Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Political Science

ORDER AND LEADERSHIP:

CASE STUDY ANALYSES AND TYPOLOGY DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO US

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS DURING THE WAR ON TERROR

[a thesis]

by

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Abstract

Order and Leadership

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This thesis focuses on United States civil-military relations during the first decade of the twenty-first century. It examines interactions between principal-level civilian and top-tier military leadership during three strategic decision-making moments. Each case involves examples of subjective civilian control. The author's goal is to investigate and then categorize the processes that were used, assessing how variables influenced the nature of subjective control. Qualitative process tracing is the primary methodology. The author focuses on available sources from myriad avenues including but not limited to journalism, memoirs, primary documents, and social science literature. Case study analysis identifies numerous variables. Presidential leadership and process organization were found to be the most influential, spanning from engaged to "delegatory" and orderly to ad-hoc, respectively. Correlations are identified between the variables. Then, theories from established literature are reviewed and applied when possible. Research finds that subjective civil-military relations became increasingly moderate and theoretically "pure" over each case, chronologically. The author uses his analysis to create new typologies of subjective civil-military control, focusing on the relationships between presidential leadership and process organization. The resulting typologies are intended to assist political scientists' identification and categorization of varying civil-military relationships on the subjective end of Huntington's spectrum.

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Chapter One
Introduction

In this thesis, the author focuses on United States civil-military relations during the first decade of the twenty-first century. He examines the interaction between principal-level civilian leadership and the top-tier military leadership during three strategic decision-making moments in the Global War on Terror/Overseas Contingency Operation (GWT/OCO). Every case involves examples of subjective civilian control. In all instances the president maintains primary decision-making status and ultimate authority. However, the power dynamics shifted from case to case. As such, the author's ultimate goal is to categorize the processes that were used and assess how any relevant variables influenced the nature of subjective control.

The author pays particular focus on the National Security Council's (NSC) relevance and influence upon the relationship/decision-making process. By examining this component of national security policy making, the author analyzes the operational processes within the civil-military relationship. How the NSC is involved in each case is vital to the style of national security decision-making. The latter point is established by history as well as political science literature preceding this work.

This thesis deals with fundamental concepts pertaining to subjective civil-military relations as well as the dynamics related thereto. Key questions include the following:

How can we categorize the different forms of subjective civilian control? In what way do those forms relate to each other? What is the decision-making process and how do the relevant agents/variables influence that process? Furthermore, how does that process influence the type of subjective control that is experienced? If we assume that successful civil-military decision making involves all players participating in national security process, what attributes lead to the most judicious, inclusive, deliberative, non-coercive method?

These questions regarding subjective civil-military relations are important not only because the relationship is in constant flux. They are also important because of the number of innovation, tactical changes, and strategic pivots that has occurred since late 2001. The civil-military relationship, the bureaucracies therein (diplomatic, military, and intelligence), and the end games of our policies have gone through significant changes this century. They have been under great stress as our forces and resources have been used with heightened frequency. As such, analyzing their actions and understanding their relationships may help us better appreciate the needs of our current national security environment.

Beyond the immediate relevance of this work is the fact that the civil-military relationship is a concept that has existed for centuries. Political scientists have theorized about it for decades. As such, it is valuable to examine the concept as it pertains to new events. This thesis uses a number of theoretical works that focus on the nature of civil-military relations and bureaucratic process theory. By using these literatures the author hopes to identify the loci of decision-making, the efficacy of different process

organizations, and the manner by which presidential leadership influences the degree of subjective civilian control.

The Framework

This thesis focuses on the interpersonal, bureaucratic relationships that were built, disassembled, used, and/or neglected at certain benchmarks during the previous decade. In its most fundamental form, however, this thesis and the theoretical work herein focus on the phenomenon of subjective civilian control. It is clear that there are myriad forms of the subjective civil-military relationship; this is due to the numerous variables that influence the relationship. In using process tracing, one can argue that there are identifiable trends present amongst the variables. When the process is of a particular sort – as indicated by and predicated upon particular variables and actions – then a category of subjective civilian control is identified.

The author adopts these suppositions. As such, within this thesis, the dependent variable (DV) is the type of subjective civilian control that is present within a particular case's civil-military relationship. The DV corresponds with Huntington's typologies of subjective versus objective civil-military relations. Thus, the theory developed in this thesis complements the literature that precedes it. This author intends to fill a gap in existing conceptual frameworks regarding types of subjective control.

The dependent variable is influenced by a large number of independent variables (IV). These are discussed throughout the thesis. Of all the independent variables in herein, two are most prevalent, influential, and predictable among all the others. Presidential leadership and decision-making process organization are clearly present in every case. They also have direct correlations with dependent variable outcomes. Other

independent variables include the institution in which the debate is centered, the nature of the debate, the transparency of the debate, and the civilian agents' level of authenticity within the civil-military dynamic. All of these IVs are described in the literature review chapter.

The National Security Council and national security advisor are highly influential agents in modern US national security decision-making. They have been particularly relevant since Nixon's Administration and became structurally reinforced following the Goldwater-Nichols Act of the late 1980s. Because of the NSC's mission and its relevance regarding many independent variables (including the center of debate, nature of debate, and transparency of debate IVs), this author pays particular focus on how its character and actions influence the DV. This effort reinforces and builds upon existing literature. Numerous authors have studied the NSC's role in decision-making. They have developed typologies that assist this author's undertaking, here. Crabb and Mulcahy's work is of particular relevance. This thesis complements and builds upon their theories as it does with Huntington's.

Intervening variables (IntV) include the organizational structures of bureaucracies used in the relationship, the style of communications between the sides (ie. method, frequency, etc.), tempo of the decision-making process, and others. Conditional variables (CV) include policy makers' willingness to make policy decisions, the political capital/opportunity to enact policies, and the military's capability to enact the decided upon tactics/strategies, among others.

The Cases

Three case studies are examined here. They span two presidential administrations, two wars, the preparation for one invasion, and two tactical/strategic shifts of ongoing combat operations. The case studies include war-planning for the Iraq invasion in the spring of 2003; the strategic review/implementation of counterinsurgency strategy (COIN) – what became known as the "Surge" – in Iraq, 2006; and the strategic review/war plan in Afghanistan, 2009. The timeline spans approximately eight years, from September 2001 through December 2009.

The author uses the case studies as controlled comparisons; he relies heavily upon process tracing. Since all three cases occur within the same civil-military structure, deal with consistent theaters of operation, and have great overlap in the players, the author hopes to minimize extraneous variables. This allows the author to monitor a large number of concepts that would prevent a controlled comparison of the relationship. Thus, using process tracing to research and analyze the case studies, this author is able to search for continuity, changes, and/or an arc of transition between the cases. In light of the thesis' goal and the case studies selected, this thesis is a historically descriptive work.

The Arguments

The author initially expected to see a direct correlation between one side's influence upon civil-military relations and a similarity of that side's position to the final decision. For example, if process tracing reveals that civilian actions most significantly influenced the relationship, then the outcome/policy decision would be most similar to the civilian position. If these situations occurred and the eventual policy decision was more like their position than the military's, then the relationship would be characterized

as subjective. This logic would work vice versa in regards to military influence in the relationship.

This elementary theory was son dismissed. All three cases studies are clear examples of subjective civilian control. However, the method by which the president and civilian agents maintained subjective control varied greatly from case to case. The author uncovered a great many variables that contributed to the civil-military relationship. Still other variables contributed to the decision-making process. Eventually, the author identified the variables that were most influential upon civil-military relations and then compared them to each other, through time. This process helped the author uncover corresponding relationships and apparent causality related to two independent variables, in particular.

This author argues that presidential leadership and decision-making process organization are the two most influential independent variables upon subjective civilian control. The manner in which these two variables are executed determines the type and characteristics of a subjective civil-military relationship. In this thesis the author develops a typology that pairs these two variables and then corresponds them to other significant independent variables. Finally, this author compares the new typology with existing theory. This helps contextualize the new work and then enrich Huntington's subjective/objective theory by illuminating different types of subjective control.

This author finds that over the course of the three case studies subjective control shifted to an increasingly traditional, moderate, theoretically pure form. The first case study revealed a highly subjective civil-military dynamic with skewed authoritative advantages, overt attempts at co-optation, secrecy, and compartmentalized policy

debates. By the third case study, the subjective civilian control was maintained by authentic civilian role players who demanded open, inclusive, highly procedural debates through the NSC. This shift took place over two administrations and involved a high number of principal agents. End runs, co-optation, and actions outside of institutional structures were common throughout all case studies. However, it was not until the final case study – when end runs were highest – that civilians overtly challenged them and then attempted to curtail any anomalies. This was part of a concerted effort to both codify the decision-making process and consolidate subjective civilian control.

The National Security Council's involvement changed dramatically with each case study, as well. This fact was a boon for the research using existing literature; it offered three different leadership styles that led to different decision-making approaches. A consistent trend developed with each case. The NSC became increasingly involved and focused on procedure over time. Likewise, the NSC staff transitioned from a policy-focused body to an implementation-focused body over the course of the three cases. Paired with the increasingly subjective and inclusive civil-military relationship, the trend corroborated a number of significant political science theories.

Tying to the Literature

This thesis complements the ever-expanding political science literature. The field's library includes a tremendous number of works related to civil-military relations. Established theories, concepts, and typologies are reviewed and then applied to the cases, when appropriate. The author reflects on how these cases relate to the political science literature. The most notable minds in the field have contributed to this concept. Less effort has been given to the National Security Council, its history, and its theoretical

purpose within foreign policy decision-making and the civil-military relationship. However, the appropriate works are included here.

Finally, the author identifies gaps in the literature. These are explained and, when possible, potential solutions are parsed out of the process tracing. The author also goes further and develops a new typology to complement existing works. His intention is to identify different categories of subjective control, determine how they relate to each other as well as the existing literature, and analyze how process variables influence the types of subjective control.

Format

This work has five primary chapters beyond the introduction and conclusions. Chapter two is the literature review. In that chapter, the author describes the conceptual framework of the thesis. He summarizes the established political science works that are referenced in the thesis, identifies gaps in the current literature, offers a summary of his conceptual framework, and briefly reviews the basic arguments of the thesis. He then briefly outlines the analytical conclusions of each case. Finally, he delves into analysis of the relevant theories, concepts, and typologies that exist in political science literature. The incorporated theories exist within the realms of civil-military relations, National Security Council history as well as functionality, and various bureaucratic process theories.

Chapters three, four, and five include the case studies. The cases are presented chronologically. Each chapter contains a brief summary of the event therein, the conceptual approach used by the author, and basic analytical conclusions. The bulk of

each chapter involves process tracing. At the end of each chapter, analysis of the case's civil-military relationship and the NSC's role therein is presented.

Chapter six is an analysis of concepts and trends that exist over the entire thesis. The overarching arguments are presented as theoretical concepts and tied to the case studies, themselves. The author applies his new typologies and concepts in this chapter, being sure to tie them to the existing literature. In so doing, findings that arose from process tracing are synthesized with the works that preceded them.

Chapter seven is the conclusion. This includes a brief summation of what was done in the thesis and what the author concluded. Brief discussion of the thesis's limits is included. Likewise, the author outlines the relevance of the work and how it can complement then expand the established political science literature.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This thesis examines three historical moments in US foreign policy strategic decision making, analyzes the civil-military relationship at the civilian-principal/top-military (CINC-JCS) level,[1] and determines the characteristics of those relationships while assessing how the National Security Advisor/National Security Council influenced said relations. All cases herein are examples of subjective civil-military relationships. The thesis' ultimate goal is to categorize the processes that were used and assess how relevant variables influence the type of subjective control.

The methodology of this thesis requires process tracing and within-case congruence procedures. The thesis's goals also rely significantly upon the literature that precedes it. The author is able to analyze and apply established theories only insofar as he is aware of the concepts, typologies, and theses that paved the way. It is for these reasons that we delve into the founding theories that ground this work.

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[1] For the purpose of this thesis, the civilian-principal level includes the President, his advisors, all cabinet-level officials tied to the Departments of State and Defense, all support staff for the Departments of State and Defense that engage in NSC protocol, as well as all NSC staff. The top-military leadership includes all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), all military officers staffing the JCS, all Commanders in Chief (CINCs) of the regional commands, the CINCs' staffs, combat commanders in theater, and any active military officers staffing the NSC.

This literature review summarizes theoretical work in the area of United States civil-military relations. Additionally, this chapter references the National Security Council's history as well as the roles played by past national security advisors. Following these reviews, the author presents reflections upon how the cases relate to the political science literature. This is be complemented by references to the cases in the literature. The latter content is paired with analysis found within the case study chapters.

The political science library contains a great deal of works related to civil-military relations. Some of the most significant minds in the history of the field have contributed to this area of study. A full anthology of work related to United States civil-military relations would require thousands of pages. For now, however, we quickly review some of the more influential theories in this topic. We begin with a summary of Samuel Huntington's theory of subjective vs. objective military rule; it is the foundation of all relevant works today. From there we explore other theories that examine agency-based and structural arguments about civil-military relations. These include agency theory (principal-agent theory), theories on conflictual collaborative relationships, bargaining process theory, modern analysis of increasing objectivity in civil-military relations, and others.

Literature relating to NSC history and operations includes presidential versus secretarial models of decision making, multiple advocacy theory, and various works of such leading theorists as Carnes Lord, Cecil Crabb, I.M. Destler, and Ivo Daalder.

The author reflects on literature preceding this work and determines how it benefits the thought problems herein. He identifies and analyzes benchmarks in decision-making that either reflect or refute the literature. However, much of this thesis involves

topics that aren't present in the literature. Still other aspects exist in published works but are dealt with insufficiently. As such, this author creates new theories related to the cases herein. In so doing, the author discusses what is missing from the literature. Gaps that overlook scenarios, causality, or typologies within these cases are examined and then analyzed.

All of the cases in this thesis involve subjective civil-military relationships of varying degrees. In each instance, the president oversees the strategic debate, decides the orders, and eventually gets his way to varying degrees. His final decision is ordered and implemented to his liking. Put succinctly, all three of these cases rest firmly within the subjective spectrum of Huntington's civil-military theory. However, the method by which the decisions were arrived at varied greatly with each event. Though all cases are within the subjective realm of Huntington's subjective/objective spectrum, the decision-making processes and the civil-military relationships were significantly different from each other.

The literature does not adequately deal with the process of subjective civil-military relationships. As such, this author develops new typologies and categories to better understand the modern US foreign policy making apparatus. The form of civil-military relationship, engagement of various national security bodies – particularly the National Security Council – and the interpersonal relationships of foreign policy decision makers all play into the new observations and theorems.

Gaps in Existing Literature

The most significant gap in existing literature involves the varieties of subjective civil-military control. Many variables contribute to the characteristics of civilian control.

These variables influence the style of subjective power and, more specifically, define the process of national security decision-making. How civilians maintain subjective civil-military relationships is a question seldom scrutinized. This author hopes to change that trend with this thesis.[2]

By examining some of the most influential independent variables, this author develops a typology related to the civil-military relationship. The styles of presidential leadership, decision-making process organization, the engagement as well as style of the NSC, and other relevant variables are considered. Each case study illuminates different – oftentimes fluid – degrees of subjective civil-military relationships. What's more, the processes of national security decision-making and civil-military relations are unique in each instance. These facts help the author identify, categorize, and present new theories. These products complement existing typologies and theories in the literature. As such, the author succeeds in presenting new material while also engaging and strengthening the contemporary body of knowledge.

Another glaring omission in political science literature is an examination of the NSC's influence upon civil-military relations. The institution is an influential locus of national security and foreign policy decision-making. The duality of civilian and military power within these spheres makes the NSC an important variable in the relationship. How it is tasked, staffed, and integrated into the civil-military relationship can have

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[2] Samuel Huntington recognized that many different forms of civilian control could exist. As such, a leading theorist acknowledged the gap as relevant. In chapter four of *The Soldier and the State*, he outlined different manifestations of subjective control. Huntington wrote, "The simplest way of minimizing military power would appear to be the maximizing of the power of civilian groups in relation to the military." He noted that civilian groups were great in number and had many different varieties. As such, sustained increase in civilian control was difficult to perpetuate. It inevitably produced increased power for only "some particular civilian group or groups." "Consequently, subjective civilian control involves the power relations among civilian groups. It is advances by one civilian group as a means to enhance its power at the expense of other civilian groups." Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1957. pg. 180.

tremendous influence on its dynamics. A body of literature analyzes the history and past uses of the NSC. However, few have explored how the body's actions and relationship with the president have affected the civil-military relationship. This thesis looks to examine this gap, apply literature to triangulate its relation to other theories, and arrive at a better understanding of the body's influence. In so doing, this work helps further resolve the gap mentioned above.

Another gap in the literature that impacts this thesis relates to military institutions. The gap exists because of relatively recent changes in U.S. military command structure. With the rising influence of regional commands and CINCs – abetted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act – the traditional military leadership in the Pentagon has seen its influence diffused. Dana Priest is among the authors who have studied implications of this development. However, insufficient time and a limited number of cases have led to a gap in understanding. Therefore, process tracing in this thesis examines how civilian interaction with regional commands as well as combat commanders have influenced the top-tier military leadership and its relationship with civilian policymakers.

Summary of Approach

There is broad, long-standing consensus about most concepts and typologies in civil-military relations. The most significant members of the political science community acknowledge established terminology and trends. Generally speaking, there are two schools of thought regarding the dynamics within the relationship. This literature review acknowledges the differences between the subjective and objective camps. It summarizes some of the many variations and theories about causality that exist within the two schools.

This thesis argues that the cases herein offer relevant lessons learned. Some of the literature resonates with the cases that are studied. What's more, the events unveiled during process tracing seem to validate multiple theories. They also challenge others. This thesis works within the framework of Samuel Huntington's concepts and typologies. Nearly all of the political science literature interacts with the subjective/objective spectrum that he established. All of this thesis's cases are clear examples of subjective civil-military relationships, however. As such, objective military control is not dealt with here.

The fundamental question that this thesis and its literature review hinge on is the following: what dynamics are present within a subjective civil-military relationship when policy decision-making occurs? What is the process of that decision and how do the relevant players/variables influence it? Assuming that successful civil-military decision making involves all players participating in national security process, what attributes lead to the most judicious, inclusive, deliberative, non-coercive method? The literature has written a great deal about these questions. General consensus has formed around the premise that all relevant national security players should participate in foreign policy processes. This includes both civilian and military leadership. However, multiple theories exist over where the power locus should reside in those processes.

Various theories and authors are reviewed within this chapter. This author pays attention to sets of arguments that resonate with the case studies. In particular, Huntington's theory of subjective civilian control is used to describe the civil-military relationships. This is fitting, as his concepts and typologies are ubiquitous within the field. Eliot Cohen's work regarding the 'unequal dialogue' builds on the subjective

typology and lends itself to this work, as well. Peter Feaver's work on principal-agent theory is covered and relevant, also. It lends itself well to the interpersonal, bureaucratic issues that exist in both civil-military relations and the National Security Council dynamics.

The published literature does not sufficiently examine how process influences the character of subjective civil-military control. How agents interact, what communications are used, whether the structures are manipulated, and various other issues go by the wayside. These are significant gaps if one is to understand how civilians maintain subjective control of the military in contemporary US national security decision-making. Through process tracing, this author seeks to define the characteristics of the relationship as well as how agents perpetuate said dynamics. The manipulation of the variables – from leadership to organization to NSC engagement to the authenticity of the players' roles – is imperative for this study. As will be described below, Alexander George's malfunction typologies are relevant in the NSC realm. They are also useful in viewing how civil-military relations are impacted by many different styles of interaction.

When discussing the National Security Council and its relation to decision making within civil-military relations, Alexander George's work will be of particular importance, as well. His multiple advocacy theory is essential to the cases in this thesis. There were multiple players, bureaucratic complexity, and a range of options present in each strategic review. George's theory, concepts, and typologies – particularly those outlining failures in the process – are vital to the thesis argument. Additionally, Cecil Crabb and Kevin Mulcahy's typologies of NSC/National Security Advisor leadership are used to describe the trends revealed through process tracing.

This author acknowledges and incorporates multiple schools of thought and theoretical topics in this thesis. The complexity of the topics at hand is rightly complemented by a variety of theories. Integration is key. This thesis analyzes the process and characteristics of subjective control in each case. It seeks to explain how those processes and related variables defined that relationship. Additionally, the thesis examines the NSC and national security advisor's involvement in the process. Because multiple agents and bureaucracies are involved, it behooves the author to acknowledge various process theories.

The Cases and Summaries of their Civil-Military Relationships

With the first case study, it is argued that Huntington's balance pattern theoretical organizational structure best describes the civil-military relations and actions leading up to the Iraq invasion. However, very important qualifications will be made. Among these are the hierarchy between the defense secretary's office (OSD) and top military officers as well as the choice of military officers that were engaged by the OSD.[3] Highly subjective civilian control of the military was maintained throughout the planning process. Throughout the case, the defense secretary's office was the locus of the relationship.

Secretary Rumsfeld used assertive leadership, aggressive timelines, interrogative communications, compartmentalized tasking, and a secretive planning process to maintain control of the process. Furthermore, he engaged with the regional commander – a known ally of his policy preferences – in order to embolden, legitimize, and assert his policy preferences. This co-optation of military leadership indicates the military's

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[3] Huntington's other two types of executive civil-military relations are the coordinate scheme and the vertical pattern. These are explained here: Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*. pg. 186-189.

objective power. In order to maintain subjective hegemony in the relationship, Secretary Rumsfeld cultivated the partnership with General Franks in order to inhibit any other challenges from those in uniform.

The NSC and its national security advisor were not significantly involved in the most influential moments of Iraq war planning. When the council participated it acted as a forum through which Secretary Rumsfeld and the abridged planning community briefed others in the national security apparatus of what they'd done. The low activity level and low influence of the NSC was inversely related to the DoD civilian leadership's authority.

Like the first, the second case study includes a subjective civil-military relationship. Civilian leadership had come to doubt the policy recommendations of combat commanders, the Pentagon, and even the OSD. Simultaneously, the National Security Council had increased its activity and influence in the decision making process. For various reasons that will be discussed, the national security advisor was tasked to lead the strategy review. The process was highly compartmentalized, like the first case study. Likewise, it began as a secretive venture both within and outside the national security apparatus. Additionally, agents advocating the eventual policy decision once again co-opted a military voice. In this case, a retired Army general augmented the minority opinion in order to bolster its credibility and – later – assist in its preparation.

The NSC was more influential and significant to this case study. The national security advisor was highly involved both in policymaking as well as implementation. The increase in NSC influence occurred concurrently with a diminished OSD and defense secretary. The NSC's counselor role helped consolidate subjective control of the civil-

military relationship and push a policy position that was unpopular among the top-tier military leadership. Like the first case study, meanwhile, a legitimate military voice complemented the civilian policy position, giving it added credibility.

The third case study reveals another subjective civil-military relationship. This example is significant in that it appears most like the theoretical definition of civilian subjective control. That is, civilian policymakers obtained and maintained the power dynamics through exclusively civilian-based, formalized methods. This is despite the fact that the Pentagon executed the most end-runs and direct challenges to civilian leadership of the three cases. Conversely, civilians offered the most tense and overt challenges to military positions. In order to maintain subjective control of the relationship, the president dictated a slower tempo. This calendar manipulation helped stunt various efforts by the military to pressure civilian decision makers into options that the Pentagon preferred.

The civil-military relationship was the most inclusive and open of the three cases. The highest percentage of national security and foreign policy agents participated. Additionally, President Obama desired a comprehensive and lengthy decision making process. The NSC and its national security advisor were tasked with administering the relationship and decisions making process. It acted in a very low policy making, high implementation capacity. It stressed formalized procedures and clearly delineated roles. The tense civil-military dialogue existed within these boundaries, though only after many leaks and assertive pushback from the president. The result was an impassioned but clearly defined civil-military relationship during a decision making process that the NSC

held custodianship over. This case resonates most significantly with the largest portion of political science literature.

Thesis Framework

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the assemblage of these three case studies. Key trends and characteristics percolate from the events and data. This author describes them here and analyzes them more fully later in the thesis. How they relate to the literature and what theories complement them is discussed, as well. Finally, the conclusions are analyzed chronologically.

All three cases studies involved subjective civil-military relationships. However, the characteristics of their processes were different with each case. Many variables influenced the type of civilian control and processes related thereto. Of these, a number of categories came to the fore. The most common characteristics that appeared in each case were the styles of decision-making process organization, the type of presidential leadership, where the center of debate was located, the nature of the debate, the transparency of the debate, and the authenticity of the roles played by civilians. All of these variables influenced the process of the decision-making and, eventually, the type of subjective civilian control.

Decision-making process organization relates to how the strategy debate is set-up and maintained. Broadly speaking, if the process organization is high then strategic debate is orderly, follows an established process, and respects existing institutional frameworks. If the process organization is low then strategic debate is ad-hoc. This means that the participating agents may or may not be following their assigned roles.

Established procedures relating to the debate are not followed, certain relevant players are ignored or neglected, and the events of the debate follow whims rather than writ.

Presidential leadership relates to how engaged the commander-in-chief is with the strategy debate. If presidential leadership is low then his actions are "delegatory." This means he assigns the lead role to a staffer or official outside of the White House. The president can be – and in all three cases here, always is – in complete control; he still has the final say. However, low leadership means the president may be briefed on only the most top-level information. A significant amount of discussion and decision-making may take place beyond his knowledge. High presidential leadership, meanwhile, means the commander-in-chief is engaged. He immerses himself in the decision process in addition to holding the highest authority. He is engaged with his advisors, deputies, and cabinet-level positions on a regular basis and is aware of a vast majority of the strategy debate.

For the purposes of this thesis the ideal center of debate lies in the National Security Council. Therefore, the author assesses the debate center's location in relation to the NSC. The nature of the debate can be inclusive of all relevant national security/foreign policy agents or it can be exclusive. The transparency of the debate can lead to an open debate or a secretive one. Finally, the civilians can act in a way that is authentic or "co-optive."

Authentic civilian agents act in manners consistent with the traditional definition of a civilian. The civilian focuses on policy decision-making, is in contact with military professionals, interacts with the latter as a steward of his role, and does not attempt to imitate or co-opt the roles of the military professional. Meanwhile, a "co-optive" civilian seeks to mimic or adopt military professionalism in order to maintain hegemony over the

relationship. "Co-optive" civilians may also foster collegial relationships with military professionals in order to bolster their position in regards to the military.

While a "co-optive" effort blurs the civilians' appearance with a lens of military form, the act is a highly subjective move. It is a civilian attempt to dictate military decision-making by adopting the latter's professional position. Additionally, "co-optive" civilian behavior suggests that military professionals have an authoritative advantage in US civil-military dynamics. That is, if civilian agents maintained authority over military professionals, they would not need to drape themselves with the garb and lexicon of military leadership. Even if parity existed between the two roles, sufficient institutional structures exist so as to ensure civilian control of the military. However, if military professionals possessed greater authority, influence, and respect within political spheres then civilians would be inclined to subvert or co-opt that advantage in order to equalize the interpersonal relationship.

