The Weinberger Doctrine and the Liberation of Kuwait

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The August 1990 invasion of Kuwait by the armed forces of Iraq presents a unique opportunity to analyze US national security decisionmaking and military strategy development. The opportunity is unique in that the analysis was real-time as the drama played daily in capitals and media centers around the world. As US policy and strategy were developed in response to the Iraqi invasion, the elements of this response were fiercely debated on the national and international stages. Adding to the uniqueness of this situation is its place in history as the first major military challenge in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, it has been argued that the new era will be indelibly shaped by the actions of the international community in coming to grips with the aggression of Saddam Hussein against sovereign Kuwait.[1]

This article will analyze the national security decisionmaking process employed by the Bush Administration in dealing with the Persian Gulf situation. It will also examine the military and diplomatic strategy that evolved as events in the Gulf unfolded. The interlocking nature of the process and the strategy will become evident as we study the dramatic events of the period and place in perspective the US responses to these events.

Enough is now known about our strategy and policy decisions to embark on an analysis of these processes in the raw. Several frameworks of analysis exist, but a particularly appropriate one was advanced in 1984 by former Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, in which he developed six major tests to be applied in deciding upon the use of US combat forces abroad.[2] These tests became popularly known as the Weinberger Doctrine. We will use the six Weinberger tests as a point of departure for considering the national security decisionmaking and national military strategy development processes as they progressed in the Gulf crisis from August 1990.[3]

The fact that Secretary Weinberger's six tests were born primarily from our experiences in Vietnam and Lebanon makes them particularly relevant to the

Persian Gulf debate. We faced in Desert Shield and Storm the same possibilities of a protracted, ill-defined, and publicly unpopular involvement that so critically marred our efforts in Southeast Asia. And the fatalities suffered in the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut raised serious questions regarding the proper use of the military instrument of power.[4]

The literature of late 1984 reveals vitriolic debate as the Weinberger Doctrine was assailed on several fronts. Secretary of State George Shultz, perceiving the tests to describe an unwillingness to use expensively purchased military power, stated, "Power and diplomacy must always go together, or we will accomplish very little in this world. The hard reality is that diplomacy not backed by strength will always be ineffectual at best, dangerous at worst."[5] Conservative writer William F. Buckley, Jr., asserted that "Weinberger sets an impossible standard. The sine qua non of popular support is success. But if the mission is indeed vital, then it has to be carried out, even at the risk of failure."[6] William Safire likened the doctrine to a "hospital that does not want to admit patients," and accused Weinberger of "moral blindness" by seeking to constrain the use of American power to those instances where success was assured.[7] There were others, however, who commended the maturity and restraint of the Weinberger standards.

Irrespective of the pros and cons of this debate, the Weinberger Doctrine has endured as a serviceable guide by which one may judge the wisdom of employing US combat forces overseas. With so much as a backdrop, let us proceed to the discussion of how Mr. Weinberger's six tests could be applied to our development of policy and strategy in the Persian Gulf.

Test One

- *The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest, or that of our allies.*

Response to Saddam's annexation of Kuwait was vital to our national interests on a variety of fronts. Stability in the region was at stake. Historically the Persian Gulf region has been among the most unstable in the world. Deep-seated religious and cultural divisions among the nations of the Middle

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East have resulted in a vast array of conflicts throughout history. This flux has further resulted in an amazingly convoluted history of shifting power centers and alliances. Given the significance of the Middle East to the world's economy, as well as its important geostrategic position, political instability and military asymmetry pose inordinately serious threats.

The United States' historical response to challenges in this region may seem inconsistent, as we have at various times allied with and opposed most of the countries in the region. Only our strong association with Israel has offered any true constancy. Nevertheless, our overall policy objectives do have a thread of consistency, and that thread is tied to stability. Our apparent shifting of emphasis over time among Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, et al. is in reality a reflection of our attempts to maintain balance and stability in the region.

