in 1989—each consisting of 50–200 combatants—to 66 fronts in 1996, with a dominating presence in one-third of Colombia's territory, while the Cuban-inspired ELN had increased from 19 to 40 fronts.<sup>7</sup> But a critical change occurred in 1996, when an emboldened FARC that previously had used small unit hit-and-run tactics began to mass insurgents against Colombian forces in well-planned attacks that focused directly on security force vulnerabilities. From 1996 through early 1998, it became increasingly clear that the Colombian Army could not control or even maintain an occasional presence in much of its territory.

The Colombian military experienced what many considered its darkest hour in March 1998 with a disaster in the Caguan Valley of southern Colombia, near the hamlet of El Billar. The military disaster revealed institutional shortcomings at all levels of the military establishment. While conducting "search and destroy" operations, two companies of the Colombian Army's 52nd Counter-Guerrilla Battalion began to pursue what they thought was a small band of FARC soldiers. In fact, the companies fell into a carefully prepared ambush by a FARC force of at least 400 fighters. The soldiers panicked. When the fighting ended, 62 soldiers were dead, 47 were wounded, and 43 had been captured by the FARC.<sup>8</sup>

The CNP, the other major Colombian security institution, was similarly affected. CNP outposts increasingly were the target of FARC

attacks through the latter half of the 1990s. The institution responded by closing smaller stations, leaving many small towns and villages with no security presence. Even the CNP's elite units, including the Jungle Commandos of the Anti-Narcotics Division, which was the recipient of extensive U.S. counterdrug training and equipment, began to find themselves repeatedly outgunned and overwhelmed by insurgent forces guarding major narcotics production targets. One high-profile jungle commando operation, also in March 1998, highlighted the increased threat posed by a link between narcotics and the FARC in rural areas. At dawn on March 23, 50 Jungle Commandos left their base in four helicopters en route to a large cocaine hydrochloride laboratory in the Vichada Department. When the CNP helicopters prepared to touch down, they faced fire from a massive FARC force. One helicopter was damaged and abandoned, and the others aborted the mission, leaving five policemen stranded at the site.<sup>9</sup>

These two events in March 1998, although unrelated in a tactical sense, cast a shadow over the effectiveness of the Colombian security forces. Thus was the state of the Colombian security institutions soon after Wilhelm took command of the Southern Command and as the U.S. foreign policy establishment considered whether and how to engage the situation in Colombia.

### *The Policy Environment*

When it became public in 1994 that President Ernesto Samper's election campaign benefited from donations by narcotics traffickers, the United States denied a visitor's visa to the newly elected president and the diplomatic relationship soured. The United States had soon "decertified" the country as an ally in the fight against narcotics trafficking, and all but a handful of U.S. government programs were cut, including \$35 million in counterdrug assistance for Colombian police and military units.<sup>10</sup> This affected more than just counterdrug programs. In the fiscal year 1997, for example, \$600,000 in funding for International Military Education and Training (IMET) was redistributed from Colombia to other countries.<sup>11</sup>

In this environment, aid for counterdrug programs, the majority of which was offered under a waiver for "compelling national interest" aid programs, was channeled almost exclusively to the CNP, whose charismatic leader General Rosso José Serrano acted as a virtual surrogate chief of state in Washington on the Colombian narcotics issue.<sup>12</sup>

In late 1997 when Wilhelm took command, U.S. counterdrug programs in Colombia focused on the White House Office of National

Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) objectives four and five: interdicting narcotics while en route to the United States and reducing foreign sources of supply of narcotics. These programs could be divided into four broad targets or missions. First, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), supported by other agencies, partnered with the CNP to develop criminal cases against narcotics “kingpins” and their organizations and bring them to justice. Second, the DEA and CNP, supported to a minor extent by the Department of Defense (DOD), targeted and destroyed cocaine hydrochloride laboratories. These laboratories are complex structures that are generally hidden in jungle areas. In some cases, they represent millions of dollars in investment by narcotics traffickers. Due to the complexity of this mission and the difficulty of reaching these laboratories, the CNP’s Jungle Commando units had been developed specifically for this type of air-mobile mission, complete with organic UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Third, in a program run by the Narcotics Assistance Section (NAS) of the Department of State in coordination with the CNP, crop dusters—some traditional “Turbo Thrushes” and some reconfigured OV-10 Broncos—eradicated illegal coca crops through fumigation. Finally, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Service, and DEA, supported by the DOD (primarily the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy), coordinated air and maritime interdiction operations in the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean with the Colombian Air Force and Colombian Navy. Thus, apart from the air and maritime interdiction missions, counterdrug engagement with Colombian security forces centered on bilateral counterdrug programs with the CNP. By comparison, the military-to-military relationship between the United States and Colombia was in a state of neglect.

The concentration on the CNP as a counterdrug partner was no accident. Earlier in the century, the Colombian military had been one of the staunchest U.S. allies in the region, having been the only Latin American country to send troops to support the United States in the Korean War. Even as recently as the early 1990s, the United States had sent elite U.S. Special Forces units to assist a joint Colombian police and military unit in tracking down drug kingpin Pablo Escobar. But during that interaction, the corrupting influence of involvement in the counterdrug effort became clear; at one point, Escobar left jail and virtually walked through an entire brigade of Colombian Army soldiers, reminding government officials that “these people all work for me.”<sup>13</sup> Such open displays of apparent corruption created reticence on the part of U.S. officials to engage further with the Colombian military.

Colombian military leaders, as well, understood the corrupting influence of narcotics trafficking and eschewed the counterdrug mission.

And yet, the fact that U.S. counterdrug assistance was channeled primarily through the CNP created an institutional imbalance, and exacerbated rivalry between the CNP and the military. Senior military leaders routinely accused the CNP of showboating or taking credit for what the military had done and vice versa, to the extent that the two institutions had a difficult time working together on even the simplest of missions. In fact, the U.S. counterdrug partnership with the CNP provided further disincentives for the Colombian military to become involved in the counterdrug mission, instead seeing counterinsurgency and infrastructure protection as the core of their institutional mission. This unwillingness—and hence, inability—to work together, despite the fact that both institutions are subordinate to the Ministry of Defense, meant an extra level of complexity of implementation for any initiative that called for joint CNP–military operations or that divided assistance between them.

Thus, the Colombian military had become a reluctant potential ally for the counterdrug mission, and as a result the environment was not as conducive to military-to-military engagement for counterdrug issues as to law enforcement-to-law enforcement engagement. Indeed, in early 1997, the DEA maintained the largest official permanent presence in the country of any U.S. department or agency, and seemed to be the dominant force in determining the extent and shape of U.S. counterdrug engagement in Colombia.

### *The Engagement Debate*

The U.S. policy response to the increasingly apparent nexus between narcotics trafficking and illegal armed groups and the related deterioration in Colombia's security situation, would be defined along two dimensions. First, to what extent would the United States be willing to focus its counterdrug programs on the jungle areas of eastern and southern Colombia, knowing that such a focus would imply more direct involvement in Colombia's internal conflict? Second, which Colombian security institution—the CNP or the military—would be the delivery channel for that assistance?

It was clear that the United States would provide some type of stepped-up security assistance. Approximately 19,000 Americans were dying each year of drug-induced causes, and billions of dollars in direct

and indirect costs were attributed to drug use each year. At the time, Colombia produced roughly 90 percent of all cocaine consumed in the United States.

In addition, U.S. policymakers recognized that the collapse of the state or its security institutions, or a marked worsening of the security situations, would wreak economic, political, and social havoc on a friendly nation in the Western Hemisphere, with clear ramifications for the security of the United States. Despite occasional warnings of the potential for state collapse, however, this second argument was less clear and ultimately less convincing—or less politically viable—for the Clinton administration and Congress. Thus, virtually the entire policy debate of whether to come to Colombia's assistance occurred within the context of curbing the flow of illegal drugs, albeit with the repercussions on the security of the Colombian state in mind. Clinton himself summarized the arguments for engagement in June 2000, saying "if we lose to the drug traffickers, the price would not only be more drugs on the streets of America but also potentially destabilizing the entire Andean region and the whole move we've seen these last 15 or 20 years toward democracy in South America."

Thus, regardless of questions about the effectiveness of a "source zone strategy," there was widespread support in Congress to provide assistance in some form, and narcotics provided the only politically-viable rationale for assistance. This rationale carried several implications for how that assistance would be delivered, and whether the Colombian military or CNP would be the primary partner. First, the drug focus gave bureaucratic clout within the U.S. embassy to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)—and, by association, the CNP—which were actively engaged in a cocaine laboratory interdiction campaign in eastern Colombia. The CNP Jungle Commandos had been trained specifically for this mission, and represented several years' investment.

Second, maintaining a focus on the counterdrug mission facilitated the development of a policy for engagement even while the Clinton administration, and its allies in Congress, publicly rejected involvement in a counterinsurgency effort. This policy stance, which solidified as policy development proceeded, resulted from the "legacy of Vietnam, and the fear of some that further U.S. involvement . . . could lead to an open-ended 'slippery slope' engagement, seasoned with memories of jungle warfare and American casualties."<sup>14</sup> The distinction between counterdrug and counterinsurgency operations—artificial though it was in the minds of many who were most familiar with the situation east of the Andes—allowed assistance to be used in support of the former while

imposing a number of constraints that disallowed support to the latter. The application of these constraints to any eventual increase in assistance was apparent from the beginning of the debate, and they seemed to rule out entirely many types of Colombian military involvement—as their primary mission was to fight the illegal armed groups—and promised to complicate any Colombian military operations that were supported by U.S. assistance. Beyond operational considerations, the policy distinction between counterdrug and counterinsurgency operations—in an area where insurgents traffic drugs and narcotics traffickers fund insurgents—seemed incongruous to the Colombian military leadership, who were immediately skeptical of American intentions. This skepticism of the level of U.S. commitment and constraints on any assistance that would be delivered strengthened resistance among the Colombian military leadership to shift their focus to counterdrug operations.

Adding to these biases that favored engagement with the CNP was the Colombian military's poor human rights record. Senator Patrick Leahy, for example, cited this record when he argued against engagement with the military, claiming that in a 1995 state of siege, the military allegedly was responsible for nearly 20 percent of all political killings and "disappearances."<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, human rights groups pointed to evidence of collusion between military officers and illegal antiguerrilla death squads.

The Colombian military's poor record on human rights created two obstacles for military-to-military engagement. First, it would raise the bar for legislative approval of an aid package directed toward the military. Second, because Congress attached the Leahy Amendment to defense appropriations for use in Colombia, any U.S. counterdrug assistance to the Colombian military would have to adhere to strict accountability procedures and human rights audits, and would require substantially more institutional intervention than assistance to the CNP. All this provided further reason to engage primarily through the CNP.

Thus, the situation in Colombia and the policy environment were conducive to some increase in U.S. counterdrug assistance, and the CNP seemed to be the most appropriate recipient of such assistance. It was clear that the violence in the Colombian countryside derived from a vacuum of government presence, and that only more effective public institutions—institutions with the capability to enforce the rule of law—could intervene in the symbiotic relationship between narcotics traffickers and illegal armed groups to stem the flow of illegal drugs and reestablish some semblance of control there. It was also clear that the



Colombian institutions could not improve their effectiveness without external assistance, and that the United States was the only country with the will and resources to provide that assistance.

And yet, as the interagency policy process swung into high gear to determine how that assistance would be delivered, the CNP seemed to be well positioned to receive the lion's share. It had strong allies in Congress and within the federal bureaucracy, had a powerful, respected, leader in General Serrano, and as the leading counterdrug agency in Colombia, its mission aligned perfectly with the public purpose of the engagement. In addition, it was a respected institution that did not evoke concern about corruption or respect for human rights.

This is the context in which Wilhelm and other senior American officials would intervene to make the argument that, despite its deficiencies, the Colombian military was the right engagement partner, simply because it alone had the institutional potential to tackle the problems brewing in the Colombian countryside.

### Southern Command: The Area of Responsibility

Before reviewing Wilhelm's personal intervention in the policy process, it is important to understand the tools at his disposal as the commander of U.S. Southern Command, and how these tools differed from those enjoyed by other regional combatant commanders. The Southern Command is fundamentally different from the other regional commands due to the unique characteristics of its AOR and the institution itself, and these differences determine the institution-specific factors that helped determine Wilhelm's degree of influence over the policymaking process. To pinpoint these institution-specific factors, this section begins with a brief history of U.S. military relations with countries in the AOR and the role of the Southern Command in these relations, and then reviews the institution itself.

The commander of the U.S. Southern Command is responsible for all U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and portions of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, including 32 countries (19 in Central and South America and 12 in the Caribbean) and more than one-sixth of the earth's surface. The region is of strategic significance due to economic ties and its proximity to the United States: it provides more oil exports to the United States than the Middle East (31 percent of U.S. imports), and trade with the region rivals U.S. trade with the European Union (\$360 billion annually). Additionally, Latin Americans are the largest and fastest growing ethnic

group in the United States (projected to represent 25 percent of the population by 2050).

The United States clearly stated its responsibility for the security of the Western Hemisphere with the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and demonstrated its willingness to intervene when necessary throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This history of military intervention took root after the United States “liberated” Cuba and Puerto Rico during the Spanish–American War of 1898, and periodic episodes thereafter included the “taking” of Panama from Colombia in 1903 to build the canal and the deployment of occupying forces—generally Marines—to Nicaragua from 1912 through 1933, Haiti from 1915 through 1934, and the Dominican Republic from 1916 through 1924.<sup>16</sup>

Then during World War II and soon thereafter, a collective security arrangement was formalized with the creation of the Inter-American Defense Board and signing of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or Rio Protocol, in 1947.<sup>17</sup> The Rio Protocol, though signed in the shadow of World War II, included the right to convene the group in the case of extra-continental attack of a signatory country or in the case of aggression that “by any other fact or situation might endanger the peace of America.”<sup>18</sup> Although rarely invoked as a justification for U.S. intervention, the Rio Protocol and related security organs would become the basis for active U.S. engagement with Latin American military forces—characterized by training in military tactics, techniques, and procedures, the deployment of U.S. advisors, and the sale of U.S. weapons—in fighting communism from the 1960s through the 1980s.

The U.S. Southern Command coordinated much of that engagement. Located in Panama since its creation in 1947 as the Caribbean Command, the Southern Command’s mission originally focused almost exclusively on protecting the canal, and its supporting units were located together with its headquarters near the canal. But as the size of merchant ships increased, the canal became less important from a strategic perspective, and military-to-military engagement became a more central part of the Southern Command’s mission. The command and its components ran several training schools in the Canal Zone, including the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA), which provided courses for Latin American military personnel in Spanish and Portuguese. Through these schools and the deployment of military advisors throughout the region, the Southern Command became a model of pro-active military-to-military engagement, infusing elements of U.S. doctrine into the Latin American military leadership.

The formation of permanent military assistance organizations in host countries throughout the AOR played a key part in the Southern Command's engagement strategy. These organizations provide in-country assistance for host nation military forces to purchase and maintain weapons and receive training.

As the twenty-first century neared, many began to argue that the Southern Command should be disbanded. The United States had agreed, in the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977, that U.S. troops would withdraw from Panama by the turn of the century, and by the late 1980s and early 1990s the insurgencies that had plagued Central and South America during the previous two decades had disappeared. In addition, the Southern Command's AOR lacked military hotspots that required detailed contingency planning, one of the primary functions of the regional combatant commands. But in the early 1990s, a growing DOD counterdrug role provided a *raison d'être* for a regional command to oversee counterdrug operations in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, a reinvigorated Southern Command would serve as a useful command structure to orchestrate disparate military operations other than war (MOOTW) in the region, including humanitarian civic action programs and disaster relief. Finally, coordinating military-to-military engagement—including the activities of the military assistance organizations, deployments of Special Forces detachments to conduct specialized training, and bringing military personnel to the United States for training—had become an important mission in and of itself.

Thus, in 1997, the Command was not dissolved, but rather underwent two major changes. First, its AOR was expanded to include the waters and island nations of the Caribbean, formerly under the Atlantic Command, in order to enhance the Southern Command's ability to coordinate maritime counterdrug efforts. Second, its headquarters was moved from Panama to Miami, a regional hub for all of Latin America and the Caribbean and an ideal location from which to travel to the Southern Command AOR.