Each of the variables described above have characteristic spectrums. That is, all the characteristics can be placed on a spectrum that includes every type, from one extreme to the other. In the table below the major variables and the extreme characteristics are listed:

Figure 2.1 – Variable Spectrums

Variable Spectrums			
	Characteristics		
Decision-Making Process	*Orderly*	vs.	*Ad-hoc*
Presidential Leadership	*Engaged*	vs.	*"Delegatory"*
Center of Debate	*NSC*	vs.	*Other*
Nature of Debate	*Inclusive*	vs.	*Exclusive*
Transparency of Debate	*Open*	vs.	*Secretive*
Character of Civilians	*Authentic-role*	vs.	*Co-optation*

Of all the variables identified in the three cases, decision-making process organization and presidential leadership are the most definitive. These two variables are most apparent, influential, and integrated with the others. The characteristics of these variables correlate with trends that span all three cases. As such, this author created a chart showing this relationship:

Decision-making Process Organization

		low Ad-hoc	*high* Orderly
	Delegatory		
Presidential	*low*		
Leadership			
	Engaged		
	high		

Figure 2.2 – Primary Variables upon Subjective Civilian Control

This author found that when process organization is orderly and presidential leadership is engaged, the NSC tends to be the center of the debate, the discussions were inclusive as well as open, and civilians maintain authentic roles. If process organization is ad-hoc and presidential leadership is "delegatory," the center of the debate tends to be outside of the NSC, the NSC is of lesser influence, discussions war exclusive as well as secretive, and civilians are more likely to be co-optive. If a low/high combination exists between the two primary variables, a mix of the other variable characteristics exists.

The author also found a direct correlation between process organization and NSC activity. When ad-hoc debates occur they exist outside of the NSC's power center. When orderly process organization is used, the NSC is at the center of the debate. A direct correlation exists between presidential leadership and the nature of the debate, as well. When there is engaged presidential leadership the debate is open and, more often than

not, inclusive. When the president delegates the leadership role the debate is secretive and, more often than not, exclusive.

The correlations between these variables help political scientists identify and label different categories of subjective civil-military relationships. Let us assume that codified procedures and structures are ideal for bureaucratic decision-making. Likewise, we suppose that decision-making should include all qualified and relevant agents within the bureaucratic community. Based on these premises, it can be said that orderly process organization and engaged presidential leadership – paired with all the trends this author has identified – benefit the national security decision-making process.

This author describes this high/high combination as "Optimal" subjective civilian control. Conversely, the low process organization (ad-hoc) and low presidential leadership ("delegatory") is described as "Alternative." High process organization and low presidential leadership is "Out-Sourced" subjective civilian control while low process organization and high presidential leadership is "Spontaneous." See below:

		Decision-making Process Organization	
		low	*high*
		Ad-hoc	**Orderly**
Delegatory *low*		Alternative	Out-Sourced
Engaged *high*		Spontaneous	Optimal

*(Row label: **Presidential Leadership**)*

Figure 2.3 – Typology of Subjective Civil-Military Control

These descriptions help us identify the characteristics associated with the different categories of subjective civilian control. Again, through all of this, we are assuming that engaged, orderly civilian control is the ideal form. We further submit that civilian

authenticity is the most traditional, least extreme form of civilian action. Co-optive civilian action is less authentic, used to undercut military authority, and more subjective. It also indicates that military professionals enjoy an authoritative advantage in the relationship. Observing these trends, we can begin to see how these different subjective styles fit on Huntington's spectrum of civil-military relations.

Basic Findings of Case Studies

As stated earlier, all three case studies are examples of subjective civil-military relationships. However, over the course of the three case studies the form of subjective control changed. The first case contains high subjectivity with moments of extremely high subjectivity affecting the military's operational decision-making. It contains ad-hoc process organization, exclusive as well as secretive strategy discussions, and delegated leadership. This author further argues that the first case study can be divided into two parts: Case I(a) and Case I(b). A change in the level of presidential leadership during the first case study brought notable changes to a number of independent variables. However, this author argues that the amount of change was stunted by consolidated roles and power dynamics perpetuated by the ad-hoc process leader: Secretary Rumsfeld. The latter intervening variables led to an amalgam of variables characteristics.

The first and second case studies include civilian co-optation of and then alliances with military figures. These were done to bolster civilian positions within a civil-military relationship that, though subjective, bestowed high deference upon the military professional.[4] This was done for a number or reasons. Most significantly, President Bush made it a leadership priority to provide what military leaders requested. He publically

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[4] There was a seeming paradox: civilian control of an environment in which military officers maintained greater authority and credibility.

sought their proffered advice. This increased an authoritative advantage enjoyed by the military professional. In order to maintain subjective control in this environment, it became necessary to co-opt military voices and embolden the civilian position. As such, presidential leadership perpetuated the military's authoritative advantage and continued the need to maintain subjective control via ulterior methods.

By the third case study this dynamic changed. Civilian agents reformed then manipulated the civil-military relationship and national security structures in order to equalize the sides. Civilians demonstrated a willingness to slow the decision-making process, combat end runs when they occurred, and intently focus on process organization. The result is a subjective civil-military relationship that was attained in a more traditional, theoretically purer means. Presidential leadership was engaged, process organization was orderly, and the nature of the debate was open as well as inclusive.

While these trends took place, the National Security Council/national security advisor also became increasingly involved over the three case studies. With each chronological event the NSC increased its influence and actively instituted process organization. The purview and established protocols of the NSC also increased over the three case studies. It increasingly became the center of civil-military and national security discussions. Additionally, the frequency of those events increased from case one through case three. By the end of the third case, for example, procedures were well established and process was coveted. The changes in the NSC witnessed a concurrent rise in the national security advisor's implementation role. Each advisor became increasingly integrated in the decision-making process. Conversely, the advisor's policymaking

capacity waned. All of these changes were reflective of the relative president's leadership style and policy preferences.

Meanwhile, the locus of primary military influence shifted from combat commanders and CINCs/regional commands back to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, augmented by the CINCs. Presidential leadership and OSD actions appear to influence which top-tier military officials were granted greatest access and influence. President Bush made consistent efforts to incorporate combat commanders and CINCs into the process. This waned, as he grew frustrated with their policy stances. Likewise, President Obama sought to limit the direct access combat commanders had to the White House. The Joint Chief's chairman filled the power vacuum and the CINC maintained influence, behind him. Additionally, the influence of the Defense Secretary and OSD fluctuated greatly over the three cases. A majority of these changes appear to be due to interpersonal variables, the president's leadership style, and politicking.

"Flanking," end runs, and maneuvers outside of established national security structures were common throughout all three cases. However, they increased over the three cases. It was not until the third case, meanwhile, that the president made a deliberate effort – albeit reactive – to stunt their prevalence. A correlation between increased openness in the civil-military/national security processes and end runs exists. Causality is undetermined here; there is insufficient evidence to reveal which caused the other. However, there is circumstantial evidence suggesting that the broadness of the decision making process precipitated the military's end runs. As more players were integrated into the process, the relationships became more porous and political.

Applicable Theories

    Civil-Military Relations

Subjective Civilian Control Theory vs. Objective Civilian Control Theory

Perhaps the most fundamental theories regarding civil-military relations were revealed in Samuel Huntington's work, *The Soldier and the State*. Huntington examined the history of civil-military relations and presented theories on its characteristics. He created two typologies: subjective and objective civilian control. The former maximizes civilian power by consolidating influence over the relationship on the side of "some particular civilian group or groups."[5] Objective civilian control, meanwhile, maximizes what Huntington calls "military professionalism" by enabling the "distribution of political power between military and civilian groups" in a way that best fosters "the emergence of professional attitudes and behavior among the members of the officer corps."[6]

Huntington made a key distinction between the natures of subjective and objective civilian control. He stated that the former aims to "civilianiz[e] the military, making them the mirror of the state," while the latter intends to "militariz[e] the military, making them the tool of the state."[7] This is a vital concept to appreciate and understand. Huntington drew a distinction that has tremendous influence on the nature as well as effectiveness of military actions. Subjective control allows civilians to more easily mold the form and function of the military. Objective control establishes a structural separation between civilian policymakers and military officers; this inhibits civilian participation in the management and organization of the military.

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[5] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*. pg. 80.
[6] *Ibid*. pg. 83.
[7] *Ibid*. pg. 83.

Since all three case studies herein are examples of subjective civilian control, this work will not dwell on objective military control. The level of civilian subjectivity varied through all three cases. However, a clear trend towards theoretically pure subjectivity occurred over time. Meanwhile, civilian involvement in military operational decisions decreased, though civilian monitoring of implementation increased. Likewise, the borders between civilian and military positions because increasingly clear. Civilian authenticity increased and roles become more delineated. The co-optation of voices from the other side went from overt to implicit to nearly non-existent. All of this leads to a more traditional civil-military relationship.

Greater objective civilian control allows military officers more independence in organizational and tactical decisions. This is not necessarily the case with strategic decisions, considering their dependence on state policies dictated by civilian policymakers. Meanwhile, more subjective civilian control enables civilian leaders to influence the organizational and tactical decisions of the military by making themselves players in those decisions. Objective control opens the door for civilians to potentially influence decisions about the officer make-up, organizational structure, and tactical decisions of the military.

Huntington was keen on recognizing the power that flows outside of formal channels, as well. He noted that "power exists in two forms, formal authority and informal influence, both of which may be measured in terms of their degree and scope."[8] As such, individuals are able to influence others based on multiple variables. He wrote:

> Informal relationships also exist where one person, or groups of persons, controls the behavior of other persons not because they occupy particular positions in a formal structure but because they control other

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[8] *Ibid.* pg. 86.

> sanctions or rewards. This influence may stem from personality, wealth,
> knowledge, prestige, friendship, kinship, or a variety of other sources.
> Its distinguishing characteristic, however, is always that it inheres in
> specific individuals or groups, not in the roles or statuses which those
> individuals or groups occupy.[9]

Regardless of the source – and there are many more – informal influences are founded in the individual not the role. This theoretical point allows for the subjective influence of individuals, beyond the limitations of structural hierarchies.

This delineation is important when dealing with our case studies and the NSC as a whole. It is also a nuanced qualification that is relevant in all three case studies. It relates to the relationship between Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and specific members of the military leadership during the first case study. It relates to how retired General Jack Keane interacted with civilian and military leadership in the second case study. It also resonates with manner in which the NSC, NSA Hadley, and the White House worked with various military officers during implementation of their decision. Civilians and military officials alike also used informal relationships and authority during the third case study.

Huntington argued for a more objective civil-military relationship through which military autonomy was perpetuated by contained, structured, professional practices. This was a deductive argument founded in the premise that the military must serve the civilian leadership but, simultaneously, it must be allowed to perpetuate and perform its institution in the manners only it knew. Peter Feaver, among other theorists, summarized Huntington's overall thesis by emphasizing the significant differences between civilian

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[9] *Ibid.* pg. 86.

and military spheres. The fulcrum on which his theory moves, therefore, is professionalism, and "the key to professionalism is military autonomy."[10]

Huntington wrote of the "balanced pattern" in *The Soldier and the State*, as well. He argued that the president and the secretary of defense both held purely political roles. It is beneath these figures that the remaining "hierarchy divides into military and administrative components."[11] According to Huntington, "the highest professional officer is the leading military adviser to the secretary;" he is also "normally" in charge of all military forces. As such, the top military official is "subordinate" to the president and cabinet-level official but neither of those civilians "exercise military command."

The military structure has striated over the passing decades, thus muting the simplicity of Huntington's descriptions. What is not lost, however, is the glaring civil-military divide and objective separation of military command that Huntington emphasized. That starkness is full grey during the first case study. However, over the course of the three events one witnesses trends of simplification and clarification in a very complex bureaucratic environment.

Damon Coletta and Peter Feaver argued that Huntington's emphasis on the supremacy of military professionalism was manifested from a perceived need to maintain corporate cohesion within the military. As such, frequent subjective civilian interference in the execution of military decisions could cause increased politicization, divisions, and conflict within the military community.[12] These implied differences between civilian and

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[10] Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ Press, 2003. pg. 7.
[11] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*. pg. 186-187.
[12] Coletta, Damon & Peter D. Feaver. "Civilian Monitoring of U.S. Military Operations in the Information Age." *Armed Forces & Society* 33.1 (2006): 106-126. Web. 20 April 2010.pg. 109. This article goes on to point out that "once military agents became 'professional' by internalizing their duty to serve the principal's ends, there would be no need to devise an optimal incentive structure with some sort of contract bonus for each political objective achieved during a military campaign." This 'principal-agent' model

military minds relate to another school of political science literature that is related to the military mind and its inclinations. Additionally, the third case study – which involves the highest level of overt, subjective civilian challenge to military positions – contains the highest level of end-runs, politicization, and overt civil-military tension. This would seem to validate Coletta and Feaver's argument.

Agency Theory (or Principal-Agent Theory)

Peter Feaver is a contemporary political scientist who adapted the "principal-agent theory" – first developed as a microeconomics premise – to the civil-military relationship.[13] The theory was originally intended for a business context and focuses on hierarchical relationships. Feaver echoed the principle held by Huntingon: civilians must control the military in a democracy. As such, he repeatedly emphasized, "Civilians have a right to be wrong."[14] Feaver posited that at its most base, the civil-military relationship is "a strategic interaction between civilians principals and military agents."[15]

Despite the consistent ebb and flow of the relationship – with civilianizing of the military responding to the militarization of civilians, many times over – Feaver kept to the fundamental premise that courses through American civil-military relations literature. At its core, it is deductive just like Huntington's work. However, agency theory differs in that it focuses on the strategic, political interactions between civilian and military players

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appears to reflect the objective civilian control model, however it has been admitted by the authors that there are many other sources of potential friction between civilians and military officers in said model. Despite "their unique profession and code of honor," military officers may still conflict greatly with civilians in tactical and organizations decisions, rather than strategic or policy decisions. This problem arises in planning for the Iraq invasion.

[13] Sowers, Thomas S. "Beyond the Soldier and the State." *Armed Forces & Society* 31.3 (2005): 385-409. Web. 10 April 2010. pg. 388.

[14] Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants*. pg. 6.

[15] *Ibid*. pg. 2.

within established interpersonal, hierarchical constructs. Feever wrote that civilians must anticipate military disobedience and that military acquiescence is not "foreordained."[16]

The latter precepts are true because those within the civil-military relationship are individual agents working towards their own benefit and the benefit of their respective structures. These "players" are influenced by a great many "exogenous factors."[17] Furthermore, the structures in which they exist require some – the civilians – to be principals in the relationship and others – the soldiers – to be agents of the former. Therein lies the dissonance: the players are influenced by multiple, often dissonant ends, all while acting – as individuals – within a hierarchical system. This creates tensions and a battle between "working" and "shirking."

Feever wrote that military agents have three preferences; these all have the potential of running counter to civilian decisions.[18] Those in uniforms are inclined to "shirk" their roles when they run counter to their own preferences.[19] As such, the military's actions could land anywhere on the "work-shirk continuum" if incentives to work for the civilian principals or disincentives to shirk them are not present.[20]

Feever described various ways by which the military could shirk civilian principals. These include giving incorrect assessments to civilians; making "end runs" of leaks, public protests, and appeals to other civilian policy makers; and "slow rolling" or "foot-dragging" which interferes with the accurate, timely implementation of civilian

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[16] *Ibid*. pg. 14.
[17] *Ibid*. pg. 58.
[18] These preferences are "over policy outcomes, over how his behavior is interpreted, and over how the relationship is monitored." *Ibid*. pg. 63.
[19] Feever's definition of "shirk" is "not doing something to the principal's satisfaction." It is the opposite of the ideal, which is "working." *Ibid*. pg. 60.
[20] *Ibid*. pg. 66.

policies.[21] Feaver also expanded on the various inequities within the civil-military relationship. These include asymmetry within information access/analysis, moral hazards, adverse selection, etc. The author focused on various ways by which the civilians – specifically, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) – could monitor the military and use "fire alarms" when issues arose.[22] How other civilians can audit and monitor those civilian bodies, meanwhile, is conspicuously absent.

By way of cases studies, modeling, and analysis, Peter Feaver concluded that civilians are inclined to have "more intrusive monitoring because the costs of monitoring are low or because the expectations of shirking are high, and the military is choosing to work because its preferences are converging with those of civilians or because the likelihood of getting punished is high."[23] He also wrote "civilians ought to listen to military advice and weight it, but military advice will improve with a vigorous give-and-take led by activist civilian principals."[24]

In *Armed Servants* Feaver presented examples in which the civil-military relationship was strained by rigorous principal-agent interactions. He wrote that Secretary Rumsfeld sought to maximize subjective, principal civilian control. He did so by leading an intensive campaign to alter the DoD, its leadership, and the structures feeding to OSD. However, "Ironically, in an effort to undo the perceived weaknesses of earlier civilian leadership, Rumsfeld may have overcompensated and provoked a backlash that produced a comparable paralysis in civilian control."[25] That is, the secretary of defense's bravado may have proved caustic enough to divide the civilian principal leadership, thus creating

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[21] *Ibid*. pg. 68.
[22] *Ibid*. pg. 80.
[23] *Ibid*. pg. 112.
[24] *Ibid*. pg. 300.
[25] *Ibid*. pg. 290.

more infighting. Feaver went further, writing that Rumsfeld's actions united the military professional's and their allies in a fight against the changes charged to them. Feaver provided further evidence of this, summarizing a schism between State and Defense in regards to Iraq war planning.[26]

Feaver's thesis is agency-based with significant acknowledgement of structural variables. It is devoid of cultural arguments, however. As such, Huntington's conservative realism and military mind arguments are dismissed. Furthermore, Feaver's thesis tends to be cynical; it refuses to acknowledge that military training, education, or culture perpetuates a respect of civilian control.[27] The third case study suggests otherwise, however. One will see that when the president pressed the chairman of the Joint Chiefs about end runs and challenges to the national security process, the admiral immediately responded in kind for multiple reasons. These included his personal deference to civilian control.

Feaver also warned that our society may be entering a new phase in which military leaders shirk civilian control and "insist" on being followed.[28] This foreboding point accents the author's pervasive emphasis on the delicate yet vital issues of loyalty and implementation when it comes to civil-military relations.[29] Feaver's work was not entirely original or unique. As was mentioned earlier, the author adapted an economics

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[26] Feaver referenced how Secretary Powell worked with various military officers in an attempt to slow the path to war. He mentioned the secretary's reported conversation with General Shelton, during which he urged the officer to restrain the civilians and "get these guys back in the box." Feaver cited various sources, including works by Kagan, Kristol, Woodward, Balz, Himmelman, and Ricks. Source: Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants*. pg. 291.

[27] As will be shown in the President Obama/Afpak review case study, there is evidence that many top-tier military officers hold the premise of civilian primacy in the utmost regard. Some were overtly offended by suggestions they did anything but ceaselessly honor the president's control.

[28] Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants*. pg. 300.

[29] Burk, James. "Book Review: Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations." *Armed Forces & Society* 30.3 (2004): 485-488. Web. 10 April 2010. pg. 485.

theory. However, Sharon Weiner had already used the same method to explain the "motivations behind the Goldwater-Nichols reforms" of the late 1980s; that law transformed the NSC into its current form.[30]

The "Conflictual Collaborative Relationship" and "Unequal Dialogue"

Another theory relating to the subjective/objective civilian control concerns the nature of dialogue between civilian and military bodies. Eliot Cohen posited, "The heart of sound civil-military relations remains now, as in the past, an unequal dialogue."[31] That is, the nature of civilian politics and military professionalism inherently "tug in opposite directions." For this reason, the relationship is invariably contentious and civilian leaders "must master their military briefs as thoroughly as they do their civilian ones." He wrote, "Both groups must expect a running conversation in which, although civilian opinion will not dictate, it must dominate."[32] The dynamic Cohen suggested is of the highly subjective civilian control typology.

Cohen stated that civilians must be relentless in their self-education, understanding, questioning, and skepticism of the military plans and professionals. His theory implies that the knowledge and ethics of military professionalism are not as exceptional or unique as Huntington purports them to be. That is, the ability for civilians to know military briefs with similar aptitude suggests that the civilian leader must have an equal or greater intellect and capacity than the military professional.

Cohen's theory directly challenges Huntington's framing of civil-military relations. The latter framed the dynamic as a doctor-patient relationship by which the

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[30] Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants*. pg. 56.
[31] Cohen, Eliot A. "The Unequal Dialogue: The Theory and Reality of Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force." Eds. Peter D. Feaver & Richard H. Kohn. *Soldiers and Civilians*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. pg. 457.
[32] *Ibid*. pg. 458.

soldiers provide the required solutions for the civilian's policy ills.[33] The former dismissed this characterization as condescending and ill informed. Instead, Cohen echoed Carl von Clausewitz's argument that war is a political instrument. For this and other reasons, the military's actions are founded in policy and must acknowledge the civilians' master roles.[34] Simultaneously, Cohen acknowledged that "a deep undercurrent of mutual distrust" pervaded civil-military relations.[35] The latter characteristic is the defining aspect of the "conflictual collaborative relationship" that exists in war.

Cohen drew from cases related to Lincoln, Clemenceau, Churchill, and Ben-Gurion. In each, he highlighted how the leaders were deeply invested in, widely skeptical of, and pervasively engaged with military-related decisions. He also drew on quotes from Colin Powell. Cohen wrote of the "unequal dialogue" in which "both sides expressed their views bluntly indeed, sometimes offensively, and not once but repeatedly – and unequal, in that the final authority of the civilian leader was unambiguous and unquestioned."[36]

The author further outlined various leadership characteristics that are necessary for successful decision-making. These included the ability to know where to integrate ideas and strategies into planning, being able to focus on the correct and relevant details, and to not become intoxicated by the power that comes with leadership.[37] Cohen explored these latter themes further in the article "The Unequal Dialogue." He was wise to note, "The imperatives of politics and of military professionalism invariably, and appropriately, tug in opposite directions; inevitably too, professional judgments require

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[33] This metaphor is used by Cohen in his book. Cohen, Eliot A. *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime.* New York: The Free Press, 2002. pg. 4.
[34] Cohen, Eliot A. *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime.* pg. 7.
[35] *Ibid.* pg. 10.
[36] *Ibid.* pg. 209.
[37] *Ibid.* pg. 212.

scrutiny rather than unthinking acceptance."[38] Again Cohen emphasized that civilians

must know the military's material better than those in uniforms. Candor is vital, as well

as a willingness to challenge and to be challenged during a sustained dialogue.

Bargaining Process Theory

In his 1990 book *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, Alexander

George described various management models and bargaining theory while exploring

civil-military relations within foreign policy discussions. He summarized Robert Bales'

work on decision-making in bureaucracy; he said group dynamics "tend to fall 'naturally'

into a moderate gradient' and eventual group think.[39] Outlier opinions tend to be

ostracized or purged. George responded to these tendencies by arguing for a structured

methodology within group decision-making.

The author wrote that groups must allow for many relevant contributions from

various members. Furthermore, uninhibited "reaction, questioning, and suggestion

making" must be allowed after those ideas are presented.[40] George emphasized that the

specific dynamics and leadership style invariably change with each executive. The goal is

to arrive at open, critical dialogue by whatever means is necessary. George listed many

threats to this theory and possible pit falls in creating said group dynamic (see

footnote).[41] He also described the differences between structural versus agency driven

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[38] Cohen, Eliot A. "The Unequal Dialogue: The Theory and Reality of Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force." Eds. Peter D. Feaver & Richard H. Kohn. *Soldiers and Civilians*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. pg. 457.

[39] George, Alexander. *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990. pg. 85.

[40] *Ibid*. pg. 96.

[41] These include: "When the president and his advisers agree too readily on the nature of the problem facing them and on a response to it;" "When advisers and advocates take different positions," debate them in front of the President, but then they "do not cover the full range" of "hypotheses and alternative options;" "When there is no advocate for an unpopular policy option;" When advisers "thrash out their own disagreements" beyond the president's knowledge and "confront him with a unanimous recommendation;" When advisers all agree that the president needs to make an important decision "but no one is willing to alert him to the

variables in the group dynamic processes. Again, he wrote of the president's "cognitive style" and its fundamental influence.[42]

George also laid out three management styles presidents could use in foreign policy decision-making. These included the formalistic, competitive, and collegial approaches.[43] Formalistic is the most dependent on structure and the hierarchy of the system. Competitive compels participants to work in zero-sum scenarios in order to garner the appreciation of the leader. Collegial is the most time and labor intensive for everyone involved. However, it also fosters the most collaborative team environments. He related all three to past cases, describing the costs and benefits of each methodology. Alexander George's work is fundamental to this thesis and its analysis. His concepts and typologies regarding leadership are used to explain much of what process tracing reveals. George's work also complements another stalwart of the literature: Graham T. Allison and organizational process theory.

Organizational Process Theory

Organizational process theory is a vital concept that relates to civil-military relations. It seeks to explain the perceptions, analyses, and actions of governments as organizational actors. It is a structural theory whose aims are to understand the patterns and procedures of different governmental organizations. As such, it diverges from George's cultural and agency heavy theories. Graham T. Allison explicated this theory in *Essence of Decision*. In it, he stated that governments perceive issues through their

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need for doing so;" when the decision maker "is depended upon a single channel of information;" "When the key assumptions and premises of a plan have been evaluated only by the advocates of that option;" When the president sees or is convinced by his advisers' consensus "but fails to ascertain how firm the consensus is, how it was achieved, and whether it is justified." George, Alexander. *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990. pg. 122-132.

[42] *Ibid*. pg. 147.

[43] *Ibid*. pg. 165.

"organizational sensors," which are components of the whole that are tasked as "quasi-independent parts" meant to deal with the innumerable complexities of policy decisions.[44] Since most issues span the domains of multiple organizations, concepts such as civil-military relations become necessary.

Complexity, due to bureaucratic size and breadth of issues, requires organizations to coordinate their efforts. They must develop standard operating procedures in order to effectively communicate and interact.[45] These rules of interaction and anticipated behaviors allow organizations to work with each other, based on assumed tendencies. As such, the ability to identify and acknowledge every single variable in a situational equation is sacrificed for efficiency. That is, "comprehensive rationality," or the ability to recognize and react to every possible alternative, is simply not possible because of finite resources, data, context, and time.

Because of "the limits of human capacity in comparison with the complexities of the problems that individuals in organizations must face", "bounded rationality" was created. This concept allows rational actors to create "simplified models that extract the main features of a problem without capturing all of its complexity."[46] The theory's concept that the "actor is not a monolithic 'nation' or 'government' but rather a constellation of loosely allied organizations on top of which government leaders sit" is vital if one is to understand the relations between the White House and the executive's

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[44] Allison, Graham T. *Essence of Decision*. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1971. pg. 67, 71.

[45] Allison makes an essential qualification here, stating, "… these loosely formulated propositions amount simply to *tendencies*. Each must be hedged by modifiers like 'other things being equal' and 'under certain conditions.'"

[46] Allison, Graham T. *Essence of Decision*. pg. 71.

myriad agencies.[47] The theory explains the tendency for parochial priorities to develop within organizations, as they have limited goals and bounded rationales.

Governmental (Bureaucratic) Politics Theory

Bureaucratic politics theory builds on many precepts of organizational process theory. The former finds that leaders of each governmental organization become players in a competitive game of bargaining; "the name of the game is politics."[48] This bargaining is the inevitable consequence of limited resources. But more importantly, it is the inevitable consequence of multiple perspectives competing to answer a given problem. Each player, as a representative of one organization, possesses parochial priorities and bounded perceptions of the greater issue.