A firm diplomatic and military response to this latest crisis was but a logical extension of our long-standing regional policies. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait stands in sharp contrast, for instance, to the Iran-Iraq War. In the latter instance, overt US involvement was not seen as essential or desirable since the conflict seemed to be a virtual stand-off and balance in the region never appeared in serious jeopardy. Such was not the case in Kuwait. Iraqi objectives, frustrated for eight years in Iran, were achieved in five hours in Kuwait. Emboldened by this quick success, Iraq may very well have expanded its aims to include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates. In fact, citing the amount of weaponry and ammunition seized on the Saudi border after the war, some military experts are convinced Saddam's intentions did not end with Kuwait.[8] Stability and balance were clearly at risk, and hence the US response was both required and justified.

The historic role of the United States as a world leader also placed response to this crisis within our national interests. It can be argued that in an era of declining defense budgets, arms control agreements, and hoped-for peace dividends, the United States had a vested interest in reasserting its willingness and capacity to take decisive action in response to international events. The invasion of Kuwait, a gross violation of international law, demanded action. To fail to heed the plea of both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for assistance (whether or not we engineered the invitation) would have been to abrogate our leadership role. Even as we sought to escape the role of world's gendarme, we could not escape our responsibilities for leading the world response to aggression.

Additionally, favorable resolution of this crisis was vital to the crafting of what President Bush has called a "new world order." The invasion of Kuwait interrupted the general euphoria of the post-Cold War period; the international response provided a glimpse of how this new world order might look.[9] The United States, as the preeminent superpower, took the lead and amassed an impressive coalition in opposition to Iraq. Strange bedfellows,

indeed, were made as the Soviet Union and Syria joined coalition forces with less reluctance than either Germany or Japan. In remarkable fashion, the United Nations acted decisively, and with near unanimity.

While the international response to this crisis was initially encouraging to the concept of a new world order, a challenging agenda remained. The major nations of the world were justifiably impressed with the unified condemnation of the Iraqi aggression from such surprising quarters as Iran, Libya, and Syria. The support of the Soviet Union in the UN Security Council, and lack of opposition from China in that forum, were further reasons for optimism. Nonetheless, we should not rush to the conclusion that this temporary coalition accurately reflected agreement with the US view of a new world order. Significant and potentially insurmountable obstacles remain. Each of the nations that joined us did so with its own national interests clearly in mind. Merely joining us in opposing Iraqi aggression did not mean that Iran, Syria, or Saudi Arabia was ready to share our views on economic development, democratization, human rights, or other core issues that form the basis of disagreement in the region. Likewise, cooperation from the Soviets did not mean that they had abandoned their historic sponsorship of client states. More realistically, we should view these developments in a cautiously optimistic perspective. At the very least, it represented a positive trend that we ought to encourage, since, as our own ability and desire to go it alone diminish, a collegial response is just what is needed to take their place.

And then there was oil. While the "no blood for oil" argument was used to protest our involvement, the economic fact of Western dependence on Mideast oil is inescapable. The prospect of Saddam Hussein controlling the oil reserves of Iraq, Kuwait, and potentially Saudi Arabia and its smaller neighbors presented a frightening economic prospect. With our own economy teetering on the brink of recession, we could ill afford the massive disruption of world economies that might have ensued were Iraq to garner such control. It is ironic that some of our principal allies, notably Germany and Japan, having the greatest reliance on Middle East oil, made relatively meager contributions to the effort. Notwithstanding their constitutional limitations on military action, the monetary pledges of these two nations appeared surprisingly constrained.

The specter of nuclear and chemical blackmail served as additional justification for US intervention. Left unopposed, Iraq would eventually have developed the technology to match its will to become a nuclear, biological, and chemical power in the region. The United States, in concert with the world community, could not tolerate the prospect of such unbridled economic and military leverage in the hands of an unstable ruler in an unstable region.

Finally, our historically close association with Israel also placed a robust response to Iraq in our national interest. Our cultural, economic, political, religious, and strategic ties with Israel demanded that we respond

to regional security threats, and certainly a successfully aggressive Saddam, having vowed repeatedly to destroy Israel, posed such a threat. As events turned out, it was only our strong presence that permitted the Israelis to forgo a military response to Iraqi Scud attacks. Lacking this restraint, the Allied coalition would have looked much different, and the battlefield outcome might have been dramatically altered.