Thus, Wilhelm inherited a command whose long history of formal military-to-military engagement and in-country engagement resources could implement any strategy that was called for, regardless of the poor state of affairs between Colombia and the United States at that time. In fact, the command's very purpose since 1995, according to its Office of Public Affairs, "has been to create multinational training events that promote military-to-military confidence building measures and disciplined technically competent militaries" to pursue "more appropriate post-Cold War missions."<sup>19</sup>

*Southern Command: The Institution*

Though a large geographic area and economically, politically, and culturally important to the United States, the region is no hotbed of conflict, and no country—including Cuba—poses a traditional military threat to the United States. Thus, despite the Southern Command's expansion and relocation of its headquarters to Miami, the DOD holds only a weak commitment to the Command. By 2003, the DOD still has made no permanent commitment to a Southern Command headquarters in Miami, and officials muse openly about doing away with the Command altogether.<sup>20</sup>

The Southern Command's resources reflect this lack of commitment. With only 7,500 troops permanently assigned to the headquarters and component commands, the Southern Command traditionally has been the smallest of the unified commands. The European Command, by contrast, has a ground force of more than 60,000. In addition, the Southern Command lacks "organic" assets that other regional combatant commanders enjoy, and must request them on an as-available basis from the individual services, through the Joint Staff. But as Wilhelm complained before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, such assets are rarely forthcoming:

Lacking adequate ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] assets, we cannot react quickly and effectively to changes in drug traffickers' operational patterns. U.S. Southern Command's ISR capabilities have been seriously degraded due to the non-availability of required assets. This has significantly reduced the effectiveness of our CD [counterdrug] operations.<sup>21</sup>

The Southern Command is composed of its joint-service headquarters staff in Miami, its Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine component commands throughout the hemisphere, two joint task forces (in Honduras and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba), one joint interagency task force and a surveillance center (in Key West, Florida), and 26 Military Groups or Liaison Offices throughout the region. In addition, three formal engagement programs supplement its institutional budget: the International Military Education and Training program, the Foreign Military Financing Program, and the 506(a)(2) Drawdown Program (in which the U.S. administration authorizes the transfer of older U.S. equipment that is no longer needed)—although the Southern Command's allotment for these programs is small relative to other regional combatant commands, despite the fact that in a "limited-resource theater" these programs represent "critical engagement tools."<sup>22</sup>

Table 6.1 Southern Command engagement tools

<i>Year</i>	<i>Foreign Military Financing (FMF) (in US\$ millions)</i>	<i>International Military Education and Training (IMET) (in US\$ millions)</i>
1990	215.1	N/a
1991	220.3	N/a
1992	109.8	N/a
1993	61.0	N/a
1994	12.2	N/a
1995	13.6	N/a
1996	1.8	.95
1997	2.0	0
1998	3.0	.885
1999	3.0	.917
2000	3.0	9.890
2001	4.99	10.842
2002 Estimate	8.7	12.760
2003 Request	115.0	13.670

*Sources:* United States, Department of State, Office of Resources, Plans and Policy, Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2002 (Washington: April 2001). FY 2003 International Affairs (Function 150) Budget Request Summary and Highlights of Accounts by Appropriations Subcommittees (Washington: February 4, 2002).

Wilhelm's Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funding, for example, totaled just \$3 million for fiscal year (FY) 1998, continuing a long trend of decline in funding that began with the decade.<sup>23</sup> See table 6.1.

#### Headquarters Staff, Miami, Florida

The approximately 800 military personnel and 325 civilian employees at the Southern command's headquarters generally are sourced from the services and are organized in the standard joint staff model, with a few institution-specific innovations. Given the Command's focus on support to law enforcement, for example, a broad representation of permanent liaisons from the Department of State, DEA, Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Service, and other U.S. government agencies ensure collaboration between Washington and the Southern Command through the interagency process. In addition, the Command created some internal organizations—such as the J5's Human Rights Office—and coordinates closely with others, such as the counterdrug-focused Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South (or JIATF-South), to align its

resources with mission priorities. Finally, due to the command's small size, it relies relatively heavily on its component commands for implementation of its counterdrug and engagement missions.

Because Wilhelm arrived just as the new headquarters was being established, the Command was not fully staffed. In addition, because a majority of the staff did not make the move from Panama, but rather joined the Command from other operational units, Wilhelm faced relatively little organizational momentum or resistance to his initiatives. At the same time, a good portion of the staff had limited experience with the AOR, experience that would be developed only over time.

### U.S. Army South (USARSO)

USARSO includes an infantry battalion and other supporting units, but with only 1,800 active duty personnel, depends heavily on the Army Reserves and the Army National Guard. One of U.S. Army South's major tasks is to provide the Army command and control structure for the Southern Command. It also supports regional disaster relief and counterdrug efforts and provides oversight, planning, and logistical support for humanitarian and civic assistance projects throughout the Southern Command AOR. Finally, reflecting the tradition that the Southern Command is an Army-dominated command, USARSO is the "Executive Agent" for the Southern Command. In this capacity, the Army is responsible for the majority of the personnel support and base operations.

USARSO's headquarters moved from Panama to Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico in 1999 while being reduced in size by 80 percent. Fewer than three years later, the Army announced another move to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and plans to further trim headquarters staff by 100 positions to just over 300.<sup>24</sup> The move further distances the Command from the region for which it is responsible.

### U.S. Southern Air Forces (USSOUTHAF)

Until the withdrawal of U.S. military forces and the closure of Howard Air Base, Panama, in late 1999, the Air Force's 24th Wing shouldered much of the logistical and air transport support to the Command, even while 12th Air Force served as the air component command. Those responsibilities have since shifted to 12th Air Force, also known as U.S. Southern Air Forces (USSOUTHAF), which coordinates these activities from its headquarters at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona. The Command operates forward operating locations (FOLs) in Aruba,

Curaçao, and Manta, Ecuador that serve as strategic hubs and staging areas for counterdrug operations, contingency operations, and humanitarian and civic assistance projects. Additionally, the air component provides tactical aircraft for intra-theater airlift; it draws from the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units on a rotating basis.

#### U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command

The Southern Command's naval component (COMNAVSO) was based in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico until early 2004; it moved to Mayport, Florida. In addition to providing naval vessels to the Southern Command, the Navy also operates the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) in Stennis, Mississippi. The small-craft school teaches Latin American naval personnel how to conduct riverine operations and maintain small craft. Finally, the Navy conducts several naval exercises every year. The largest, UNITAS, involves naval, marine, and Coast Guard forces. Held annually since 1959, the exercise in 2003 involved more than 20,000 sailors, coast guard personnel, and marines from 15 countries.

#### Marine Forces South (MARFORSOUTH)

The Marine component is located in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. When deployed, the Marines typically train forces to conduct riverine operations.

#### U.S. Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH)

The Special Operations component was stationed at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, but moved to Florida in 2004. With an emphasis on counterdrug and counterinsurgency operations, Special Forces play an important role in the Southern Command. In addition, the U.S. Army's 7th Special Forces Group, located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, maintains continuous deployments of training teams throughout the AOR.

#### Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-Bravo)

In 1984, the Southern Command created Task Force Bravo at Soto Cano Air Base in Comayagua, Honduras. The base is primarily staffed by U.S. military personnel from units in the United States on temporary assignment. The Task Force is composed of about 1,000 permanent military and civilian personnel. JTF-Bravo provides command, communications, intelligence, and logistics support for U.S. exercises and deployments to training activities in Honduras. As the most robust

U.S.-run base in Central America since the closure of Howard Air Base in Panama, JTF Bravo organizes and supports multinational humanitarian, counterdrug, and disaster relief operations. For example, JTF-Bravo served as the U.S. military transportation hub for all of Central America in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

#### Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-South (JIATF South)

Composed of about a dozen U.S. federal departments and agencies, the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-South is located in Key West, Florida. The Task Force coordinates the activities of the Departments of Defense, Justice, Treasury, and Transportation, and many subordinate agencies engaged in drug interdiction.

#### Joint Task Force-Guantánamo (JTF-Guantánamo)

Created in 2002 to hold and interrogate captives from Afghanistan, Joint Task Force Guantánamo is located at the U.S. Naval Base Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

#### Security Assistance Organizations

The Southern Command operates a total of 26 security assistance organizations throughout the region, which manage U.S. security assistance programs and special activities in Central and South America and the Caribbean. These organizations, named Military Groups (MILGP), Military Assistance Groups (MAG), Offices of Defense Cooperation (ODC), Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAG), and Defense Assistance Offices (DAO) according to the country-specific agreements that authorize them, generally are commanded by an Army colonel or a Navy captain, and serve as the Command's representatives to the U.S. ambassadors and their respective country teams. They also serve as the Command's liaisons to the host country military forces and oversee most U.S. military activities and deployments in their respective countries, including any official responsibilities connected with weapons sales or maintenance agreements.

#### Other Organizations

In addition to the Southern Command's components and subordinate commands, several training institutions that do not fall within the command support the engagement agenda. The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, run by the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command, annually instructs more than 1,000 civilian, military and law enforcement leaders from throughout the Western



Hemisphere. Inaugurated in January 2001 to replace the much-criticized USARSA, its goals explicitly include strengthening democracy, instilling respect for the rule of law, and honoring human rights. Held in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, the programs are designed to educate students on a variety of topics: peaceful resolution of border disputes, fighting terrorism, interdicting the drug trade, disrupting organized crime, responding to natural disasters, and supporting peacekeeping efforts.<sup>25</sup> Other training institutions that do not fall under the Southern Command include the Inter-American Air Forces Academy and the Inter-American Defense College.

Despite its history of engagement and, as a consequence, the existence of a well-oiled “engagement” engine, when Wilhelm took command in September 1997 the Southern Command’s very survival as a co-equal to the other regional commands seemed to be in jeopardy. His leadership would determine whether the Southern Command as an institution was necessary at all, and whether it could serve our nation during a crisis in our own hemisphere. At stake was not only the institutional prestige of the Southern Command itself, but the influence of the U.S. military in the Caribbean and Latin America.

### Policy Entrepreneur

When I call, you haul—no whimpering or whining.

Gen. Wilhelm during a “pep-talk” to Soldiers and Airmen, U.S. Southern Command<sup>26</sup>

### *Personal Interest*

While every regional combatant commander works within the overarching policy environment and is limited by the tools at his disposal, much of his influence is determined by who he is and his effectiveness in policy circles. The commander’s experience in the AOR, in combat, and in the policy arena all plays a part in determining this effectiveness, as do his personal abilities, convictions, and motivation to engage in the policy process. By reviewing Wilhelm’s personal characteristics and his personal approach to engagement in Colombia, this section seeks an understanding of the importance of these various attributes in determining the degree of the regional combatant commanders’ influence on the policy process.

General Wilhelm arrived at the Southern Command having spent precious little of his career in the AOR, and he spoke no Spanish. Furthermore, he was a career Marine officer, and many wondered

whether a Marine would carry weight with Latin American military brass; invariably, Latin American armies were the military heavyweights, dwarfing other services in size, prestige, and power. As a result, the senior military leadership almost always consisted of Army officers. On the other hand, Wilhelm had seen combat service in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia. This combat service earned him credibility with the Colombian military leadership (who had all spent good parts of their careers in combat) as no amount of Spanish ability or familiarity with the culture of the region would have. In addition, Wilhelm was no stranger to Washington or the interagency process, having served from 1990 until 1992 as deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Policy and Missions within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SOLIC). This experience would come in handy, as the DOD's counterdrug office at the time, the deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Strategy (DEP&S), fell within the same Office.

When Wilhelm arrived at the Southern Command, the situation in Colombia, the existing counterdrug assistance programs, and organizational inertia seemed to set the conditions for a stepped-up counterdrug assistance program with the CNP. And yet, Wilhelm's background and his mandate as the regional combatant commander whose mission in large part was to engage the region's military forces dictated that he attempt to revitalize ties with the Colombian military. Furthermore, despite several other major issues facing him—a quasi-permanent U.S. presence in Haiti following the U.S. intervention to return President Aristide to power, tensions on the border between Peru and Ecuador, and the impending move of all U.S. military forces from Panama and the need to establish forward operating locations to replace Howard Air Base—Wilhelm felt personally engaged in Colombia's security situation. Through his interaction with Colombia's leadership, it is clear that he developed a conviction that the United States bore some responsibility for Colombia's troubles, and that even with its deficiencies, the Colombian military was the only public institution that potentially could control the countryside, the only institution that warranted a large U.S. investment. With these beliefs, General Wilhelm took an active role in policy development, embarking on an advocacy campaign in Bogotá and Washington to convince policymakers that the U.S. military could and should appropriate a massive increase in counterdrug assistance, and focus on the Colombian military as a primary engagement partner.

This active personal involvement in the Colombia situation began after the March 1998 disaster at El Billar, which prompted a Wilhelm visit to Bogotá on short notice. In Bogotá, Wilhelm took a personal interest in the tactics of the battle. To ensure that the Colombians understood their own points of failure, he asked them to describe to him in detail what went wrong. After this trip, Wilhelm assessed that beyond equipment and training issues, the real problem within the Colombian military was not a crisis of *competence* but a “crisis of confidence.”<sup>27</sup> Barring the restoration of the leadership’s confidence to pursue the FARC and other illegal armed groups, he concluded, the vast, lawless countryside would remain the undisputed domain of “narco-guerrillas” and a *de facto* “narco-state.”

Given the connected nature of the insurgents and narcotics trafficking in southern Colombia, Wilhelm saw the El Billar incident as an opportunity to craft a response that would serve the interests of both the United States and Colombia. With this in mind, Wilhelm began to wage a full-scale diplomatic effort with the Colombian brass to convince them that it was in their best interest to take a more direct stance against the narcotics production industry in the region. At the same time, he began to make the case in Washington for increased U.S. military assistance that would help make such an effort possible and successful.

A Colombian initiative would be the first test case for such assistance. Soon after El Billar, under public pressure to respond to the FARC’s growing power, the Colombian military leadership took tentative steps toward establishing a more robust presence in southern Colombia by announcing the creation of a joint task force, to be headquartered at Tres Esquinas Air Base just 60 miles from El Billar. President Samper announced the organization as a “counterguerrilla task force” of 5,000 soldiers whose primary purpose would be to fight the FARC.<sup>28</sup> Although the counterguerrilla label sent the wrong message to U.S. policymakers, this step was encouraging for two reasons. First, the initiative, spearheaded by the Colombian Army leadership, signaled an institutional interest in challenging the FARC in the area; the Army could just as easily have beaten a hasty retreat, pulling out any remaining forces. Second, the task force was modeled after a U.S. joint operation, and called for staffing by Colombian Army, Air Force, and Navy personnel—with the potential for including the CNP.

In early May, fewer than two months after the task force’s inauguration, Wilhelm made it a priority to visit Tres Esquinas, in the heart of Colombia’s jungle, to see the new organization firsthand and to understand whether it could serve the interests of both countries—in counterdrug terms. What

he found was that, despite much fanfare at the stand-up of the task force, it lacked an organic offensive capability that could combat the drug-financed insurgents on their own turf or attack narcotics-related targets. Within a few months, the task force consisted of nothing more than a skeleton staff with few resources, no organic forces, no plans to engage the FARC or cocaine producers, and little inclination on the part of its commanders to deploy troops beyond the sloppily guarded base perimeter.<sup>29</sup> It was apparent that without U.S. support the task force would remain nothing more than a paper tiger. If the initiative were to become a high-profile failure, the Colombian leadership and the Colombian people would lose faith in the military institution—the only institution with the potential, in Wilhelm’s mind, to exert meaningful pressure on the narcotics industry and the insurgents.

Thus, Wilhelm realized that even if the Colombian military leadership developed the will to take the drug war to the jungles of southern Colombia, they would need assistance to plan in detail and to build an offensive fighting force that could do so. Although arguably the least resourced of all regional combatant commanders, his 800-person headquarters staff in Miami was replete with military planners who would love nothing more than to engage in real combat-force planning in an otherwise sleepy area of operations. He would quickly set them to the task.

### *Shuttle Diplomacy*

Just after the stand-up of the Southern Joint Task Force, Andrés Pastrana, who had lost to Samper in the previous election, emerged triumphant in the presidential election.<sup>30</sup> President Pastrana’s election brought a definitive end to the Samper regime, and a “normalization” of political relations between the two countries ensued, bringing with it a window of opportunity for improved military-to-military relations. This was not lost on General Wilhelm, who jumped at the new opportunity, becoming one of the first high-level U.S. officials to visit President Pastrana in Bogotá.<sup>31</sup>

But if President Pastrana’s election removed some obstacles to military engagement from the U.S. policy standpoint, the way ahead was anything but clear. No one had spelled out just what type and level of engagement was needed. Furthermore, a “militarization” of the war on drugs would be a hard sell to President Pastrana’s new team, who campaigned on the potential for a peace dialogue with the FARC, and to the Colombian public. President Pastrana himself seemed determined to make peace rather than making war, and tended to view a stepped-up

military effort as a threat to—rather than complementary to—his peace plan. Wilhelm would have to convince President Pastrana, at times through personal meetings and at times by mobilizing other key figures within the administration, such as Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, that military pressure should be a key component of any effective negotiating strategy.<sup>32</sup>

Almost immediately, General Wilhelm began to find common ground with the Colombian Army leadership for military engagement. Together, they used the Southern Joint Task Force as a launching pad, devising a plan to develop a U.S.-trained and U.S.-equipped counterdrug battalion to serve as an organic air-mobile unit within the Southern Joint Task Force—essentially, to replicate the CNP's Jungle Commandos within the Colombian Army, providing organic ground troops to the Task Force and thus giving "teeth" to the paper tiger. It was not the Colombians, but a Southern Command working group that first drafted a proposal for an organizational structure and training curriculum for the counterdrug battalion. Shortly after the Southern Command sent this proposal to the Colombians, Colombian Army Commander General Mora visited the Southern Command headquarters in January 1999 with a request for assistance. Remarkably, the Colombian military's request strongly resembled the initial plan proposed by the Southern Command. General Mora also requested that a Southern Command working group continue to propose detailed plans for the counterdrug battalion. In response, a Southern Command team traveled to Bogotá later that month to work with their Colombian counterparts to fine-tune plans for the counterdrug battalion.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, Southern Command headquarters staff secured more than \$7 million from the DOD's counterdrug office for training and equipping the battalion.<sup>34</sup> Training began in April of that year, and by December, nearly 1,000 soldiers of the Colombian counterdrug battalion were trained, equipped, and ready to commence operations. At the same time, the Southern Command orchestrated the establishment of a Joint Intelligence Command and Control Center at Tres Esquinas Air Base, and secured more than \$5 million to build and equip it.