As such, governmental decisions are the results of political "compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence."[49] This political game takes place within the domestic political realm. However, it intimately affects the decisions of foreign policy and civil-military relations. The domestic competition over organizational power, influence, structure, appropriations, etc. is a significant game with comprehensive implications.

Organization process and government bureaucracy theories are relevant to this thesis. The works are worth examining here – as well as applying to the case studies - because of the number and complexity of players contributing to the civil-military relationship. There is a high number of power loci with the military as well as the civilian leadership. Additionally, the National Security Council relies on interdepartmental, integrative work. The structures, personalities, and limitations inherit in the complex

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[47] *Ibid*. pg. 79.
[48] *Ibid*. pg. 144.
[49] *Ibid*. pg. 162.

system make these theories highly relevant. However it must be applied skeptically. The theory does not expressly accommodate the possibility of fractures within each organization. It will be argued that conflict within civilian and military spheres can cause important permutations to civil-military relations.

Contemporary Assessments on Increasing Objectivity in Current Civil-Military Relations

In her book *The Mission*, Dana Priest wrote about increasing objectivity within U.S. civil-military relations. She examined the increased power of regional commands and their commanders in chiefs (CINCs) over the last quarter century. She wrote that the accumulation of influence, resources, and operational responsibility grew incrementally "as the DoD filled [the] power vacuum left by the White House" and an "atrophied" State Department.[50] This occurred when civilian policy makers tended to understand less about the military, its systems, and its capabilities. As such, "our elected leaders often treat men and women in uniform with either suspicion or excessive reverence, failing to ask probing questions or push hard enough for reform."

Priest outlined how the CINCs and regional commands garnered increased influence since the 1980s and the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act (1986).[51] Simultaneously, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) lost influence over policymaking; they were flanked by CINCs, the OSD, and to a lesser extent the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Since the JCS was required to report to civilians in the OSD while the CINCs' "line of authority runs directly to the defense secretary and president," the chiefs became

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[50] Priest, Dana. *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003. pg. 14.
[51] Goldwater-Nichols handed the CINCs the purviews and influence they enjoy today. Their budgets have more than doubled since 1989. *Ibid*. pg. 95, 71, 96.

inhibited.[52] What's more, the State Department lost more than 20% of its budget since the 1970s; this greatly hindered its ability to compete.

Amos Jordon, William Taylor, and Michael Mazarr co-authored a book in 1999 that expanded upon Huntington's – and in many respects, Priest's – theories on increased objectivity. The authors recognized Huntington's concern that military leaders would "broaden" their realms of influence so as to include political decisions; this would allow them to "gain access to the supreme levels of the policy process, but" they "would no longer speak on strategic matters from an adequately military perspective."[53] This tendency was labeled "fusionism;" the authors echoed Huntington when they argued that it was to be avoided.

The risk of fusionism is that it could relegate the military's most pressing, fundamental purposes to a secondary focus, behind more administrative and policy-focused spheres. Operational readiness, planning, and preparedness could suffer. If policy making and political influence were executed by the military it could lead to excessive focus on budgets and administration instead of tactics and operations.[54] The military should not touch grand strategy, they argued. Meanwhile, fusionism and broadened military influence could increase "informal action channels."[55] This latter development could undermine structured changes of commands, hierarchies, and traditional civil-military relationships.

The implications of regional commands' influence, Goldwater-Nichols, and fusionism are present in all three case studies. The former two developments impact the

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[52] *Ibid*. pg. 96.
[53] Jordon, Amos A., William J. Taylor, Jr. & Michael J. Mazarr. *American National Security: Policy and Process.*Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ Press, 1999. pg. 190.
[54] *Ibid*. pg. 191.
[55] *Ibid*. pg. 229.

manner in which the military communicated with civilian policymakers. They also influence how the civilians were able to selectively engage military leadership in order to achieve policy ends with minimal over tension or pushback. The latter concern – fusionism – seems to ebb over the course of the three cases, however.

Applicable Theories

National Security Council

A body of literature exists that analyzes the National Security Council. Many political scientists have written numerous works that describe, interpret, and theorize the most influential institution of post-World War II U.S. foreign policy. This literature review will contain some of the most relevant works. It will start with an expanded summary of Alexander George's "multiple advocacy theory." The latter is fundamental to this thesis's analysis. Throughout the review, references will be made to histories of the NSC. However, this work will not include expanded summaries of the NSC and national security advisors (NSAs) through the decades.

Presidential and Secretarial Models of Decision Making

Colin Powell recently outlined two basic models of civilian-based foreign policy decision-making. He wrote that the presidential model finds the national security advisor as a standard-bearer and locus of power. He, working with the president and on behalf of the National Security Council, helps lead the daily foreign policy decision-making. Conversely, the secretarial model sees the secretary of state as the locus of policy decisions. While final decisions still firmly rest in the hands of the president, "the

bureaucracy of the State Department" holds "the principal actors" who formulate and implement foreign policy.[56]

The latter model had been in neglect under recent administrations. This is for various reasons. It is linked to the continued atrophy of the State Department and its waning influence upon the national security decision-making processes. Similarly, it is related to the increased power of the Defense Department. However, the most recent administration has sought to bolster, embolden, and reassert the State Department's influence. The net growth of influence in Foggy Bottom may be stunted, however, by concurrent growth in NSC power.

Multiple Advocacy Theory

Alexander L. George wrote a seminal article in the early 1970s in which he argued for multiple advocacy in foreign policy decision-making. As a management oriented theory, multiple advocacy was intended to rebut centralized management processes that could silence disagreement within policy-making bodies.[57] Instead of scuttling debate, the president would use management styles to "harness diversity of views and interests in the interest of rational policy making." The theory is a "mixed system;" it openly draws on pluralistic sources but also requires active management in order to perpetuate the system needed for productivity.

George delved into dozens of scenarios and variables that influence the system's output. Many of these relate to the case studies of this thesis and will be explored further. Suffice to say that the theory requires full, open, engaged participation from all players.

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[56] Powell, Colin. "The NSC Advisor." Inderfkurth, Karl & Loch K. Johnson. Eds. *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*. New York: Oxford Univ Press: 2004. pg. 158.
[57] George, Alexander L. "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy." *American Political Science Review* 66.3 (1972): 751-785. Web. 8 Sept 2012. pg. 751.

Politicking must be kept to a minimum and altruistic actions towards the NSC's goals are essential. However, contradictory inclinations pervade the NSC and make multiple advocacy a delicate theory. For example, when the NSC staffs itself with advisors it often appropriates individuals under the employ of external departments. The defense and state departments, the White House staff, intelligence agencies, and other organizations often surrender their best staff in the name of the NSC.

Simply put, the council coopts a great deal of manpower out of the bodies of which it requires superior participation.[58] This brain drain, or sorts, weakens the residual staffs at those bodies. It inhibits the State Department employee working for the NSC, for example, from speaking on behalf of his department; at that time, he is acting as an NSC official. As such, divergent missions overlap and differences are exaggerated – yet also stunted – within multiple advocacy bodies. This tendency is particularly worrisome when the NSC – and multiple advocacy theory, in general – requires full, unmitigated participation from numerous participants. Additionally, since the NSC funnels the final decision process to a small group of advisers – and the president – it's possible for minority opinions to be lost or insufficiently advocated.[59]

As the pinnacle of national security/foreign policy staffers, the national security advisor has procured tremendous influence over the decades. The NSA's access to the president is a great advantage. He and the body he governs possess are able to determine the topics and trajectory of discussions. Certainly, the president has eventual say and his personality strongly affects the structures and decision-making. Nevertheless, the national security advisor's role is at the center of the policy-making processes.

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[58] *Ibid.* pg. 754.
[59] *Ibid.* pg. 755.

Alexander George's work is a prescriptive theory. It outlines how to effectively nurture a policy-making process within the muddled, complex, political national security apparatus (most specifically, the NSC). He cited the works of Joseph L. Bower, Graham T. Allison, Richard Neustadt, Charles Lindblom, and Roger Hilsman throughout what amounts to a concise literature review.[60] Hilsman had the greatest influence on George's thesis. Hilsman wrote that policy decisions are most likely to be "wise one[s]" if the policy makers are intelligent, well informed, and at the apex of power."[61] Additionally, the complex jumble of national security organizations requires multiple advocates in order to guarantee that all perspectives are promoted.[62]

These requirements led George to the conclusion that better decisions required three things:

> (1) No major maldistribution among the various actors of the following resources:
>   (a) Power, weight, influence.
>   (b) Competence relevant to the policy issues.
>   (c) Information relevant to the policy problem.
>   (d) Analytical resources.
>   (e) Bargaining and persuasion skills.
> (2) Presidential-level participation in organizational policy making in order to monitor and regulate the workings of multiple advocacy.
> (3) Time for adequate debate and give-and-take.[63]

For these reasons, multiple advocacy theory requires the president and his staff to "avoid gross disparities" in resources, be "alert to the danger" that the range of options presented them is not comprehensive, and "develop certain rules of the game to maintain fair competition" among the advocates."[64] These are the reasons why the national security advisor is an essential aspect of U.S. foreign policy discussions: the NSA, as the

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[60] *Ibid*. pg. 757-760.
[61] *Ibid*. pg. 758-759.
[62] He wrote, "Since conflict over policy and advocacy are inevitable within a complex organization, one solution lies in ensuring that there will be multiple advocates within the policy-making system who, among themselves, will cover a range of interesting policy options on any given issue." *Ibid*. pg. 759.
[63] *Ibid*. pg. 759.
[64] *Ibid*. pg. 760.

president's senior advisor, is to act in "the custodian role" over the process and players.[65] Meanwhile, the president – as chief executive, must act as the "magistrate." The latter role puts the locus of final decision-making in the lap of the president. George argues that this role allows the myriad advocates to cease competing with each other and commence advocating for the magistrate's attention.

George listed nine potential "malfunctions" to the policy-making process.[66] These were mentioned earlier, regarding George's bargaining process theory, and will be explored further in this work's case study analysis. For now, it is important to recognize that all malfunctions impact the deliberation and presentation processes within the NSC.

In his conclusion, George reemphasized the need for the national security advisor – as custodian –not to be an advocate but, rather, a moderator. He must monitor and maintain the policy-making process, engaging constantly. He must not be a "watch dog" who simply serves and protects the president's magisterial role.[67] His responsibilities are broader and less deferential than that. He must maintain credibility as an "honest broker" and auditor over the decision-making process. Finally, George emphasized that the NSA

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[65] Alexander George wrote that the custodian and magistrate roles can be fulfilled by the chief executive, alone. However, he strongly argues that the custodial role is delegated to his senior assistant (pg. 762). It is for this reason that this author summarizes the work as such (president as magistrate, NSA as custodian). *Ibid*. pg. 761.

[66] They are: "When the President and his advisers agree too readily on the nature of the problem facing them and on a response to it;" "When advisers and advocates take difference positions and debate them before the President but their disagreements do not cover the full range of relevant hypotheses and alternative options;" "When there is no advocate for an unpopular policy option;" "When advisers to the President thrash out their own disagreements over policy without the President's knowledge and confront him with a unanimous recommendation;" "When advisers agree privately among themselves that the President should face up to a difficult decision, but no one is willing to alert him to the need for doing so;" "When the President, faced with an important problem to decide, is dependent upon a single channel of information;" "When the key assumptions and premises of a plan have been evaluated only by the advocates of that options;" "When the President asks advisers for their opinions on a preferred course of action but does not request a qualified group to examine more carefully the negative judgment offered by one or more advisers;" and "When the President is impressed by the consensus among his advisers on behalf of a particular policy but fails to ascertain how firm the consensus is, how it was achieved, and whether it is justified." *Ibid*. pg. 769-781.

[67] *Ibid*. pg. 782.

must not be the "public spokesman" for executive policy nor implement those decisions.[68]

This author argues that George's work is fundamental to understanding the case studies here. The theories he posited help explain the power dynamics in the NSC and how they impacted civil-military relations. His malfunction typologies are cited directly in the analysis and help us understand the distance between NSC theory and actual implementation. Ironically, this thesis finds that NSA Rice participated in the case with the highest number of malfunctions. This is despite the fact that she and George were colleagues at Stanford and she was well aware of his work.

George's theory complements the trends, categories, and typologies that this author develops. His lists of ideal practices and malfunctions relate to the variables present in this thesis. Specifically, his work on national security advisor leadership is cited extensively and fused with new theory in this work. George's descriptions of the different roles the advisor and NSC play include many aspects that are present in all three cases.

Carnes Lord and Analysis of the NSC post-Goldwater-Nichols

Carnes Lord has written thorough, respected analysis of the NSC. He has written a great deal about what was formally titled the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. The legislation significantly reformed the national security and military apparatus. Among other things it bolstered the influence of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, altered the chain of command so that it ran from the president through the Defense Secretary and directly to the CINCs, amd decreased the influence of

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[68] *Ibid*. pg. 783.

the service chiefs to indirect advisory roles. As mentioned earlier, the Act had profound impact on civil-military relations.

In *The Presidency and the Management of National Security*, Carnes Lord argued that civil-military relations are under increasingly "subjective control."[69] Civilians increasingly insert themselves into the "professional military sphere." Conversely, those military professionals are actively studying topics outside their purview and, thus, able to participate in discussions beyond their objective roles. In this environment the NSC has six roles, according to Lord. These include "routine staff support and information," "crisis management," "policy development," "policy implementation," "policy advice," and "operations."[70]

For the purpose of this thesis we shall focus on the policy development aspect of NSC responsibilities. Lord emphasized the body's need to "catalyz[e] decision[s]" and manage "the decision process;" these were "indispensable NSC" functions.[71] For these reasons Lord argued the need for a strong NSC that had an established, working relationship with the president. If a president did not want to participate in the decision-making process the staff would have to be particularly "strong" so that he maintains control of the bureaucratic bodies.[72] All of this resonates with the NSC's activity – or lack thereof – throughout the three cases in this thesis. It also relates to the variables and trends that this author found.

Lord also posited the need for a highly networked and immersed NSC. Isolation leads to failure. He "most emphatically" condemned a "hermetically sealed off" NSC and

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[69] Lord, Carnes. *The Presidency and the Management of National Security*. New York: The Free Press: 1988. pg. 45.
[70] *Ibid*. pg. 63.
[71] *Ibid*. pg. 64-65.
[72] *Ibid*. pg. 86.

national security advisor. He wrote, "Strategic planning cannot meaningfully be conducted in the absence of full and reliable information concerning the operational implications of strategy."[73] Direct access to the various, relevant bodies help increase the likelihood of success. However, Lord recognized that there are organizational disparities between the players. For example, the State Department does not have a secretary's office that is nearly as influential or organized as the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It is important that the NSC recognizes each agency's positions as well as limitations.

In these regards, Lord's work agrees with the spirit of George's writings. Both argued the need for an influential, legitimate, integrated NSC through which bureaucracy can be choreographed. The end goal is policymaking that reflects the civilian leaders' decision and complements the president's leadership style. This thesis's case studies show the extent to which these goals are correlated to the type of subjective civilian control that is present.

Lord argued that the national security advisor inevitably acts as a policy adviser to the president. There is an air of fatalism with this conclusion. It doesn't appear as though Lord was concerned that this would scuttle the advisor's role. This thesis takes issue with that argument. The third case study's process tracing shows that this is not inevitable or necessary.

Lord went on to write that the NSC, as a whole, must remain strong and authoritative. This allows it to "adjudicate among the differing interests and perspectives of the various national security agencies."[74] In this respect he again echoed substantial pieces of George's multiple advocacy theory. Lord further wrote that "strategic

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[73] *Ibid.* pg. 89.
[74] *Ibid.* pg. 94.

expertise," a "sense of history," and experience are paramount for the NSC staff and national security advisor.[75] While close relationships with the president were ideal but not required, strong and independent character are highly touted by the author. Lord famously wrote, "The best approach to countering the inevitable bias of senior White House staff is to strengthen the institutional presence of the National Security Council within the White House structure."[76]

Cecil Crabb, Kevin Mulcahy, and Typologies of the National Security Advisor's Role(s)

Cecil Crabb and Kevin Mulcahy developed typologies for the national security advisor's role vis-à-vis the president and National Security Council. These correspond strongly with the process organization and presidential leadership variables that are emphasized in this thesis. Based on levels of implementation responsibility (a) and policy-making responsibility (b), they defined the NSA's leadership role as either "department-centered" Administrator [low (a), low (b)], "formalized" Coordinator [high (a), low (b)], "collegial" Counselor [low (a), high (b)], or "palace guard" Agent [high (a), high (b)].[77] The two make clear that each typology is defined by the leadership styles of the president (see footnote, below).[78] There is direct causality between the president's preferences and how the NSA/NSC function.

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[75] *Ibid*. pg. 118.
[76] *Ibid*. pg. 138.
[77] Crabb, Cecil V. & Kevin Mulcahy. *American National Security: A Presidential Perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1991. pg. 176, 189.
[78] Administrator is the "classical" typology; it sees the State Department as the "lead agency" when approaching foreign policy. This occurs when the president's leadership style is such that he has "litter interest in the hands-on administration of foreign affairs." The Coordinator typology comes to pass when the president requires policy positions from various agencies but "maintains a high degree of personal control." The Counselor pattern arises when the president "eschews direct administrative responsibility for an active part in shaping the content of the policy." Ad-hoc bodies tend to arise, in this instance. Furthermore, the White House tends to use the NSC as its own independent agency of analysis and decision-making. Finally, the Agent typology relates to administrations in which all responsibilities are located in the White House. The State Department and other agencies are often relegated to implementer

Implementation Responsibility

		Low	High
Policymaking Responsibility	**Low**	*Department-Centered* - Administrator	*Formalized* - Coordinator
	High	*Collegial* - Counselor	*Palace Guard* - Agent

Figure 2.4 – Crabb/Mulcahy Typologies of NSC/National Security Advisor Roles

These typologies are very useful when creating a synthetic conceptual framework to analyze events. This author uses Crabb and Mulcahy's typologies when interpreting the national security advisor's and NSC's roles in each case study. He also relates Crabb and Mulcahy's work to the theory that is developed in this thesis; the two works complement each other. What's more, their typologies meld well with George's work, his typologies, and the civil-military literature that has been discussed earlier. Because Crabb and Mulcahy's work includes clear spectrums of both policymaking and implementation involvement, it relates well to the language and primary concerns of George's malfunction typologies.

The National Security Council Throughout History, Influencing Our Cases

There are numerous works within political science and historical literature that analyze the role of the NSC. From Truman to Obama the histories are increasingly robust. They highlight the changes in the body's structure and influence with each administration. A predominant narrative is common throughout the literature. That is, there is substantial agreement about each president's influence upon the NSC and which moments – as well as figures – served as benchmarks. For the purpose of this thesis we

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status. This typology finds the NSA as "an articulate and ambitious aid with strongly held international views that complement those of the president." *Ibid*. pg. 188-190.

will not delve into the history of the NSC prior to the cases in question. However, it is important to recognize the bodies of literature that precedes us.[79]

It is vital, meanwhile, that we take time to highlight basic trends and fundamental aspects of the NSC throughout history. A distinct trend since the Nixon administration has been the decline of State Department influence over foreign policy decision-making. This is particularly true within the realms of civil-military relations. Edward Kolodziej wrote that the National Security Council became a substitute body, of sorts, for the State Department. As the former's star rose, the latter's set within the bureaucratic arena.[80] Henry Kissinger was the pivot point for this transition. This encouraged Kolodziej; he argued that the NSC should take up the mantle of policy making, due to – among other things – its proximity to the White House staff.

The National Security Council cemented itself as the core of civil-military relations and foreign policy decision-making during the Nixon-Kissinger era. As the White House staff and NSC consolidated their authority as well as legitimacy, a zero-sum struggle saw the waning of the State Department. The primary harbinger of this change was funding and budgetary battles over appropriations. Concurrently, the Department of Defense and OSD benefited from more rigid, hierarchical structures. The OSD was able to maintain and grow influence because of this. No doubt it also benefited from the

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[79] Some excellent historical summaries and political science analyses can be found in: Inderfkurth, Karl & Loch K. Johnson. *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*. New York: Oxford Univ Press: 2004; Hilsman, Roger. *The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs*. 3rd Ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993; Bock, Joseph G. *The White House Staff and the National Security Assistant*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987; Kolodziej, Edward A. "The National Security Council: Innovations and Implications." *Public Administration Review* Nov/Dec (1969): 573-585. Web. 8 Sept 2012. pp. 573-585; Thayer, Frederick C. "Presidential Policy Processes and New Administration: A Search for Revised Paradigms." *Public Administration Review* Sept/Oct (1971): 552-561. Web. 8 Sept 2012. pp. 552-561; Best, Richard A. *The National Security Council: An Organizational Assessment* Huntington: Novinka Books: 2001; Hoxie, R. Gordon. *Command Decisions and the Presidency*. New York: Reader's Digest Press, T.Y. Crowell, 1977.
[80] Kolodziej, Edward A. "The National Security Council: Innovations and Implications." *Public Administration Review* Nov/Dec (1969): 573-585. Web. 8 Sept 2012. pg. 580.

specialized, professional assets of the military and its place in contemporary foreign policy. Hard power had a distinct advantage over soft policy. Kolodziej was concerned about the Defense Department's rise, however.[81]

The National Security Council Grows, Changes

The NSC more than doubled in size over the course of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It then stabilized in size and mission until 1980. Then, President Reagan saw the NSC explode in size and influence.[82] After the end of the Cold War the size of the NSC fell precipitously. However, President Clinton ultimately broadened the NSC's purview and increased both its funding and size. By the end of his administration the full time staff numbered nearly 100.[83] Clinton, meanwhile, did not focus on policy making nearly as much as day-to-day management of foreign policy. For this reason, in some respects the former mission of the NSC atrophied during his tenure.

Under the second President Bush, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice immediately cut the NSC's size by over 30% to about 70 staffers. While the NSC remained larger than any point prior to 1996, it was a drastic move.[84] It is worth noting, however, that NSA Rice steadily built the NSC back up and it eventually grew to be much larger than the body she inherited. By 2004, in fact, it was 50% larger than what

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[81] Kolodziej was particularly concerned with the DoD gaining strength at the State Department's expense (or, at least, to the latter's detriment). *Ibid*. pg. 579.

[82] According to figures published by Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler the NSC grew from approximately 20 to 45 staff members from 1965 to 1971. After 1980 the NSC staff grew from just under 40 to nearly 80 members. This size plateaued until 1990; the new decade saw a rapid decrease then steady increase to nearly 100 members in 2000. Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. "A New NSC for a New Administration." *Brookings Institution*. Nov 2000. Web. 25 Sept 2012.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. "How Operational and Visible an NSC." *Brookings Institution.* 23 February 2001. Web. 25 Sept 2012.

Rice acquired. It is commonly acknowledged that she found it necessary to re-grow what had initially be cut in an anti-Clintonian purge.[85]

Daalder, Destler, "Trust," & Analysis of Clinton's NSC Forward

When analyzing Clinton's National Security Council, Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler argued their was a need for greater integrated coordination. They argued that an "odd man out" national security advisor would be a disservice to national security and foreign policy.[86] Edward Kolodziej shared an appreciation for the NSC's precarious and delicate balance it must maintain. He wrote that the NSC must remain outside the fray in order to maintain its reputation as independent. The president must not play favorites, the national security advisor must serve the president's wills, and the NSC must scuttle any bureaucratic infighting.[87]

In their 2009 book, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*, Daalder and Destler emphasized the many, often conflicting requirements of a functional NSC. Throughout their arguments, from its hybrid behavior and agency perspective, trust is paramount; it is essential for a successful NSC. The national security advisor and NSC must garner the trust of the president. What's more, the national security advisor must be perceived as a legitimate, approachable choreographer, as well. The latter point is particularly true for the principal, cabinet-level leadership.[88] This requires a significant amount of interpersonal skills, knowledge, engagement, and receptiveness on the advisor's part.

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[85] Rothkopf, David. *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005. pg. 403, 404.

[86] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. "A New NSC for a New Administration."

[87] He wrote, in part, "The President requires advisors who stand outside the security and foreign policy system in order to assess the relative merit of the representations arising from the agencies in terms of his, not their, objectives." Kolodziej, Edward A. "The National Security Council: Innovations and Implications.". 581.

[88] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. pg. 322.

Daalder and Destler wrote:

> National Security Advisers have one tough job. They must serve the president, yet balance this primary allegiance with the commitment to manage an effective and efficient policy process. They must be forceful in driving that process forward to decisions, yet represent other agencies' views fully and faithfully. They must be simultaneously strong and collegial, able to enforce discipline across the government, yet engage senior officials and their agencies rather than exclude them. They must provide confidential advice to the president, yet establish a reputation as an honest broker of the conflicting officials and interests across the government. […] They must […] operation in the shadows to the maximum extent possible […] and they must handle all issues, large and small, in a manner that establishes and retains the trust of their senior administration colleagues.[89]

Daalder and Destler emphasized that neither the NSC nor the national security advisor should try to play consensus seeker. While various previous administrations used the National Security Council as such, it can scuttle healthy dialogue or compel agreement too early in the process.[90] The latter risks perpetuating policy decisions that are too elementary, atrophied, or aimless. It can also allow for players to co-opt the national security process through politicking.

These and other theories put forth by Daalder and Destler resonate with this thesis. The two political scientists emphasized the need for explicit procedures. Established processes and structures must be followed. Additionally, the roles of all agents participating in the national security process must be clearly defined as well as followed. Daalder and Destler are advocates for high process organization and role authenticity. Their work complements what is discussed and built in this thesis. As will be shown in the cases, their emphasis on the NSC's need to be trusted and deemed legitimate by all players – especially the president – complements George's theories, as well.

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[89] *Ibid*. pg. 327.
[90] Ivo Daalder and I.M. (Mac) Destler, "A New NSC for a New Administration." pg. 360.

For Daalder and Destler "functional competence" – like that found in the "late Reagan, Bush, and early Clinton administrations" – was paramount and must be prioritized. In this way they made simultaneous agency and structural arguments. The two focused a great deal on the structural, bureaucratic, and procedural boundaries of the NSC's mission. However, they insisted on the impact of individual personalities, relationships, and leadership. The latter aspect of their analysis led to an important conclusion: no single leadership style or NSC structure would work universally. Each community of civil-military and national security leaders has to adapt the NSC so as to complement its dynamics and optimize their service.[91] Again, this matches the trends that are present in the three case studies.