For the foregoing reasons, it is clear that the US decision to introduce combat troops met the first of Weinberger's tests. The decision quite evidently was in concert with a wide variety of compelling national interests.

Test Two

- *If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning.*

To adequately assess compliance with this test, one must have a firm idea of what "winning" means. Given the earlier discussion on the genesis of the Weinberger Doctrine, it seems clear that he had military victory in mind. Hence, the successful application of this test would avoid the physically and morally draining experience of Vietnam. Having decided that introduction of troops was necessary, rather than adopt the gradual-escalation strategy of Vietnam, President Bush inserted a combat force capable from the outset of achieving military victory. The rapid deployment of more than 200,000 troops to Saudi Arabia put a militarily sufficient force in place to achieve our immediate objective of halting Iraq's aggression at the Saudi border. Significant by their absence were military advisers, observers, or small-scale peace-keeping forces. While the US policy placed primacy on a peaceful resolution of the conflict, there could be no doubt that the strategy to employ the military instrument had winning armed conflict as its objective.

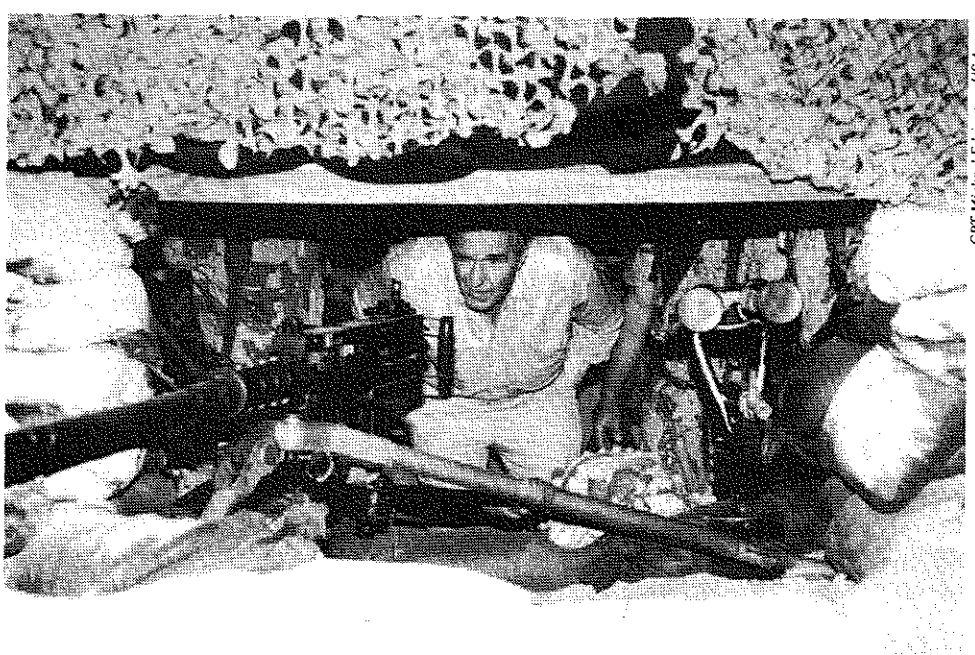
By amassing so potent a military force, we also advanced the possibility of peaceful resolution by signaling unequivocally to Saddam our resolve to engage militarily should diplomacy fail. Unlike our involvement in Vietnam, this time there would be no doubt in the minds of our troops, politicians, media, populace, or enemy that should hostilities erupt, US armed forces were there to secure military victory. Our assessment of the enemy's size, strength, and capabilities led us to assemble an awesome force of high-tech weaponry on land, on sea, and in the air. The war plan developed to support this force had as its end objective, swift, decisive, and unequivocal destruction of the enemy with minimum allied casualties. Absent were convoluted rules of engagement, safety zones, and ever-changing political restrictions placed upon warfighters. In their place was JCS Chairman Colin Powell's exhortation to "find the enemy, cut it off, and kill it."[10] President Bush stated the case clearly: "I will not, as Commander-in-Chief, ever put somebody into a military situation that we do not win—ever. And there's not

going to be any drawn-out agony [like] Vietnam."[11] Employment of a war-winning strategy has relevance, however, only in terms of the objectives of that strategy, and this moves us to a discussion of Weinberger's third test.