### *Persuading Washington*

All of this happened without a need for legislation, because these engagements were paid for by DOD counterdrug funds. But from the very beginning of this re-engagement process, Wilhelm was acutely aware that eventually he would need congressional support. As early as August 1998, for example, he cautioned State Department officials that

serious flaws within the Colombian military would take a minimum of three years to “repair.”<sup>35</sup> He knew, too, that helicopters for troop transport would be required to provide a true air-mobile capability. Thus, rather than an end in itself, Wilhelm saw the first counterdrug battalion as a pilot program, and lost no opportunity to tout its success. During meetings with Colombian and U.S. officials, for example even while U.S. Special Forces were only beginning to train the battalion’s soldiers, Wilhelm pushed the strategy of reporting tangible success of the counterdrug battalion to Congress.<sup>36</sup>

In October 1999, before the first counterdrug battalion became operational, Wilhelm and the new Colombian defense minister, Luis Ramirez, along with General Tapias, the Colombian Military Forces commander, and General Mora, the Colombian Army commander, discussed a strategy for justifying and obtaining further assistance from Washington.<sup>37</sup> In order to convince Congress to appropriate funds on the scale required, they knew they would have to articulate the Colombian requirements and justify those requirements. Furthermore, they knew that there would be little support—in Washington or Bogotá—for a military build-up without a commensurate effort to address the root causes of the conflict through programs focusing on poverty alleviation, alternative economic development, and administration of justice. What they needed was a comprehensive plan for Colombia.

### Devising “Plan Colombia”

As the CD [*counterdrug*] battalion demonstrates its effectiveness, and I am confident it will, I will encourage Colombia’s military leaders to expand the concept and create a CD Brigade.

General Wilhelm, September 21, 1999<sup>38</sup>

Although the Clinton administration has portrayed Plan Colombia as Mr. Pastrana’s work, much of it was drafted by American officials, according to people familiar with its preparation.<sup>39</sup>

Christopher Marquis, *The New York Times*, October 15, 2000

While General Wilhelm and his staff were actively involved in planning the first counterdrug battalion and were starting to articulate the next step by mid-1999, President Pastrana’s administration was just beginning to formulate its own national strategy. The first white paper released by the Colombian Office of the Presidency of the Republic in May 1999 and called “Plan Colombia” consisted of an evaluation

of the beginning stages of peace negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and spoke of the need for a holistic approach to solving the country's security problems. However, while replete with references to the poverty rates in outlying areas and the need for social investments, the plan made no mention of a military strategy to combat narcotics trafficking.<sup>40</sup>

In order to assist the Colombians to develop a strategy with teeth, Wilhelm coordinated with allies in the Clinton administration that would help him make the case for military aid to Colombia. Just before traveling to Colombia in July 1999, General Barry McCaffrey, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, or "Drug Czar"—and a former commander of the Southern Command—published a discussion paper that first made mention of the need for a massive aid package. In the paper, McCaffrey called for \$1 billion in aid to Colombia, including \$360 million to establish Colombian military counterdrug operations in the southern coca growing areas.<sup>41</sup> Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, followed with a visit in which he counseled President Pastrana to formulate a comprehensive plan that would serve as a focused platform for U.S. counterdrug assistance. One month later, the Pastrana administration produced what it once again called "Plan Colombia." This time, the multifaceted \$7.5-billion plan required more than \$3 billion in aid from the United States and the European Union. While \$4 billion of this supposedly would come from the Colombian government and another \$2 billion would come from the European Union and other international donors, the United States was asked to provide the "hard component"—military aid to support an assault on coca cultivations in southern Colombia.

### *The Plan*<sup>42</sup>

Broadly, the Colombian government's plan that became known as Plan Colombia had five components: alternative development and assistance to displaced persons, improved governing capacity and protection of basic human rights, support for the peace process in Colombia and cooperation with Colombia's neighbors, illicit crop eradication, and interdiction of illicit narcotics. Assistance for alternative development would target small family-farms in areas that stood the best chance of developing licit agricultural markets, and would be administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). (Costing only \$3 million, this program would not apply to industrial-scale, agro-business areas of illicit crop cultivation. Such areas, totaling about 80,000 hectares,

accounted for most of the coca grown in southern Colombia.) With \$13 million, the U.S. would attempt to strengthen the rule of law in Colombia through USAID and U.S. Department of Justice programs. Other programs totaling approximately \$3 million would facilitate the peace process through grants to a variety of Colombian and U.S. institutions, universities, NGOs, and other civil society organizations for research, workshops, conferences, and training.

The final two components of Plan Colombia would garner the lion's share of American aid. In order to exert pressure on the cocaine industry in southern Colombia—including eradicating plantation-sized coca fields, locating and attacking cocaine laboratories, and interdicting cocaine shipments before they left the “source zone”—the Colombian government's proposal called for U.S. assistance in training and equipping three counterdrug battalions of the Colombian Army and a counterdrug Brigade Staff. The idea was to use counterdrug Brigade troops as an occupying force that would flush out the insurgents from the areas targeted for eradication, thereby working hand in glove with the Department of State's eradication program by minimizing ground fire or other types of resistance to aerial spraying. The final major element of U.S. support for Plan Colombia lay in funding improvements to Colombian aircraft and providing ground-based radars and intelligence support to interdict narcotics as they were transported to the borders or coasts.

### *Developing Priorities*

Although the Pastrana administration clearly took responsibility for Plan Colombia, the plan unmistakably incorporated input from various organizations in the United States and Colombia. Its emphasis on a counterdrug Brigade was a clear Wilhelm imprint, reflecting many months of behind-the-scenes preparation. During an August 1999 trip to Bogotá, Wilhelm had emphasized to the Country Team—including Ambassador Curtis Kamman—the importance of “ruthlessly exploiting the current window of opportunity for counterdrug assistance” to the Colombian military.<sup>43</sup> Throughout that summer Southern Command staff members had sat alongside Colombian military planners to “work the details” of a Colombian counterdrug Brigade—to include the three battalions and a headquarters element. As they did so, Southern Command personnel encouraged the Colombian joint staff to come up with a “shopping list” of capabilities they thought would be necessary to achieve success against the narcotics trafficking target. By October 1999—just one month after the Colombians published Plan



Colombia—General Wilhelm was holding detailed talks with Colombian officials about the numbers and types of helicopters that would be needed to provide an air-mobile capability to the counterdrug Brigade.<sup>44</sup> These details served as a framework for the Clinton administration's February 2000 proposal to Congress requesting emergency supplemental funding of \$1.3 billion for FY 2000 and FY 2001, ultimately resulting in a dramatic funding increase to \$960.1 million in FY 2000 and an additional \$254.9 million in FY 2001.<sup>45</sup> (See table 6.2 and figure 6.1.)

The Clinton administration's proposal was a direct reflection of Wilhelm's views on the scale and scope of assistance required. Now, it was up to him and other allies—such as McCaffrey—to make the case before Congress. He was in a strong position to do so, having personally worked on many of the details of the request during trips to Colombia. In fact, in the space of one year Wilhelm made 12 visits to Colombia, almost always meeting with General Mora, the Colombian Army commander. Despite Wilhelm's lack of Spanish-language capability, he was well supported in Bogotá by the U.S. Military Group—his permanent detachment of staff—and the rest of the “Country Team,” thereby enabling him to hold substantive, detailed meetings directly with his Colombian counterparts. What's more, Wilhelm's Miami-based staff traveled with him and traveled independently, and they held a nuanced view of the Colombian requirements and capabilities that would serve Wilhelm well as he took the issue to the Hill.<sup>46</sup>

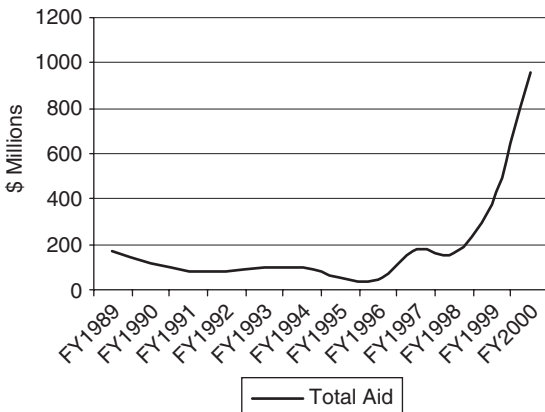


Figure 6.1 U.S. assistance to Colombia, FY 1989–FY 2000.

Source: Table 6: U.S. aid to Colombia FY 1989–FY 1998, Congressional Research Service Report RL30541, 2001, *Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000–FY2001)*, July 5.

Table 6.2 U.S. assistance to Colombia, FY 1989–FY 1998 (obligations and authorizations in millions of dollars)

<i>Category of aid</i>	<i>FY 1989</i>	<i>FY 1990</i>	<i>FY 1991</i>	<i>FY 1992</i>	<i>FY 1993</i>	<i>FY 1994</i>	<i>FY 1995</i>	<i>FY 1996</i>	<i>FY 1997</i>	<i>FY 1998</i>
<i>Economic</i>										
USAID	—	—	—	—	23.8	0.2	—	—	—	0.5
Food Aid	0.1	0.2	—	—	0.8	—	—	—	—	—
Other	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.6	—	—
<i>Counterdrug</i>										
State Dept INC	10.0	20.0	20.0	23.4	25.0	20.0	16.0	16.0	33.5	46.3
State Dept Air Wing	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.5	6.6	10.9	37.8
Defense Dept Section 1033 (Riverine)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.2
Defense Dept Section 1004 (Counter Drug)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10.3	11.8
Admin of Justice	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.8	2.0
<i>Military</i>										
IMET	1.5	1.5	2.8	2.3	2.6	0.9	0.6	—	—	0.2
FMF	—	69.7	27.1	47.0	27.0	7.7	10.0	—	—	—
MAP Merger Funds	7.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Drawdowns</i>										
Defense Dept	65.0	20.0	—	7.0	—	—	—	14.5	9.4	18.8
Subtotal	84.7	112.2	50.6	80.3	80.4	30.2	30.4	37.7	66.6	119.6

Table 6.2 *Continued*

<i>Category of aid</i>	<i>FY 1989</i>	<i>FY 1990</i>	<i>FY 1991</i>	<i>FY 1992</i>	<i>FY 1993</i>	<i>FY 1994</i>	<i>FY 1995</i>	<i>FY 1996</i>	<i>FY 1997</i>	<i>FY 1998</i>
<i>Other Aid</i>										
Foreign Military Financing	—	—	19.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Foreign Military Sales	83.3	3.7	10.2	14.3	12.8	67.2	21.9	9.7	74.5	8.7
Foreign Military Construction Sales	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33.5	28.7
Defense Dept Section 124 (Detection and Monitoring)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33.5	28.7
Subtotal	83.3	3.7	30.1	14.3	14.4	67.6	21.9	10.4	108.5	37.4
Total aid to Colombia	168	115.9	80.7	94.6	94.8	97.8	52.3	48.1	175.1	157.0

Source: Table 6: U.S. aid to Colombia FY 1989–FY 1998, Congressional Research Service Report RL30541, 2001, *Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000–FY2001)*, July 5.

## The Fight on Capitol Hill

The national interest in Colombia . . . just cries out for action.  
 President William Jefferson Clinton, June 6, 2000

I want to help Colombia . . . but I cannot endorse a proposal that . . . is so poorly thought out and suffers from so many unanswered questions. . . . Even the goal is vague. If it is to stop the flow of illegal drugs into the United States, that is wishful thinking. If it is to defeat the guerrillas, this is not the way to do it. I think the American people deserve better answers before we spend billions of their tax dollars on another civil war in South America.

Senator Patrick Leahy, June 20, 2000

Just as he frequented the capital cities of the Caribbean and Central and South America—making 74 visits, or an average of more than six per month, during FY 2000—Wilhelm also knew that he needed to be well connected in the most influential capital in the hemisphere. In FY 2000, Wilhelm traveled to Washington 21 times, including three trips in February and four trips in March, just as the House of Representatives took up the emergency supplemental legislation for Plan Colombia.<sup>47</sup> During these trips he testified before Congress, but perhaps more importantly, he sought out members of Congress behind the scenes and won them over to his point of view.

To help sell the Plan, General Wilhelm went to the Hill on March 7, 2000 prepared with a briefing that contrasted the monetary, force commitment, and casualty costs of Colombia to Vietnam, a conflict with which he was intimately familiar. The slides offered a cost figure of \$1.6 billion for Colombia for 2000–01, contrasted with \$140 billion spent in Vietnam from 1964 to 1974; 3,000 U.S. troops deployed to Colombia, contrasted with 2.59 million deployed to Vietnam; and perhaps most striking, five U.S. casualties in Colombia—which occurred when an intelligence aircraft crashed in 1999—contrasted with 58,148 American casualties in Vietnam.<sup>48</sup> The point was that the two scenarios were not remotely comparable. And even those who were reluctant to support a “militarization” of the drug war or another U.S. “intervention” in Latin America admitted that something needed to be done in Colombia: the United States simply could not stand by while a friendly nation—a nation whose capital was just three hour’s flying time from Miami—succumbed to an insurgency or became a *de facto* narco-state. Two days after his briefing to key House members, the House Appropriations Committee approved a \$1.7 billion emergency supplemental package along the lines of that proposed by the administration.

Wilhelm met more rhetorical resistance in the Senate, but by the time the bill was discussed there, in June 2000, it was essentially a *fait accompli*, and was passed without major delays. After a short stay in conference committee, the emergency supplemental was approved, and President Clinton signed it into law in July 2000. At the time, Clinton remarked, “the Colombian Government . . . can’t begin to deal with the challenges posed by the drug traffickers . . . [the legislation is a] clear signal to the Colombians that we support democracy and we support their efforts against the drug traffickers.”<sup>49</sup> See table 6.3.

Broad support from the Congress, the State Department, and the president for the emergency supplemental in some respects conceals the

*Table 6.3* Plan Colombia funding contained in public law 106-246, H.R. 4425<sup>a</sup>

<i>Category</i>	<i>In millions</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	
Southern Colombia Program	403.7
Colombian National Police Support	115.6
Interdiction	113.0
Economic and Alternative Assistance/Employment	58.5
Assistance for Displaced Persons	47.5
Human Rights	53.5
Administration of Justice/Rule of Law/Other Governance	65.5
Peace Process	3.0
<i>Colombia subtotal</i>	860.3
<i>Assistance from other U.S. agencies (nondefense) to Colombia</i>	
Interdiction	132.3
Forward Operating Locations	116.5
<i>Subtotal</i>	248.8
<i>Support for the Andean region</i>	
Interdiction in Bolivia	25.0
Interdiction in Ecuador	12.0
Interdiction in Other Countries	18.0
KMAX Helicopters	32.0
<i>Interdiction subtotal</i>	87.0
Development for Bolivia	85.0
Development for Ecuador	8.0
<i>Development subtotal</i>	93.0
<i>Total for Plan Colombia</i>	1,289.0

<sup>a</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Nina M. Serafino, 2001, “Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options,” Washington: *Congressional Research Service*, February 12.

extent of Wilhelm's influence on the policy process, making it appear as if the consensus reached was a foregone conclusion with or without his intervention. And yet, when he took a personal interest in Colombia's situation more than two years earlier, the Colombian military had been a distrusted, failing institution with little interest in counterdrug operations and little hope of receiving U.S. assistance. Through personal diplomacy in Bogotá and Washington and by mobilizing his staff on the issue, Wilhelm intervened effectively in the policy creation process, largely shaping the eventual \$1.3 billion U.S. assistance package, all but \$321 million of which constituted assistance for the Colombian military.

### Wilhelm's Legacy

Two months after the aid package's approval, and before much of the support was delivered, Wilhelm would relinquish command of the U.S. Southern Command, retiring from the U.S. Marine Corps after 35 years of service. When he did, the Colombian military lost a key ally in Miami; Colombian General Mora, then the Colombian Army commander and in 2003 the commander of the Colombian Armed Forces, called Wilhelm "Colombia's favorite friend in the United States." The momentum General Wilhelm created for U.S. engagement with the Colombian military, though, would outlast his own service in office. While other sources of funding for Plan Colombia's nonmilitary aspects never materialized—the European Union and other international donors backed away from the Plan—all \$1.3 billion in U.S. aid was delivered, mostly in the form of helicopters and training for the counterdrug Brigade.<sup>50</sup> In 2002, an additional \$452 million was appropriated for aid to Colombia, Congress lifted strict rules that limited this aid to counter-drug operations—opening the way for direct U.S. support to counterinsurgency operations—and U.S. troops began to train other Colombian Army brigades to protect oil pipelines and strategic infrastructure.<sup>51</sup> As of early 2003, an additional \$600 million in aid is expected, and the U.S.–Colombian military relationship remains strong.