Daalder, Destler, and others wrote many articles throughout the 1990s and early 2000s about necessary structural changes to the NSC as well as mission shifts for the national security advisor. Daalder and Destler argued that augmenting the NSC's staff and modifying its bounded mission was essential. This would allow the NSC to match its operation to its influence. They wrote that the national security advisor must "balance this managerial responsibility against the role of advising the president."[92]

In 2001 John Deutch, Arnold Kanter, and Brent Scowcroft argued the NSC's need to enhance its ability "to plan, direct and coordinate interagency programs."[93] New

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[91] Daalder and Destler emphasized this point throughout *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. Specifically, they were critical of NSA Rice's attempt to transplant Brent Scowcroft's NSC/NSA style into the second Bush's White House. Daalder and Destler cited significant personality and cultural differences within the administrations as reasons it did not work. Furthermore, H W Bush's leadership style was vastly different than W Bush's. The former was far more activist, knowledgeable, and engaged than the latter. This exacerbated the lack of transplantation, since Rice did not increase her proactive engagement, overt work, or initiative in order to counteract W Bush's style. Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 260-261.
[92] *Ibid*. pg. 322.
[93] Deutch, John, Arnold Kanter & Brent Scowcroft. "Strengthening the National Security Interagency Process." *Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future*. Ed. Ashton B. Carter & John P. White. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. pg. 281.

deputy level positions were recommended. They suggested reorganization of the NSC's office structure and categorizations, as well. Conversely, Daalder and Destler, in the same year, wrote that the National Security Council can remain larger but must pare down its jurisdictions and roles. Legislative affairs and communication offices could be culled.[94] Their argument was that any public roles were distracting from the NSC/NSA's first and foremost role: choreographing foreign policy internally.

For this reason Daalder and Destler were critical of Bush's first national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, and her highly prominent diplomatic role. They argued that instead of a mouthpiece, the advisor should be a stage manager. They wrote, "To best serve the president and the nation, experts agree, the National Security Council staff needs to be strong, small, subdued, selective in its issue engagement, and focused above all on management of the policy process."[95] This statement best summarizes their thesis vis-à-vis the National Security Council and its role. Their argument also agrees with what this author found during process tracing.

Daalder, Destler, and Others' Analysis of Bush's NSC

Daalder and Destler have written a great deal about the mission and operational capacity of the National Security Council. Much of their work has included historical case studies; they have analyzed modern administrations' use of the body. In their book *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*, for example, Daalder and Destler spent significant effort analyzing President George W. Bush's National Security Council. This included an examination of Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley as national security advisors.

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[94] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. "How Operational and Visible an NSC." *Brookings Institution.* 23 February 2001. Web. 25 Sept 2012.
[95] *Ibid.*

Daalder and Destler argued that President Bush appointed Condoleezza Rice as a policymaking adviser, first and foremost. Likewise, Rice perceived her role more as staffing the president and less as managing the civil-military or national security processes; this led to the neglect of various institutional processes.[96] Rice also became one of the most visible policy spokespersons for the Bush White House. For Destler and Daalder, this "atypically active" presence was distracting, undermined the credibility of the national security advisor, and was troubling to the prospect of stable national security processes.[97] Furthermore, Rice was one of the youngest, least experienced national security advisors in history; she held approximately three years of government experience prior to her appointment in 2000.[98] NSA Rice took immediate steps to alter, trim, and consolidate the NSC that she inherited from Clinton's administration.[99] According to Daalder and Destler's research and argument, this allowed for other principals to overtake the processes Rice should have controlled.

Politicking was rampant amongst the cabinet-level leaders of Bush's White House. Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld made overt power plays early in the administration's first term.[100] Rumsfeld expressed "great disdain for the process that Rice was supposed to run" and made immediate, comprehensive efforts to control all

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[96] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 251. Also, Rothkopf, David. *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005. pg. 405.

[97] Daalder, Ivo H. "More Than a Few Campaign Stops: How Rice Has Redefined the Role of National Security Adviser." *Center for American Progress*. 22 October 2004. Web. 25 Sept 2012.

[98] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 257.

[99] NSA Rice believed Clinton's NSC had become too powerful, specifically condemning its focus on implementation. She sought to explicitly limit the NSC's role to "staffing the president; pushing his policy priorities; and coordinating the rest of the government." Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 259-260.

[100] Daalder and Destler give anecdotal evidence of various times Cheney and Rumsfeld made policy decisions outside of the NSC apparatus then failed to notify NSA Rice (or the State Department for that matter). *Ibid*. pg. 275-276.

communications coming out of the Pentagon.[101] Cheney, meanwhile, initially tried to

chair the NSC principals committee meetings; this would have been an unprecedented

usurpation of the advisor's power by the vice president.[102] The vice president also staffed

his own office with intelligence and national security personnel. NSA Rice described

Cheney's "mini-NSC," as Richard Haass described it, as being unencumbered. Others

described it as intimidating, networked, and belligerent in the face of established NSC

protocols.[103] This was despite the fact that NSA Rice met with President Bush upwards of

eight or nine times a day with face time sometimes lasting over four hours.[104]

     Daalder and Destler present many examples of NSA Rice's inability to contain

Secretary Rumsfeld's aggressive power plays. Neither Rice nor anyone else successfully

compelled Rumsfeld to attend meetings regularly; if he did not agree with their premises,

he simply ignored them and did not attend.[105] Rumsfeld's Pentagon "mind meld" also

continued without fail. This allowed the OSD to neutralize dissenting voices within the

military, flank the Joint Chiefs, and more easily co-opt voices at the CINC level when

they complemented the secretary's policy preferences.[106]

     Meanwhile, various players within the national security process marginalized

Secretary of State Colin Powell. Neither Bush nor Cheney consulted him on the

nomination of Rumsfeld. Once the administration began, Powell found himself outside of

some of the most confidential and impactful policy discussions. Daalder and Destler cite

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[101] *Ibid*. pg. 258.

[102] Cheney was finally stopped when Rice appealed to President Bush and the latter blocked the move. *Ibid*. pg. 258.

[103] Rothkopf, David. *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005. pg. 421-423.

[104] David Rothkopf's work complements a great deal of Daalder and Destler's research as well as their conclusions. Collectively they offer the foundation of an increasingly voluminous, reputable volume of political science and historical literature on the subject. Rothkopf, David. *Running the World*. pg. 393.

[105] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 273.

[106] *Ibid*. pg. 274.

evidence that NSA Rice failed to end the secretary of state's isolation in national security policy discussions. They go on to argue that it was Rice's responsibility to do so.[107] The secretary of state wasn't the only principal who was subdued at the time; President Bush removed the UN ambassador from the cabinet-level and kept the position outside of vital NSC events.[108]

A majority of Daalder and Destler's argument is framed around process and leadership. Significant civilian agents, particularly those who could have maintained procedural organization, shirked process. As such, leadership from the top did not attempt to resolve the atrophy. The work Daalder and Destler did, therefore, corroborates and enhances the trends developed in this thesis.

Daalder and Destler argued that Rice's passive role as national security advisor was the primary reason that the Iraq war planning process was anemic, unchallenged, and incomplete.[109] From Rice's aloof position at the start of the discussion through her willingness to cede post-war planning to the Pentagon, she failed to manage the myriad roles and agencies of U.S. civil-military/national security policymaking.[110] A significant and influential body echoed their argument: the 9/11 Commission found Bush's first term National Security Council to be highly dysfunctional and ineffective in multiple organizational responsibilities.[111]

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[107] *Ibid*. pg. 272.
[108] Rothkopf, David. *Running the World*. pg. 405.
[109] Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 280.
[110] For a narrative of the systemic issues affecting the NSC, see *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Some examples of the mentioned issues are found on page 358. Recommendations to reverse the faults can be found on pages 401-403. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. (Philip Zelikow, Executive Director; Bonnie D. Jenkins, Counsel; Ernest R. May, Senior Advisor). *The 9/11 Commission Report*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
[111] Rothkopf, David. *Running the World*. pg. 406.

In President Bush's second term Condoleezza Rice became secretary of state and former Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley was appointed to his boss's position. Hadley held much more experience within the government and NSC, in particular.[112] Hadley made overt moves to reform and re-administer the NSC's policy implementation role. His close proximity to and relationship with President Bush – like Rice's – allowed him to garner tremendous trust and influence. He prided himself on being able to read and even anticipate the president. This time, a relative absence of challenges coming from Cheney and Rumsfeld helped Hadley. Hadley also maintained the policymaking timbre of Rice's national security advisor tenure. When the Iraq strategy review commenced in 2006 this would become particularly consequential; Hadley and his top regional advisors – Crouch, O'Sullivan, Feaver – were strong proponents for a surge.[113]

Daalder and Destler presented evidence that Hadley and his staff's minority position during the 2006 strategy review gained influence due to Hadley's proximity to the president. What's more, as national security advisor, Hadley was able to corral outside voices/proponents in ways other bureaucrats were unable to do.[114] Through these actions, Daalder and Destler argued, Hadley used his role as a way to greatly influence policymaking. However, their protestations were muted because he was also able to simultaneously execute the portion of his job that they found paramount. That is, Hadley served his rank and role by choreographing a wide-ranging strategic review that would have been unlikely if not for his leadership. As such, he enacted their prescription of

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[112] Hadley worked for the NSC under Kissinger and Scowcroft. He also served on the Tower Commission and was in policy circles for many decades. Destler, I.M. & Ivo. H. Daalder. *In the Shadow of the Oval Office*. pg. 292.
[113] *Ibid*. pg. 295.
[114] *Ibid*. pg. 295.

NSC/NSA functions, if for no other reason than creating an opportunity to present his position.

According to Daalder and Dester's evidence, arguments, and typologies, Hadley succeeded in leading outside of the limelight. He was a covert liaison who was trusted by the president and a legitimate, networked figure within civil-military and national security apparatuses. Daalder and Destler were willing to dismiss Hadley's significant policy making role because he executed his primary roles as national security advisor despite the policy-based tangent. In this respect, their silence serves to amplify Carnes Lord's voice; his theory that the national security advisor is inevitably a policy-making figure while serving the NSC's mission rings true.

Chapter Three
Case One: Iraq War Plan (2001-2003)

In the days and weeks after the September 11th attacks there were numerous meetings amongst the top tier civilian leadership. The Bush Administration was reeling. However, it was also resolved to identify strategic threats in order to neutralize them and ultimately declare victory. Fires still raged at Ground Zero and smoke still billowed from the Pentagon when Defense Secretary Rumsfeld first suggested a broadened front in the new Global War on Terror (GWoT). Within weeks, President Bush requested a review of the Iraq invasion plans that were on file. Within months a comprehensive overhaul of the Iraq war plan was underway. The velocity and trajectory of the war planning efforts were products of civilian policy preferences and willing military acquiescence.

From the fall of 2001 through early 2003 a swift, massive, covert process of war planning and operational preparation took place. The president catalyzed the process via direct policy requests. The process was implemented based on distinct policy goals and strategic objectives laid out - in varying precision – by the top tier of civilian policy leadership. However, a significant question remains. Through all of this – from the initial request until the final "go" order – what were the civil-military dynamics? The puzzles that this case seeks to answer include: What methods did civilian leaders and military

officers use to plan the Iraq invasion? What were the dynamics between these players during the war planning process? How was the process organized and to what extent did the president lead during this moment of subjective civilian control? In so doing, it is the author's intention to define the nature of the events leading up to the Iraq war. This is relevant to the overall thesis in that it helps illustrate the state of civil-military relations at the beginning of the project's focus.

This case spans from immediately after the attacks of September 11th through the 19 March 2003 National Security Council (NSC) meeting in which President Bush gave the final "go" order to invade Iraq. This author argues that the case is a clear indication of highly subjective civil-military relations. Process tracing reveals a stark fact: the Secretary of Defense and his office – the OSD – succeeded in their goal of controlling the operational planning process. President Bush delegated his primary leadership role during the earliest, most formative moments. Additionally, the National Security Council failed to moderate the entirety of the strategic debate. From the earliest stages through the latest revisions, Secretary Rumsfeld kept in frequent and direct contact with General Tommy R. Franks, the commander of Central Command (CENTCOM). The Secretary's contact with the regional command's Commander in Chief (CINC) marginalized other top military leaders. This includes the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The locus of power was firmly in the Secretary of Defense's office throughout the war planning efforts. Furthermore, this author argues that Rumsfeld's relationship and contact with Franks constituted the co-optation – however willing – of a senior Army general. This strengthened the OSD's position and allowed for Rumsfeld's preferences to

be executed more easily, without pushback or challenges to its validity. In many ways, Rumsfeld was able to circumvent traditional bureaucratic channels and chains of command. The end result was a highly subjective move by civilians to maintain control within a civil-military environment where – despite being firmly subjective – military professionals held an authoritative advantage.

Additionally, due to political preferences and civilian policy decisions, a near entirety of the planning process was highly secretive and exclusive. The secrecy and structure of the war planning decreased the manner in which players – civilian and military, alike – could influence the eventual design of the invasion. This worked to Rumsfeld's advantage for multiple reasons; increased difficulty for other civilians to challenge the tempo and nature of the planning was not the least of these reasons. A relatively weak National Security Council and a National Security Advisor – in Condoleezza Rice – who did a poor job of moderating power dynamics within the civilian leadership, further compounded the process.

Throughout this case it is essential to remember this fact: the processes of defining operational goals and developing the Iraq invasion plan were done within an environment of comprehensive and rapid transition of civil-military relations. This all occurred during a civilian-led campaign to reorganize and re-prioritize the missions and assets of the military. This was the case before the attacks of 11 September 2001. However, the catastrophic effects of that day accelerated and broadened these goals of subjective civilian control.

Political Context

To appreciate the nature of civil-military relations leading up to the Iraq invasion, it is important to explore context. In order to appreciate context, it is necessary to understand the prevailing policies and political ideologies within the civilian leadership. There is a substantial volume of sources that indicate the ideological positions of many relevant actors in the Bush Administration. A significant proportion of these sources reveal a penchant for shifting away from the Powell Doctrine's legacy of cooperative internationalism. Instead, they preferred a move towards more assertive militant internationalism, neo-conservative foreign policy goals, and an eventual adoption of offensive liberalism.

Many top civilian political officials and highly influential policy advisors in the Bush Administration participated in various neo-conservative think tanks and organizations leading up to the 2000 election. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and Zalmay Khalilzad – among others – publicly supported the "Defense Planning Guidance" as early as February 1992.[115] This document was one of the earliest calls for neo-conservative foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Its positions included a call to "address sources of regional conflict and instability" and encouraging "the spread of democratic forms of government."[116] Among its list of numerated U.S. interests were "Persian Gulf oil," protection against "proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," and "threats… from terrorism or regional or local conflict."

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[115] Ehrenberg, John et al. Eds. *The Iraq Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. pg. 9.
[116] *Ibid*. pg. 10.

In June 1997, the Project for the New American Century published a "Statement of Principles" as a response to the Clinton Administration's foreign policy decisions. In it, the think tank warned that the United States was "in danger of squandering the opportunity and failing the challenge" to reshape the international community to fit the nation's "principles and interests."[117] In January 1998, the organization sent a letter to President Clinton; it urged him to announce a new strategy towards foreign policy and military engagement. This strategy, it stated, "should aim, above all, at the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power. We stand ready to offer our full support in the difficult but necessary endeavor."[118] Paul Wolfowitz and the eventual Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, were among the organization's members.

These brief examples indicate that various Bush Administration officials had established inclinations towards neo-conservatism and offensive liberalism. They are examples of policy positions held by the administration's group of influential civilian policymakers. Indeed, there existed in the Bush Administration an overarching agreement in a neo-conservative foreign policy ideology. Many individuals who espoused such policies and political positions were out of power throughout the Clinton Administration. There was a good deal of discontent not only with foreign policy decisions but also the organization and utility of the military. As can be expected, a good deal of that frustration focused on Iraq.

Conservatives and Republicans were amongst those most frustrated over over the results of the first Gulf War.[119] Specifically, they were most upset that Saddam Hussein

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[117] *Ibid*. pg. 19.
[118] *Ibid*. pg. 24.
[119] It is important to note that frustration about Saddam Hussein and the lack of substantial change in Iraq was felt, as well as expressed, by both political parties throughout the 1990s. There are myriad examples of

remained in power, still threatened regional stability, was still believed to have biological and chemical weapons capabilities, and still sapped the economic, political, and military resources of the United States. However, by the middle of the 1990s, various strategies proved to be either ineffective or too costly and time consuming; the United States was eventually compelled to perpetuate a containment policy of Saddam while musing over various ways to influence substantial change.[120]

The frustration increased in magnitude and volume over the course of the decade. Nearly 300 editorials in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* critiqued the status quo policy and, in the final two years of the decade, a majority of writers on the subject declared containment dead and/or lobbied for regime change.[121] On November 13, 1997, House Resolution 322 was approved; it called for unilateral force against Iraq if the U.N. Security Council tried to veto multilateral force as a part of sanctions.[122] Furthermore, in October 1998 President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act. This legal document proclaimed the "ouster of Saddam Hussein" as "the goal of American foreign policy toward Iraq."[123] It also provided funding that was specifically appropriated to help topple Saddam. By the end of the decade, there was a critical mass of popular opinion, political will, and legal precedence behind the idea of regime change in Iraq.

Democratic leaders proclaiming their support for efforts whose ultimate goals were regime change and the toppling of Saddam Hussein. Among the more influential Democrats who voiced support for efforts to topple Saddam were Sen. Joe Biden and Vice President (and Presidential Candidate) Al Gore. For more information on the bipartisan discontent over the containment policy – as well as support for regime change – see: [Burgos, Russell A. "Origins of Regime Change: 'Ideapolitik' on the Long Road to Baghdad, 1993-2000." *Security Studies* 17.2 (2008): 221-256. Web. 21 April 2010.].

[120] Burgos, Russell A. "Origins of Regime Change: 'Ideapolitik' on the Long Road to Baghdad, 1993-2000." *Security Studies* 17.2 (2008): 221-256. Web. 21 April 2010. pg. 223.

[121] *Ibid*. pg. 241.

[122] *Ibid*. pg. 246.

[123] *Ibid*. pg. 251.

Through all of this, regime change hawks and neo-conservatives escalated their rhetoric as well as their commitment to said goal. They began to suggest that while regime change catalyzed by domestic forces was ideal, it might be necessary for the United States to commit troops in order to achieve their policy goals.[124] It was a stark policy conclusion: the fundamental goal had become regime change by whatever means necessary, including direct and comprehensive American military engagement. With this conclusion, "for Republicans, regime change was taken for granted by 2000."[125] Throughout the 2000 Presidential election campaign Senator John McCain, advisor (and eventual National Security Advisor) Condoleezza Rice, and others spoke openly about the need to institute new strategies aimed at complete regime change.

These desires and policy intentions were brought into the Bush White House. Initially, however, it was recognized by many civilians that Iraq was not a priority and that more significant national security issues needed to be managed. National Security Advisor (NSA) Condoleezza Rice, for example, indicated that Saddam fell below issues pertaining to Russia, China, NATO expansion, India, and even Africa. Regardless, Iraqi exiles such as Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress (INC) cohorts frequently advised on war plan scenarios.[126] What's more, in the hours and days following the attacks of September 11, 2001, there was a rapid re-prioritizing of national security goals. Almost immediately, the simmering issue and policy goals of Iraq boiled to the surface.

This shift in priorities reflected an elevation of offensive liberalism that, contrary to normative suppositions, reconciled with the neo-conservative ideology well. As the trauma the September 11th attacks amplified the concern of policy failures and an

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[124] *Ibid*. pg. 248.
[125] *Ibid*. pg. 253.
[126] Hersh, Seymour M. "The Iraq Hawks." *The New Yorker*. 24 & 31 Dec 2001: 58-63. Print. pg. 59, 60.

inability to engage a new enemy, civilian leaders adopted offensive liberalism strategy more aggressively. Realist grand strategies were shirked while neo-conservative foreign policy ideas were elevated. The idea that the international community could be – and should be – altered by way of offensive military engagement blossomed.[127] This, added with the idea of "the benign influence of democracy on the external behavior of states and on international security" – which was commonly held by neo-conservatives in and outside the administration – compounded the adoption of offensive liberalism.[128]

As such, key civilian policymakers perceived a need and opportunity to offensively alter the international community. This fusion of neo-conservatism and offensive liberalism brought forth the idea that "benevolent American hegemony" was a necessary purpose of the United States, as sole super-power.[129] This was to be achieved in a way that was perceived to be morally right and humanly inevitable.

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[127] Benjamin Miller writes about the different realist, liberal, defensive, and offensive types of grand strategy in his article: Miller, Benjamin. "Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq." *Security Studies* 19.1 (2010): 26-65. Web. 21 April 2010. He relates these ideas to a structural argument, in which he posits that "the international material environment works as the *selector* of ideas, and it determines which approach to security is likely to emerge as the winner and dominate U.S. security policy in a certain period." (pg. 29) This paper's author would like to complement Miller's argument by saying that while the international structure has great influence on the security posture, the prevailing opinions and ideology of civilian policymakers are also influential on the perception of those structures. This would inevitably influence the posture, as well.

[128] Miller, Benjamin. "Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq." pg. 33. Miller also points out the eventual decision in Iraq war planning for a small invasion force. Miller states that "it seems… this decisions stemmed from the offensive liberal core belief that once a people is liberated from tyranny, it will automatically endorse democracy irrespective of regional, religious, and cultural variations, because liberty is a universal aspiration." This idea directly relates to arguments implied in this paper: the lack of Stage IV (post-invasion and combat victory) planning was influenced by policy assumptions, compounded by the compressed timeline and under-resourced nature of the war planning.

[129] Flibbert, Andrew. "The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Iraq War." *Security Studies* 15.2 (2006): 310-352. Web. 19 April 2010. pg. 331. Flibbert further states that "This fusion of benevolence and dominance underpinning the administration's core foreign-policy objectives gained traction after the shock of September 11 created new political possibilities for a substantially more aggressive American presence worldwide."

Bureaucratic Context

The neo-conservative penchant for offensive liberalism was complemented by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's intention to dramatically reorganize the Department of Defense. This had inevitable consequences upon civil-military relations. When Secretary Rumsfeld arrived at the Pentagon for his second tenure in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), he was committed to altering a military that he saw as "too set in its thinking" and "too attached to the weapons systems and fighting doctrines of the past."[130] Rumsfeld was one of many top civilian leaders in the Bush Administration who felt that the Department of Defense required a massive reorganization. He was also one of many leaders who believed the opportunity for a drastic change in military and foreign policy had arrived.

There was a continuum that connected neo-conservative foreign policy to a belief that the Powell Doctrine hindered civilian control of the military. Developed by many of former Vietnam-era junior officers who moved up the ranks (including General Colin Powell), the Powell Doctrine sought to restrict the influence and decision making abilities of civilian policymakers upon wars that were in progress; when the guns start, the policy hawks should remain silent.[131] It was a form of objective civil-military relations that was born out of the assumption that political interference greatly contributed to tactical and strategic failures of the past, most specifically in Vietnam. As such, the doctrine was intended to alter the structure of civil-military relations and allow for more military autonomy once policy decided that there was a need for war.

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[130] Boyer, Peter J. "The New War Machine." *The New Yorker*. 30 June 2003: 55-71. Print. pg. 55.
[131] Popescu, Ionut C. "Strategic Theory and Practice: A Critical Analysis of the Planning Process for the Long War on Terror." *Contemporary Security Policy* 30.1 (2009): 100-124. Web. 21 April 2010. pg. 117.

Among the frustrations associated with the Powell Doctrine, however, was that it restricted options for civilian policymakers and, thus, increased the possibility of larger conflict. The logic of this argument was that the doctrine – as a concept developed by military minds – required large build-ups of resources and still larger magnitudes of force deployment in order to execute the form of massive combat that it favored.[132] The Powell Doctrine's top priorities included the insurance of offensive dominance, force protection, and the limiting of military force as a tool for diplomacy. It was a hyper-inflated application of tactical determinism, in which policy determination defers to military professionals the moment that force is agreed upon.[133]

Michael Desch and others have argued that the Powell Doctrine, while "for the most part externally focused… nonetheless undermined civilian control, by asserting a greater domestic role for the military in foreign policy decision-making."[134] This doctrinal trend further enhanced the elevated stature that military professionals enjoyed after the first Gulf War. As military successes became more explicit and impressive, fewer citizens volunteered for military service. The exclusive and outstanding appearance of military professionals amplified their legitimacy as well as their authority in the public

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[132] The prolonged, massive build-up of forces and aggressive tactics of the first Gulf War are prime examples of the Powell Doctrine. Gen. Normal Schwarzkopf commanded this methodic, extended build up and combat campaign with limited civilian oversight. While the war itself was rapid and one-sided, the peace that came afterward was marked with errors. One of the most significant examples of frustrations over the civil-military relations of the Powell Doctrine is that civilians ceded "responsibility and overly deferred to military advice on when to end combat operations against Iraqi forces and how to hand ceasefire negotiations." Gen. Schwarzkopf negotiated the eventual ceasefire, in fact. But, without significant guidance and feedback from civilian leaders, military leaders failed to achieve some basic tenets of the political peace desired by the government. This included, among other things, the desire to have Saddam Hussein himself sign the ceasefire agreement, as opposed to one of his military officers. This, among other things, has been cited as one of the many reasons why military independence in decisions – amplified by the Powell Doctrine – is ineffective and dangerous. For more information (including quote citation), see: Russell, Richard L. "Civilian Masters and Military Servants: A Review Essay." *Political Science Quarterly* 119.1 (2004): 171-178. Web. 10 April 2010. pg. 173-174.

[133] Betts, Richard K. *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ Press, 1977. pg. 13.

[134] Desch, Michael C. *Civilian Control of the Military*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ Press, 1999. pg. 36.

sphere. This led to an increasing authoritative advantage for those who wore a uniform. It was an advantage that was seemingly bestowed by civilian leadership; politicians rained praise on soldiers throughout this period and perpetuated the appearance of willing deference.
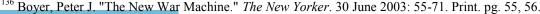
Meanwhile, there were concerns that the doctrine limited strategic adaptation to changing political events; it also inhibited the use of force as a signaling tool. It was further argued that because of this trend – which was established for the specific benefit of combat effectiveness – adversaries were able to more easily identify American maneuvers, anticipate military operations, and test the authenticity of statecraft and diplomatic actions. As stated by one theoretician, "Americans… are incapable of modulating violence for political purposes and would not contemplate massive war for the sake of secondary or tertiary interests."[135]

Many among the Bush Administration's leadership and Secretary Rumsfeld's office shared these concerns; they perceived the Powell Doctrine as an ineffective and even dangerous precedent. Furthermore, Rumsfeld and others believed that the doctrine allowed the military to pervert civil-military relations and reverse the tradition of military deference to civilian authority. Rumsfeld believed that it allowed for the entrenchment of the many expensive, bloated weapons programs and strategies that were superfluous in a post-Cold War, globalized world with advanced weapons and information technology.

Meanwhile, the fulcrum on which Rumsfeld's reorganization pivoted was the existence of advanced weapon systems, specifically precision-guided munitions.[136] With these tools, and the development of maneuver warfare, the civilian leadership began an

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[135] Russell, Richard L. "Civilian Masters and Military Servants: A Review Essay." *Political Science Quarterly* 119.1 (2004): 171-178. Web. 10 April 2010. pg. 177.
[136] Boyer, Peter J. "The New War Machine." *The New Yorker*. 30 June 2003: 55-71. Print. pg. 55, 56.

assertive, rapid, and subjective change to military doctrine. The new emphasis was on "speed, agility," and "flexibility."[137] Key members of the Bush campaign, many of which became civilian policymakers in the Bush Administration, emphasized that a "revolution in military affairs" had occurred and that a fundamental "transformation" of the DoD was necessary. The very nature of such a civilian-catalyzed structural reconstruction and reinterpretation of military strategy required highly subjective civil-military relations; the unequal dialogue had been reversed and amplified.