Test Three

• *If we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives.*

The concept of clearly defined objectives seemed to trouble the Administration throughout the crisis. Despite considerable effort on the part of President Bush, Secretary of State Baker, and Secretary of Defense Cheney to elucidate our political and military objectives in the Gulf, significant confusion and disagreement persisted. Our initially stated objectives were straightforward: deter further Iraqi aggression and defend Saudi Arabia; secure the unconditional removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait; permit the return of the legitimate Kuwaiti government to authority. However, despite having these goals repeated almost daily from the 2d of August through the fall, we still seemed divided. Senator Sam Nunn, arguably the most influential senator on US military policy, stated as late as November, "We're committed [to defend Saudi Arabia], but I do not think that means we have to build up



CPT Michael Edrington, US Army

In concert with Weinberger's second test, President Bush vowed, "I will not, as Commander-in-Chief, ever put somebody into a military situation that we do not win—ever." Here, during a Thanksgiving 1990 visit to Saudi Arabia, the President sights down the barrel of a .50-caliber machine gun in a bunker.

an offensive force to liberate Kuwait."[12] Others openly speculated that our real goal was the removal of Saddam Hussein and the destruction of the Iraqi army. They saw this goal as unachievable with anything other than offensive military operations and hence questioned both our "peaceful resolution" political policy and our defensive military strategy.[13]

US political and military objectives were initially clear. The specific diplomatic and military actions necessary to achieve them evolved over time. As the crisis unfolded, the success or failure of initial efforts determined the character and extent of future efforts. The Bush Administration had a definitive view of what it hoped to achieve and stated these objectives forcefully. It is equally clear how the Administration hoped to achieve these objectives. World-wide diplomatic pressure, strict UN-sponsored economic sanctions enforced by a tight naval embargo, and the presence of enormous military firepower on Iraq's borders were all calculated to achieve our objectives without firing a shot.

That hope was dashed by Iraq's defiance of the UN's call for it to vacate Kuwait. By late January it appeared that the coalition's campaign would be successful in minimum time. Our initial military success led to a reevaluation and expansion of our original objectives. The rapid achievement of air supremacy with lighter-than-expected losses enabled us to wage a relentless air campaign, in essence unopposed. The resulting damage to Iraqi defenses and significant attrition of its ground troops substantially reduced the specter of a costly, bloody ground war to liberate Kuwait. These early and almost total successes in the air war gave certain life to expanded expectations and more ambitious objectives.

Another key to the broadening of military objectives was the proliferation of violent, senseless atrocities committed by Saddam's army. The indiscriminate Scud attacks on civilian targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia and the rape, torture, and mutilation of Kuwaiti citizens galvanized coalition opposition to Saddam's postwar survival. His obvious mistreatment and exploitation of coalition POWs, polluting of the Persian Gulf, destruction of Kuwait City, and vindictive torching of the Kuwaiti oil fields gave rise to a chorus of demands for retribution.

As the war drew to a successful conclusion, alliance insistence upon destruction of the Iraqi war machine became more strident. Abject capitulation became a prerequisite for ending hostilities. President Bush's rejection of the spate of last-minute Soviet-sponsored peace plans appeared on the surface to insure compliance with our original objectives as outlined in the 12 United Nations resolutions. In reality, it now seems evident, the coalition had raised the ante. Emboldened by our military success and incensed by Iraqi abominations, we began to look beyond the liberation of Kuwait to the destruction of Iraqi warfighting capability and the political castration of Saddam, in Iraq as well as in the region.