In addition, although Wilhelm and others were careful to advocate an increase in U.S. engagement with the Colombian military strictly under the auspices of counterdrug assistance—simply because the politics of the day required it—since then the distinction between counterdrug and counterinsurgency or counterterrorism operations has largely disappeared. In fact, with the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent Bush administration focus on fighting terrorism throughout the world, Colombia is again at the center of America's policy in the

Western Hemisphere. Colombia's three major illegal armed groups, the FARC, the ELN, and AUC, are on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations, and in 2002, there were more incidents classified as terrorist attacks in Colombia (an average of four per day) than in all of the world's countries combined. Congress has recognized these realities. In the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2002 and the FY 2003 Defense Appropriations Act, Congress granted the Southern Command the authority to use counterdrug money for non-counterdrug activities. As an example of how effective the less constrained authority can be, Southern Commander General James T. Hill concluded his 2003 testimony with a "success story" from Colombia's counterdrug Brigade:

Operations are more efficient and effective because the same assets are used to confront terrorists as well as drug traffickers. We can now share more intelligence with Colombia, and they can use counterdrug-funded assets in the combined campaign against terrorists and drug production and trafficking. A great example of success as a result of expanded authority is the killing of the FARC's 15th Front Commander by the Colombian military utilizing U.S.-provided UH-1 helicopters flown by Colombian pilots.<sup>52</sup>

Given the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent Bush administration focus on fighting terrorism throughout the world, the removal of constraints on counterdrug assistance is not surprising. And yet, regardless of whether Wilhelm and others foresaw the military re-engagement they engineered as the first step toward greater direct U.S. involvement in Colombia's conflict, it is difficult to argue that the investment in the Colombian military has delivered anything less than what was promised. In the three years since the implementation of U.S. assistance to Plan Colombia, the counterdrug brigade successfully facilitated unprecedented aerial eradication in Caqueta and Putumayo, and became a laboratory interdiction force in its own right, destroying thousands of cocaine base labs and several dozen cocaine hydrochloride laboratories while exerting pressure on illegal armed groups operating in southern Colombia. At the same time, reports of human rights violations by the Colombian military fell to fewer than 2 percent of all allegations.<sup>53</sup>

On a larger scale, the crisis of confidence that Wilhelm noticed among the Colombian military leadership seems to be well behind them, as they commit their forces to successive operations of increasing scale and scope, and take an ever more aggressive approach to both the counterdrug and counterinsurgency missions. Additionally, public

confidence and trust in the Colombian military has increased, with approval ratings for the military at record highs.

### Understanding the Policy Influence of the Regional Combatant Commander

Wilhelm's role in this "about face" by the Colombian military was not merely to implement a U.S. military engagement strategy handed down by the Clinton administration and Congress. Rather, he played an active role in the interagency process that shaped and secured support for that strategy. While the situation in Colombia clearly called for stepped-up U.S. assistance, the size of that assistance and its key component—an air-mobile counterdrug brigade complete with U.S.-provided helicopters—were a direct result of his intervention in the process. To be sure, others aided in this effort—not least of which General Barry McCaffrey, director of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy and a former commander of the Southern Command, who took a public role in advocating aid for the Colombian military. But McCaffrey did not have military planners on his staff, nor the capability to engage the Colombian military in order to work out the details of the policy. Rather, it was General Wilhelm, through behind-the-scenes advocacy and personal diplomacy in Bogotá and Washington, who exerted his influence to shape U.S. military engagement. As the leader of the Southern Command, he had the necessary tools at his disposal, and the necessary influence in Bogotá to cajole, coax, and ultimately convince the reluctant Colombian military brass to step up their efforts against the narcotics industry. But while his distinguished combat career earned the respect of Colombian military leaders, his adeptness in policy circles—in Washington rather than Bogotá—together with his personal interest in the Colombia situation, was the key to his success in shaping U.S. military engagement in Colombia.

Wilhelm and his allies in the administration overcame countless legislative and administrative hurdles to make a \$1.3-billion aid package a reality. In doing so, he demonstrated the power of the regional combatant commander to guide the interagency policy process.

### Notes

1. The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.



2. February 23, 2000.
3. As quoted in Jaime Eduardo Jaramillo, Leonidas Mora, and Fernando Cubides, 1989, "Colonización Coca y Guerrilla," *Alianza Editorial Colombiana*, Bogotá, Colombia, p. 129.
4. Statement of General Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC, Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command, before the 105th Congress, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, March 23, 2000.
5. David Bushnell, 1993, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 182 and 201–222.
6. For a detailed description of the combined U.S.–Colombian effort to bring down the Medellín Cartel, see Mark Bowden, 2001, *Killing Pablo: The Hunt for the World's Greatest Outlaw*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
7. "Hechos de Paz V: Del Dialogo a la Negociacion, Agosto 7 de 1998–Mayo 24 de 1999" (Santa Fe de Bogotá: Presidencia de la Republica, Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, Mayo de 1999), p. 441.
8. A series of *El Tiempo* articles that ran from early to mid-March 1998 describe the ambush in detail. *El Tiempo* is the leading Bogotá daily newspaper.
9. The episode ended tragically: the policemen were held in captivity for more than eighteen months, when, heroically, they escaped and evaded their captors for more than 10 days in the Vichada jungle. This chase through the jungles of Vichada became a high-profile media event, with Colombians following the story closely. After an informant revealed the escapees' whereabouts to the FARC, they were executed for their attempted escape.
10. The cuts included mandatory cancellation or delay of funding for International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs. See General Accounting Office, 1998, "Drug Control, U.S. Counterdrug Efforts in Colombia Face Continuing Challenges," February, GAO/NSIAD-98-60, p. 7.
11. USSOUTHCOM, SCJ5-SA, 1999, Security Assistance Fact Sheet, December 15.
12. An exception was the air interdiction program carried out in conjunction with the Colombian Air Force. See General Accounting Office, 1998, "Drug Control, U.S. counterdrug Efforts in Colombia Face Continuing Challenges," February, GAO/NSIAD-98-60, p. 2.
13. Bowden, *Killing Pablo*.
14. Aleksandar D. Jovic, 2000, "Colombia at the Crossroads," Schlesinger Working Group Report, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Washington, DC: Schlesinger Working Group on Strategic Surprises (Spring): 6.
15. Senator Patrick Leahy, 2000, comments during Wilhelm testimony (February 23).
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## CHAPTER 7

# U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND: WHERE HISTORY IS MADE

*James S. Robbins*

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Middle East became the daily focus of Americans watching and engaging in the global war on terrorism. At the forefront of fighting terrorism is the U.S. Central Command. As the tip of the spear in this war, U.S. Army General Tommy Franks led the U.S. Central Command against the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2002, Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, and orchestrated the hunt for transnational terrorists throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. With several successful military campaigns completed before he retired, General Franks fulfilled the former Central Command leader General Norman Schwarzkopf's assessment a decade earlier: "Central Command is where you can make history."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of its importance today, the U.S. Central Command was the regional command that got no respect during the 1980s. Born in crisis, underestimated, and under fire from its larger siblings (the European Command and Pacific Command), in recent years it has become the forward line in the war against terror and rogue states. As the Command matured into this position of responsibility, warfighting, and statecraft—sometimes stagecraft—have gone hand in hand. The U.S. Central Command became crucial to American foreign policy to project power in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. The diplomatic role of the combatant commander has been central to this achievement. He has constantly balanced the necessity of a regional American military presence and the sensitivity of having American forces in Arab countries.

### The Historical Framework

The U.S. Central Command comprises 25 countries in Northeast Africa, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, plus the Seychelles islands. While the command is currently the focus of world attention, its beginnings were less auspicious. In the 1960s, the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (AOR) was a part of the U.S. Strike Command (STRICOM), which was tasked with responsibilities in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia (MEASA). STRICOM disappeared when it was replaced by U.S. Readiness Command (REDCOM) during the Nixon administration. The geographical component of the STRICOM mission was divided between the European Command, which took control of all of Africa and the Middle East to Pakistan, and the Pacific Command, which was assigned responsibility for Pakistan and the Indian Ocean.<sup>2</sup>

Destabilizing events in the region in the 1970s, particularly the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, the attendant oil embargo, and growing unrest in Iran, questioned the wisdom of not having a geographical command in what President Carter’s National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski called a “crescent of crisis.”<sup>3</sup> The Cold War competition with the Soviet Union remained the central focus of national security, but the Middle East region contained critical U.S. national interests, chief among them being global petroleum supplies. The United States was heavily dependent on energy imports from this region, and its European and Japanese allies more so. The threat of destabilization, or fear of a Soviet strike southward to seize control of the oil fields and thus the economies of the West, argued strongly in favor of a separate military presence.

The Carter administration attempted to move quickly, but was stymied by politics. Presidential Directive 18, August 18, 1977, recommended forming a quick reaction force for the Middle East, but Congress did not fund the directive. This was the period of the post-Vietnam military drawdown, and other priorities took precedent. The need for some form of response to the emerging threat was brought into sharp focus at the end of the decade, with the fundamentalist revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The loss of Iran was particularly damaging, since the U.S.-backed Shah had traditionally been counted on to supply the military power to back U.S. initiatives should the contingency arise. The radical anti-American monologues of the Iranian revolutionaries, the 1979 oil shock, and the hostages taking at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, made the need for a military response capability irrefutable.

These events led to the formation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) in March 1980, subordinate to REDCOM. The RDJTF was a well-intentioned move to cope with a crisis situation, but it lacked the funding, forces, and infrastructure necessary to have a significant impact. Furthermore, it was given responsibilities to operate within the AOR of the other two regional commands (Europe and Pacific), and it was ill equipped to compete bureaucratically. The deficiencies of the RDJTF, along with the failure of the "Desert One" rescue mission of American hostages in Tehran in April 1980 (which was not conducted by the RDJTF) brought into focus the growing difficulties the United States faced in the Middle East. The area was an important region of vital and growing national interest, becoming less stable, and lacking the physical and organizational infrastructure for sustained presence. The United States had no forward bases, a poor understanding of the cultural and political context of the area, and few friends willing to cooperate in enhancing the U.S. presence. Further, the close American relationship with Israel complicated diplomatic relations with Arab countries in the region.

The RDJTF became an independent Joint Task Force in October 1981, and evolved into a separate regional command, the U.S. Central Command, in January 1983. The new Command's area of responsibility included 18 countries, from Pakistan in the east to Egypt in the west, from the Soviet border in the north to Kenya in the south. The command did not include the Muslim countries in North Africa, which the European Command retained since they bordered the Mediterranean, and thus were logically part of the Italy-based U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet's potential combat zone. Nor did it contain Syria, which the European Command also retained given its Mediterranean shore. Most importantly, Israel was excluded from the U.S. Central Command.

The rationale for retaining Israel in the European Command was the same as the other countries on the Mediterranean rim (Egypt excepted); and in 1973, the bulk of U.S. logistical support for Israel arrived by sea. Thus operational utility overcame geopolitical reality. However, this omission had a significant and beneficial impact on the ability of the U.S. Central Command combatant commander to engage in diplomacy. The combatant commander was not required or expected to visit Tel Aviv for any reason, which protocol (at least) would have demanded were Israel within his AOR. This saved the combatant commander from potential diplomatic contretemps, and did not establish situations in which leaders of Muslim countries would analyze every visit of the combatant commander vis-à-vis Israel. General Schwartzkopf stated plainly, "I'd have had difficulty impressing the Arabs with Central

Command's grasp of geopolitical nuance if one of the stops on my itinerary had been Tel Aviv."<sup>4</sup>

Ten years later, General Franks expressed two views on not including Israel in the U.S. Central Command's AOR. "One view is that if one command, any one command were to have all these 'Arab states' and Israel, then that would make it possible to do a lot of things. There is another view that says if you were to have one command team associated with both sides of the issue there would credibility with neither."<sup>5</sup>

A similar arrangement can be found with respect to the ongoing India–Pakistan conflict over Kashmir. Pakistan is included in the U.S. Central Command, while India is included in the Pacific Command. On one hand, it is easy for the U.S. Central Command to cooperate and visit Islamabad without fear of its staff being "tainted" by visits to New Delhi. On the other hand, if both countries were included in the same AOR, combined military exercises under the direction of the United States might lessen tensions between the two countries. In other words, if India and Pakistan were treated the same way the United States treats Greece and Turkey with respect to the European Command and NATO, then maybe both countries could retain healthy animosity within the larger context of a shared alliance with the United States.

General Franks expressed that the current arrangement with Israel and the Arab states and India and Pakistan works fine. The key, according to Franks, is "to know where the fault lines are and ensure coordination across fault lines."<sup>6</sup> The secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff in Washington are essential to this coordination. This, however, is not always easy. When faced with the task of coordinating American escorts for Gulf oil tankers (Operation Ernest Will), Admiral Crowe observed:

The chief difficulty was that Ernest Will would require coordinated operations by the Middle East Force inside the Gulf and a carrier group outside the Strait of Hormuz. But the Persian Gulf was under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Central Command, while the Indian Ocean (where the carrier group would be located) fell under the Pacific Command . . . To complicate matters further, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Central Command was a Marine General. . . . The prospect of a Marine commanding an almost exclusively Navy mission was deeply disturbing to the naval community. A maritime operation of these dimensions, they believed, was far too significant to be left to a Marine . . .<sup>7</sup>

### A Command Without Forces

In contrast to the other unified combatant commands, the U.S. Central Command has no permanently assigned military forces. Instead, the

Command is organized as a headquarters element and all four Armed Services provide the U.S. Central Command with component commands. The Army component is based in Fort McPherson, Georgia and relies on air transport of its units to the region during times of crisis. The Army component attempts to overcome its geographic distance from its theater of operations through prepositioned equipment in Kuwait. Additionally, the Army provides a near continuous presence through a rotating battalion in Kuwait.

The Air Force component is located at Shaw Air Force base in South Carolina, but maintains Air Expeditionary Forces in the region. The Marine Corps component is located at Camp Smith, Hawaii and deploys to the region by Navy ships or by chartered civilian aircraft. Reflecting the Command's maritime roots, the Navy is the only component located in the region. Based in Bahrain, naval forces make up over 70 percent of all U.S. military presence in the theater and are drawn from naval units in the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

In the past, the lack of forces assigned to the U.S. Central Command was seen as a warfighting handicap. In 1990, it took over seven months for General Schwartzkopf to build a large enough force to confront the Iraqis in Kuwait. The United States Transportation Command moved nearly 504,000 passengers, 3.7 million tons of dry cargo, and 6.1 million tons of petroleum products to the U.S. Central Command.<sup>8</sup> It took six months before enough air power was assembled to strike Iraqi forces. And it took another five weeks before the ground components were ready to strike. Had Iraq invaded Saudi Arabia and denied the U.S. Central Command a staging area for the military build-up, it is doubtful the 1991 ground war would have finished in 100 hours. In 2002–03, however, the U.S. Central Command proved that it could operate with a much smaller force (almost one-third the size of the 1991 force) and launched its campaign against Saddam Hussein in just a few months. In the initial days of the campaign, analysts remarked that the force was too small, but American technology and air power provided by the Air Force and five Navy aircraft carriers proved overwhelming to the Iraqis and Baghdad was captured within four weeks.