Civil-Military Relations Context

Secretary Rumsfeld and his civilian staff were highly assertive and aggressive when implementing their desired ends. One of their high priorities was to control the discussions and decision-making in the Pentagon. They did this by emphasizing the subjective civilian control hierarchy and a balanced pattern of civil-military relations. They also maintained control by dictating the tempo of discussions and decisions. They used aggressive maneuvers with the military leaders with which they disagreed, then promoted or co-opted military officers with whom they agreed. These actions served to dramatically alter the prevailing civil-military relations prior to Iraq war planning, as well as relations during the process itself.

As mentioned above, there was a significant shift in ideology on the side of the civilian policymakers. Secretary Rumsfeld and his OSD staff represented these changes and took it upon themselves to aggressively enact reforms. There exists a large volume of anecdotal and qualitative sources that reveals the goals as well as tactics used by civilian policymakers to this end. Douglas Feith, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, is one civilian who was intimately involved in the reorganization of the Pentagon and civil-

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[137] *Ibid.* pg. 56.

military relations.[138] He agreed to many interviews throughout his tenure and, in 2008, published a book about his experiences under Secretary Rumsfeld titled *War and Decision*. His descriptions of the decisions and events that took place between the OSD, White House, and military officials offer an invaluable glimpse into the processes.
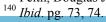
Feith's and others' writings indicate how civil policymakers – specifically Secretary Rumsfeld and his office –influenced the military. They reveal an unequal dialogue in which civilians dictated the policy discussions, topics of focus, and decision-making. Feith states, "It was typical of Rumsfeld and his team to introduce concepts and principles into policy discussions and consider ways to influence public thinking about strategic matters."[139] While this is not atypical, it is important to recognize that the civilian side of the relationship was instigating synthetic reform of the military structure. It did so by injecting questions and challenges into the relationship. This was a shrewd application of critical-thinking; it compelled military leaders to answer difficult questions that challenged the justification of their weapons systems, war plans, and strategic logic. It compelled change by way of inquisition.

The establishment of the Campaign Planning Committee (CAPCOM) is another example of change and reorganization of the civil-military relationship. There, Vice Chairman Marine General Peter Pace met with Feith frequently to discuss various strategic concepts and problems, as well as bureaucratic structure reforms.[140] As Feith attests:

> The CAPCOM allowed us to eliminate the longstanding but grossly unconstructive practice of the military and civilian sides of the Pentagon each continually sending in to the Secretary's office ideas that the other side had not seen and did not approve. The CAPCOM was an important

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138 Fallows, James. "Blind Into Baghdad." *The Atlantic Monthly*. Jan/Feb 2004. Web. 21 April 2010.
139 Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008. pg. 59.
140 *Ibid*. pg. 73, 74.

innovation at the Pentagon, although it has received virtually no attention…[141]

This and other reforms were meant to improve efficiency, reduce redundancy, and integrate various civilian and military organizations in the Pentagon. There were many commendable arguments for these changes, to be sure. However, simultaneously, other actions took place that did not simply alter military organization and bureaucratic size; they were altering the balance and reciprocity of civil-military relations.

If the Powell Doctrine hindered civilian control of the military and perverted any preceding balance in civil-military relations, the Bush Administration's actions rapidly and dramatically shifted the advantage the other way. While most of the Bush Administration's actions were to this end, they occurred at a time in which a revolution of civil-military relations was already brewing. The effects, in turn, were compounded as well as amplified. This was largely due to the same information technology and weapons advances on which Rumsfeld's objectives so heavily relied.

The development of numerous computer, precision weapon, and telecommunications technologies was rapidly altering policy and tactical decisions.[142] Secretaries of Defense preceding Rumsfeld had already made efforts to adapt these new technologies to civil-military relations and military decisions, much to the chagrin of the military. There was a perception that automated systems could take over bureaucratized personnel positions and even compromise objective military control. However, the initial success of the Afghanistan campaign was perceived as a clear indication of the Rumsfeld Doctrine's superiority. The notions that "speed kills" and that forces could be smaller and less bureaucratic or logistically supported were percolating amongst civilian leadership

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[141] *Ibid*. pg. 74.
[142] Coletta, Damon. "Courage in the Service of Virtue." *Armed Forces & Society* 34.1 (2009): 109-121. Web. 20 April 2010. pg. 111.

and some key military officers. Simultaneously, other generals, such as McKiernan and Thurman, were skeptical and voiced concerns to the CENTCOM commander, General Tommy Franks.[143]

These standing tensions were compounded by Secretary Rumsfeld's well-known goal of transforming the organization of the Department of Defense. His top-priority was to dramatically alter the military, often talking about a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) that emphasized the utilization of information technology.[144] Movements to incorporate theoretical concepts such as Network Centric Warfare (NCW) and other integrative programs were to be applied. Civilian policymakers intended to impose rapid, subjective, and transformative change to the military's bureaucracy and departmental organization. Throughout the process there was a tendency, however, to focus more on data capture and categorization than applying it to the tactical environment.[145] This would perpetuate various issues down the road.

The ultimate goal was to increase resource efficiency and to integrate the service branches. Again, speed became the emphasis of these new Information Age theories of military organization. "Transformation and network-centric warfare will first and foremost equip the military with speed."[146] However, these changes would threaten the organization process and bureaucratic structure of the military, as the newly networked assets would theoretically require less logistical support. Regardless, the rapid success of the Afghanistan campaign gave credence to Rumsfeld's doctrine and influence. The

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[143] Ricks, Thomas E. *Fiasco*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006. pg. 75.

[144] Popescu, Ionut C. "Strategic Theory and Practice: A Critical Analysis of the Planning Process for the Long War on Terror." *Contemporary Security Policy* 30.1 (2009): 100-124. Web. 21 April 2010. pg. 112.

[145] Serena, Chad C. *A Revolution in Military Adaptation*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown Univ Press, 2011. pg. 52.

[146] *Ibid*. pg. 113.

political capital he gained would help amplify his authority when it came time to plan for Iraq.

Process Tracing

Shifting Priorities after 9/11

Secretary Rumsfeld was jotting down notes within hours of the 9/11 attacks. In them, Rumsfeld indicated his intention to reprioritize foreign policy, strategy, and tactical goals in light of the massive terrorist attacks. At a briefing that was held while the Pentagon still smoldered and Lower Manhattan lay in ruin, the Secretary of Defense penned an aggressive objective: "Judge whether good enough [to] hit S.H. [Saddam Hussein] at same time – not only UBL [Usama bin Laden]. Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not."[147] On 12 September, President Bush held a war cabinet meeting and Secretary Rumsfeld wondered aloud if the attacks presented an "opportunity" to engage Iraq militarily.[148] When a vote was taken, the principals decided four to zero not to engage Iraq immediately; Rumsfeld abstained.[149]

On Thursday, 13 September, one of Rumsfeld's "snowflake" memos arrived at the Third Army's headquarters in Fort McPherson, GA. It directed the commander – Lt. Gen. Paul Mikolashek – to create a plan for seizing Iraqi's southern oil fields; the order was given the highest level of secrecy, known as Polo Step.[150] The defense secretary, alone, ordered this directive; President Bush had not yet asked for revised – let alone new – war plans concerning Iraq.

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[147] Flibbert, Andrew. "The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Iraq War." *Security Studies* 15.2 (2006): 310-352. Web. 19 April 2010. pg. 315.
[148] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. pg. 25.
[149] Tenet, George. *At the Center of the Storm*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007. pg. 306.
[150] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*. New York: Pantheon, 2006. pg. 19.

The next day, 14 September, President Bush met with his closest advisors at Camp David. Over the course of the discussions Secretary Rumsfeld again raised the idea of targeting Iraq and Saddam Hussein, specifically. The president table vetoed the idea.[151] Over the course of the two-day conference, Rumsfeld pushed Wolfowitz to bring up Iraq. [152] Throughout the policy discussions there was push back on the issue from Secretary Powell as well as other civilian policy advisors.[153] Meanwhile, President Bush continually stated that they would maintain focus on al Qaeda for the time being.

However, on Sunday 16 September, the president contacted National Security Advisor Rice and said he wanted plans created "in case it turned out that Iraq was somehow implicated in the 9/11 attacks."[154] Then, on Monday 17 September, President Bush gave a secret directive ordering the military to review its Iraq invasion plan; the president's formal policy request was dispatched four days after the Secretary of Defense sent his secret request to the Third Army. Within the week, meetings were held with the Defense Policy Board to discuss the merit of targeting Saddam Hussein.[155] On 19 September Rumsfeld again raised the idea of targeting Iraq. He went further and asked the regional commanders to identify worldwide targets for the GWoT if it was to expand beyond Afghanistan.[156]

On Wednesday 26 September, Secretary Rumsfeld met with President Bush in the Oval Office. At the end of that meeting the president asked his secretary of defense to

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[151] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld*. Philadelphia: PublicAffairs, 2009. pg. 291.

[152] Bradley Graham states that the preceding meeting took place on the fourteenth. However, Gordon Michael and Bernard Trainor have the two day conference taking place on 15-16 September. Regardless of the exact dates, the events are similar and corroborated for the most part.

[153] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 15-16.

[154] *Ibid*. pg. 17.

[155] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars: The Arrogance of Power*. Lawrence: Univ Press of Kansas, 2008. pg. 89.

[156] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 292.

review the war plans for Iraq that were on file. Rumsfeld remembered the president saying, "he wanted the options to be 'creative.'" Rumsfeld understood this to mean that Bush was approving the use of smaller, faster forces and that the campaign was to be comprehensive in strategic goals.[157] In Rumsfeld's eyes, civilian policy now required the DoD to be operational prepared for engaging Iraq in the near future.

Formal War Plan Review and the Start of Planning

Little happened during the next eight weeks in regards to Iraq war planning. The Third Army continued to prepare its ordered plans and a number of meetings took place about the current state of plans concerning Iraq. It is not until the 21 November NSC meeting that President Bush again pulled Secretary Rumsfeld aside, this time into an unoccupied conference room in the Situation Room complex.[158] No one else was present. Multiple sources later confirmed it was at this meeting that Bush asked Rumsfeld to undertake a formal review of the Iraq war plan. Furthermore, according to some, the president ordered that new war plans to be drawn up.[159] Another source states Bush asked Rumsfeld to confirm that the CINC at CENTCOM – General Franks – was already updating the Iraq war plan.[160] This portrayal presupposes a direct order for that war planning to take place. Whether the 26 September Oval Office meeting included said order couldn't be determined with full certainty. The NSC nor NSA Rice participated in this decision or implementation.

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[157] Rumsfeld, Donald. *Known and Unknown*. New York: Sentinel, 2011. pg. 425.
[158] *Ibid*. pg. 427.
[159] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 327.
[160] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 89.

President Bush stressed to Secretary Rumsfeld that the review must be confidential and the war planning must remain secretive.[161] Rumsfeld stressed that the work involved in reviewing and revising a war plan was tremendous; it could take a great deal of time. The president understood but reiterated that he should not speak with anyone outside of the DoD. Within hours, Rumsfeld had informed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs – General Richard Meyers – that the president had requested said actions.[162]

By the end of the day, the Pentagon had contacted CENTCOM and General Frank's office. Tommy Franks was directed to "devise a concept of operations" around the strategic goal of invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam Hussein.[163] Immediately, Franks' deputy director of operations at CENTCOM – Air Force Major General Victor Renuart – was notified.[164] With that, the process of reviewing and creating a war plan estimate was underway.

Secretary Rumsfeld arrived in Tampa four days later to meet with General Franks at CENTCOM headquarters. During that 21 November meeting Franks presented the current war plan to Rumsfeld. General Zinni's staff last revised Op Plan 1003-98 during Clinton's second term. Op Plan 1003 was a massive document that "outlined an attack and invasion of Iraq designed to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein."[165]

The document was muddled and massive; it called for the deployment of well over 400,000 troops and depended on tactics that predated the recent proliferation of more advanced technologies and armaments.[166] The plan required a slow, massive,

[161] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 3.
[162] Rumsfeld, Donald. *Known and Unknown*. pg. 428.
[163] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 327.
[164] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 21.
[165] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 36.
[166] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 26-27.

conspicuous build up of troops that could take upwards of seven months.[167] It had not been updated since 1998 and lacked the official approval signature of this sitting secretary of defense.[168] It was also incompatible with Rumsfeld's policy preferences. Franks and Rumsfeld met by themselves for over an hour and scoured the plan for its fundamental assumptions and dominant tactics.

The secretary of defense was displeased with nearly the entire plan. He stressed a need for "surprise, speed, shock, and risk, as well as actions that… would add to the momentum for regime change."[169] Rumsfeld told Franks that the plan would have to be drastically altered and the asset volumes slashed. The pressure for change was consistent and Franks responded affirmatively. By the end of the day a concept request was submitted to CENTCOM; they had three weeks to prepare and present a new war plan.

Five days later Rumsfeld sent a message to Franks – via the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs – ordering him to create a "commander's estimate to build the base of a new Iraq war plan."[170] In the top secret order Rumsfeld laid out the strategic goals of engaging Iraq: removing Saddam Hussein from power, eliminating any Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threat, and ending any support of global terrorism. The CENTCOM commander had three days to execute an order traditionally given thirty. This was despite the fact that his command was preoccupied with the Afghan campaign.

At this point many military circles were exhausted. CENTCOM staffers were fatigued from their responsibilities attributed to the Afghanistan campaign. They were working around the clock to execute that plan, which was rushed in the months after the

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[167] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 8.
[168] *Ibid*. pg. 37.
[169] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 91.
[170] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 38.

terror attacks.[171] Now they were being handed what amounted to a huge distraction on a tight deadline. Morale plummeted and officers at various levels wondered aloud why attention was being diverted to Iraq.

There was discontent within the military community, as well. General Franks was known to berate and pressure the soldiers below him; he had a tendency to ask for and require immediate answers. This created an even tenser atmosphere at MacDill Air Force Base, home of CENTCOM headquarters. However, with all these issues swirling around the simmering morale issues were not boiling over. As one senior officer on the Joint Chiefs said, "there were lots of concerns, anxieties, and private conversations, but it never went public, or into a formal dissent."[172]

On Tuesday 4 December 2001 General Franks video-conferenced with Rumsfeld at the Pentagon; General Renuart, his operations director (J-3), was at his side. Franks had previously asked Rumsfeld whom he may include in the planning effort. The secretary gave him permission to involve Renuart in the planning process.[173] In the meeting, Franks presented three preliminary options: robust, reduced, and unilateral. To date, Franks was able to decrease the Op Plan numbers down to 385,000 troops.[174] None of the iterations impressed Rumsfeld and he told the CENTCOM commander that there'd be no need for more than 400,000 troops in the campaign.[175] Franks agreed with Rumsfeld on the troop cap. This decision was made before tactics or specific operational

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[171] Ricks, Thomas E. *Fiasco*. pg. 33.

[172] *Ibid*. pg. 42.

[173] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 40.

[174] The scenarios were contingent upon how much regional support the United States received in the campaign. However, the numbers Franks quoted Rumsfeld assumed that the U.S. would need to act alone. This is part of the reason they were still so high. Regardless, Rumsfeld was displeased that the estimates were pared down versions of Op Plan 1003 as opposed to paradigm shifts in how the military was planning for war. Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 28.

[175] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 93.

goals were agreed upon. Rumsfeld then told Franks to work on "out of the box" ideas and ordered him to meet again on 12 December.

Based on Rumsfeld's feedback, Franks created a matrix for the next meeting. This ideational structure showed Franks' approach to strategy innovation. It also indicated that the CENTCOM commander was willing to work with Rumsfeld in challenging and changing fundamental military assumptions regarding war planning.[176] By the next meeting General Franks had decreased the troops levels by another 85,000 bodies. Rumsfeld remained unsatisfied and continued to stress the need for rapid troop build up and limited numbers in theater. He also asked that the force accrual be done in secret.[177] Most significantly, the secretary of defense placed tremendous time pressure on the military planners. He said the war plan could be ordered as early as April or May 2002, giving the planners only four or five months.[178]

Franks and Rumsfeld met again on 19 December, when the general presented a third iteration of CENTCOM's war plan revision. Rumsfeld was still "not fulfilled" with what was being offered by the military planners.[179] This was despite the fact that in less than a month the military had decreased troop levels to 145,000 from over 500,000.[180] Rumsfeld let Franks know that President Bush requested the general's presence at Crawford Ranch over the Christmas holiday. Tommy Franks was scheduled to meet with him personally in order to present the current state of war planning.

On Friday 28 December General Tommy Franks arrived at the president's ranch in Texas; General Renuart attended, as well. A videoconference was scheduled with

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[176] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 29.
[177] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 93.
[178] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 43.
[179] *Ibid*. pg. 43.
[180] Franks was still asking for reinforcements that put the total troop levels up at 275,000. Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 94.

Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, and Tenet. At the end of a confidential intelligence briefing

Franks was given the table. This is when Franks first presented his commander's estimate

to President Bush. During the briefing the general stressed that particular aspects of Op

Plan 1003 would need to be changed further, including troop numbers and the integration

of other government resources outside of the DoD.[181] Overall, the idea was to mimic the

Afghanistan campaign's use of precision ordinance, Special Operations forces, and

networked data.[182]

    Rumsfeld interjected on numerous occasions throughout the meeting. He stressed

that the troop numbers were "soft" and were still being worked downward.[183]

Conversely, Franks enumerated a list of military expectations; this outlined each

branches' expectations and needs if a campaign was to be undertaken.[184] Some perceived

this as a pushback from the CENTCOM commander at a time when the sides were

assessing civil-military power dynamics. Franks made it clear that the DoD would

require a great deal of infrastructure build up, budget increases, and operational

improvements – ie. new headquarters and technology – if a war plan was to be executed.

Around the same time, Rumsfeld made the unusual offer for civilian OSD staff to assist

the CENTCOM planning team. Franks welcomed them, though some officers perceived

the move as a civilian, subjective invasion upon military terrain.[185]

    Within ten days of the Crawford Ranch meeting, Franks presented to Rumsfeld an

actionable war plan on Iraq.[186] If the war planning hadn't yet moved from the

hypothetical to the plausible, the New Year brought that transition. Up to this point

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[181] Cheney, Dick & Liz Cheney. *In My Time*. New York: Threshold, 2011. pg. 369-370.

[182] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown, 2010. pg. 234.

[183] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 32.

[184] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 63.

[185] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 32.

[186] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 75.

significant groundwork had occurred. All of it had been done between Secretary Rumsfeld, his office, and General Franks' staff. It was insular and thoroughly removed from the larger national security apparatus.

Throughout this period of winter into early spring of 2002, meanwhile, a "running internal review of America's policy option on Iraq" was taking place separately in the Bush Administration.[187] This included representatives from the DoD (Wolfowitz and Feith participated), State Department, National Security Council, CIA, and Joint Chiefs of Staff. The work influenced the policy decisions, to be sure. However, it was removed from the civil-military relationship that worked on how the policy was to be implemented. By review's end the group agreed that current containment policy was no longer sustainable or viable. Regime change was recommended as the new goal.

Frequency and Nature of Civil-Military Contact

Throughout the planning process Secretary Rumsfeld was in constant contact with General Franks. The secretary of defense had a direct, secure line connecting him to the CENTCOM commander and they frequently talked more than once a day.[188] When Franks met with Rumsfeld he had a tendency to give meticulous descriptions and lay out even the most inane details so as to confirm that the secretary of defense understood.[189] This was despite the fact that Rumsfeld's temper wouldn't allow for the tempo. Oftentimes, the secretary of defense would ask questions related to costs as opposed to tactics; this appeared to frustrate the CENTCOM commander as it was a distraction from the primary focus.[190]

[187] Mann, Jim. *Rise of the Vulcans*. New York: Viking Press, 2004. pg. 332.
[188] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 98.
[189] Franks, Tommy. *American Soldier*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004. pg. 333.
[190] *Ibid*. pg. 343.

Rumsfeld's style of rapid and constant inquiry conflicted with Franks' demand for rapid responses. The combination created a frantic atmosphere on the war planning staff. General Franks later said that the frequency and character of the Secretary's communications with CENTCOM "was beginning to border on harassment;" his staff found the "daily barrage of tasks and questions" to be distracting and challenging.[191] The secrecy of the operation compounded stress levels on the planning staff. Franks engaged his staff for hours straight during marathon day sessions. They would break briefly to reset and then jump back in again. Simultaneously, the CENTCOM commander made sure that communication between the planners was limited and different focus groups were not aware of what the others were doing.[192]

The Growth of Plans and their Iterations

On 1 February 2002 Franks met with Rumsfeld at the Pentagon and gave the secretary of defense a fifth iteration of the Iraq war plan. By this point the CENTCOM planners had shifted to what was named the "Generated Start Plan," or GSP. It was thought this might satisfy operational goals and civilian policy expectations.[193] Under the GSP all forces would be in theater prior to the start of the campaign, though the build up would be rapid and public. Franks estimated that it would take ninety days to deploy 160,000 troops to the region, with an eventual 275,000 making up the force.[194] Rumsfeld believed that timeline and visibility was unacceptable and asked for a thirty to sixty day "ramp up."

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[191] *Ibid*. pg. 362.
[192] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 77.
[193] *Ibid*. pg. 96.
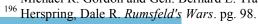[194] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 98.

Ensuing discussions regarding the timing of air versus ground assaults and the use of Special Operations assets ultimately led to a transition to the "Running Start Plan." Under this concept, the build up would not take two months. Rather, the attack would start immediately with the forces already in theater. The following, weeks long air campaign would generate momentum as a massive force build up occurred simultaneously.[195]

The first meeting at which President Bush attended and was briefed on an actionable war plan was held on 7 February 2002.[196] Held in the Situation Room, Franks, Rumsfeld, Secretary Powell, and others were in attendance. This constituted the largest contingent of NSC principals in attendance, to date. However, the meeting was more of a summary than a policy or planning discussion. The CENTCOM commander described the current state of the GSP. Discussions about a running start-type iteration were already occurring, but at that time a ninety day build up, forty five day heavy bombardment, and ninety day 300,000 force invasion – dubbed "90-45-90" – was the primary plan. When Franks completed his briefing Rumsfeld interjected and told the president that further changes were in the works. The defense secretary described some of these as "shock and awe." However, at that time Franks was not in agreement and his concerns about smaller forces were not yet allayed.

Three weeks later Rumsfeld and Franks met to review a list of nearly 4,000 targets that CENTCOM planners had identified as possible targets. At meetings end, Franks emphasized that the Joint Chiefs and NSC needed to be involved at this point. The planning and plausibility of action had developed too far for political and diplomatic

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[195] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 50-51.
[196] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 98.

choreography not to be considered.[197] It wasn't until a month later, however, that General Franks met with the Joint Chiefs in the "Tank," a high security conference room at the Pentagon in which the chiefs frequently met. Integration of the service chiefs was an afterthought that occurred only after military officers compelled the OSD to acquiesce.

It was on 29 March that the CENTCOM commander presented the Iraq war plan's current iteration to the service chiefs.[198] Franks had previously sparred with the service chiefs during the Afghanistan campaign and according to attendees tensions during the meeting were palpable. As Franks made his way through a presentation of more than seventy slides, some generals protested that the seriousness of the discussion was hard to determine. Was this a legitimate option or a thought exercise? General Eric Shinseki – the Army's chief of staff – voiced concern about the plan's logistics and the troops size. Throughout, the senior tier of military generals expressed a considerable level of skepticism. They had been flanked and rendered practically useless during the war planning effort and there was little they could do.

As the meetings between the civilian policy heads and senior military officers continued through the late spring, the CIA executed an expansive war game in regards to Iraq. The goal was to test numerous invasion and occupation plans; the primary focus was on Phases III and IV of the war plan. The war games began in May 2002 and the DoD initially sent representatives to participate. However, the Office of the Secretary of Defense ordered them to cease cooperation when it learned of the joint exercise.[199]

On 11 May President Bush held a long planning session at Camp David. Larger civilian participation and NSC involvement began at this point. However, a vast majority

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[197] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 111.
[198] *Ibid*. pg. 117-119.
[199] Fallows, James. "Blind Into Baghdad." *The Atlantic Monthly*. Jan/Feb 2004. Web. 21 April 2010.

of information and decision making was still funneled through Secretary Rumsfeld's office. During the meeting Franks went into the tactical and strategic intricacies of the current, five-front invasion plan.[200] Beyond that, the president and his advisors also asked highly in depth questions; President Bush also offered advice and made requests. By this point, meanwhile, discussions between Franks and Rumsfeld made it clear to the CENTCOM commander that the GSP was not possible. It could not satisfy operational demands and civilian policy desires. Franks started to present the Running Start Plan as an alternative.[201] This was not yet a replacement of the GSP but, rather, an augmented plan.

Under the RSP, the air war would last forty-five days. Simultaneously, the force build up would be executed. This allowed for greater secrecy, faster deployment, and the option to start the ground war three to six weeks into the air campaign. During this presentation and ensuing discussion the civilians brought up more questions and scenarios with which they were concerned. The military officers responded in kind and adapted to the administration's concern about a fortified Baghdad, attacks on Israel, and various other contingencies.[202] On 3 June Franks again presented an expanded version of the Running Start to Rumsfeld during a videoconference meeting. The secretary of defense approved of the plan and ordered that it be pursued further.[203] However, the Generated Start was still on the table. Thus, by the 19 June meeting there existed two different war plans for an Iraq invasion.[204]

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[200] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 126.
[201] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 50.
[202] *Ibid*. pg. 51.
[203] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 134.
[204] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 52.

Civil-Military Relations Evolve

At this time Franks decided to focus planning efforts almost exclusively on Running Start. The manner of civil-military conversations and civilians' focus on an aggressive start time dictated his decision. Franks told the planning staff that Rumsfeld clearly preferred the RSP's options and design.[205] Meanwhile, the planners had finite resources at their disposal; this was certainly a contributing factor. The war in Afghanistan required a great deal of focus and work hours. What's more, to date only two civilian policy officials had worked directly with the planning effort in Tampa.[206] Even these individuals were mixed blessings.

Abe Shulsky and Bill Bruner were the OSD civilian policy staffers who worked with CENTCOM planners. They spawned a significant amount of tension throughout the war planning process. Soon, the fenced off trailer in which the planners worked was sarcastically nicknamed the "Love Shack." Over late winter and early spring of 2002 Franks began to suspect that the two staffers were feeding information back to Secretary Rumsfeld's office.[207] The suspicions arose when OSD appeared to be aware of internal differences amongst military planning staff. Eventually Shulsky and Bruner were notified that they were not welcome at the center of the planning process if there were acting as moles for the civilian side. The two left the Love Shack, though they continued to contribute to briefings at other military installations as deployment plans were developed.

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[205] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 99.
[206] Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision*. pg. 293.
[207] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 45.

Planning continued over the course of the summer and military participation slowly expanded beyond MacDill Air Force Base.[208] As more players came into the mix the debate over proper force size grew more contentious. As late as August the secretary of defense's office was still pushing remarkably small force numbers – some proposals were as low as 50,000 to 80,000 troops.[209] This was all part of the often contentious process of determining a coherent war plan out of the numerous plan iterations. The volume of plans made it very difficult for multiple players and positions on both sides – civilian and military – to get on the same page. This dissonance only amplified the frustration within the military.