These new de facto objectives drew widespread support and more than a little criticism. The long-term effects of this expansion on our reputation in the Middle East cannot be calculated as yet. Be that as it may, this fact is inescapable: our military and political objectives were altered substantially throughout the course of the crisis. Clausewitz has written, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so, without being first clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."[14] In this case, it seems that President Bush had that clear vision initially, but that events conspired to drive an expansion of our goals. Such an ad hoc approach to military and political objectives of war carries with it high risk. It is sometimes this approach that makes managing the peace more difficult than managing the war.

To this point, we have applied the Weinberger tests to US Persian Gulf involvement in terms of vital national interests, a winning strategy, and clearcut objectives. As we have seen, objectives can undergo reassessment. So too, military forces may also require adjustment—and this brings us to Weinberger's fourth test.

Test Four

- *The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.*

Here, the evidence is abundantly clear that we were true to the test. Given our August 1990 objectives (defense of Saudi Arabia, removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and restoration of the legitimate government), we developed a strategy of economic sanctions and defensive military force. Our early commitment of 230,000 troops was sufficient for the task. The force mix of approximately 165,000 ground and air troops and 65,000 seaborne troops was adequate and appropriate, particularly with the addition of the 25,000 troops supplied by other nations as part of the multinational force.[15]

As October drew to a close, however, Saddam had not budged. The diplomatic pressures applied had met little success. The economic sanctions, while taking their toll, would require significant time to have a telling effect. A reassessment was thus in order. Our political and military objectives had not yet changed, but we had to rethink our means of achieving them. As the likelihood decreased that economic sanctions and defensive military strategies would succeed, President Bush ordered a further commitment of another 200,000 troops. This action fueled negative congressional and media reaction. However, the increase was justified. While initial force levels were sufficient to defend Saudi Arabia, more firepower was needed to force an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. In ordering more troops, President Bush was acting in accordance with Weinberger's fourth test (reassessment) as well as his second

(commit enough force to win). Unfortunately, the hue and cry that met this additional commitment illustrates the challenge the President faced in meeting the fifth of Weinberger's tests.

Test Five

- *Before the United States commits forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.*

In terms of the success or failure of US national policy and its related military strategy, this concept of public and political support may be the most difficult test of all. By November it was evident that the President's initial widespread popular support was eroding. Opinion polls showed public approval of Mr. Bush's actions in the Gulf dropping from 82 percent on 20 August to 51 percent by 13 November. Also, only 51 percent approved of the decision to send the additional troops to the area.[16] As with any opinion poll, it is difficult to judge precisely the concerns of the respondents. In this case, one cannot know how much of the erosion of support was tied specifically to our Gulf policies and how much reflected the President's general decline in the polls owing to his repudiation of "no new taxes" and his perceived lack of leadership during the budget debacle. By any standard, however, it appears that public support was waning before the first shot had been fired. Some of this erosion might be attributed to the substantial reliance upon Reserve and National Guard forces. The media aggressively reported on the family hardships caused by the call-up of various Reserve and Guard units in support of Desert Shield. News stories about local Guardsmen and Reservists brought the Mideast crisis close to home. Unlike any earlier conflict, the saga of Desert Shield was being played on Main Street, USA, well before the fight was joined.

One public relations strategy used by President Bush and his policymakers was to keep the public eye focused on how the crisis threatened our national interests and to continually emphasize the multinational character of the operation. By doing this, they hoped to avoid a public perception that Desert Shield was just another example of the United States flexing its military muscle in some remote and marginally important part of the world. Rather, the perception they sought to instill was one of the United States stepping up to its leadership role in confronting hostilities and atrocities in an area of the world vital to our security and way of life.

The President began by concentrating outrage on Saddam Hussein. American experience was fresh with resentment toward other regional players such as Khomeini and Gadhafi. President Bush succeeded in directing public opinion appropriately by emphasizing Saddam himself as much as his actions. For his part, Saddam's blatant manipulation of the press, particularly vis-à-vis the hostages, complemented our public relations strategy. The key question,

unanswerable at that time, was whether public support could endure throughout the time it would take for our diplomatic and economic strategies to work. Moreover, given the early erosion of support already evident, could American public opinion stand the casualties that seemed inevitable if we were forced to take the combat option?