In retrospect, having no forces assigned to it and no permanently stationed personnel in the region, the emergence of the U.S. Central Command as the most critical of the regional commands seems logical and preplanned. But in the context of the times, with the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union intensifying, the U.S. Central Command was still a minor theater of operations compared to the European Command and Pacific Command. Its mission planning dealt chiefly with responding to hostile Soviet moves southward through a



destabilized Iran, which was engaged in a war of attrition with Iraq. The geographical remoteness of the U.S. Central Command headquarters, at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, added to the impression that this was not an essential command. Countries in the region also saw the U.S. Central Command as “little more than a major intervention force designed to operate solely for U.S. purposes without their consultation or participation.”<sup>9</sup> Hence the U.S. Central Command received little attention and as much respect. General George Crist, the second Central Command leader, was thus forced by the necessity to undertake a more diplomatic approach, to convince the region’s governments that the U.S. Central Command existed to help provide them with capabilities to defend their interests.<sup>10</sup>

The relative lack of national security organization in the region turned out to be an inadvertent advantage of the U.S. Central Command commander relative to his peers in other commands where there were well-established multinational lines of communication. In Europe and the Pacific especially, security relationships with the United States were mature. Alliance systems were in place; lines of communication and diplomatic discourse were well proven and established. However, in the Middle East, the diplomatic role of the U.S. Central Command commander was dictated by necessity. The lack of a competing infrastructure was simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity to make history. General Tommy Franks commented,

This part of the world is famous for relationships. And so I think any one of the unified commanders of CENTCOM and actually I suspect the other unified commanders too, probably in the Pacific, probably in the Atlantic, but the one I know about is mine, this one. We place a great premium on relationships and that very simply means being there at a frequency, being in each country at a frequency that permits one to establish relationships, to understand what the realities in a given country may be. And then it is based on those relationships or it is because of those relationships that we are able to go in and talk to people we know about issues that are important to hopefully the state, certainly important to us, and make arrangements for basing, staging, overflights, support, membership in a coalition. So it’s a lot more of that than it is aha, we’d better get over and do it because no one else is doing it.<sup>11</sup>

### The Diplomatic Role of the Combatant Commander

In April 2002, addressing the use of the term “Proconsul” to describe the diplomatic role of the combatant commander, General Tommy

Franks observed:

In many other countries where we have relationships, some of the most substantial relationships we have would be security assistance. Now if you pick a country where that's the case, then you will also find that a commander-in-chief [regional combatant commander] will frequently deal with other people in the government in that country. So that's where I think the comment comes from. I know that my own boss uses me to go out in the region and to discuss not only the specific military-to-military relationships, but also the context within a country or within a region. And so I think the choice of term is interesting, but what I find is that commanders-in-chief represent our country in the security assistance or military-to-military relationships that may exist in a region. And that really is the best answer that I can give you.<sup>12</sup>

In General Franks's view, the diplomatic role of the combatant commander is incidental to his role as overseer of security assistance, which is directed by his boss the secretary of Defense. Yet, as the evolution of the U.S. Central Command demonstrates, this relationship has implications that reach beyond security. The U.S. Central Command was originally not highly regarded, understrengthened, and seen as at best a secondary command. (For example, the only peacetime forces under direct Central Command control in the late 1980s was the Navy task force in the Gulf.) Nevertheless, circumstances led to the development of the U.S. Central Command into a major warfighting command, and this was done in part through leveraging the diplomatic role of the combatant commander.

### *Natural Diplomats*

Combatant commanders are not trained to be diplomats, but in their roles, they have various natural advantages over the diplomatic representatives of the United States in their regions. For example, one obvious advantage a combatant commander has over a U.S. ambassador is that his AOR covers an entire region rather than a single country. A combatant commander may move freely around his region and conduct business among several countries with a regional policy and focus. The State Department of course also organizes regionally, but there is no such thing as a "regional ambassador" with the same relative operational responsibilities and rank as the combatant commander.<sup>13</sup> Commanders also travel in their own aircraft, and with larger entourages. This regional focus, mobility, and support allows the combatant commander to undertake planning with a wider scope and to conduct personal diplomacy with a greater range of international actors than any given ambassador, and more frequently. As General

Tommy Franks stated, “We’ve placed a premium on being there at a frequency that builds familiarity.”<sup>14</sup> Rightly or wrongly, this leaves a perception among foreign governments of a position of greater stature and influence.

### *Security Resources*

A more concrete advantage is the influence commanders have over security-related resources going into the region. Combatant commanders command more attention because they control or have influence over much greater sums of money than their diplomatic counterparts. General Norman Schwartzkopf described his role in overseeing security assistance as being “a kind of military ombudsman in that part of the world—overseeing the advisors’ work, administering \$1.6 billion a year in military programs, and solidifying relations with rulers and generals.”<sup>15</sup> The U.S. Central Command combatant commander has oversight over a variety of programs, including Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Construction Sales, Foreign Military Financing, Direct Commercial Sales, International Military Education and Training (IMET), Economic Support Funds, funds for Peacekeeping Operations, equipment leasing, sale and emergency draw-down of excess defense articles, services and training, and third country transfer of equipment.<sup>16</sup> The foreign assistance budgets of comparable State Department agencies are magnitudes lower, and with fewer dollars follows fewer opportunities to influence behavior and decisionmaking. It has also been suggested that it is easier politically to funnel money into regions of interest through the Pentagon rather than the much smaller but more controversial foreign aid budget.<sup>17</sup>

### *Impact on Local Economies*

The military presence also contributes to local economies, an indirect means of foreign assistance. The money comes from expenditures in host areas, as well as side-deals that rebound to the benefit of local authorities. For example, in Kyrgyzstan military expenditures are projected to top \$40 million, not including personal spending by American personnel. Of the \$40 million, “[m]ost of the money comes through purchases of local fuel, but an unusual arrangement also calls for the U.S.-led coalition to pay landing fees of \$5,000 to \$10,000 per transport.”<sup>18</sup> Under these circumstances, it is in the interests of both sides to maintain cordial diplomatic contacts.

*Uniform to Uniform Understanding*

A third advantage the U.S. Central Command commander has is that he is a member of the military. Since the command's inception in 1983, the commander has always been from one of the ground services alternating between the Army and the Marine Corps. This has several concrete benefits. The U.S. Central Command AOR is largely composed of authoritarian regimes, and a general will have the perception (and reality) of strength in dealing with these types of governments. If they (again, rightly or wrongly) perceive strength in the American context as being primarily military, the combatant commander automatically has advantages his State Department colleague lacks. Among them is the implicit notion that if the local government encounters dire threats to its existence, the combatant commander can protect them in ways diplomats cannot. The mere fact that Americans will make and keep military commitments has made a substantial impression in the region, and raised U.S. credibility.

After the 1989 reflagging operations during the "Tanker War" in the Gulf, the Kuwaiti chief of staff told General Schwartzkopf, "We never thought you Americans would come, but you did. When you came, we thought you'd leave as soon as you took casualties, but you didn't. You stayed and defended us. We now believe the United States is a friend of the Arab world."<sup>19</sup> Those countries in the U.S. Central Command region with good relations with the U.S. military will leverage the relationships in their own diplomacy. For example, in 1995, the emir of Bahrain, whose country was undergoing Iranian-encouraged Shiite protests, seated Vice Admiral Scott Redd, the senior U.S. naval officer in the emirate, next to the Iranian ambassador at a major public function, just to make a point.<sup>20</sup>

*Conduit to Washington*

At the very least, local rulers see combatant commanders as another potential avenue of influence, and commanders can cultivate these relationships. In 1989, General Schwartzkopf appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to call for increased arms sales to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, in order to bolster U.S. security in the region. Little came from the appeal, but the fact that he made it boosted the general's credibility in the region.<sup>21</sup> Marine Corps General Joseph Hoar, the fourth Central Command combatant commander, noted in 1992 that increasing U.S. arms exports to the region would not only enhance force compatibility and make the spread of arms more controllable, but failure to do so would itself be detrimental, because it would allow other states to "sell their most lethal weapons systems throughout the region [which] may preclude U.S.

influence into the area.”<sup>22</sup> Implicit in the sale of weapons is American training, American maintenance support, and American presence.

However, security assistance can be a double-edged sword in diplomatic terms. One country’s security assistance can be another state’s threat. Furthermore, politics and bureaucracy can undo the goodwill intended by security assistance. For example, an arms deal with the United Arab Emirates was soured when the Hawk anti-aircraft missile system was modified. Two missile systems that the Emirates had just purchased were declared obsolete in favor of the newly upgraded Hawk Mod Three, a decision made without the knowledge of the combatant commander, and over which he had no influence. Furthermore, small slights combined with long memories can create difficulties. In the 1970s, Qatar wanted to purchase a dozen machine guns, which was refused. In 1991, when the United States came to Qatar to ask for assistance in the Gulf War, “the angry Emir whipped out the fraying rejection letter about the guns.”<sup>23</sup> By 2002, however, the relationship had been repaired and Qatar temporarily hosted a forward element of the U.S. Central Command headquarters at Camp As Sayliyah to oversee the 2003 war against Iraq.

#### *Advantage over the State Department*

Probably the most important aspect of the military status of the combatant commander is that the commander does not implicitly or explicitly pass judgment on the internal politics of the regimes with which he does business. The human rights issue is neither his focus nor his primary responsibility. Unlike the State Department that publishes annual reviews of a country’s human rights treatment, the Defense of Department (DOD) has a different institutional culture and mission. This observation does not downplay the importance of human rights in the pursuit of U.S. strategic objectives and interests; combatant commander’s are strictly bound by the restrictions placed on them by the executive and Congress not to engage in activities or participate in training that would contribute to worsening the human rights climate in a friendly country. As General Anthony C. Zinni, the sixth Central Command combatant commander, noted, “it is our obligation to assure our political leaders in the United States that neither the nature of the training nor the forces we are working with are part of any such events or problems . . . Our political leaders monitor our activities very closely for this reason.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, neither is the broader promotion of human rights or political change the primary province of the combatant commander.

As General Franks stated,

I would say this, as sort of a principle. I think, and I'm not sure what you do on the policy on the political side but I am sure what you do as a unified commander. You don't mess around with the internal proclivities of a state in the region, which is to say I would never try to describe to one of the nations in the region here's what you should do in terms of what you permit to be public and what you suggest because in the long run it would be good for you. Now that could happen but it would be way above my pay grade.<sup>25</sup>

These factors underscore the importance of relationships in executing the tasks of the combatant commander. Given his regional focus and mobility, the commander can meet more leaders than his State Department counterparts, and a general who appreciates the importance of this role and is proficient in it can use that as a force multiplier. As General Franks commented, a combatant commander "will visit countries in his region. And as he visits countries in the region, he will deal not only with military people, but he'll also deal with the civilian leadership in these countries. . . . I can tell you that [combatant commanders] enjoy the work. I very much enjoy it. I enjoy the relationships that I have with people out in my region. I said early on that I find those relationships to be very supportive. I find them to be friendly. I find them to be professional. And I think that's the experience of each of the unified commanders."<sup>26</sup>

General Norman Schwartzkopf was the commander most responsible for developing the diplomatic aspect of the U.S. Central Command. He saw this as an opportunity from the outset, an opinion not shared by other high-ranking officers. While being considered for the command, he noted, "Central Command was not one of the most desirable—it included too many so-called political-military responsibilities." What others saw as an imposition, Schwartzkopf viewed as a personal and professional opportunity. "Most Army officers perceived the diplomatic aspect of the job as distasteful, but I'd always relished the opportunity to be among people of other countries, whether in Iran, Germany or Vietnam."<sup>27</sup> For example, four days after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Schwartzkopf and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney traveled to Saudi Arabia to confer with King Fahd about the Iraqi threat to his kingdom.

Schwartzkopf took naturally to the very personalized Arab way of doing business, which was, he said, "a form of diplomacy I genuinely enjoyed."<sup>28</sup> At his first meeting with Saudi Prince Abdul Rahman bin

Abdulaziz, who was then serving as Saudi deputy minister of defense and aviation and was a full brother of the king, Schwartzkopf noted that in 1946 his father had had an audience with Rahman's father, and he considered their meeting "a renewal of the ties my family has had with yours." Another time he wore Kuwaiti clothes to an informal dinner with high-ranking members of the Kuwait government. This simple gesture of recognition won him praise from each of the Kuwaiti officers present.

Schwartzkopf took time to be educated in the culture and politics of the region. He took the Foreign Service Institute's intensive two-week, 80-hour course in the Middle East. The Institute, located in Arlington, VA, offers regional and other specialized courses primarily for State Department personnel going overseas. In addition, as commander, the general organized educational opportunities for himself and his staff. He began a program of seminars for Central Command staff, inviting academics and government officials with regional expertise to lecture. "[My staff] quickly became enthralled," he said.<sup>29</sup> The purpose of this effort was to enable his command to apply their cultural understanding to both the security and more importantly the diplomatic side of their mission.

Schwartzkopf said that the ambassadors in the region did not oppose his personal diplomacy style, they "understood and supported my need to cement military friendships." Opposition came not from State Department personnel on the ground in the region, but from Foggy Bottom. Some diplomats in Washington were concerned about the potential negative impact of a general cultivating personal relationships with members of foreign governments. Yet, Schwartzkopf relied a great deal on the advice of his political advisor (POLAD), or as he jokingly put it, his "State Department spy," Stanley Escudero. Before long, Schwartzkopf said, "our colleagues at the State Department began complimenting us on our growing understanding of the Arab world."<sup>30</sup>

### *Political Advisor's Role*

The POLAD has always had a significant if less publicized role in helping guide the diplomatic activities of the combatant commander. General Zinni admitted that there were sometimes differences with the State Department, but that his Command worked hard to "create a strong relationship with our Ambassadors on the ground and the forward desk officers who influence our part of the world." He noted, "It requires constant attention and constant interaction because of all

the complexities and differences in organization and approach.”<sup>31</sup> Recently, Frank C. Carlucci, former secretary of Defense and chairman of a 2001 Independent Task Force on State Department Reform, stated: “My experience has been that the CINC’s [commanders in chief] are quite willing to take policy guidance. One of the task forces . . . recommended upgrading the political advisors to the CINC’s, and we have had some very talented people as political advisors to the CINC’s . . . . So if a CINC is a good CINC, and the political advisor is a good political advisor, it will work, but you cannot build a system that bad people will not disrupt, so I think the emphasis really has to be on quality on both sides.”<sup>32</sup>

### *Military Success Begins with Diplomacy*

The relationships that General Schwartzkopf forged in the early years of his command contributed markedly to the success of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990–91, particularly in allowing the United States to gain the access necessary to prosecute the warfighting mission. General Schwartzkopf’s approach to personal diplomacy helped establish the conditions that allowed the war to be won. In turn, the magnitude of victory expanded the influence of the combatant commander and the command both in the region and within the Pentagon. The U.S. Central Command had become a major warfighting command, one that was respected. By the time Marine Corps General Joseph Hoar succeeded Schwartzkopf in August 1991, the U.S. Central Command was “an organization that no longer had to justify its existence.”<sup>33</sup> Its swift defeat of Iraq and established air bases in Saudi Arabia guaranteed that the U.S. Central Command would get the resources it was once denied.

### The Expansion of the U.S. Central Command

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of global bipolarity had important effects on all the unified combatant commands, and on the U.S. Central Command in particular. The relative importance of the Middle East to U.S. national security was enhanced with the end of the Soviet threat in Europe and the Pacific. This was reflected in the increased level of force commitment in the region—by the end of the 1990s, there were between 16,000 and 23,000 troops in the Gulf region.<sup>34</sup> In fact, by this time in other commands warfighting had almost become the exception. In 1999 General Zinni was able to state that the



U.S. Central Command “is the only one of our unified commands that actually has an operational mission in addition to a strategic or military mission. We actually put on our desert camouflage uniforms and go off to war.”<sup>35</sup> Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. Central Command supported the enforcement of the UN imposed no-fly zone over southern Iraq. Every day for more than ten years, American and British aircraft were flying combat missions and were subject to infrequent attack.

More importantly, with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Unions, five republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—became independent states bordering on the U.S. Central Command’s AOR. These countries presented the United States with a geostrategic opportunity to expand U.S. influence in Central Asia and to help promote stability, free trade, and democracy in former Soviet lands.<sup>36</sup>

The United States adopted a strategy termed “Enlargement and Engagement,” which was intended to consolidate the post cold war landscape by promoting stability and democracy in the newly democratized (or at least de-Sovietized) countries of the world.<sup>37</sup> A central supporting strategic tool was “shaping,” which referred to activities to influence events and developments in areas of U.S. national interests in a favorable manner, primarily through deterrence and peacetime military engagement.<sup>38</sup> Generally, the advent of shaping gave the combatant commanders more diplomatic–political responsibilities in their regions. One aspect of the application of this strategy was the development of Theater Engagement Plans (TEPs), which was mandated in September 1997 as part of the revised Joint Strategic Planning System.<sup>39</sup> The TEP required the combatant commander to formulate a five-year Theater Engagement Strategic Concept, which essentially demonstrated how the various activities of the command (operations, exercises, and other foreign military interaction) contributed to achieving long-range strategic goals in the region. Theater Engagement—renamed Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) under the Bush administration—was described by Stephen Cambone as “peacetime activities . . . day to day activity by the combatant commanders in their regions of interest . . . a peacetime planning process.”<sup>40</sup> Current Theater Security Cooperation planning seeks to “integrate [Central Command] activities with those of other U.S. government agencies, non-governmental and private volunteer organizations, and our friends and allies. It draws resources from various agencies, the Department of State, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and the military services.”<sup>41</sup>

The TEP/TSC system can be viewed as a codification of existing practices within the combatant commands more than an innovation. The process suffered from several shortcomings, in particular a degree of vagueness in determining metrics of accomplishment. Commanders were called upon to rate the effectiveness of the shaping activities within their commands, but were not given adequate definitions of what shaping entailed, nor precisely how one can know when it had occurred. Furthermore, TSC planning is not synchronized with either force structure planning or the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), which dramatically constrained what the process could achieve.<sup>42</sup> It is also difficult to synchronize the TSCs, and they bear no relationship to grand strategic plans in other government departments.<sup>43</sup> However, the very fact that such a planning process is required compels the combatant commanders to adopt a multi-year, theater-wide vision of their AOR and commit it to print. This process has had an important influence on the political roles of the regional commanders. It has forced them explicitly to think and plan strategically for greater roles than warfighting. This has been a significant burden on the commands since, in the words of General Zinni, "War is the easy part." The TEP/TSC codified what had been customary and made it policy.