By this point, President Bush was in consistent contact with General Franks. Between December 2001 and August 2002 the president spoke with the CINC of CENTCOM more than a dozen times.[210] Many of these conversations happened outside of the NSC and its organizational structure. Numerous international players came into the mix, as well. By summer, British policy makers and intelligence officials participating with the Bush Administration were convinced that the president was resolved to act militarily even if the plan and timing were not yet firm.[211] This was while the multiple plans still existed and a significant amount of tactical as well as strategic questions were yet to be parsed.

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[208] For example, on 10 July 2002 the Army Chief of Staff – General George Casey – created a new interagency group. Its mission was to integrate and coordinate the various planning efforts on Iraq. General Casey called it the Iraq Political-Military Cell and it was under his purview at J-5: the Joint Chief's Strategic Plans and Policy directorate. Officials from the Pentagon, CENTCOM, White House, Vice President's office, CIA, State Department, and other organizations were involved. However, it is important to recognize that a good deal of the work involved here was Phase IV related. As such, it had minimal affect upon the invasion and active combat operations planning. Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision*. pg. 296.

[209] Cordesman, Anthony H. *The Iraq War*. Westport: Praeger, 2003. pg. 150.

[210] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 235.

[211] Metz, Steven. *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2008. pg. 112.

During the first week in August 2002 one of the more significant moments of the planning process and civil-military relationship occurred. At an NSC meeting held of 4 August, General Franks presented yet another permutation of the invasion plans.[212] The general's top-secret presentation consisted of 110 slides; the meeting took place in the Situation Room.[213] After quickly summarizing the current statuses of the Generated Start and Running Start options, Franks described what was dubbed the Hybrid Plan. For all intents and purposes this plan was an amalgam of the first two plans; it blended the former's strike capabilities and deterrent with the latter's decreased build up timeline and rapid tactics.

Franks had continued to pare down the force size and operational length of GSP and RSP. With the Hybrid Plan, meanwhile, CENTCOM had developed what was called an "air bridge" of all available civilian aircraft to augment DoD's mobility command.[214] This would increase deployment volumes and decrease the time needed to build up forces. During the ensuing discussions Franks raised a concern of the military planners – that the campaign could succeed too rapidly.[215] CENTCOM planners had wondered aloud what issues would have to be dealt with if Saddam's regime crumbled faster than anticipated. Phase IV issues were significant concerns to Franks and his staff. Throughout the discussions it appeared that civilian policymakers held assumptions that erred on the optimistic side, which is to say that the military's concerns were dismissed. Civilian policy officials were confident that the Iraqis would maintain order, that

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[212] Different sources place this meeting on different days. Cheney's memoir, for example, has the meeting taking place on 5 August. Bush states that it took place on the fourth. Beyond that, there is little that is disputed about the meeting. For this work, the author will recognize the president's memory of the calendar. Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 235.
[213] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 145.
[214] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 103.
[215] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 147.

infrastructure would be of satisfactory status, and Iraqi self-governance and security would be in place shortly after the completion of Phase III operations.

Despite the CENTCOM planner's concerns, President Bush liked the Hybrid Plan. By his recollection Franks had already set up "basing and overflight permissions" from various Gulf states.[216] The plans were coming together quickly, targets were being identified, and the logistics required to pull off such operations were in progress. This meeting was the moment in which the military sufficiently altered its planning and shifted its tactics to the desires of the civilian policy leaders. The generals succeeded in developing new strategies so as to achieve mission success while also meeting civilian expectations. The uniforms had acquiesced and – at the highest level – agreement on Phases I, II, and III had been attained.

About a week later, on 14 August, Generals Franks and Renuart met with Rumsfeld to hash out the specifics of the Hybrid Plan. However, a significant portion of the meeting was spent educating Rumsfeld on the process of target selection; the process involving nearly four thousand options fascinated the secretary. Frustration grew as the generals' focus was on dozens of other more pertinent, higher priority issues.[217] Franks was also dealing with irritation from the broader OSD office. Douglas Feith and other policy minded undersecretaries were making multiple attempts to suggest various non-operations related concepts to CENTCOM. These overtures were met with aggravation and noted silence from the soldiers.[218]

The 14 August meeting occurred on the same day that a number of the principals – including Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld but not President Bush – met to discuss

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[216] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 235.
[217] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 157.
[218] Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision*. pg. 290-291.

courses of action regarding invasion start and Phase IV follow through. It wasn't until mid-August that the administration created an official document that outlined the goals of the military campaign. The top secret text was titled, "Iraq: Goals, Objectives and Strategy."[219] In it, various goals were outlined, including the original three that were given to CENTCOM in late 2001; beyond them the objectives had expanded to include democratizing efforts and regional stability. On 29 August, President Bush signed the document, stating the mission objectives.[220]

By this point the military plan was nearly completed from a strategic standpoint. What remained were various tactical and operational details that could be ironed out within the multi-tiered framework that was already established. Since the major operational attributes had been decided, most of the meetings by late summer and early fall focused on Phase III scenarios. Specifically, the civilians raised a number of questions about how to secure the oilfields, conquer and control Baghdad, maintain or rebuild infrastructure in country, as well as various other topics.[221]

Throughout this process there was a consistent focus on certain riding assumptions. The military made a sustained attempt to plan for a wide range of possibilities. However, civil-military dialogue brought the planning back to a numerated list of perceived givens; civilian policymakers were confident of the environment that would be engaged. As such, they continually framed discussions around simplified scenarios and contingencies. For example, President Bush and the NSC staff was very concerned about a "Fortress Baghdad" scenario in which Saddam loyalists and the Republic Guard retreated then embedded themselves in the capital. Franks and the

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[219] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 72.
[220] *Ibid*. pg. 73.
[221] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 205.

CENTCOM planners had eventually adapted the Hybrid Plan so that coalition forces could tactically prevent such a development.[222]

Beyond the example above, there were many moments in which military commanders were prompted to focus on particular scenarios because civilian policymakers objectively assumed they would occur. At one point during a 9 October videoconference meeting General Franks was compelled to guarantee President Bush that there'd be no need to engage in urban warfare.[223] This was despite the fact that there was no indication it could be absolutely avoided. Meanwhile, one of the most significant riding assumptions – one that was fundamental to the military planning process – would end up being altered because of civilian policy preferences.

Phase IV and Shifting Responsibilities

Military officers at CENTCOM made it clear early in the planning process that the DoD would expect assistance from civilians during Phase IV of the war. Franks expected that numerous civilian bodies would assist in the occupation and rebuilding of Iraq after major combat operations ceased. According to numerous officers who were at CENTCOM, the planners were explicitly told that other areas of the federal government would be responsible for "postwar responsibilities."[224] However, as summer became fall in 2002 there was a shift.

The Joint Chiefs had been flanked throughout the war planning process, but they were resolved to raise concern about how little Phase IV planning had occurred. The

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[222] The "Inside-Out Plan," which would target Saddam's command and control assets early – thus disorienting and fragmenting Republican Guard networks – was developed for this concern. The idea was that if coalition forced severed contact through the Republican Guard forces early, no 'retreat to the capital' order could be given and any forced that attempted to do so could be targeted while in transit. Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 51.

[223] *Ibid*. pg. 77.

[224] *Ibid*. pg. 139.

chiefs eventually held their own top-secret war game to identify shortcomings in the current plans; it was named Prominent Hammer II.[225] Based on ensuing findings, the Joint Chiefs recommended that a headquarters be created whose sole focus was Phase IV. This could be led by the military and augmented by civilians, but it would run in tandem with Franks' war plan assets and operations.

By 16 October Chairman Myers wrote that Rumsfeld agreed with an iteration of this plan. As such, "POTUS/Dr. Rice agreed that DOD lead initially was OK."[226] Military assets would now be in direct control of all Phase IV operations, with a civilian leading the reconstruction and governance. Military commanders would execute all security and training of Iraqis; they would also report to CENTCOM. Suddenly the largest, most opened ended, highly volatile phase of the Iraq war had been put on the military's plate just months before execution.

Troop Deployments and Highly Subjective Control

One of the most significant and overt examples of subjective interference within the civil-military relationship began in late November 2002. On the 26th of that month General Franks delivered what he called "The Mother of All Deployment Orders."[227] This was the MODEPS – "the mobilization deployments of U.S. military forces for war" – that contained invasion related troop deployments. It requested that 300,000 troops be deployed to the region; the number revealed the military's desire to plan for the largest, longest possible scenario in the spirit of operational preparedness.[228] However, the sheer number and length of the MODEPS concerned Secretary Rumsfeld. He balked.

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[225] *Ibid*. pg. 140.
[226] *Ibid*. pg. 141.
[227] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 231.
[228] *Ibid*. pg. 232.

The structured request was standard military procedure. It was part of a highly integrated and automated deployment scheme – TPFDD, or Time-Phased Force and Deployment Data – which depended on the assumption that all material and personnel deployments would be executed exactly as planned.[229] This was part of the larger Joint Operational Planning System (JOPS) – the fount of logistical operations. The entire institution was highly integrated and systemized.[230] However, from Rumsfeld's perspective the order was too large, too fast, and would limit the president's options beyond military engagement. His concerns were substantiated and valid; President Bush was in the middle of pursuing UN resolutions and international diplomatic solutions to the perceived crisis. If the world saw U.S. military forces building up rapidly for offensive engagement it could scuttle various peaceful paths.[231]

Additionally, Secretary Rumsfeld believed that the system was another example of bloated, outdated group think that needed to be modernized. Rumsfeld balked for two weeks before the first large sets of deployment orders were transmitted on 6 December. However, through the rest of the deployment phase Rumsfeld and his office micro-managed the orders to an unprecedented level. He refused to approve the deployment orders as designed. Rumsfeld wanted the ability to slow, divert, or change the orders as written. This usurpation of power not delegated to the secretary's office deeply concerned numerous military officers.[232]

Secretary Rumsfeld spent a tremendous amount of time reviewing the deployment orders; there were suspicions that he didn't trust the generals to best deploy their troops.

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[229] *Ibid*. pg. 233.
[230] Cockburn, Andrew. *Rumsfeld*. New York: Scribner, 2007. pg. 164.
[231] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 362-363.
[232] Colonel Pat Lang, a former defense intelligence officer with the DIA, said, "This is an interesting exercise of power for someone who has no experience of ground warfare and, in fact, little experience of military affairs other than his two stints as secretary of defense." Cockburn, Andrew. *Rumsfeld*. pg. 164.

Frustration ran high through military circles as Rumsfeld refused senior Army officials'

requests to notify reservists prior to Christmas that they might deploy in the near

future.[233] Some senior officers condemned OSD and Rumsfeld, saying later that the

civilians "simply did not understand how dependent the military was on reservists,

especially for logistics." Because of Rumsfeld's meticulous review, he eventually

approved units on a case-by-case basis. However, due to the various intricacies of timing

and unit capabilities the repercussions were large. In some cases material arrived on time

but could not be deployed because those trained to do so hadn't yet been approved.[234]

Throughout the MODEPS and TPFDD issues CENTCOM continued to plan and

prepare for war. In mid-December the joint forces participated in a Qatar-based war game

called Internal Look.[235] This exercise helped the military identify areas for improvement

in the war planning; it challenged all aspects of the war plan, to date, including multiple

iterations of the initial invasion. The briefings that came out of the exercise helped the

military identify risks and opportunities throughout the air and land campaigns.

Concurrently, military planners were still tweaking the Hybrid Plan and even coming up

with significant changes.

Late Pivots to the War Plan

Eventually, by the end of December, President Bush approved 200,000 troops to

the region.[236] Regardless, one of the generals at CENTCOM, Lt Gen David McKiernan,

told Franks at the end of January 2003 that he was worried. He and his staff had concerns

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[233] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 99.
[234] *Cobra II* outlines various anecdotal examples of these effects, including muddled deployment of the
Theater Support Command. *Ibid*. pg. 99.
[235] *Ibid*. pg. 92-93.
[236] Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars*. pg. 117.

regarding the Hybrid Plan throughout the fall, in fact.[237] Now, although he was confident they could get enough forces in the region for the beginning of the invasion, he was concerned there wouldn't be enough forces to continue the invasion and Phase III, as planned in the timeline.[238] As such, the military commanders and planners made modifications to the operations; they were not willing to be hamstrung. McKiernan and his staff felt that the Hybrid Plan satisfied Rumsfeld's doctrine and preference for speed but contained tactical deficiencies. Therefore, to allow for sustained speed and offensive effectiveness McKiernan drew up a plan that was larger and tactically different than the Hybrid Plan.[239] This plan was eventually approved by McKiernan and brought to Franks; the CENTCOM commander then approved it and brought it to the White House.

Throughout November and December McKiernan, Franks, and other military planners debated the merits of the new Cobra II plan. They felt that it offered better tactics, more effective strategies, and a higher chance of operational success. It was agreed amongst them that there was a small window in which they could compel the civilian leaders to accept this change; the Hybrid Plan had already been presented to the president and approved. Over a period of weeks the new plan was brought to Rumsfeld, who reviewed it and was compelled. By the end of December he eventually approved the changes and troop increases, bringing yet another iteration of the Iraq war plan.[240] The changes were stark; the plan looked much more like the Generated Start Plan than the Hybrid. Specifically, it required a larger number of forces, took longer to build up, and

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[237] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 78.

[238] General McKiernan would eventually become CENTCOM'S CFLCC commander, which stood for Coalition Forces Land Component Command. *Ibid*. pg. 98.

[239] Details of this plan can be found in *Cobra II*, pages 77-80. Its important to recognize that this plan was designed by McKiernan's staff, which did not report directly to Franks nor was it in Tampa. Rather, this group of military planners was stationed just north of Kuwait City.

[240] Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 93-94.

had a staggered start as opposed to a running start with prolonged air campaign. In so doing, the military succeeded in pivoting the war plan back towards their starting position less than four months from the start of the war.

The shift in the war plan was just in time for the military. During a 9 January meeting with General Franks, President Bush asked, "What's my last decision point? When have I finally made a commitment?"[241] The president was ready to give the "go" order as soon as all players were confidently ready to execute. At approximately the same time, President Bush took Secretary Rumsfeld aside and told him they would be going to war. The secretary of defense interpreted the conversation as a "go" order.[242] Then, on 13 January President Bush welcomed Secretary Powell to the Oval Office. During the meeting he notified his secretary of state that they would be going to war with Iraq. The State Department was marginalized throughout the entire planning process and the Saudis had even been notified before Colin Powell. It wasn't until NSA Rice insisted that the president tell Secretary Powell that Bush scheduled the meeting.[243]

Then, on 20 January 2003, President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive Number 24.[244] OSD's Office of Special Plans drew up the document and it created a new organization, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).[245] The document gave full postwar Iraq control to the Department of Defense; Phase IV was officially in the military's hands. However, since late fall the postwar planning had slowed dramatically. Additionally, multiple players including OSD's Douglas Feith knew full well that ORHA would be able to do little in the time it was

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[241] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 258.
[242] *Ibid*. pg. 261.
[243] *Ibid*. pg. 269.
[244] Cockburn, Andrew. *Rumsfeld*. pg. 170.
[245] Packer, George. *The Assassins' Gate*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. pg. 120.

given.[246] The cards were stacked against Phase IV prep despite the myriad scenarios that were recognized as possibilities, to say nothing of the many others that were dismissed.

Civil-Military Relations Strain and Devolve

By this point, civil-military relations were beginning to degrade. The growing discontent and concern among senior military officers was having an affect on the planning process. Military officers were less willing to entertain the civilians' operational suggestions. Likewise, officers often ignored or scuttled civilians' questions or recommendations about policy related programs. Civilian policy officials from OSD were increasingly using back channels and less formal, assertive channels to convey suggestions to the military. This was because the normal bureaucratic channels – via the Joint Chiefs – often brought curt responses or blow back from CENTCOM.[247]

Frank Miller, the NSC staff director for defense, had a unique vantage point regarding this civil-military degradation.[248] Since summer 2002 he was head of the Executive Steer Group (ESG), which was intended to oversee interagency coordination; it was the eyes for NSA Rice. What Miller witnessed concerned him greatly. Miller found that OSD lacked planning managers. It was also top heavy with deputies more interested in grand strategy and policy papers. Eventually Miller reported to Rice that communications between civilians and the military within the Pentagon were "catastrophically broken."[249] He also found that various senior members of the Joint Chiefs were unwilling to engage the defense secretary or his office; this inhibited their active participation in Iraq war planning.

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[246] Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision*. pg. 349.

[247] Feith makes this a recurring theme when discussing relations with Franks' staff. A particular anecdote he mentions includes a message passed through the informal *and* the formal channels. *Ibid*. pg. 365.

[248] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 321.

[249] *Ibid*. pg. 322.

Simultaneously, there is anecdotal evidence indicating that the secretary of defense did not properly involve or prepare his staff when he was disliked a particular process. Andy Card, President Bush's chief of staff, said that when Rumsfeld sent his staff to meetings in his stead they often weren't fully briefed or weren't given permission to speak for the secretary.[250] This tended to happen when the secretary of defense didn't like the organization or track a body was moving on. In those cases, he would send a deputy without real authority or simply not participate. It was a shrewd way to neuter any decision making beyond his preferences and purview. This further amplified his efforts to maintain hegemony over the war planning process.

For example, when Rumsfeld and Franks briefed the NSC the secretary of defense would personally distribute the presentation materials.[251] He would then request that no one take notes during the presentation and, finally, collect all the briefing slides and material at the end of the meeting. He would then return the material to a personal safe that he had in his office. This compounded his order for compartmentalized planning, secrecy within planning circles, and approval order on many aspects of the plan both large and small.

The Final Plan and "Go" Order

On Friday 24 January 2003 General Franks presented the final war plan to President Bush. Among others, Secretary Rumsfeld and Chairman Myers were in attendance.[252] At this point no other changes would be made, though tweaks to smaller tactical decisions would still occur. "This is the plan," the CENTCOM commander proclaimed. Rumsfeld created a simple timeline document for the president, since he was

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[250] Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 344.
[251] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 148.
[252] *Ibid*. pg. 287.

the civilian closest to both the commander in chief and senior military officials. It was still called the Hybrid Plan, though McKiernan's Cobra II changes had been inserted. Prior to the meeting Secretary Rumsfeld already approved the troop deployments and material needed to start the invasion. By the middle of February over 140,000 troops would be in theater.

Six days later on 30 January President Bush welcomed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the White House. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room and relevant combat commanders were also present.[253] The president went around the table and asked each service chief for his assessment and opinion on the war plan; he made it clear that he expected a candid and honest response. Chairman Myers said he was happy with the plan while both Navy and Air Force heads praised it. Army chief of staff Shinseki gave "a more qualified assessment" of the plan and requested a number of prerequisites; these included more troops at the start of the campaign and a guarantee from Turkey that a northern front would be possible.[254] However, after voicing these suggestions Shinseki did not go further and he eventually gave tacit approval of the war plan.[255] It was with this meeting and the Joint Chiefs' participation that President Bush could now say that the war plan had the backing of the senior leadership from all military branches.

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[253] Rumsfeld, Donald. *Known and Unknown*. pg. 453.

[254] Neither request would be satisfied or occur. Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II*. pg. 101.

[255] There has been a great deal written about General Shinseki's testimony before Congress on 25 February 2003. It was at this time that he made the now famous pronouncement that many more troops would be needed to invade Iraq. Since the testimony was before the legislative branch and not directly with executive policy official – the latter being the focus of this thesis – this author will not delve into the event. Suffice to say that his testimony was a clear indication of military differences about the war plan. It was also an indication of the tension that existed between – in the very least – Secretary Rumsfeld's office and various levels of senior military leadership. Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules*. pg. 385. Another pertinent article on Shinseki's testimony and how it can be analyzed within civil-military relations can be found here: Moten, Matthew. "'The Stuff of Tragedy:' Shinseki's Reply to Levin." *Armed Forces & Society* 34.3 (2008): 509-516. Web. 10 April 2010.

15 February was the earliest possible start date for the campaign, per Franks'
plans and the troop deployments. However, the president's decision to give the "go"
order was also dependent on other variables. Among these were the pursuit of UN
resolutions and effective weapons inspections, both of which were diplomatic attempts to
avoid the fog of war. When the window arrived, President Bush contacted Secretary
Rumsfeld and ordered that the military's public preparations be slowed; he said the plan
was "accelerating too fast relative to where we need to be because of the diplomatic
side."[256] He was concerned about the optics while diplomatic solutions were still being
pursued. For this reason the "go" order was delayed and operational readiness was
slowed for the time being.

When the diplomatic channels were deemed sufficiently exhausted for public and
foreign relations' sakes, President Bush was prepared to give the final "go" order to
begin the war. On Wednesday 19 March the president called for an NSC meeting in the
Situation Room. With all principal civilian and senior military officers present, President
Bush gave the order to begin Operation Iraqi Freedom.[257] Within hours, a year and a
half's worth of intense, subjective civil-military relations would be made manifest with
shock and awe.

Analysis

This case is an example of highly subjective civil-military relations. Due to
political preferences, delegated presidential leadership, and ad-hoc process organization a
vast majority of the operational planning process was secretive and exclusive. This
secrecy and structure of the war planning decreased the likelihood that all relevant

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[256] Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. pg. 319.
[257] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 223.

players – civilian and military, alike – could influence the eventual design of the invasion. The National Security Council proved weak throughout the process. Additionally, the national security advisor did a poor job of moderating power dynamics within the civilian leadership; this compounded the characteristics of the case herein.

The idea to engage Iraq militarily was first presented by the Secretary of Defense in the days following 11 September 2001. Secretary Rumsfeld was persistent in his suggestions that the United States review tactical and strategic planning regarding Iraq. Less than a week went by before President Bush secretly asked Secretary Rumsfeld to review the military's plans. The conversation was done privately and no members of the national security apparatus outside of the President's office, OSD, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs office, or CENTCOM commander's office were notified.

The compartmentalized, confidential nature of the early review/war planning sprung from this precedent and continued until well into 2002. Meanwhile, it was not until late December 2001 that key principals were first briefed on the Op Plan 1003 review. Up until that point – and well after it – the CENTCOM planners worked in isolated cells that were not fully informed of the larger mission or how their work integrated into it. What's more, the military reported to the OSD and Secretary Rumsfeld who briefed the president when it was deemed necessary.

The war planning process occurred despite NSC structures rather than through them. That is, the secretary of defense controlled all of the operational process organization. From the earliest stages through the latest revisions, Secretary Rumsfeld kept in frequent and direct contact with General Tommy R. Franks, the commander CENTCOM. Even after the civilian participation grew, most information was channeled

through the OSD. The secretary's contact with the regional command's CINC also marginalized other top military leaders. This includes the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

All of this worked to Rumsfeld's advantage for a variety of reasons; not the least of which was an increased difficulty for other civilians to challenge the tempo and nature of the planning. The locus of power was firmly in the Secretary of Defense's office throughout the war planning efforts. Furthermore, Rumsfeld's relationship and contact with Franks constituted the co-optation – however willing – of a senior Army general. This strengthened the OSD's position, since the general's professional credibility and military authority amplified the defense secretary's bargaining position. It also allowed Rumsfeld's preferences to be executed more easily, without pushback or challenges to its validity.

In many ways, the secretary of defense was able to circumvent traditional bureaucratic channels and chains of command. This includes the NSC, the chairman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other civilian principals such as intelligence leaders and the secretary of state. The end product of this was an invasion plan that was closest to Secretary Rumsfeld's preferences. That plan was the result of an ad-hoc process organization that was most heavily influenced by the OSD's subjective control under the final authority of President Bush.

Process tracing indicates that various civilian players were eventually incorporated into the war planning process. President Bush's leadership was more engaged during the second half of the war planning process, as well. The increased openness and inclusion of civilian agents, starting in spring 2002, allows us to perceive

the case as occurring in two parts. However, this broadening, of sorts, occurred after the power dynamics were firmly established. This hindered their abilities to serve their intended roles, let alone encroach upon Secretary Rumsfeld's authority. That is, Secretary Rumsfeld consolidated his authority so successfully that key decision-making remained exclusive even after they became integrated into the process. Additionally, OSD's power was enhanced by the NSC's inability – or unwillingness – to take over process organization.

What is most significant throughout the source material is how inconsequential the NSC and NSA Condoleezza Rice were throughout the planning and decision-making process. The National Security Council was most likely to be engaged when updates were being provided to civilian principals. However, evidence of protracted, in-depth debates about the war plan and merits of engaging Iraq is conspicuously absent. Instead, the most consequential debates about the war plan's tactics and strategy occurred between CENTCOM and Secretary Rumsfeld's office. NSA Rice did not campaign for control of the process, nor did she insist that the deliberative process be brought under the NSC's purview. For this reason – compounded by the secrecy of the enterprise – Secretary Rumsfeld's office was able to more easily maintain civilian control and demarcate limits to their colleagues' influence.

With the civilian influence resting in the OSD, civil-military relations were highly subjective for many reasons. The civilians were able to maintain their authority, dictate tempo of planning, and compel military findings by way of various methods. Perhaps the most effective method of subjective civil-military relations was the split structure via secrecy. As mentioned above, because of a desire for secrecy, the civilian policy makers

made sure that CENTCOM's planners were kept in the dark about the overall mission. The smallest possible number of military officers was involved in the planning and they were kept isolated from their compatriots. The source material indicates that the circle of incorporated military professionals only grew at the behest of General Franks or other senior military leaders. It is reasonable to suspect that the level of secrecy would have remained much higher for much longer if not for their requests.

Civilians maintained control of the planning by manipulating the calendar, as well. Secretary Rumsfeld continually demanded exceptionally short turn around on changes to the war plans. It was not uncommon for the civilians to demand a month's worth of work be completed in less than a week. Secretary Rumsfeld also told General Franks that the planning would need to be ready much earlier than was realistic or, in fact, what occurred. In another example, Rumsfeld told the military planners in late 2001 that the invasion order may be given as early as late spring 2002. This had many effects upon the military planning process, including the hindrance of debate or challenges to civilian requests.

Subjective civil-military relations were further compounded by Rumsfeld's persistently interrogative manner of compelled military change. Rumsfeld engaged with General Franks for multiple reasons, not the least of which being that he was the CENTCOM commander. He was also a proponent of the changes Secretary Rumsfeld proposed. Regardless, Franks and his staff continually presented mission plans that the civilians found to be unsatisfactory. Despite the fact that the findings came from military professionals, the civilians refused to accept them if they failed to satisfy established

civilian partialities. Rumsfeld would commonly use persistent questioning in order to reveal his preferences or flaws in what the military presented.

The immense pressure of civilian subjectivity had detrimental affects on military morale and, in the later stages, cooperation. The latter issue exacerbated what was already deemed a poor civil-military relationship. The high demands and constant expectations of Iraq war planning occurred at a time when the same planners – and CENTCOM, as a whole – were consumed by the war in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Rumsfeld and his OSD staff engaged the military professionals in a way that sparked tension and frustration. These feelings existed throughout Iraq war planning and increased towards the end of the exercise. Process tracing has revealed many moments during which officers complained to each other, challenged the presence or influence of OSD staffers, or openly questioned the merits of the exercise overall.