Once hostilities began, public support for our war effort became one of the most gratifying aspects of the crisis. Spurred by confidence in our civilian and military leadership, a spirited sense of national pride and purpose swept the country. Rallies, outpourings of support, and the ever-present yellow ribbons completely overwhelmed the amazingly limited number of protest movements. The large-scale participation of the Reserve and Guard, which originally had threatened to be divisive, in fact had the opposite effect as communities throughout the nation rallied behind "their troops." Of course, it is far easier to be patriotic in a quick victory, and we will fortunately never know the effect upon public support if casualties had been high or the conflict prolonged. But rather than credit this public relations success to the vagaries of American popular sentiment, one can attribute it instead to the winning, "no-more-Vietnams" policy of the Administration. The fact that public support continued even as our objectives expanded can be attributed equally to President Bush and General Schwarzkopf, whose leadership earned the trust of the nation and made us believe that our expanded objectives were both just and achievable.

Congressional support was equally halting and problematical in the nurturing. Much of the debate on Capitol Hill revolved around the power to declare war as vested by the Constitution. The Administration and Congress were in sharp disagreement, and Congress was divided within itself on the distinction between committing troops to combat and the declaration of war. Well beyond the constitutional question, the debate threatened to digress into a turf battle, with many members prepared to mount an assault on what had, during the Vietnam War, been labeled the "imperial presidency." The debate on this issue was nothing new. Congress had repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1971 and then throughout the Watergate and Iran/Contra eras had argued over the risks inherent in a militarily adventurous president unfettered by legislative oversight.[17]

Although the President and his supporters wanted a free hand, it was obvious that the US position would be strengthened if the President could garner the support of the Congress. Not only would this send a stronger signal to Saddam, it would also avoid having the operation characterized, at home and abroad, as "Bush's war." Secretary of Defense Cheney, himself a former member of the House, was not sanguine that Congress was up to the task. Citing congressional debate in 1941, he observed, "World War II had been underway for two years; Hitler had taken Austria, Czechoslavakia, Poland,

Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and was halfway to Moscow. Congress, in that setting, two months before Pearl Harbor . . . agreed to extend the draft for 12 more months, by just one vote." He went on to state that divisive debate in the Congress would play into Saddam's hands by creating the impression that time was on his side.[18] It was not altogether clear how Congress would react in a straight up-or-down vote on a presidential request to declare war, absent a first strike from Iraq. Without a Pearl Harbor-type catalyst, debate on the wisdom of our strategy and policy could be protracted and potentially harmful to our attempts to pressure Saddam. Should Congress officially state that military action would be authorized only in response to an Iraqi attack, the UN-declared 15 January 1991 deadline for the use of force would be seriously undermined.

Moreover, the Congress itself was not united on the wisdom of "stepping up to the bar" on this issue. While some rattled the constitutional sword and the War Powers Act, even going so far as to file a court suit against the President, others seemed more than willing to "let George do it." The Vietnam experience clearly shows the political expediency of avoiding the collateral damage of a potentially unpopular war. Many in Congress seemed more comfortable with vague "Sense of Congress" resolutions than with unequivocal support or opposition to the President's policy.

Even in the face of such congressional uncertainty, it remained in the President's best interest to place the same emphasis on support at home as he had on solidifying international unanimity for our position. Unless he could insure a quick, surgical victory with minimal US casualties (and it was beginning to appear increasingly unlikely that he could), the wisdom of history and the fifth Weinberger test would argue that we enter hostilities congressionally and popularly united. As the *Washington Times* observed, "If Mr. Bush wants the latitude to start a war by invading Iraq, the approval of King Fahd or the United Nations will mean nothing without the approval of the American people. And that approval can only come through an open debate in Congress and a formal declaration of war."[19]