### *The Territory of the U.S. Central Command*

The territory of the U.S. Central Command can be divided into four subregions. The first is the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and the Northern Red Sea that consists of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Prior to 2003, the U.S. Central Command defined Iraq as the central threat to the strategic oil reserves, critical waterways, and regional stability. With Iraq defeated, the U.S. Central Command's efforts will likely emphasize reconstruction activities and regional stability de Culely non-war making activities.

### Horn of Africa

The second subregion is the Horn of Africa composed of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and the island country of Seychelles. Not since the Somalia intervention in 1992 has the U.S. Central Command undertaken a major military operation in this area rocked by famine, disease, and civil war. The region borders the Bab el Mandeb waterway that is a vital link to the Suez Canal. This strategic waterway is a major shipping avenue between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.

### South Asia

Next, the U.S. Central Command considers South Asia an important area. The countries of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are of concern to the United States. With a defeated Iraq, Iran is now the dominant military power in the region and always poses a threat to the Strait of Hormuz. Nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply travels through the 34-mile Strait, which is the only waterway leading to the Persian Gulf. Since 9/11, relations have improved greatly between the United States and Pakistan. With General Musharraf now in power in Pakistan, military relations are strong and led to close cooperation to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, if Musharraf were to be overthrown by a Pakistani fundamentalist group, the United States would be very concerned about a fundamentalist regime with nuclear weapons. Relations with Afghanistan are based on reconstituting Afghan society and searching for al-Qa'ida terrorists. Outside Kabul, the U.S. Central Command fills an important security role and is directing the effort to fight al-Qa'ida.

### Central Asia

The final region is the Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. American interest in Central Asia has much to do with vast oil and natural gas fields that by 2010 will make the region the world's third largest producer of petroleum products. With large energy reserves and the strength of Islamic fundamentalism in the Fergana Valley, the United States began to cooperate militarily with the Central Asian states before they became part of the U.S. Central Command AOR. At the onset, the Central Asian states were beset with difficulties that were part of the emerging set of U.S. strategic concerns—terrorism, violent Muslim fundamentalism, drug trafficking, and other transnational threats. Furthermore, they presented the U.S. Central Command with more “hard to understand” places, culturally distinct from the other regions of the Command, and significantly different from each other. Like the Middle East, it was a region in which there was little expertise in the United States generally and especially in the DOD. For decades, these countries had been a part of the Soviet closed society, and the United States had virtually no history in the region.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the inclusion of Central Asia within the U.S. Central Command AOR became a critical test of the diplomatic role of the combatant commander.

Developing ties with Kazakhstan was of immediate concern because of its substantial legacy, its nuclear arsenal, some of which was transferred

to Russia and the rest destroyed under multinational supervision. Formal contacts were enhanced in 1996, when Kazakhstan became a signatory to the NATO partnership for Peace program on July 31.<sup>45</sup> Further, Kazakhstan is home to Baikanour, the main Russian space launch facility. After the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentry in 2003, the United States became dependent on Russia for all space launches to the International Space Station.

The first regional combined training operations under the Partnership for Peace framework began in the fall of 1997 (CENTRAZ-BAT 97), and was made up of forces from eight countries, including Russia, Latvia, Georgia, and Turkey.<sup>46</sup> The exercise was an important training activity, but also held symbolic value of a new area of cooperation between the United States and the former Soviet Union. General Michael Sheehan, Atlantic commander at the time remarked, "Three years ago, people said this type of operation was not possible. I say, look at what is happening today. It did happen, because the three presidents [of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan] wanted it to happen, and the three ministers [of defense] made it happen."<sup>47</sup>

The United States had two major security objectives in the region. The most important was to help the five countries settle their regional problems, whether resolving residual grievances among the countries, or halting the activities of terrorist and insurgent groups, religious radicals, drug dealers, smugglers, and other destabilizing threats. A second and complementary objective was to establish a solid platform for the long-term U.S. strategic presence.<sup>48</sup>

Uzbekistan became a pivotal state in terms of promoting U.S. interests. Its size and location—in the center of Central Asia, bordering Afghanistan, at the crossroads of a variety of insurgent and transnational terror groups, and potentially along access routes to Caspian Sea oil reserves—gave it special importance. General Zinni visited the country many times during his tenure as Central Command combatant commander, meeting with both the foreign minister and President Islam Karimov, as well as his military counterparts; he also toured the country, learning about its culture, and history, in which he showed a great interest. Zinni was known for his personal style, and like Schwartzkopf seemed to relish the chance to make personal contacts.<sup>49</sup> The practical product of these visits and the relationships he and his staff forged included combined training exercises involving conventional and special forces,<sup>50</sup> intelligence sharing (particularly concerning insurgent groups backed by Taliban-led Afghanistan), help in establishing noncommissioned officer academies in Uzbekistan to develop a professional core

of soldiers, providing technical, communication, and transportation assistance to border security forces, and providing humanitarian assistance. Relations with Uzbekistan were upgraded when a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States was signed in October 1995,<sup>51</sup> and Uzbekistan became a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace program in August 1996. Finally, and most importantly, the U.S. Central Command laid the groundwork for negotiating a status of forces agreement (SOFA).<sup>52</sup>

Formalizing military ties between the United States and another country begins with the SOFA. A SOFA is “an agreement that defines the legal position of a visiting military force deployed in the territory of a friendly state. Agreements delineating the status of visiting military forces may be bilateral or multilateral.”<sup>53</sup> The importance of such agreements to operational capabilities should not be underestimated. According to one Air Force Judge Advocate General (JAG-legal) officer, “Without a SOFA, you’re just a group of heavily armed tourists.”<sup>54</sup> A SOFA with Uzbekistan became imperative after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. The proximity of the country to Afghanistan and other areas of al-Qa’ida and Taliban influence gave the United States a potentially critical staging ground for special operations forces, air support and maintenance, intelligence collection, and, if necessary, heavy ground forces.

Even with the record of good relations between Uzbekistan and the United States, Tashkent was hesitant to provide the latter with a platform for power projection against Afghanistan. At the time, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and with the history of the bloody ten-year Soviet guerrilla war in Afghanistan, the Uzbeks were concerned that a sustained U.S. presence could lead to the destabilization of their own country. However, concerted negotiations involving teams of Central Command JAGs and State Department lawyers, building on the goodwill that had been established through military contacts over the past decade and the preceding two years in particular, convinced the Uzbeks to allow the United States to establish a military presence. On October 5, 2001, a little over three weeks after the 9/11 attacks, after a meeting in Tashkent between President Karimov and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Uzbekistan agreed to permit American forces to have overflight rights in Uzbek airspace, and to utilize one of its airfields.<sup>55</sup> This access, codified in a SOFA, along with other new agreements in the region, paved the way for General Franks to swiftly and successfully prosecute the war against the Taliban. The U.S. Central Command’s diplomatic investment in the countries in its expanded AOR reaped an important dividend in only a few years’ time.

Officers from Central Asian states were also enrolled in IMET-sponsored courses at the Marshall Center in Germany.<sup>56</sup> Senior officers took courses at the European Command institute that dealt with such issues as the history and causes of terrorism, fighting terrorism, and intelligence sharing. By meeting with officers from other European and Asian countries in an academic setting, new relationships are fostered among militaries and common strategies are developed to deal with transnational problems.

### Conclusion

The development of the diplomatic role of the U.S. Central Command was evolutionary and adaptive. The early circumstances of the command, coupled with the natural advantages of the position of the combatant commander, favored the growth of the political role. The character of U.S. interests in the region, the nature of the local regimes, and the shape of the regional threat, all helped move the regional command toward greater political involvement. Through cooperative efforts with the State Department and the intelligence services, this political role took on an operational character after 9/11. Victory in warfare was a consequence (at least in part) of military diplomacy, and victory in turn has enhanced the position of the combatant commander in the Middle East region. Yet, given these facts, it is vital to understand that at no time is the combatant commander divorced from civilian political control; that is, not from the State Department, but from the civilian leaders of the DOD, ultimately the commander-in-chief in the White House, and the minders of the public treasury in Congress. The combatant commanders are not free agents, not independent actors shaping their regions without guidance or control, but instruments of national policy. The diplomatic role of the combatant commander, so long as it does not preempt other elements of national power but augments them, is both beneficial and necessary, and as recent experience has shown in the U.S. Central Command, military diplomacy can be a critical force multiplier.

### Notes

1. General Norman H. Schwartzkopf, 1992, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, New York: Bantam Books, p. 272.
2. Jay E. Hines, 2000, "From Desert One to Southern Watch: The Evolution of U.S. Central Command," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 24 (Spring): 42-43.
3. Quoted in *ibid.*

4. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 275. General Anthony Zinni later noted that the different geography of the U.S. Central Command and the State Department sometimes made cooperation more challenging. See Fred L. Schuitz, 1999, "It's All a Matter of Perspective," *Proceedings*, May, p. 42.
5. Quoted in "General Tommy Franks Interview with Greg Jaffe," *Wall Street Journal*, April 30, 2002, <http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/transcripts/20020430.htm>.
6. *Ibid.*
7. William J. Crowe, 1993, *The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military*, New York: Simon and Schuster, pp. 187–188.
8. Central Command History, <http://www.centcom.mil/aboutus/history3.htm>.
9. General George Crist, USMC, 2nd Combatant Commander of CENTCOM, quoted in Hines, "From Desert One to Southern Watch."
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
11. Quoted in "General Tommy Franks Interview with Greg Jaffe," *Wall Street Journal*.
12. General Tommy Franks, 2000, Press Briefing, April 11.
13. It has been suggested that the State Department institute a similar position, a regional "Super Ambassador" or "State CINC" to play the same role as the combatant commander on the diplomatic side. See Paul Mann, 1998, "Info Technologies Transform National Security Doctrine," *Aviation Week and Space Technology* (November 23): 51. The article reviews two studies dealing with reform of State and DOD communications and cooperation at the regional level.
14. Greg Jaffe, 2002, "Desert Maneuvers: Pentagon Boosts U.S. Military Presence in the Gulf," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 24, p. 1.
15. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 271.
16. See list in Thomas M. Jordan, Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., and Thomas-Durell Young, 2000, "*Shaping* the World Through 'Engagement': Assessing the Department of Defense's Theater Engagement Planning Process," U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, April, p. 30 fn. 16.
17. Michael R. Hickok, 2001, "Military is Treading Where Only Civilians Should," *New York Newsday*, May 9, p. A34. Hickok's article is a general critique of the Theater Engagement process.
18. John Hendren, 2002, "Beddown in Bishkek," *Air Force Magazine*, July, p. 57. The author notes that the \$40 million sum "doesn't include money brought in during troop visits to Bishkek, where \$30 buys dinner and caviar for four at one of the capital's classiest bistros."
19. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 278.
20. Jaffe, "Desert Maneuvers."
21. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 278.
22. "New Central Command Chief Wants Exports," *Navy News and Undersea Technology*, March 16, 1992, p. 4.
23. Jaffe, "Desert Maneuvers."
24. General Anthony Zinni, Media Round Table with General Anthony Zinni, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, May 15, 2000.

25. Interview with General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief with Greg Jaffe, *Wall Street Journal*, MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL Tuesday, April 30, 2002.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 271.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
29. Note that this was in addition to the education that military officers receive throughout their careers as part of the Professional Military Education (PME) system.
30. Schwartzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, p. 282.
31. Quoted in Schuitz, "It's All a Matter of Perspective."
32. Frank C. Carlucci, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on State Department Reform, February 28, 2001. General Franks has stated, "Because the relationship between a unified commander and the American representatives in a country, the U.S. Ambassador, for example, will be very good because the military portfolio in any one of our countries will be a part of the Ambassador's portfolio." General Tommy Franks, 2002, Press Briefing, April 11.
33. Hines, "From Desert One to Southern Watch," p. 44.
34. Schuitz, "It's All a Matter of Perspective," p. 45.
35. "Interview with Anthony C. Zinni," *R.U.S.I Journal*, August 1999, p. 44.
36. See Jim Nichol, 2001, "Central Asia's New States: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests," *Congressional Research Services Report*, May 18.
37. Cf. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Washington DC: The White House, May, 1997. Also General J.H. Binford Peay, II, 1992, "Five Pillars of Peace," *Vital Speeches*, November 15, pp. 88–91. In it General Peay, the fifth Central Command combatant commander, outlines his view of the role of power projection, forward presence, combined exercises, security assistance, and readiness in securing stability.
38. See CJCS Manual 3113.01, February 1, 1998, which defines engagement as "all military activities involving other nations intended to shape the security environment in peacetime."
39. Jordan et al., "*Shaping* the World Through *Engagement*," p. 6. Note that the TEP planning process is distinct from the well-established deliberate war planning process.
40. Stephen Cambone, 2002, "P&A Review and the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget," Special Defense Department Briefing, The Pentagon Briefing Room, Arlington, VA, September 18. Theater Security Cooperation is a more precise term, and less intimidating to other countries; it better conveys that U.S. security strategy seeks to build cooperative relationships in peacetime, not to effect regime change through shaping.
41. General Tommy R. Franks, 2002, Statement before the House Armed Services Committee, Washington DC, February 27.
42. See Jordan et al., "*Shaping* the World Through *Engagement*" pp. 11–13.
43. Ralph R. Steinke and Brian L. Target, 2000, "Theater Engagement Plans: A Strategic Tool or a Waste of time?" *Parameters*, Carlisle Barracks (Spring).



44. Around the time of Central Command's expansion the author overheard General Zinni saying, "Anyone who knows all the names of the Stans, I got a job for you."
45. Treaty Actions, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, August 26, 1996. Uzbekistan also reached agreement for military assistance with the United States on May 4, 1999, and chemical weapon destruction and nonproliferation on May 25. Treaty Actions, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, August 1, 1999. Many such bilateral agreements were concluded in the late 1990s.
46. See Kenley Butler, 2001, "U.S. Military Cooperation with the Central Asian States," Center for Nonproliferation Studies Bulletin, Monterey Institute of International Studies, September 17.
47. Quoted in Douglas J. Gillert, "After Jumping, Battalion Learns to Crawl," American Forces Press Service, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct1997/n10011997\\_9710011.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct1997/n10011997_9710011.html)
48. See Nichol, "Central Asia's New States."
49. In Bahrain, for example, "Zinni made visits even when there was nothing to talk about, frequently slipping away for fishing or falconing expeditions with the royals." Jaffe, "Desert Maneuvers."
50. H. Allen Holmes, an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SOLIC) stated that Special Forces "are a force multiplier and a diplomacy multiplier." Quoted in Dana Priest, 1998, "Free of Oversight, U.S. Military Trains Foreign Troops," *The Washington Post* (July 12): A01.
51. OASD/PA Press Release, October 13, 1995.
52. "Head of U.S. Central Command at Roundtable in Tashkent on Terrorism," U.S. Department of State Bulletin, May 18, 2001.
53. DOD definition. It continues: "Provisions pertaining to the status of visiting forces may be set forth in a separate agreement, or they may form a part of a more comprehensive agreement. These provisions describe how the authorities of a visiting force may control members of that force and the amenability of the force or its members to the local law or to the authority of local officials. To the extent that agreements delineate matters affecting the relations between a military force and civilian authorities and population, they may be considered as civil affairs agreements."
54. Quoted in William C. Smith, 2003, "Lawyers at War," *ABA Journal* (February).
55. Kathleen T. Rhem, 2001, "Uzbekistan Grants U.S. Flyovers, Limited Basing," *Armed Forces Press Service* (October 5).
56. IMET programs such as those at the Marshall Center and the recent Regional Counter Terrorism Fellowship Program at National Defense University in Washington DC, which draws students from all the regional commands, have an important public diplomacy component. Students are able to spend weeks and months getting to know each other and their American counterparts, forging ties that are actively maintained through sponsored alumni networks. The U.S. Central Command also maintains the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at NDU, which hosts similar programs for foreign visitors with a focus on the U.S. Central Command AOR.

## CHAPTER 8

### U.S. COMBATANT COMMANDER: THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

*Stephen D. Wrage*

Chapters 2–7 in this book have explored the issue Dana Priest raised in her much-discussed series of articles published in *The Washington Post* in 2000. These chapters bring further study, more recent and more complete case-study evidence, and much more historical and political context to her insightful and original observations about the role combatant commanders play in U.S. foreign policy.

These chapters find that there is less there than met her eye, or at least less to be alarmed about.<sup>1</sup> The combatant commanders are certainly worthy of study, but they are not an object for concern. They represent an innovative, energetic effort to fill gaps in American diplomatic efforts, but they do not amount to the spearhead of an effort to militarize foreign policy or to sideline civilian authority.

Priest remarked at length on the travels, the entourages, the budgets, and the prestige of the commanders in chief (CINCs) in their “CINCdoms.” These trappings may be impressive, but if they suggest the combatant commanders are “the modern-day equivalent of the Roman Empire’s proconsuls” (to use Priest’s oft-repeated phrase), they are misleading.