The most significant body of unsatisfied military officers was the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Throughout the case study the heads of the DoD branches were marginalized. It was not until Franks compelled President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld to incorporate the Joint Chiefs that the March 2002 'Tank' meeting took place. Consequences to the civil-military relationship with the service chiefs were an afterthought. Before and well after that moment tension remained high. The service chiefs worried about the merits of an invasion yet were only afforded the opportunities to symbolically approve or disapprove of the plans once they had been established.

The civil-military relationship was most subjective when it came to force deployment. The military had a highly structured and automated method of transporting troops and equipment to the theater: the TPFDD. However, Secretary Rumsfeld took over

the process after initially balking at the military's established timeline and size of the operation. His highly subjective participation in approving specific units' orders and the schedule therein was based on his great skepticism of military bureaucracy. It led to tremendous frustration amongst the military planners and outright confusion in the force deployment. Many reserve units did not arrive on time and equipment preparation was delayed because of Rumsfeld's orders.

Throughout the subjective control within civil-military relations there was minimal pushback from the military. General Franks and his planners tended to quietly acquiesce to Secretary Rumsfeld and President Bush's requests. The flow of Generated Start to Running Start to Hybrid Plan shows a military officer corps that responded to civilian requests regardless of the amount and level of concerns expressed by those in uniform. Source material shows us that many military planners were concerned about the civilian's preferred plans. They also shared frustration when they had to educate Secretary Rumsfeld about numerous tactical issues and engage him on decision-making that was left to the military in less micro-managed events.

The largest exception to this trend, meanwhile, was one of the most significant moments of the case. In the eleventh hour General McKiernan and his staff within CENTCOM pushed Cobra II up the chain of command. This war plan was closer to the initial, military-generated plans than the Hybrid Plan that was preferred and pressed by President Bush. Military officers outside of the top-tier military officer corps – which had led the vast majority of Iraq war planning – established Cobra II. Still, it ended up being employed after rapid approval and campaigning from CENTCOM. Cobra II became the war plan that was executed.

Cobra II was the result of late pressure from military planners who were in theater. It was accepted by civilian policymakers who were, if not distracted, preoccupied with other issues related to the coming war (not the least of which being the campaign for UN support as well as Phase IV planning). When the civilian policymakers decreased their subjective involvement, the military immediately leapt at the opportunity to implement their preference. As such, development of Cobra II proved to be an isolated moment of military objectivity within the civil-military relationship. It was successful and must be recognized as a significant moment within an otherwise highly subjective civil-military relationship.

Overall, the Iraq war planning exercise involved highly subjective civilian control. Delegated presidential leadership and an ad-hoc process organization perpetuated this dynamic. A fraction of the civilian leadership led a secretive, exclusive effort to maintain subjectivity in an environment that could have benefited the military professionals. Instead, civilian agents succeeded in subjectively compelling military leaders to produce as well as execute strategies they desired. Secretary Rumsfeld and his office proved to be the most active and influential players in the process. This was despite and at the expense of other civilian policy makers. The State Department was, perhaps, the most marginalized player in the decision-making process. The National Security Council was never the exclusive venue nor the most significant player in the process, either. As such, fellow civilian players or bureaucracies never significantly challenged the OSD's leadership. What's more, Secretary Rumsfeld succeeded in imparting highly subjective control over the top tier military leadership. He did so with various tactics and

tools. One of the more notable decisions that worked to the OSD's benefit was the active engagement and co-optation of General Franks, the CENTCOM commander.

Throughout the Iraq war planning case study it is clear that tension was high within the civil-military relationship. Dysfunction was also present. Military officers who participated in the war planning consistently complained of high stress, aggressive policy demands, and an inundating presence of civilian oversight. Basic cooperation was heavily strained towards the end of the war planning. Various observers of the events – in the moment as well as in retrospect – found the relationship troubling and the structures strained. Frank Miller of the NSC infamously described communication as being "catastrophically broken" within the civilian and civil-military circles.

Chapter Four

Case Two: Strategy Review – Iraq (2006)

On February 23, 2006 a bomb ripped apart the dome of the Samarra Mosque – one of Shii'a Islam's holiest sites. If a clearer sign of Iraqi civil war preceded this event, it has not been credited. By spring, the trajectory of Iraq was looking increasingly dire. Violence was increasing, sectarian divisions were growing, the insurgency was metastasizing, and questions swarmed about the viability of the current strategy. The summer brought exploding violence and mixed messages from civil as well as military circles; President Bush showed resolve while commanding generals pivoted vis-à-vis withdrawal and redeployments. In the public sphere, it wasn't until the midterm elections "thumping" that the Bush administration began to review its course in Iraq.[258] Finally, in January of 2007, new leaders were announced and a different strategy was put forth.

What happened during the months between Samarra and the surge? Why did the strategic review begin? How did it come to pass? What were the dynamics between the civilian policy makers and the military commanders? To date, a great deal has been written about the summer and fall of 2006. Many individuals have published their actions, the vying perspectives, and the compartmentalized push towards the surge. In

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[258] Madison, Lucy. "Obama's 2020 "Shellacking" is Like Bush's 2006 "Thumping."" *CBS News*. 1 May 2012. Web. 4 Aug 2012.

this chapter, the author reviews the timeline of events and reconstructs the dynamics to the best of his abilities. As the events are unearthed and analyzed, a picture of what happened is captured.

The goal here is to identify the characteristics of civil-military relations during the Iraq strategy review in 2006. From the start of the review through the decision on a strategy, this chapter process traces events, analyzes dynamics, and identifies typologies of civil-military relations. The timeframe spans from late spring 2006 – when key civilian players began to shift towards strategy review – through the beginning of winter 2006-2007, at which time a new strategy was created and both sides made moves to implement the appropriate changes.

The chapter reveals that, based on source material, the Iraq strategy review was catalyzed, led, and dominated by civilians. There existed a subjective civil-military dynamic throughout the process. This included lots of interactions outside of formal structures and chains of command. Additionally, the Bush Administration lost confidence in its combat commanders and ultimately became willing to dismiss and then overtly flank them. Prominent civilian players who campaigned for a surge benefited from those latter actions. Conversely, a relatively small percentage of the strategy review occurred within established, traditional civil-military structures.

While divisions existed within both circles during the review process, some civilian players complemented their findings with the opinions and overt lobbying of active duty as well as retired generals. In the case of the former, civilians went under combat commanders' heads – as it were – and spoke with officers beneath them. This

enhanced pro-surge civilian positions and allowed them to better engage different positions on both sides of the civil-military relationship.

Multiple, compartmentalized strategy reviews existed during a significant portion of the strategy review; this was true within civilian and military environments. Furthermore, various civilian and military circles accessed – as well as depended on – different data sources and intelligence. This helped perpetuate the significant differences between various players including those of the National Security Council, commanding generals in theater, and service chiefs at the Pentagon.

An apparent paradox is that this all took place within a culture of consensus that was encouraged by the highest levels of the Executive Branch. President Bush put emphasis on concurrent and complementary opinions. This created challenges and put great stress upon the review efforts. That is, by attempting to maintain unified opinions, positions contrary to the status quo were not easily developed or well supported. It also led to a tendency to go around leadership levels rather than challenge them directly.

President Bush's closest advisors were fiercely loyal confidants. In the case of National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley, he and the president both stressed how closely and frequently they met. Trust was ever present; because of this, the president ultimately delegated various influential duties to Hadley. At many points prior to and throughout the strategic review Hadley took significant actions without President Bush's explicit request or knowledge. In this way the president's inclination to delegate was similar to how Secretary Rumsfeld and the OSD consolidated influence in the first case study.

Ultimately, moderate to high levels of subjective civilian control were maintained throughout this case study. This correlated with delegated presidential leadership – President Bush relied heavily on NSA Hadley's management – and orderly process organization that was centered within the NSC, albeit exclusive and secretive. The enacted strategy was closest to positions within particular civilian circles that were augmented by external policy advisors; the latter group included a number of retired military professionals. In fact, the idea to surge troops did not come from active military circles. As such, co-optation of military voices – in this scenario, retired ones – was present in this case.

Process Tracing

Brewing Concerns

According to President Bush, by the spring of 2006 he was already thinking that the strategy in Iraq wasn't working. He had voiced this concern to his national security advisor, Stephen J. Hadley.[259] By 6 June, Jim Jeffrey and Philip Zelikow – Secretary Rice's coordinator for Iraq policy and a counselor for the Department of State (DoS), respectively – presented the secretary of state an eleven page secret, internal memo with three options going forward. These included a transition to a full counterinsurgency strategy (COIN), adoption of particular COIN aspects, and a less intensive pull pack option who's goal was to "keep the lid on" the violence.[260] The memo reflected concerns that the situation in Iraq was not sustainable; the feelings were held by various civilian bodies, including members of the State Department. However, there is no evidence that the memo was shared outside of DoS.

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[259] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown, 2010. pg. 364.
[260] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008. pg. 54-55.

At the same time some key members of the president's National Security Council (NSC) were concerned about the violence. According to Peter Feaver, he and other "senior civilians" on the NSC staff "believed the situation warranted launching a top-to-bottom reassessment of the strategy" by the end of May.[261] Meghan O'Sullivan, the Deputy National Security Advisor on Iraq/Afghanistan, was using her densely developed network of contacts to get a picture of Iraq that was not offered during the combat commanders' video conferences.[262] She believed that the nature and frequency of violence indicated a much more volatile environment.[263]

These opinions ran counter to what General George Casey, the Commanding General of MNF-Iraq, was indicating. In his weekly briefings to the president and NSC he would frequently cite figures about the number of insurgents captured or killed and number of patrols completed. The metrics he used showed a ramp up of missions and perceived success. However, it was not data that was relevant within counterinsurgency circles and several advisors felt the information was not only distracting from proper goals but also detrimental to success.[264]

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[261] Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." *International Security* 35.4 (2011): 87-125. Web. 17 May 2012. pg. 101.

[262] O'Sullivan had established many contacts from her days working in Iraq. She monitored and recorded the data that she was receiving and was convinced early on that a large strategy review was necessary. By her opinion, the assumptions under which they were operating – and the current strategy were founded – no longer applied within the threat environment and political situation. Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 68-69.

[263] *Ibid.* pg. 60-61.

[264] General Casey took command of MNF-Iraq in July 2004. At the time, the tactical priorities were significantly different than they were by the spring and summer of 2006. However, there was no significant shift in tactics or strategy over the course of the two-year period. As such, Frederick Kagan and others have suggested that while General Casey and General Abizaid – CENTCOM Commander – succeeded earlier in the campaign, they were focusing on ramping up Iraqi training, establishing their independence, and tamping down on U.S. exposure. Their inability to shift focus to more population security and targeted strikes on insurgents (different aspects of COIN than they prioritized) contributed to the strategic situation in 2006. Interview. Frederick Kagan. *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007. Website. 10 May 2012.

The dissonance between military briefings and civilian beliefs reached an actionable level by the time President Bush asked for a multi-day review of Iraq strategy. On 12 June, the President met with his principal advisors. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Peter Pace, and National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley were present; they were complemented by various support staff and advisors.[265] NSA Hadley moderated the agenda and the direction of discussions. He framed the event around grand strategy questions and devoted ninety minutes in the morning to more abstract concepts such as, "Is our political strategy working?"

This was followed by briefings from General Casey, Secretary Rice, and others. Casey briefed the group on the current strategy; he focused on Baghdad and listed various risks that threatened mission success. Rice, meanwhile, presented the State Department's position that the current track was not improving Iraq.[266] Other civilian advisors, including Peter Feaver and Eliot Cohen, presented different options including troop increases and faster transitions to Iraqi training and standing down.[267] The National Security Council suggested an expansive internal review modeled after Solarium during President Eisenhower's administration. While the meetings at Camp David were candid, at the end of the abstract exercises President Bush did not authorize a formal review. Instead, he followed precedent and accepted his combat commander's position; they would wait and give the current strategy more time to work.

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[265] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 10.
[266] *Ibid*. pg. 10.
[267] Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." *International Security* 35.4 (2011): 87-125. Web. 17 May 2012. pg. 101.

A Long, Hot Summer

General Casey's June assessment found that American troop drawdowns could accelerate. He was confident that sectarian violence would slow after the 7 June killing of Zarqawi.[268] However, by July he reversed his position, much to the surprise and consternation of Chairman Pace. The security situation had deteriorated by such an extent that Lieutenant General Pete Chiarelli, Commander of MNC-Iraq, requested that the 172nd Stryker brigade from Alaska be called back and its tour extended. This was after a majority of the unit had already rotated home.[269] The move was intended to help stabilize the security in Baghdad; the unit would augment forces currently assigned there. However, by the beginning of August, President Bush's daily briefings indicated that the situation continued to fall apart.

On 1 August, details of "150 attacks a day in Iraq, six an hour" were coming in. What's more, the weaponry and tactics used by the insurgents were increasingly lethal and sophisticated.[270] On 3 August, when General John Abizaid – the CENTCOM commander – was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he stated that the violence in Iraq and around Baghdad was the worst he had seen.[271] He ruled out any reductions in US troops, citing the increase in sectarian violence.[272] The escalation of violence and trajectory of Iraq's instability became increasingly worrisome to the

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[268] This was a major success for the mission in Iraq and a significant moment in the war. Many military officers and civilian leaders alike – Secretary Rumsfeld included – believed that it would become a turning point in the violence. Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld*. Philadelphia: PublicAffairs, 2009. Pg. 621.

[269] Baldor, Lolita C. "Just-Returned Troops Sent Back to Iraq." *The Washington Post*. 14 Aug 2006. 2 May 2012.

[270] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 81.

[271] Roque, Ashley. "Abizaid: U.S. Troop Drawdown in Iraq Unlikely Until Next Summer." *Inside the Pentagon*. Vol. 22, No. 38. 21 Sept 2006. Web. 15 May 2012.

[272] *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007. Website. 10 May 2012.

president and commanders. 2006 had done nothing significant to allay their concerns or indicate that the status quo was achieving desired results.

Lack of Consensus

By mid to late July members of the NSC determined that strategy discussions had to be started. It was felt within civilian policy circles that any leak of a strategy review – even one that was preliminary – would create political and optics issues that were ill afforded at the moment. This opinion strongly influenced the initial form of strategic dialogue. As such, the first attempts to broach the subject across civil-military lines were informal and vague. For example, NSA Hadley began by sending broad questions to Secretary Rumsfeld and numerous generals. These were intended to spark relevant discussions about Iraq strategy.[273] Explicit intent was not presented.

Prior to a 22 July meeting, Secretary Rumsfeld concurred with Hadley's position and sent fourteen strategic questions to General Casey. They were meant to spark debate about the current plans and even included a "grand strategy" sub-heading that would be discussed. Secretary Rumsfeld, Chairman Pace, General Casey, Vice President Cheney, Ambassador Khalilzad, General Abizaid, and others were in on the meeting.[274] The meeting broached the topic of a strategic review but again the combat commanders – Casey, specifically – were cautious and skeptical of embracing COIN tactics such as prioritizing population security. He firmly believed the current course should be followed. To date, the civilian leadership made it a point to support the commanders' wishes.[275]

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[273] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 71.
[274] *Ibid*. pg. 78.
[275] Philip Zelikow later said that after the invasion the civilian leadership – and Secretary Rumsfeld's office, specifically – became deferential to the combat commanders. He spoke of an objective civil-military

Three and a half weeks later, on the morning of 17 August, a meeting took place in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. It became a significant moment on the road to strategic review. In it, President Bush expressed his consternation in regards to the trajectory of Iraq.[276] He specifically stated that they needed "a clear way forward coming out of Labor Day" and implied that tactics were constantly being reassessed but strategy stayed immobile. The latter point seemed to displease him. His combat commanders and ambassador were video conferencing in on the meeting and pushed back by providing context to their positions. Abizaid outlined three major regional problems that influenced Iraq. Casey emphasized his confidence in training the Iraqis and planning for drawdowns; he also insisted that things were improving. Khalilzad suggested that the President make a rousing, "defining speech" on the issue.[277]

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The 17 August meeting indicated that by that date the positions of the players were consolidated and moderately entrenched. The combat commanders – General Casey, specifically – were insistent that the current course was the only viable option. From their perspective, American troops were distractions that made the Iraqi population displeased and increased target opportunities for insurgents.[278] Furthermore, if the Iraqis

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relationship; "the basic dynamic between Baghdad and Washington, in scores and scores of meetings, is Baghdad briefs; Washington listens." Interview. Philip Zelikow. *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007. Website. 10 May 2012. This observation is also developed by Dale Herspring in his book *Rumsfeld's War*. Herspring, Dale R. *Rumsfeld's Wars: The Arrogance of Power*. Lawrence: Univ Press of Kansas, 2008. pg. 138-139.

[276] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 88.

[277] *Ibid*. pg. 90.

[278] General Casey was also insistent that they had adequate troop levels at that time, based on the current strategies in place for Baghdad and Iraq in general. His position was that they would have difficulty finding jobs for additional troops and they would also increase hostility towards the Americans. This would, thus, increase overall violence in the country.

weren't trained to be self-sufficient in all aspects of government and security then they would become dependent on an occupier that was enormously unpopular.[279]

The State Department believed that the war was discrediting the United States abroad, sapping it of valuable blood and treasure, and was distracting the country from more legitimate missions. Secretary Rice also thought that the war was hindering other grand strategic priorities. President Bush and his closest advisors on the National Security Council – best exemplified by NSA Stephen J. Hadley – believed that Iraq had to be won from both a national security and a political standpoint. As such, a winning strategy had to be found and implemented, immediately; managing failure was not a viable option.

Throughout the summer of 2006 different civil and military players became increasingly certain of the conclusions they were reaching. Hadley and his NSC team, emboldened by Meghan O'Sullivan's experience and sources, believed that a comprehensive review – with the expressed intention to change strategies – was imperative. Combat commanders felt that they needed more time and that the only viable path was the one they were on. State had an established position that did not resonate with the President; he wasn't going to accelerate a pull back from Iraq.

The different positions were distancing and consolidating because, among other reasons, they were using different intelligence and data sources. The briefings that combat commanders gave the president contained assessments that various players deemed irrelevant, biased, or incorrect. On 25 August, for example, General Casey delivered a secret report whose numbers indicated progress. It relied heavily on figures

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[279] Secretary Rumsfeld also supported this position.

showing the numbers of insurgents killed and damage done to targeted adversaries.[280]

However, the CIA indicated that many of the stated successes in the report were

temporary; insurgents were pouring into areas immediately after "clearing." What's

more, Iraq's borders were porous and new fighters were able to travel with relative ease.

As such, the middle goal of the "clear, hold, and build" trifecta was not being achieved.

Staffers at the State Department even went so far as to say that Casey's report was "a

smoke screen."[281]

And yet, while displeasure in the format and content of intelligence was brooding

amongst civilian policy makers, there's no indication that there were sustained attempts

to push back or challenge it. Instead, they were simply going to different sources. Deputy

National Security Advisor Meghan O'Sullivan, for example, established a network of

contacts and sources on the ground in Iraq when she worked there. One of the most

influential contacts she used throughout the strategy review, meanwhile, was General

Petraeus. Throughout the review, both sides used the back channel they established.[282] By

the summer of 2006 she was in the routine of communicating with numerous sources on

multiple continents and retrieving copious amounts of information about the situation in

Iraq. She recorded the data, tracked the information, and used it to bolster her position.[283]

President Bush was in a position that straddled these points for a number of

interpersonal and structural reasons. First, he had made it a priority of his administration

to support his combat commanders and heed their opinions with great respect. He also

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[280] Other data presented included how many buildings had been cleared by patrols. Readers of the report were concerned with how few detainees were captured during these operations. Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 105-106.

[281] There were also reports that Secretary Rice became very confrontational and challenged the generals – as well as their reports – during principals meetings. *Ibid.* pg. 106-107.

[282] Kaplan, Fred. "The End Of The Age Of Petraeus." *Foreign Affairs* 92.1 (2013): 75-90. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 11 Jan. 2013.

[283] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 60-61; 101.

refused to micro-manage the tactics and daily operational aspects of their duties. The president's tendencies thus magnified the influence that General Casey and other combat commanders had earlier in the Iraq campaign. By putting faith in the generals on the ground, the president was more inclined to suppress skepticism and delay changes if those generals expressed confidence in the current tactics and strategies. Likewise, this faith diminished a willingness to take action upon any disagreements he may have with what he was briefed.

President Bush's position also straddled these two positions because of a culture of consensus that he deliberately promoted within his Administration. He was intent on having his advisors agree on whichever path he decided. This priority created an expectation of agreement that did not promote contentious debates and dialogue. In short, strategic review and its necessarily critical – and sometimes confrontational – lens ran counter to Bush's preferred leadership style.

This certainly didn't prevent him from viewing the combat commanders with skepticism. It also didn't inhibit him from debating a change of course or expressing those thoughts with his closest advisors. After a 17 August meeting in the Roosevelt Room, for example, President Bush was dismayed with General Casey's position. He was also concerned with how poorly Operation Together Forward was progressing.[284] Josh Bolten, White House Chief of Staff, asked the President "what radical measures can the team recommend" if Iraq continued to deteriorate? The President at this point was convinced that options had to be drawn up and a review had to take place. He stated that

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[284] Operation Together Forward and Operation Together Forward II were plans meant to quell violence and establish sustainable security in Baghdad. Both were joint operations between U.S./coalition troops and Iraqi Security Forces. An increase in troops within Baghdad was part of the plan, as well. "Operation Together Forward." *GlobalSecurity.org*. 5 May 2011. Web. 15 May 2012.

he and his national security advisors "would have to develop those measures" themselves, if need be.[285] He then authorized Hadley "to formalize the review the NSC Iraq team had been conducting." With this decision, Hadley began to lead a confidential, civilian-centric review of Iraq strategy.[286] The military was not directly involved.

Multiple, Confidential, Compartmentalized Strategic Reviews

By late September 2006 there were multiple strategic reviews taking place at various levels of civilian and military circles. They were confidential and compartmentalized; there were no overt or sustained attempts to synthesize what was being reviewed. A plurality of players deemed action necessary, but overtly challenging the status quo was deemed difficult. To date, President Bush had not requested a broad review or alternative plans. Rather, his only order was to NSA Hadley and it was for a secretive review. President Bush expressed his concerns to a few of his closest confidantes; any actions that he requested were done quietly and within strict boundaries. Most significantly, the reviews done at the president's behest were executed without involvement of the defense secretary or military.

Staff within the NSC was reviewing options informally throughout the summer. Amongst those on staff there was a clear, established preference for escalation in Iraq. It was at the beginning of October – when he was aware of informal reviews taking place at the State Department and Pentagon – that NSA Hadley ordered a report with recommendations be written. However, the timeline of events here is slightly ambiguous. By one account, on Sunday 1 October, Hadley had his deputy J.D. Crouch meet with

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[285] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 370.
[286] Members of this National Security Council strategic review included staffers J.D. Crouch, Meghan O'Sullivan, Brett McGuik, Peter Feaver, Navy Captain William J. Luti, and two star general Kevin Bergner. *Ibid*. pg. 371.

NSC staff member and Navy Captain William J. Luti. Crouch asked that a plan be drawn up that would promote a surge of forces in Iraq.[287] The request required an "operational concept" that would help change the trajectory in Iraq; Luti was given five weeks.

By another account, on 3 October NSA Hadley asked that Crouch meet with him in the West Wing. There, Hadley asked Crouch to complete a strategy review and recommend a plan. It was then that Crouch called Luti and submitted the request, citing a lack of options or alternatives being presented by the Pentagon. In this account, Crouch emphasized that this "briefing about a new strategy for Iraq" was to be quiet and of utmost confidence.[288] What is consistent between these two accounts is that Hadley ordered a strategy review of Iraq. Furthermore, it was meant to be confidential, exclusively within NSC circles, and expansive enough to include strategic options.

By 11 October Luti delivered his report to Crouch;[289] it was titled "Changing the Dynamics: Surge and Fight, Create Breathing Space and Then Accelerate the Transition."[290] In its ten pages, it suggested a surge of troops – approximately five brigades, or 20,000 troops – that would allow for consistent "secure and hold" operations. It also suggested that American forces increasingly target insurgents, thus going beyond the training mission that was emphasized under General Casey. Furthermore, it recommended an increase in the overall force size of the Army and Marine Corps.

At this moment, a NSC staffer – at the request of the national security advisor – made comprehensive tactical and strategic recommendations without direct military involvement within the chain of command. The report was also completed without

[287] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 161.
[288] West, Bing. *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq*. New York: Random House, 2008. Pg. 197.
[289] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 170.
[290] Gordon, Michael R. "Troop 'Surge' in Iraq Took Place amid Doubt and Intense Debate," *The New York Times*. 31 Aug 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.

Deputy National Security Advisor on Iraq/Afghanistan Meghan O'Sullivan's
knowledge.[291] It was a bold recommendation made outside of the body's traditional role
and without full knowledge of some of the most relevant figures within the National
Security Council.

It wasn't until 17 October that, with President Bush's permission, NSA Hadley
asked O'Sullivan start a full "review quietly."[292] She was expressly told that no military
or intelligence assets could be consulted or notified in the process; only a handful of State
Department staffers could be involved. During the ensuing meetings, members of the
review – including State's David Satterfield – expressed concern about how ambitious
the review had become, considering no military professionals were being consulted.[293]
Two weeks after it started, however, O'Sullivan finished a memo titled "The Way
Forward." Multiple options were presented, including a surge of troops and strategic shift
towards COIN.

At the State Department, Secretary Rice's senior advisors began a review based
off of the Zelikow memo from earlier in the spring. Through November, State continued
to voice a concern that significant strategic and grand strategic priorities were being lost
because of Iraq. Secretary Rice's top deputies published a report saying as much. This
occurred at the same time that – unbeknownst to them – the NSC was aggressively
researching and posturing for a troop surge.[294]

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[291] According to Michael Gordon's 31 August 2008 article, in the same month Meghan O'Sullivan, Brett McGurk and Peter D. Feaver were working on a report that raised the prospect of increasing troops in Iraq, separately.

[292] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 177.

[293] Woodward quotes Satterfield saying, during a 21 October meeting in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, that they could "only go so far… [they couldn't] make judgments about military force capabilities, about readiness capabilities…" *Ibid*. pg. 178.

[294] Gordon, Michael R. "Troop 'Surge' in Iraq Took Place amid Doubt and Intense Debate," *The New York Times*. 31 Aug 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.

While all this was occurring within civilian policy circles, Chairman Pace quietly ordered sixteen leading colonels from across four branches of the military to assemble at the Pentagon; if asked, they were to say they were helping conduct "research for a series of war games."[295] On 27 and 28 September, however, they were briefed by the staff director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. Walter Sharp about a three-month plan to create strategic options for Iraq. Chairman Pace told the colonels to "think broadly and creatively;"[296] they did not need to come to a consensus and dissenting opinions were encouraged.[297] The group was dubbed the "Council of Colonels" and worked under what the chairman called "extraordinary secrecy."[298] They reported to Pace and the service chiefs every Friday, for two hours. From a civil-military perspective, it was significant that no notification or integration occurred with Secretary Rumsfeld or OSD.