When all was said and done, Congress did indeed rise to the occasion. The debate in both Houses was spirited and emotional, but noticeably lacking was the partisan rancor that had marked the budget fiasco only two months earlier. Rather, the debate revealed broad consensus on the overall objectives of the Bush Administration though disagreement over the means. A substantial number in Congress favored extended reliance on the economic sanctions to bring Saddam around. An equally substantial contingent argued that the President must be given a free hand to deal diplomatically and militarily with the crisis. As the debate was engaged, Representative Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) claimed the President wanted a "blank check which leaves the decision to him when, how, where, and what force he can use. He is not going to get that,

clearly."[20] Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.) echoed similar sentiments in his claim that Bush wanted "a blank check authorization to say the President at some indefinite future time under unspecified circumstances can make war. That is a negation of the role of Congress in our system of government."[21] Replying for the Administration, Vice President Quayle observed that congressional critics "have a direct line to Saddam Hussein" through the news media, and that the Iraqi leader may be getting the message that the President "cannot and will not use force because Congress will not let him." The Vice President also attacked critics on another front, stating that US forces in the Gulf "don't look forward to spending the next couple of years waiting around in the Saudi desert while Congress debates what to do next."[22]

The final vote was in the Administration's favor by a slim margin in the Senate (52-47) and a more comfortable margin in the House. But regardless of these margins, the United States approached the 15 January 1991 United Nations deadline on the use of force politically united as perhaps not since World War II. Speaker of the House Tom Foley (D-Wash.) has observed that despite the honest disagreement on means, "The Congress united behind the President in war and gave constitutional meaning" to the actions of our nation.[23] The executive and legislative branches were acting in concert, and public support for US policies was strong at home and abroad. All that remained, in terms of Weinberger's tests, was the sixth—to exhaust all other means prior to combat.

Test Six

- *Finally, the commitment of US forces to combat should be the last resort.*

US policy and strategy were true to this sixth test. While our rapid deployment of troops in August and the subsequent doubling of force levels may have appeared militarily confrontational, our policy was, in reality, most patient. Our initial strategy of defensive buildup and reliance on economic sanctions reinforces this point. The Bush/Baker strategy of diplomatic coalition advanced our policy of avoiding armed hostilities. By operating under the aegis of the United Nations diplomatically, financially, and in many cases militarily, the Administration clearly signaled our desire to achieve our objectives short of combat.

Much will be made of the diplomatic activity immediately preceding hostilities. The potential impact of the "last hope" meeting between Secretary of State Baker and Saddam dominated the world media. The apparently petty bickering over dates for this meeting foreshadowed the intensity of the brinkmanship that would dominate diplomatic efforts throughout the crisis. As one nation after another sent its envoy to Baghdad, only to be rebuffed, Saddam seemed to grow in stature. Insistent that the United States would not contribute to Saddam's enhanced standing, President Bush held firm that

discussions would take place on the US schedule, not the Iraqi leader's. Soon thereafter, the much-heralded meeting between Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz collapsed in Geneva, with Aziz refusing to receive President Bush's letter to Saddam, a letter which has been called "the most historic document of George Bush's presidency."[24] At this point, it can be safely surmised that war was inevitable.

But was it inevitable long before then? Some might argue that the massive buildup of coalition forces from August to November created an environment not unlike that leading up to World War I in Europe. In that situation, the mobilization plans of Russia, Germany, and France seemed to take on a life of their own, stair-stepping their ascent to inexorable armed conflict. History will show that this analogy does not hold up, however. Unlike the prelude to World War I, the mobilization for Desert Shield was done in full world view. Aggressive diplomatic efforts were conducted coincident to the buildup. World opinion strongly favored avoidance of armed conflict, if at all possible. Hindsight will show that Saddam could have avoided war right up to the point when the first bomb was dropped.