The title proconsul, with its overtones of imperial rule and Roman pomp and power, mischaracterizes the combatant commanders’ place in the U.S. foreign policy establishment. Rome’s proconsuls always presented the threat that they might lead their armies out of the provinces and back across the Rubicon into Italy to overthrow the Republic, just as Caesar finally did. There is none of that threat in what Priest calls these “modern-day equivalents.” Readers of this volume are likely to reject the term “proconsuls” and might recognize a degree of overstatement in this book’s use of the word “viceroys” as well.

In the same sentence in which she first dubs the combatant commanders “proconsuls,” Priest goes on to describe them in three ways: “well-funded, semi-autonomous, unconventional . . .” This essay will consider those three qualifiers in turn, starting with the second since it is their autonomy, their ability to carry forward their own purposes without answering to others, that might excite the most concern.

### Semiautonomous?

Any autonomy enjoyed by the combatant commanders is compromised by the large number of persons, organizations, bureaus, branches, departments, and other power centers they must answer to. The word autonomous literally and etymologically means giving themselves their own laws, yet there are many people, groups, and institutions that in fact lay down laws for them.

First, the combatant commanders are hardly independent of their own chains of command. It is true, as Fettweis points out in chapter 3, that since the 1986 Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reform Act the combatant commanders have had a unique chain of command arrangement, reporting directly to the secretary of Defense rather than through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Service secretaries. This makes them more anomalous than autonomous, however, and this anomalous arrangement has meant widely varying degrees of autonomy under various Defense secretaries.

How much autonomy have the combatant commanders been granted by the secretaries of Defense?<sup>2</sup> Their autonomy has never been great, and it has diminished whenever the person in office felt like asserting his prerogatives. Defense Secretary Cheney kept his combatant commanders on a short leash. He was aggressive and demanding, meeting with them often and not hesitating to fire them when they did not inspire complete confidence. Thus, shortly before Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989, Cheney fired Southcom Commander General Frederick Woerner and replaced him with General Maxwell Thurman. Secretary Aspin, on the other hand, did not take much interest in the combatant commanders. In his rather brief tenure in the Pentagon, he may never even have met with them. Secretary Perry chose to be assertive and controlling, but he also promoted what James David Barber would call an “active–positive” role for his combatant commanders, encouraging them to expand their diplomatic roles and pursue “peacetime engagement” activities. Perry’s indulgent spirit with regard to diplomatic activity has not endured, however.

Secretary Cohen did not see as much potential in his combatant commanders, did not encourage their efforts at “peacetime engagement,” and essentially undid their anomalous reporting structure by delegating contact with them to General Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs. This arrangement, as one might expect, did not mean more autonomy for them. Most recently, Secretary Rumsfeld has made no secret of his intent to rein in the combatant commanders, stripping them of the CINC title and announcing that the phrase “peacetime engagement” will not be heard in his Pentagon. He has also been well known for overruling his combatant commanders and for requiring his CENTCOM commander, General Tommy Franks, to revise his war plan for Iraq to reflect Rumsfeld’s ideas about exploiting high mobility, high accuracy, and information dominance.

When Franks was asked about the depth of his autonomy, he underscored the important role the secretary of Defense plays. “The Defense Planning Guidance and the guidance that I have out of Rumsfeld tells me what he wants done in this region [Central Command]. We have a constant dialogue on it. And he has provided me the resources that I need in order to be able to do what has been asked of me.”<sup>3</sup>

Their reporting structure hardly grants the combatant commanders extraordinary or worrisome autonomy, but in any case, whatever that structure might be, they remain subject to military discipline. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs can shut down a combatant commander in any of a number of ways. General Shelton, for example, was unhappy with the way General Clark had worked through NATO to expand the American commitment to Operation Allied Force over Kosovo and so chose to limit his access to NATO heads of state. To that end he set out to exclude Clark from attending the fiftieth anniversary celebration of NATO, even though it was observed while Clark was the supreme allied commander of that organization.<sup>4</sup> Shelton relented only when the strangeness of the NATO commander’s exclusion promised to turn embarrassing.

The secretary of Defense can silence a combatant commander with a simple order, as Secretary Cohen did when he forbade General Zinni from giving on-the-record interviews. A rule Secretary Cohen established required all combatant commanders visiting Washington to “file an hour-by-hour appointment schedule” listing who they are visiting and what they are discussing.<sup>5</sup> Significantly, no subsequent secretary of Defense has seen fit to rescind that rule and it remains in place today.

But any experienced bureaucratic player would see opportunities for autonomy in a command structure that allowed one to coordinate with

the State Department and the National Security Council (NSC) and to report and testify to various committees of the House and the Senate. What success have the combatant commanders had using their unusual reporting structure to play one authority off another? Have they been able to work the system like clever children who play one parent off another, playing members of Congress off the secretary of Defense for example?

On the occasions when the combatant commanders testify before Congress, they are, as Fettweis suggests, usually being used as “mouth-pieces” for policies shaped over their heads. Still, there is no question that some secretaries of Defense and some chairmen of the Joint Chiefs have felt they had to guard against end runs. The evidence suggests that they need not have worried. Combatant commanders haven’t found in members of Congress a means to escape accountability; rather they have found in them a host of new figures interested in holding them to account. In chapter 6, Cook describes General Wilhelm’s frenetic travel schedule in Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 as he sought support for Plan Colombia. He traveled to Washington 21 times, not only testifying before committees but also meeting individually with members of the House and Senate. During the same months he made 74 visits to various capitals in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Wilhelm seems to have had constant contact and constant accountability with scores of persons in authority. When one considers how much time he was spending reporting his activities, it is hard to imagine how he had time to do all the things he was reporting.

The accounts of General Clark’s activities as head of the European Command by Reveron in Chapter 5 and of Admiral Crowe’s role in the Pacific by the admiral himself in Chapter 4 make it clear that the combatant commander is in constant consultation with literally dozens of authorities, all of them expecting a full account of his communications with the others. The combatant commanders are even answerable, formally at least, to the various ambassadors in their regions. It is clearly the case that General Zinni, when he was in charge of the Central Command, excelled the ambassadors to the states of the region in both influence and prestige, yet Admiral Blair, commander in chief of the Pacific, head of a command that embraces 43 countries, watched angrily but helplessly as Robert Gelbard, ambassador to Indonesia, revised the admiral’s travel schedule, excising meetings with both the head of the Indonesian military and the minister of Defense.<sup>6</sup>

Most fundamentally, the autonomy of the combatant commanders is limited by the sheer brevity of their terms in office. None serve longer

than three years and many, like Clark and Woerner, see their terms cut short. If they pursue a frenetic pace of work and travel, that may be because they so strongly feel the tick of the clock.

The combatant commanders' term of office is brief, and their learning curve must be very steep. They achieve their quasi-diplomatic posts only after decades of intense military service, and military service is in some respects an odd and inappropriate preparation for diplomatic work. Diplomats must coax and not command, so the commanders must adapt quickly and radically. Moreover, the civilian officials with whom these "modern proconsuls" are likely to be contesting for influence have much more experience and face no ticking clock.

Persons like Cohen, Aspin, Christopher, Albright, and Lake, or, more recently, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle, or Cheney, have been immersed in high-level diplomatic and strategic issues for decades. Aspin, for example, had served in the Pentagon or played a role in its oversight since he arrived as one of McNamara's "whiz kids" in 1961. Rumsfeld, the once and future secretary of Defense, had held the post in 1975 and resumed it in 2001, after spending the quarter century constantly involved at high levels of military policy and at the center of such issues as strategic defense. It seems unlikely that a newly arrived CENTCOM commander would be able to maneuver around an experienced figure like Richard Perle, who chaired the influential Defense Policy Board and is a senior advisor to Secretary Rumsfeld.

It is possible that the autonomy of the combatant commander may increase in wartime. Halberstam shows how General Clark used the risks involved in war to increase his leverage as he demanded more resources. In his arguments with the White House and the Pentagon for ground troops or Apache attack helicopters, Clark could say "Surely we're not going to deny a wartime commander the assets we need to win . . ." <sup>7</sup> Yet in wartime the number of persons and institutions to whom the combatant commander is answerable increases. Reveron in chapter 5 shows how the White House, the Joint Chiefs, NATO officials, the heads of state of the NATO countries, members of Congress, and the media were all demanding Clark's attention. <sup>8</sup>

The memory of General Norman Schwarzkopf as a central figure in the first Gulf War and its principal media star should not be misleading. In his daily briefings, he became the personification of the war, and he was able to translate this into celebrity status and a bestselling memoir. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld learned from that experience and made sure that he, not General Franks, was the public's leading persona in the second Gulf War. The combatant commanders can be suppressed. <sup>9</sup>

Excessive authority will never be delegated to the combatant commanders simply because technology has annihilated distance; in the past distance (and the time it takes to cover distance) were the main reasons for deputizing significant power to proconsuls and viceroys. Fettweis is right to argue that changes in the technology of travel, of communications, and of weaponry have removed the need for distant, independently acting commanders. He is equivocal, however, and says that "technology is a double-edged sword," bringing the combatant commander into policy consultations on the strategic level at the same time that it invites others into decisionmaking on the tactical level.

I would maintain that technology cuts one way, and that it cuts down the combatant commanders' autonomy. (This is not to say that his importance is diminished, but that his autonomy is less.) Civilian authorities in Washington may, for various reasons discussed below, choose to include (or exclude) the combatant commanders from policy discussions, but technology will always compromise their independence and limit their autonomy. Henry Kissinger could not resist speaking directly to the pilots in their cockpits as they attempted the rescue of Americans seized from the *Mayaguez*, and since then, technological change has increasingly meant more constant surveillance of combat operations from Washington plus real-time participation and review of the most minute decisions by the combatant commanders' political masters.

To the tightening of the reins, add the elevation of expectations. Precision weaponry has excited a tremendous heightening of public interest and expectation in the conduct of war. Gone are the Vietnam days when Americans shrugged off the loss of a number of aircrews in a night or averted their eyes from the destruction of villages full of noncombatants. In Operation Allied Force, General Clark recognized that he needed to present an image of risk-free, casualty-free, error-free warfare.<sup>10</sup> A leader laboring under such expectations is not dangerously autonomous. If anything, he is dangerously overburdened and overcontrolled.

### Well Funded

The combatant commanders are undoubtedly well funded, though only in comparison to the drastically underfunded diplomatic programs of the State Department and the rest of the executive branch. There is a sad irony in General Shalikashvili pleading, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, for more funding for his "competing" department. "What we are doing to our diplomatic capabilities is criminal," he said at a Meridian House meeting in early

1999. "By slashing them, we are less able to avoid disasters such as Somalia or Kosovo, and therefore we will be obliged to use military force still more often."<sup>11</sup> Shalikashvili knew that America was trying to lead the world on the cheap, and that the functions other departments failed to perform would default to his. That defaulting process is at the root of much of the story this book tells.

The combatant commanders are well funded so they can travel, stage conferences, have a good intelligence system, and deal handsomely with the representatives of foreign powers. It is hard to imagine our civilian diplomats being *unable* to do those things, yet that is the case. As Fettweis points out, members of Republican-controlled congresses did not trust the State Department and worked systematically to defund it. Senator Jesse Helms and others had more confidence in the military and were glad to see its role expand at the expense of State. Even State Department efforts to establish a permanent liaison office on Capitol Hill have been rebuffed by the Rules committee. With each military Service represented, there is apparently no office space for the State Department.

Combatant commanders do have some natural advantages in dealing with figures like the late King Hussein of Jordan. As military persons, they can relate well to authoritarians and are not congressionally mandated to bring up such topics as the annual Human Rights Country Reports, assembled and published by the Department of State. General Zinni always could roll out a bigger helicopter or a faster jet than the king, and he was comfortable going into the desert to do falconry with the royal party. He no doubt seemed to them the person to address about foreign military sales and credits, so he had their attention. A combatant commander like General Zinni also had the advantage of civilian emissaries who, due to the structure of the State Department, were more capable of bilateral than multilateral planning and action. The most sensible response to this book might be for Congress to undo some of the damage to State Department funding done in the years of the Helms-controlled Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and perhaps to use the prospect of increased funding to encourage a restructuring of the department to parallel in some degree the regional structure instituted after Goldwater–Nichols at Defense.

Are there reasons to fear the levels of funding the combatant commanders receive? Not really. There is no parallel here to William Casey's CIA and the establishment of a secret, self-funding independent cell operated by an obscure Marine lieutenant colonel based at the NSC. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds are well scrutinized; the sums spent on study centers are hardly secret or inappropriate; the disaster



relief, travel for foreigners, and coalition work the combatant commanders support are only initiatives other departments would undertake if they were not so underfunded. This does not seem like a case of what students of bureaucratic politics call imperialistic task expansion. Rather it is an instance of the military taking on new roles as those roles default to them. In the absence of a major military rival, the Defense Department (DOD) in the 1990s readily embraced a larger foreign policy role that enabled it not only to preserve its budget, but to expand it to respond to foreign policy crises. In any case, the demands of the war on al Qaeda will divert much of the funding that had gone into "peacetime engagement," and will mean increases in funding to other organizations such as the CIA, the Department of Homeland Security, and possibly even to the Department of State. However, the initial budget requests of this decade are not promising for the diplomats. The State Department budget did increase by about 25 percent from 2000 to 2004, which is faster than the growth of the Defense budget that increased by nearly 23 percent during the same period. However, the 2004 Defense budget of nearly \$400 billion greatly overshadows a mere \$28.5 billion for the State Department and the other international affairs agencies. As a share of discretionary spending, the DOD has consistently stood above 50 percent, while the State Department has steadily received just 1 percent.

### Unconventional

The combatant commanders are unquestionably unconventional actors in the diplomatic field. They are relatively new arrivals and they are experimenting, innovating, and feeling their way through the diplomatic process. They are different from and inevitably to some degree at odds with their services, as Fettweis explains, finding them more parochial than the combatant commanders are inclined to be and less interested in deep and frequent contact with other departments at the assistant secretary level. The combatant commanders are more interested in forming new arrangements, building coalitions, and creating new grounds for engagement with their regions than the rest of the military and most of the executive and legislative branches. This inclination, which follows naturally from their lines of responsibility, tends to make them in some sense threatening to military and civilian policymakers. Moreover, since combatant commanders are forward deployed and not mired in the policy debates of Washington, they are more accessible to international leaders.

They can be threatening to the Service chiefs because they are likely to call on them to perform some missions the chiefs would rather avoid.

They can be threatening to a secretary of Defense who doesn't want to be drawn into the new enterprises that can arise out of "peacetime engagement." They can be threatening to the NSC as they are more able to be continually involved in issues and to think long range as they have a constant and intense presence in a region and are not burdened by issues external to that region, nor are they driven by the interagency process to respond to whatever constitutes the minor crisis *du jour*.

They can certainly be threatening to the ambassadors who they frequently outperform, in part because they are better funded and in part because they have more facility at pursuing multilateral relations and are not, by their very job description, focused on a single bilateral relationship. Though their autonomy is not extreme, it is doubtless greater than that of most ambassadors who live to serve the ceaseless cable traffic to and from Washington.

They can be threatening to Congress, which is less able than they to sustain attention to matters abroad, to focus on selected issues, and to staff, study, and pursue those issues. In chapter 6 on the Southern Command and Colombia, Cook described Congress beginning to delegate more discretionary authority to a combatant commander, but Congress knows that if it follows that practice repeatedly, the members will see their role as an oversight institution with supervisory authority over the executive branch diminish.

These unconventional and emergent actors are seeing many issues default to them, and more issues will come their way as the war on terror increasingly militarizes foreign policy and as peacekeeping missions to war-torn areas more often require authorities who can project force and ensure order at the same time as they deliver humanitarian aid. As these new missions settle on the combatant commanders, we should not fault them for being insufficiently parochial, excessively adaptable, unusually energetic and surprisingly effective. Nor should we expect reticence. The combatant commanders are not shy, diffident, or lacking in energy. Shy people don't win four stars. New roles will continue to default to them and they will continue to innovate, though we should take General Zinni seriously when he says, "The system is badly broken . . . . We use chewing gum and baling wire to keep it together."<sup>12</sup>

### The Man in the Middle

If Priest is overstating matters when she calls the combatant commanders "the modern-day equivalent of the Roman Empire's proconsuls," and if there is little to be concerned at in their being "well-funded,

semi-autonomous [and] unconventional,” why then do the combatant commanders merit all the attention they receive in this book? It is because the United States stands at a peculiar and important juncture in the course of civil–military relations—a time when, according to Eliot Cohen, there has been a “decline in the quality of American civil–military relations at the top”<sup>13</sup>—and because the combatant commanders stand as the men in the middle between two conflicting views of civil–military relations.