Theorists of war termination have criticized strategists and military planners for concentrating on how wars begin and are fought while neglecting how they are stopped.[25] In the case in Desert Storm, the phasing of the war actually gave the United States a second chance to apply both termination theory and Weinberger's "last resort" test. By mid-February of 1991, the month-long air war had taken its expected toll on Iraqi command and control elements and had inflicted significant damage on their ground forces. As preparations were being made to initiate the ground war, a frenzied series of peace proposals emerged from bilateral Soviet-Iraqi meetings. Although it is now known that a date certain had already been set for the initiation of the ground war, a persuasive case can be made that hostilities could have been terminated diplomatically if the proper deal could have been struck. Major General Perry Smith (USAF Ret.) has observed that Saddam became quite adept at staying one step behind the power curve by consistently accepting the last discarded peace proposal.[26] For our part, President Bush clearly sensed victory and was adamant that termination would be on coalition terms only. In one of an impressive series of diplomatic strokes, the President publicly praised Soviet intentions while steadfastly adhering to his own diplomatic agenda. But when viewed in the context of the Weinberger "last resort" test, it is evident that during each major phase of Desert Shield and Storm, military force was indeed applied only after all else had failed.

Before leaving the subject of the relationship between negotiation and combat action, we may note what may well become one of the principal lessons of the Gulf War. President Bush was determined not to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam and the latter stages of the Korean War, wherein we

conducted formal negotiations during hostilities and altered our battle plan in response to the ebb and flow of the peace talks. History has shown that variously escalating or de-escalating hostilities to support bargaining positions at the negotiating table is hazardous, both diplomatically and militarily. While success is ultimately possible, the more likely results are protracted conflict, increased casualties, and a concomitant erosion of public support, both domestic and international.

Desert Storm exemplifies the proper role of negotiation during armed conflict. At no time prior to victory did the United States offer a cease-fire to permit negotiating positions to be sorted out. On the contrary, while diplomatic initiatives abounded during the conflict, our military policy remained unchanged—the war would continue, unabated, unless and until Iraq fully accepted coalition conditions. In a combination of Weinberger's second and sixth tests, the lesson here is that once the last resort has been reached, combat force must be steadfastly applied toward winning militarily.

Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait provides a unique opportunity to observe US national policy and military strategy at work. The specific military tactics and operational art which General Schwarzkopf has labeled "absolutely textbook"[27] will be topics of study for students of warfare for generations. In terms of the decisionmaking process that led up to the introduction of combat forces into the contested theater, the Weinberger Doctrine provides a useful framework for analysis.

In this crisis, President Bush began by orchestrating a plan for immediate defensive military response to achieve near-term objectives. He then moved to pursue nonmilitary options of economic sanction and the garnering of world opinion in an attempt to convince Saddam of the folly of his aggression. Through reliance on the United Nations and a multinational military force, Bush managed to seize and hold the high ground diplomatically. When all political, diplomatic, and economic initiatives failed, he did not hesitate to employ the military instrument of power with sufficient force and will to ensure victory.

Of potentially longer-term importance, President Bush has set the international agenda for a new world order in which nations might more readily put aside parochial interests in deference to higher international goals. At the same time, the President has succeeded, domestically and internationally, in restoring trust and confidence in the United States. Succinctly put, the Vietnam syndrome, at least in its more literal and paralyzing form, has been relegated to history.

For strategists and policymakers, Desert Shield and Storm offer a prescription for the future. Analysis of US reaction to the Persian Gulf crisis

places in clear perspective the relative roles of the elements of national power. It provides a microcosmic view of the relationship between national objectives and the strategies to achieve them. While future crises will obviously not all fit the Persian Gulf mold, the lessons of Desert Storm abound for political, diplomatic, and military decisionmakers.

One can only hypothesize at this point on the ultimate effects of these momentous and exciting events. But seen through the prism of the Weinberger Doctrine, as amplified by the useful reminder that war is "nothing but the continuation of policy with other means,"[28] US policy and strategy in the Persian Gulf crisis should certainly earn the approval of Weinberger and Clausewitz alike.

NOTES

1. John O'Sullivan, "James Burnham and the New World Order," *National Review*, 5 November 1990, p. 40.
2. Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," *Defense 85*, January 1985, pp. 2-11.
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