One vision of proper civil–military relations, which we will label the military-preferred view, holds that the civilian leadership should give the military a mission, then get out of the way. Lay out the large objective, set out the major political limits, describe the desired outcome, then stand back. Military people sometimes express this view by drawing an analogy to surgery:

If you needed your appendix out, wouldn't you go hire the best surgeon you could find? And once you did that, once you located the most qualified professional, would you try to stay awake during the operation and keep interfering, saying, “Don't cut there! Cut over here! Don't do it that way! Wait! Stop! No! This way! OK, now you can go ahead . . .” Of course not. You would let the professional do it his way. He knows best. He has made it his life's work. He brings to the role great skills and vast experience. It's his job and his responsibility. Let him do his job, or don't expect the outcome you were hoping for at the outset. That's the way it is in war. Don't be looking over the officers' shoulders, don't be telling them what forces they must use, where they can bomb and where they can't, where they can go and when they must stop. Those are technical questions that no one outside the military is qualified to answer.

Teaching at a military academy, one hears this view weekly, and not only from midshipmen and cadets too young to know better. This view clearly is a legacy of the military's experience in Vietnam and it has been passed down for three decades to many classes of junior officers.

The combatant commanders of course have enough experience of politics and too much knowledge of history to subscribe to such a simplistic view. On the other hand, they also see and daily labor under the shortcomings and incompleteness of what we will call the civilian-preferred view.

The civilian-preferred view holds that the members of the military are and ought to be mere implementers of the objectives and plans drawn up by the political authorities. In this view, the military are functionaries whose skills are necessary but whose judgment must be limited to technical matters narrowly defined. “War is too important to be left to the generals,” the holders of the civilian-preferred view repeat.

Left unsupervised they will let things get out of hand. In fact, they will *carry* things out of hand. They will dictate when and how the military can be used. They will refuse missions that do not fit their preferences and will undermine the accomplishment of missions they do not favor. In the past, we saw a thoroughly political general take things in the other direction. We saw MacArthur in Korea undertake on his own authority to spread a war, to try to take it nuclear, and ultimately try to ride it to the presidency. Nowadays these political generals are more likely to do the opposite—to refuse to go into a place like Rwanda or Bosnia or Kosovo, or to set conditions on how these missions can be carried out. Don't let such practices get started. Don't let the officers threaten the Constitution they are sworn to protect. Keep the generals away from political decisions; keep them out of politics altogether. Let them follow the model of the greatest American soldier, General George C. Marshall, who refused even to vote because he wanted no part of politics and partisanship. And if they don't have the good sense and professionalism to stay out of political affairs, keep them out by keeping them functionaries, implementers, carriers-out of orders from their civilian superiors.

The combatant commanders are too sophisticated, too thoroughly engaged in the politics of Washington and the diplomacy of their regions, to be able to buy into the civilian-preferred view. They see that both views (which admittedly are caricatured here, but not so broadly as to be beyond what one would hear) are unrealistic and oversimple. As a result they operate in some middle ground between the two views, seldom entirely pleasing either the holders of the military-preferred view, which would tend to include the persons reporting to them and the uniformed persons above them in the Pentagon, or the holders of the civilian-preferred view, which would include the people they deal with on the NSC, the White House staff, in Congress, and at the State Department as well as the representatives of allied governments.

To take a single example, General Wesley Clark found himself harshly challenged by his air commander in Operation Allied Force, Air Force Lieutenant General Mike Short, who felt Clark was being too cautious and political and who angrily demanded to “go downtown” and bomb high-value sites in the middle of Belgrade. Clark also found himself opposed by persons in the Pentagon who felt he was too deferential to micromanaging civilians, too inclined to try end runs and backstage conversations, too close to the other Rhodes scholar from Arkansas who was in the White House—altogether too political an animal. Things would have been simpler for Clark if he had been able to ascribe single-mindedly to the military-preferred view of civil–military relations.

Because of the nature of his combatant commander job, however, he had to give equal weight to the civilian-preferred view. He had to be an implementer of directives from the White House, from the secretary general of NATO, and from NATO heads of state like French President Jacques Chirac who infuriated General Short and others by boasting publicly that if some bridges still stood over the Danube in Belgrade, the Serbs could thank him personally for demanding that they be spared. Clark had to constantly court members of Congress and parliamentarians from around Europe and help each manage the political problem confronting each one of sustaining political support for a war that, after all, involved bombing Europeans even as it presented a wordless rebuke to Europeans for having failed to manage this problem in past years.

It is significant that General Clark had to perform a particularly deft and dexterous balancing act between those asserting the military-preferred and those asserting the civilian-preferred views. Schwarzkopf had not been so torn. Nor had General David C. Meade, Joint Task Force commander in Haiti or Admiral Leighton Smith, U.S. commander in the Balkans. The difference lies in the fact that Schwarzkopf, Meade and Smith held their commands at a time when the military-preferred view was clearly dominant over the civilian-preferred view—dominant because the civilian leadership in the Clinton administration was cowed by the military. This situation had its origin in many factors including the striking success in the Gulf War of 1991, the prestige of General Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs with his strong insistence on a doctrine that codified the military-preferred view, and the high public regard that the American military enjoyed in the 1990s. But all these factors were greatly reinforced by the ways President Clinton disadvantaged himself and his administration with regard to the military.

Clinton came to the presidency with the reputation of a draft dodger whose letters from Oxford to an ROTC officer in Arkansas spoke of “loathing the military.” He had had so little exposure to American military culture that he was unskilled at saluting and imagined that it would take no more than an executive order to gain homosexuals full rights and standing as officers and enlisted members. This disastrous beginning was followed by a greater disaster in Somalia, and the distrust of the civilian leadership by the military was deepened when the mission was rapidly abandoned after 18 deaths in Mogadishu. It was obvious to General Zinni, who led the retreat from Somalia, that neither the White House nor the Congress would stand behind a mission once it took a seriously bad turn. Neither would spend political capital to shore up a mission once it began to crumble.<sup>14</sup>

The military-preferred view of civil-military relations correlates with a military-preferred kind of mission. It is a mission without civilian interference, with a definite and limited political goal, a vital national interest at stake, proven public support, ample forces, and a clear exit strategy. It should be undertaken wholeheartedly and only as a last resort. This is of course the ideal mission prescribed by the Weinberger Doctrine, and the military became entrenched throughout the 1990s in demanding that any prospective deployment meet these standards. They were successful in this insistence and defeated almost all calls for use of force.

In the case of the genocide in Rwanda, for example, holders of the military-preferred view used their prestige and clout to get the option of putting troops on the ground ruled out at the outset, then argued throughout the course of the killing that only troops on the ground could be effective. As the slaughter unfolded, the State Department was reduced to the mean expedient of refusing to allow the term genocide to be used, for that would obligate the United States to an intervention the civilian leadership did not want to try to require the military to perform. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell fought to have such military assets as Commando Solo aircraft deployed to jam radio frequencies to impede the killers. In a variation on the National Rifle Association's line, she was mockingly told by her counterparts at the Pentagon, "Pru, radios don't kill people. People kill people."<sup>15</sup>

In Haiti holders of the military-preferred view prevailed and were able to insist that the intervention be done with a massive force of 20,000. The troops were kept buttoned up in protective gear to the point that they were mocked as "ninja turtles." The humanitarian goals of the mission were sacrificed to the paramount goal of "force protection."<sup>16</sup> In Bosnia holders of that viewpoint long resisted deployment and finally were able to dictate the terms on which the military would participate, including the insistence that they not include the pursuit or arrest of war criminals. During these years the same people also successfully resisted the adoption of a treaty to ban land mines and American participation in a war crimes court. By 1995 the Clinton administration had so capitulated to the Weinberger Doctrine that it encoded it as its official position in Presidential Decision Directive 25, which erected such an array of standards to be met before a peacekeeping mission could be ordered that it effectively ruled out such missions entirely.<sup>17</sup>

The civilian-preferred view of civil-military relations also has its preferred kind of mission. It is one in which civilians direct the application of force and the military implements a carefully calibrated series of escalating measures aimed at compelling an opponent to accept a

political outcome. The use of force is gradual, not overwhelming; there are pauses to see how the opponent will respond. Political exposure and the cost of failure are kept low. Force is integrated with diplomacy in a kind of coercive diplomacy.

This kind of mission found a strong proponent in the Clinton administration in the person of the Permanent Representative to the United Nations and later Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was very inclined to experiment with graduated, calibrated uses of force. The clash of views and of missions is captured in Colin Powell's memoirs where he describes Albright demanding, "What's the point of having this superb military if you're always talking about we can't use it." Powell recalls "I thought I would have an aneurysm. American GIs were not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board."<sup>18</sup>

The military-preferred view was so dominant that its holders were able to insist that the U.S. steer clear of most of the missions Albright desired. In Kosovo they could not, but it was in part out of deference to their anxiety over an open-ended, Vietnam-style graduated escalation that Clinton announced on the very day the bombing began, "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war."<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, the civilian leadership would have been glad to resort to coercive diplomacy in order to solve political difficulties with military means. They would have been quite willing implicitly to tell the military, "Carry out this limited measure. We will study the result and get back to you. Stand by." At the same time, however, the military wanted massive and short interventions, saying "Give us the objectives and get out of the way! We fight and win the nation's wars; we aren't a political device." Throughout the 1990s, the holders of the second view generally prevailed.

In 1999 they were able to limit the experiment in coercion that was Operation Allied Force. Halberstam describes in detail the long campaign of resistance that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Hugh Shelton and his deputy, General Joseph Ralston, waged against General Clark when the latter sought to expand the forces committed. The Army famously resisted the deployment of Apache helicopters to Albania, calling for the building of a special air field and the deployment of 5,000 troops to make them safe, requiring 550 cargo flights to bring in the necessary equipment to support them and the tanks to defend them, then resisting their use by predicting that as many as half would be lost in combat. The helicopters eventually arrived in theater but never flew in combat.<sup>20</sup> Almost as soon as the conflict was over, General Clark was relieved and replaced by General Ralston.

In 2000, Priest surfaced the issue of the combatant commanders as “proconsuls.” It was in great part the long-lasting domination of the military-preferred view of civil–military relations that made the combatant commanders seem significant and even threatening to her. Experience since then has shown that there is little to be concerned at in their “well-funded, semi-autonomous, unconventional” status. It is clear by now that combatant commanders can be curbed. Indeed, they have been dramatically curtailed in their influence by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and the Bush administration.

The current administration feels toward the military very little of the diffidence or deference of the Clinton administration. The relationship is respectful but distant, and Rumsfeld has decisively asserted civilian dominance. He has abolished the title of commander in chief for all but the president, has banned the term “peacetime engagement,” and has announced his intent to “take back the Pentagon” for the civilians. Against the Army’s wishes, he has canceled one major weapons system in the Crusader artillery, and he has quickly forced through a set of defense reviews that, in Cohen’s words, “ostentatiously excluded the active-duty military from participation save as a kind of uniformed research assistants.”<sup>21</sup> He has given the Army a strong shaking up, sending Chief of Staff General Shinseki into early retirement and stripping his Service of its traditional European Command, giving it instead to General Jones of the Marine Corps.

If the experience of the 1990s is any guide, the significance of the combatant commanders will vary with the assertiveness of the administration under which they serve. Their power and importance will grow when the military-preferred vision of civil–military relations tends to prevail. They will recede in power and importance when the civilian-preferred vision is ascendant. This approach is in fact preferred by General Tommy Franks in the Central Command who sees a security relationship as just one arrow in the quiver managed by the U.S. ambassador for each country. However, in certain regions, particularly Franks’, security is the dominant concern.<sup>22</sup>

In less predictable ways, changes in the political context will alter their power. For example, the events of September 11 assisted in this reassertion of the civilian-preferred view. They put an abrupt end to the kind of resistance and selectivity that holders of the military-preferred view had exercised with regard to what missions they would like. The Weinberger Doctrine is seldom evoked in reference to the recent campaigns in Afghanistan and in the Gulf. Instead, the headline in *The Washington Post* as the war on Iraq began read “Calibrated War Makes Comeback.”<sup>23</sup>



One may also speculate that the aftermath of the second Gulf War may increase the consequentiality of the combatant commander in the Central Command as he takes a role in post-conflict reconstruction, though to date that process seems to be run directly from the Pentagon by appointees acceptable to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, and their close associate Richard Perle.

The role of combatant commanders may increase if diplomacy is discredited by intractable crises in Israel, North Korea, India–Pakistan, or the Sudan. On the other hand it may decrease if a military intervention in one of those regions, or against Syria or Iran, should go badly. What will not change is that the combatant commanders will remain the men in the middle, caught between two visions of the proper role of the military and the proper relations between civilian and military leaderships.

#### Notes

1. Priest's own book derived from her articles, 2003, *The Mission*, New York: W.W. Norton, confirms this judgment. Its structure suggests she found she could not build the three articles into a book-length study. Instead, only the first 100 pages treat what she called America's modern proconsuls. The other 300 pages are given over to very interesting and well-reported narratives of special forces in various places and peacekeeping work in Bosnia.
2. See Priest, *The Mission*, pp. 96–97.
3. Quoted in "General Tommy Franks Interview with Greg Jaffe, *Wall Street Journal*." April 30, 2002.
4. See David Halberstam, 2001, *War in a Time of Peace*, New York: Scribner, p. 469.
5. Dana Priest, 2000, "A Four-Star Foreign Policy?" *The Washington Post*, September 28: A1.
6. Dana Priest, 2000, "Standing Up to State and Congress," *The Washington Post*, September 30: A1.
7. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 465.
8. To make the situation more difficult and confusing, the president and the secretary of Defense would not communicate with Clark directly, even though they had very strong directives to deliver. "But neither the president nor the secretary of defense chose to speak with their theater commander, who found himself on the receiving end of admonitions from a hostile chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and uncooperative generals at home. 'I had little idea, and never had during the entire crisis, how the commander in chief, or the secretary of defense, were making their decisions.'" Clark's words are from his memoirs: *Waging Modern War* as quoted by Eliot Cohen, 2002, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, New York: The Free Press, p. 203.

9. General Franks was little heard from until, a few days into the war, a sand-storm and resistance near Basra raised doubts about the coalition's war plans. At that point General Franks's name began to be heard, but in the context of disclaimers: "This is General Franks' war plan," Rumsfeld said repeatedly. "He designed it and he has pronounced himself satisfied with it at every step of the way."
10. See Michael Ignatieff, 2000, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond*, New York: Metropolitan Books. See also Wesley Clark, 2001, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs.
11. Quoted in Priest, *The Mission*, p. 54.
12. Priest, "A Four-Star Foreign Policy?" A1. A statement like this might move Congress to act as Garbesi described in chapter 2 when a plea from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs helped spur the Goldwater-Nichols Act.
13. Eliot Cohen, 2002, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, New York: The Free Press, p. 200.
14. One measure of the dominance of the military-preferred view over the civilian-preferred view was that it was the *civilian* authority, Secretary of Defense Aspin, who resigned after Mogadishu, even though, as Eliot Cohen points out in *Supreme Command*, "his military advisers had not urged upon him a course of action other than that undertaken by American forces there, and had, in fact, favored the withdrawal of the one system that might have rescued the Rangers, the AC-130 aerial gunship." Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 202.
15. Rwanda is a mountainous country with poor communications. Radios were used to coordinate the efforts of crews of killers, directing them to villages that had not yet been "cleansed" and even guiding stalkers to individual victims as they fled through the streets of Kigali. Samantha Power, 2002, *Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, p. 372.
16. On the day the troops landed they were required to stand by gripping their weapons and watching as thugs from the outgoing Cedras regime beat to death a pro-democracy demonstrator on the docks. Later an intelligence captain was court-martialed for insisting on inspecting a prison where political prisoners were being held and abused. See Stephen Wrage, 2002, "Captain Lawrence Rockwood in Haiti," *Journal of Military Ethics*, 1, no. 1.
17. According to Samantha Power, there were "sixteen factors that policymakers needed to consider when deciding whether to support peacekeeping activities: seven factors if the United States was to vote in the U.N. Security Council on peace operations carried out by non-American soldiers, six additional and more stringent factors if U.S. forces were to participate in U.N. peacekeeping missions, and three final factors if U.S. troops were likely to engage in actual combat. U.S. participation had to advance U.S. interests, be necessary for the operation's success, and garner domestic and congressional support. The risk of casualties had to be "acceptable." An exit strategy had to be shown. In the words of Representative David Obey of Wisconsin, the restrictive checklist tried to satisfy the American desire for "zero degree of involvement, and zero degree of risk, and zero degree of pain

- and confusion.” Samantha Power, 2002, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, p. 342. PDD 25 was promulgated one month into the hundred-day Rwandan genocide and was a significant factor in forestalling an American response.
18. Colin Powell, 1995, *My American Journey*, New York: Random House, p. 576.
  19. This of course broke the cardinal rule in forceful negotiation: never tell your opponents what you won't do. Keep them guessing. Feed their doubts and fears. Cultivate ambiguity. (President Nixon even used to reflect that the North Vietnamese should wonder if he was quite sane.)
  20. See Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 466.
  21. Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 205.
  22. Quoted in “General Tommy Franks Interview with Greg Jaffe,” 2002, *The Wall Street Journal* (April 30), <http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/transcripts/20020430.htm>.
  23. Thomas E. Ricks, 2003, “Calibrated War Makes Comeback,” *The Washington Post*, 21 March: A1.

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