A 12 October meeting, meanwhile, represents one of the less prevalent moments in which civilian and military players communicated directly with each other about any strategic review. Chairman Pace requested the meeting; during it Secretary Rice welcomed the general in her office at the State Department. Pace presented to Rice some disconcerting figures that indicated a failure of the status quo in Iraq. Towards the end of the meeting, Pace told Rice about the Council of the Colonels, though Rice indicated that she had already heard rumors of it "through the ether."[299] Reciprocally, the secretary of state told the chairman of the Joint Chiefs that her staff, too, was undertaking a similarly expansive and critical strategic assessment, albeit from a more political/diplomatic lens.

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[295] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 158.

[296] *Ibid*. pg. 159.

[297] General Ray Odierno also ordered a strategic review prior to his takeover of ground forces in November 2006. The result of that review was that a surge of troops was viable and should be attempted. Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." *International Security* 35.4 (2011): 87-125. Web. 17 May 2012.

[298] Grossman, Elaine M. "Pace Group to Put Forth Iraq Strategy Alternatives by Mid-December." *Inside the Pentagon.* Vol. 22, No. 45. 9 Nov 2006. Web. 15 May 2012.

[299] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 173.

There appears to be no mention – or knowledge – of the NSC reviews. By meeting's end, Rice and Pace agreed that the political, public, and internal environments did not allow them to share efforts. They would update each other but remain independent.

By this time, the preferences of each review – and respective bodies – were becoming increasingly clear. The most influential civilian review occurred under the National Security Council. NSA Hadley and a number of his influential staffers preferred a surge in troops and believed a COIN strategy could be viable as well as effective.[300] This ran counter to the State Department's findings. Secretary Rumsfeld, meanwhile, still agreed with General Casey that the priority was training Iraqis and transitioning security to them. This complemented his military doctrine of rapid, small footprint operations and allowed for less US engagement in the situation. It also complemented his established leadership style vis-à-vis combat commanders and their directives.

However, President Bush's increasing dismay and decreasing confidence in his combat commanders reinforced his strategic concerns. For him to break from his established support and deference of combat commanders, he would need a great deal of encouragement and evidence that the schism was the right thing to do. Ultimately, the catalyst for the change came from outside of the official civilian circles: think tanks staffed with retired generals offered the opportunity. By the time this occurred, the defense secretary ultimately threw his hat in the wrong ring and reinforced his path to resignation.

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[300] This was clear from early on in the strategic review process. Prior to the Camp David meetings, for example, he brought President Bush a number of articles written by former commanders in Iraq. The contents were heavily skewed towards the belief that more troops were needed. Furthermore, Hadley read and briefed on Col. McMaster, who was one of the most renowned implementers of COIN style operations in Iraq; he did so while commanding in Tal Afar. Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 364.

Assessments from Outside the Civil-Military Structure

Over the course of the summer, as violence in Iraq worsened and the public position of the president indicated intransigence, various experts and retired generals in several think tanks became increasingly concerned. After the failure of Operation Together Forward, members of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) verbalized a desire to help. Frederick Kagan raised the idea of creating strategy options to retired general Jack Keane; he thought it was an excellent idea.[301] Keane was on the Defense Policy Board, was a former Army Vice Chief of Staff, had close connections with Secretary Rumsfeld as well as those close to him, and shared a deep concern about the trajectory of Iraq.[302]

AEI eventually created a strategy that required a surge of 35,000-45,000 troops.[303] A formal PowerPoint briefing was created for a conference in early December.[304] The strategy focused on making population security a priority, ceasing violence within major urban centers like Baghdad, and bolstering reconstruction as well as other engineering projects. It also emphasized a good deal of commander flexibility. In short, AEI recommended that an increase of troops, adoption of various COIN concepts/strategies, and willingness for flexibility/adaptability be enforced.[305]

Keane decided to request a meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld in order to give his – and by extension, AEI's – assessment of Iraq and the current strategy. On 19 September, he met with the secretary of defense. By both men's accounts the meeting was a healthy

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[301] Interview. Frederick Kagan. *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.
[302] Interview. Gen. Jack Keane (Ret.). *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.
[303] Interview. Frederick Kagan. *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.
[304] Kaplan, Fred. "The End Of The Age Of Petraeus." *Foreign Affairs* 92.1 (2013): 75-90. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 11 Jan. 2013.
[305] Gen Keane was quoted as saying that "it's much more a captain's and a sergeant's war than it is a colonel's war, because it's very decentralized." Interview. Gen. Jack Keane (Ret.). *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.

discussion complemented by skeptical questioning and various hypothetical comments. Keane was blunt with his assessment and emphasized the need for change. He emphasized his high regard for COIN and its potential application in Iraq.[306]

Three days later, Keane met with Chairman Pace after the latter requested a job evaluation of sorts. Keane was frank in his assessment that Iraq was failing and that the chairman's leadership was contributing to that end. He also suggested that the combat commanders and ambassador to Iraq were hermetically sealed in their environment, working too hard, and perhaps not seeing the forest through the trees.[307] That is, he felt that they were unable to accurately evaluate the current strategy because of their proximity to and immersion within the threat environment. What's more, Keane suggested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff weren't making success in Iraq a high enough priority, thus contributing to the morass. He ended the meeting by recommending an internal review, changes of command in Iraq, and a new head for CENTCOM. Whether the first recommendation spurred or quickened the Council of Colonels cannot be confirmed, though the closeness of this meeting to the colonels' first briefing seems to discount the former.

In the coming weeks and months Keane's input, travels, and connection significantly influenced the tactical and strategic discussions. Civilian and military leaders – both active duty and retired –felt his influence.[308] Furthermore, his stature as a retired four star general and his reputation within the military community bolstered the positions he held, to say nothing of the civilians who heeded his recommendations. Over

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[306] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 129-138.

[307] *Ibid*. pg. 142-146.

[308] Metz, Steven. *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007*. Washington D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010. pg. 24.

the course of the fall he made numerous trips to Iraq to assess the situation, hone his position, and analyze how particular combat officers perceived the campaign.[309]

Throughout this period Keane remained a retired Army officer and active member of the Defense Policy Board.[310] Meanwhile he was also in contact with NSA Hadley and other NSC staffers. Keane continued to advise the civilian administration's staff and leaders throughout the fall. His access, actions, and career allowed him military professional credentials and civilian policy access. This hybrid role was both a catalyst and a conduit. He and AEI were able to act as uncharacteristically critical voices within Bush's leadership circles. He could also submit proposals and commentary that would not be appropriate or politically viable coming from internal positions.[311] Meanwhile, as a retired general he was able to act as a channel through which various civil-military dialogues flowed. He gave assessments of civilian positions to commanders in the field. He also told civilian players what various officers were thinking and doing.

Keane was not the only outside advisor influencing civil-military relationships and the strategy review. Many experts from numerous organizations participated. Meghan O'Sullivan specifically asked that Army general Kevin Bergner be assigned to her staff, as we was a proponent of COIN after implementing it in Mosul, 2005.[312] Dr. Kalev Sepp – a Naval Postgraduate school faculty member and US Army Special Forces

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[309] By December, Keane was in phone communication with General Odierno – the commander of MNC-Iraq – one to two times a week. During these conversations he continued to gauge the opportunity and willingness to embrace a troop increase as well as COIN operations. Ricks, Thomas E. *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*. New York: Penguin, 2009. pg. 112.

[310] Interview. Gen. Jack Keane (Ret.). *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.

[311] The author has made mention to various moments in which civilian policy makers and advisors proposed military action they were not qualified to make. Furthermore, within the culture of consensus, civil-military meetings and communications were not intently broaching the strategy review topic. Keane, other outside advisers and experts, as well as think tanks helped push the conversations in directions that were not comfortable or yet priorities.

[312] Barnes, Fred. "How Bush Decided on the Surge." *The Weekly Standard*. Vol. 13, No. 20. 4 Feb 2008. Web. 15 May 2012. pg. 4.

veteran with COIN experience – advised General Casey.[313] Bruce Hoffman – a COIN and terrorism specialist at RAND Corporation – was tapped to advise various civilian leaders. Still other academics – like Eliot Cohen – and retired generals – such as Barry McCaffrey and Wayne Downing – advised the President and NSC staff.[314]

The participation of these civilians – both former active duty soldiers and not – within the strategy review highlights a significant degree of informal, unstructured correspondence. There were numerous players who had no formal elected or appointed positions. They did not report directly to civilian policymakers or any officers within the military chain of command. This amplified the civil-military relationship's unorthodox nature in the summer and fall of 2006. Influential as well as important discussions frequently occurred outside the traditional legal structures of civil-military relations. This allowed for certain individuals – with or without title – to influence the decision making process far more decisively than normal.

Rumsfeld is Out, Full Formal Strategy Review Begins

The day after the 7 November midterm elections, Secretary Rumsfeld resigned as the civilian head of the Defense Department. President Bush recognized that a change was needed; he had already met with Robert Gates at his Crawford Ranch to discuss taking over the DoD.[315] Until mid-December, however, Rumsfeld remained in the position in a highly diminished capacity. As such, NSA Stephen Hadley acted as the point person for President Bush during this phase of the strategy review; his position became even more influential and relevant.

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[313] Metz, Steven. *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007*. Washington D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010. pg. 20.
[314] Cheney, Dick & Liz Cheney. *In My Time*. New York: Threshold, 2011. pg. 449.
[315] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 201.

By this point it was clear that Hadley favored an increase in US troops as well as a transition to tactics and strategies focusing on population security and COIN.[316] To date Rumsfeld had been in agreement with Casey, Abizaid, and other combat commanders that a troop increase was not advisable (and, in fact, could be detrimental).[317] Hadley continued to garner data and individuals to support his position despite this. In the beginning of November, with Rumsfeld's resignation, Hadley grasped the greatest opportunity to lobby his position.

On Friday 10 November, President Bush held a meeting in the Oval Office; principals were in attendance.[318] It was at this time – after Rumsfeld resigned and the Republicans were on their heels – that the president requested a formal strategy review of Iraq. He wanted the participants to make the review their top priority and report back to him within sixteen days. Furthermore, he assigned Deputy National Security Advisor J.D. Crouch as the head of the effort. The same day, meanwhile, Crouch handed Luti's report over to two of the generals leading the Pentagon review: Lt Generals Richard Sattler and Douglas Lute. He asked that they review the material and "to seriously consider" its recommendations.[319] Crouch also relayed specific tactical and strategic opinions; he viewed Anbar Province and Baghdad as linked and vital to success in Iraq.

Four days later the first formal strategy review meeting took place in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, a large stone structure close enough to the West Wing that it casts its shadow on the Situation Room every afternoon. Per the president's orders, senior representatives were present from the Departments of State and Defense,

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[316] Metz, Steven. *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007*. Washington D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010. pg. 18-19.
[317] *Ibid*. pg. 19.
[318] These included Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld, Hadley, his deputy Crouch, Pace, and Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte. Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 207.
[319] West, Bing. *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq*. pg. 201-202.

the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice President's office, the Director of National Intelligence's office, and the National Security Council.[320] Representatives for the current combat commander were conspicuously absent. Deputy NSA Crouch distributed binders that included Meghan O'Sullivan's lengthy paper on the four strategic options the NSC thought realistic: "adjust at the margins; target our effort; double down; bet on Maliki."

In the coming weeks, memos and leaks from various players appeared to influence – or in the very least, *attempt* to influence – the group's work. On 18 November DoD representatives distributed a secret memo that rehashed the position held by Casey, Rumsfeld, and a plurality of generals in the Pentagon; it was necessary to maintain the course of training Iraqis forces and standing down U.S. troops.[321] The document proposed a compromise of boosting the number of US teams focusing on the transition.

At the same time, members of the Joint Chiefs released reports that indicated pessimism about the status quo and a need to make longer strategic goals a priority. One stated that the U.S. had "strategic and moral obligations to leave the people of Iraq with a working democracy."[322] Mixed messages were coming from within the Pentagon, even within individual groups like the Council of Colonels. While acknowledgement of failure – or in the least, a lack of success – was easy to come by, opinions ranging from maintaining the course to implementing COIN to expediting training and drawing down were heard throughout.

A 22 November memo from OSD confirmed the civilian office's agreement with Casey. "General Casey has a good plan. He has identified ways to do things faster and

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[320] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 230-231.
[321] *Ibid*. pg. 235.
[322] *Ibid*. pg. 236.

accelerate the timeline to Iraqi self-reliance," it read in part.[323] Rumsfeld and his staff still believed – along with Casey and a plurality in the Joint Chiefs' office – that transition was still the key to eventual success.

As a body the Joint Chiefs of Staff had a priority to plan for innumerable scenarios and challenges to national security. With the current troop deployments and rotation schedule – to say nothing of the prospect of increasing force levels in Iraq – there was real and growing concern about force exhaustion. Strategic overstretch was also a concern. Various senior officers within multiple branches indicated that this was the case. Lt. Col. Andrew Krepinevich, for example, has stated that "American commanders are reluctant to ask for additional troops because they realize how stretched the force is already."[324] The military's preferred ratio of forward deployed to home stationed soldiers was out of balance; this required more troops to deploy longer with fewer (and shorter) stretches at home.[325]

These concerns had near term effects both on the health and effectiveness of the deployed forces. It also made it more difficult for commanders to willingly suggest troop increases, since they were already concerned that soldiers could succumb to the current strain. Retention was an issue, let alone the readiness of the active forces. All of this, meanwhile, influenced the branches' ability to plan for and respond to any crises on the horizon.

In the midst of this Lt General Sattler, head of the strategic plans and policy directorate, met with Deputy NSA Crouch to summarize the benchmark positions coming

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[323] Gordon, Michael R. "Troop 'Surge' in Iraq Took Place amid Doubt and Intense Debate," *The New York Times*. 31 Aug 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.

[324] Interview. Lt. Col. Andrew Krepinevich. *Endgame*. Frontline & PBS/WGBH Education Foundation, 2007.

[325] The preferred ratio involved three brigades with one forward and two back. At this point in the Iraq war, the ratio was closer to a one to two ratio.

from different civilian and military circles.[326] Various military voices were expressing and responding to very different recommendations. Additionally, President Bush had already asked Casey what he would do with a hypothetical increase in troops; this is despite the fact that no active military source had recommended said course of action. When Chairman Pace notified the Council of Colonels of this, the responses were negative. Feeling that the chiefs were already softening the blunt assessments they had constructed, a number of the colonels voiced concern that they – and many military leaders, at large – were not being listened to through the process.

NSC's Formal Report is Submitted; Iraq Study Group Publishes its Report

On 26 November, principals met with President Bush in the White House's Solarium to review Crouch's strategy briefing; he had finished the 14-page document the Friday night prior.[327] In it, Crouch noted that an "emerging consensus" was coalescing around an acceleration of "transfer of security responsibilities of Iraqis."[328] However, he wrote that the group should consider a "significant surge in U.S. forces." He also wrote that securing the population's security needed to be a priority and that U.S. forces could not stand by without working to that end. The report prompted a frank debate about what the U.S. could realistically achieve in Iraq. By the end of the meeting no decisions were made but the established positions of the State Department, NSC, and Secretary Rumsfeld's office were rehashed.

By this meeting, NSA Hadley had arrived at the conclusion that President Bush decided on a surge of troops.[329] He was correct. During a late November meeting with

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[326] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 241.
[327] *Ibid*. pg. 244.
[328] *Ibid*. pg. 245.
[329] *Ibid*. pg. 264.

President Maliki in Amman, Jordan, President Bush decided that he had "faith" in the Iraqi leader. As such, Bush determined that the prime minister of Iraq needed more time and that a surge of troops with a strategic shift was the best way to achieve that end.[330] This decision appeared to have immediate influence on discussions between civilian leaders and military officials. In the coming weeks, direct conversations about strategy shifts and tactical questions increased in frequency.

Then, on 6 December the Iraq Study Group privately met with President Bush in order to deliver their finished report.[331] Within its seventy-nine points it recommended a drawdown of troops that would remove most of the current numbers by the beginning of 2008. However, it also stated that the group would support a "short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces" with the intent of bringing Iraq security under control and facilitating a responsible withdrawal. At a time when public approval of the president and the war were extremely low, the bi-partisan commission had expressed willingness to do what was counter-intuitive to the public and exactly what the president desired.

The next day, 7 December, Chairman Pace met with NSA Hadley and emphasized that a significant amount of the national security advisor's recommendations were already in place under Casey's command. He also let him know that an internal surge was possible; combat commanders were able transfer forces within Iraq to Baghdad and Anbar Province.[332] He acknowledged the importance of optics and the need for the American public to see significant changes in the way Iraq was being handled. That being the case, he told Hadley that the latter could be achieved under the current battle plans. The men also discussed a need to reevaluate deployment and rotation policies. Citing

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[330] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 374-375.
[331] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 262.
[332] *Ibid*. pg. 265-266.

exhaustion and difficulties maintaining operational readiness, Pace said active duty and National Guard/Reserve forces must be bolstered.

At this point in the strategy review the State Department's position was being marginalized. In an 8 December NSC meeting Secretary Rice again stressed her skepticism of the level to which the U.S. was engaged in Iraq. She was adamant that the Iraqis needed to take more responsibility and, as such, U.S. forces should only engage in order to stop egregious sectarian violence. However, Chairman Pace immediately asserted that the military would not accept a 'to stop genocide only' mission. The tactical and ethical dilemmas of such a plan made it unfeasible, and the head of the Joint Chiefs immediately undercut the Secretary of State's position.[333]

Discussing Logistics and Run-up to "The Tank" Meeting

On Saturday 9 December a secure videoconference meeting was held between the NSC and General Casey. President Bush was very assertive in this discussion and led with questioning that revealed his disposition to send more U.S. troops.[334] Various topics were covered including a perceived need to deal with insurgents within Sadr City, the limitations Maliki's leadership presented to American ends, tactical decisions within Baghdad, and the makeup of forces in the area. The civilian leaders and President Bush were directly challenging the military's position more frequently and in an increasingly transparent manner.

By this point, frustration was mounting within numerous military circles. A poll done by the *Military Times* found that less than 40 percent of troops supported a troop

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[333] *Ibid*. pg. 267.
[334] *Ibid*. pg. 270-274.

surge in Iraq.[335] Many vocal "senior commanders" also argued that the U.S. "needed to lower its profile and reduce its footprint." General Abizaid told Senator John McCain that "every division commander," General Casey, and multiple officers on down said no when they were asked if more U.S. troops would "add considerably to" their "ability to achieve success in Iraq." Far from the field, the commander of STRATCOM – General Cartwright – was quoted as saying that "clearly the strategy's got to change" and needed "to have a global context."[336]

What's more, combat commanders like General Casey believed that President Bush had lost confidence in their opinions and actions.[337] The Council of Colonels felt as though their work had been distilled and politicized. Various members of the Joint Chiefs felt that their opinions – let alone their grand strategic concerns of operational readiness and preparedness throughout the globe – were dismissed. Indeed, there is little evidence that by this point – and even through the eventual policy decision – the chairman or the Joint Chiefs of Staff had substantial influence on the development of surge strategy. [338] General Peter Schoomaker, United States Army Chief of Staff, rose as the leading voice of this frustration.[339]

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[335] Desch, Michael C. "Bush and the Generals," *Foreign Affairs* 86.3 (2007): 97-108. Web. 22 April 2010. pg. 104.

[336] Grossman, Elaine M. "With U.S. Forces Spread Thin, Top Combat Commanders Mull Global Risks." *Inside the Pentagon*. Vol. 22, No. 42. 19 Oct 2006. Web. 15 May 2012.

[337] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 283.

[338] Of the Joint Chiefs' relationship with President Bush, Steven Metz has written that they "appeared to play a minimal role in shaping U.S. strategy in Iraq" and had minimal contact with the president, if at all. Metz, Steven. *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007*. pg. 27.

[339] General Schoomaker is quoted as expressing his strong objections, concerns, and dissatisfaction about the strategic review. He also made his concerns known when he thought U.S. forces were being overstretched and exhausted unnecessarily. Of the surge strategy he said, "No one had articulated or established a clear purpose for the surge, including how to know when that purpose had been achieved." Ricks, Thomas E. *The Gamble*. pg. 114.

Odierno Takes Command; Formal Chain of Command Continues to be Flanked

An influential, rising combat commander thought differently. In December 2006 General Ray Odierno took command of the MNC-Iraq forces. He replaced General Peter Chiarelli in this role.[340] On 4 December, Odierno was briefed on the plan he was to implement; it was named "the Bridging Strategy" or "TBS." At that moment he decided to formally be against any increase in U.S. forces, thus mirroring his commander's position. Over the course of the ensuing weeks a small advisory group briefed Odierno. Within a short period of time the general shifted his position; Odierno believed they needed more troops.[341]

Tensions quickly built between General Casey and General Odierno as the latter became more outspoken. Odierno and his staff came to a consensus that eight more brigades were needed.[342] Assuming that the established combat command would not approve this, they went about developing contingencies to bolster force effectiveness; these included adding smaller units such as helicopter squadrons and special operations forces. Meanwhile, Odierno's chief of staff noted that as MNC commander, Odierno was speaking with Jack Keane one to two times per week. His contact with the retired general was a boon for AEI, Keane, and those in the administration who lobbied for a surge. At that point Odierno was one of the few active duty generals who were clearly in the surge camp.

Odierno and Casey continued to conflict with each other. What's more, Casey became agitated when Keane and other civilian officials communicated directly with

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[340] On one of his final days in Baghdad, Lt Gen Chiarelli stated that "We have done everything militarily we possibly can[…] Militarily, I can say without a doubt that we are winning." West, Bing. *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq*. pg. 217.
[341] Ricks, Thomas E. *The Gamble*. pg. 112.
[342] *Ibid*. pg. 113.

officers beneath him. Thomas Ricks confirmed that by December officials in the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and staff of the Joint Chiefs "were bypassing several echelons in the chain of command to call" Odierno and ask his staff's colonels what they'd do with more troops.[343] Furthermore, Keane had kept in contact with him and other officers, including General Petraeus, who were sympathetic to what he was lobbying. Keane made a number of trips to Iraq in order to meet with Odierno as well as other relevant officers in theater.

Keane's connections from his career in the military, present position on the Defense Policy Board, as well as access to active military and top civilian advisors alike made him a formidable figure. After one of his trips to Iraq he was asked to meet with President Bush on 11 December, along with four other outside experts.[344] In that meeting Keane presented copies of AEI's PowerPoint briefing to Vice Present Cheney.[345] He also expressed an opinion and strategy plan closest to the ultimate decision. He bluntly stated that the military did not have a plan to beat the insurgency. He succinctly restated his ideas that were attributed to the AEI plan – surging troops, making population security a priority, adopting multiple COIN tactics/strategies, and complementing the military shift with a civilian surge of economic as well as political initiatives.

Keane complemented his opinion with a pronouncement that General Odierno's assessment was similar to his; Odierno had come to the conclusion that a five brigade, two-battalion surge was necessary.[346] Keane presented himself and Odierno as allies, of sorts. Odierno's opinion also helped to bolster the AEI plan. Keane made full use of this

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[343] *Ibid*. pg. 118-119.
[344] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 280-281.
[345] Kaplan, Fred. "The End Of The Age Of Petraeus." *Foreign Affairs* 92.1 (2013): 75-90. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 11 Jan. 2013.
[346] Gordon, Michael R. "Troop 'Surge' in Iraq Took Place amid Doubt and Intense Debate," *The New York Times*. 31 Aug 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.

fact in both the Oval Office meeting and a briefing with Vice President Cheney around the same time.

A Civil-Military Afterthought is Noticed: Service Chiefs

As tension and frustration grew within military circles and Keane was straddling the civil-military divide, Chairman Pace asked President Bush to sit with the Joint Chiefs.[347] To this point they felt marginalized and were increasingly concerned that vital operational and strategic decisions were being made without military opinions. Two days before that meeting was to be held, Pace indicated that many concerns and grievances would be aired; General Schoomaker would be the most assertive to this end.[348] However, the chairman also suggested that the chiefs would be willing to support a surge if their concerns were entertained and responded to in earnest.[349] Ever concerned with building consensus and equally aware of the political delicacy of a surge decision, President Bush made a rare trip to the Pentagon on 13 December. He intended to meet with the Joint Chiefs on their turf, in order to hear their opinions and honor their professional positions. The meeting would take place within a highly secure, windowless conference room nicknamed "The Tank."

The Meeting in "The Tank;" Posturing to Influence a Surge

The meeting lasted almost two hours. President Bush, Vice President Cheney, soon to be sworn in Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and National Security Advisor

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[347] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 286.

[348] Admiral Mullen voiced great concern that the military was going to be blamed for any and all failures in Iraq, as well. Meanwhile, General Schoomaker was visibly agitated on multiple occasions when news spread that Keane was briefing the president. "When does AEI start trumping the Joint Chiefs of Staff on this stuff?" he asked. *Ibid*. pg. 286.

[349] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 376.

Stephen Hadley were the civilian principals present.[350] One day prior General Casey, via secure videoconference in an NSC meeting, told the president that only the Iraqis could ensure long-term success. He also reaffirmed that he was not recommending an increase of U.S. troops and that a surge would be a step backwards.[351] Now President Bush was meeting with the officers in charge of operational readiness and grand strategic preparedness. They and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs were the top tier of military professionals and, legally, were the closest advisors to the President.[352]

Vice President Cheney began the meeting by posing a number of questions meant to reveal weakness in non-surge opinions and direct the conversation towards the president's strategic preferences.[353] Each of the service chiefs was given an opportunity to voice his opinions and concerns. Three fundamental concerns arose. One was that Maliki was not strong enough to quell sectarian violence and that, as such, any significant American efforts were set to fail. Another was that the Iraqis had to be responsible for implementing a non-sectarian security plan. Finally, it was agreed among the chiefs that there should be no safe place of al-Qaeda in Iraq.[354]

Beyond these political, tactical, and strategic concerns, the chiefs also expressed concerns about strategic overstretch. General Schoomaker said that an increase in force deployments to Iraq would put an "unacceptable strain on ground forces."[355] Multiple

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[350] Barnes, Fred. "How Bush Decided on the Surge." *The Weekly Standard*. Vol. 13, No. 20. 4 Feb 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.
[351] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 283.
[352] The Goldwater-Nichols Reform Act of 1986 states that "The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense." It also grants the Joint Chiefs access and advisory status to said civilian leaders, as well. Metz, Steven. *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007*. pg. 45.
[353] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 287.
[354] *Ibid*. pg. 287.
[355] Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." *International Security* 35.4 (2011): 87-125. Web. 17 May 2012. pg. 107.

scenarios – including an invasion of South Korea by North Korea and Iranian regional aggression – were presented. These were among myriad contingencies for which the Joint Chiefs were responsible to prepare. Schoomaker bluntly stated that they could not assure strategic success if these crises arose, based on the volume of forces deployed in Iraq. He also reminded President Bush that when a five-brigade surge is discussed, fifteen are required.[356] However, while unforeseeable conflicts were priorities for the Joint Chiefs, President Bush made clear in the meeting that winning Iraq in the near term was his priority.

Civilian leadership was not indifferent to the legitimate strategic concerns that were presented. President Bush that in order to garner a consensus that was anything beyond tepid – to say nothing of secure – specific accommodations would be necessary. As such, the principals came to the meeting with "sweeteners" for the generals.[357] President Bush was willing to support a DoD budget increase as well as increases in the sizes of the active duty Army and Marine Corps. These moves would help ease the pressure on the military's strategic forces. They could also allay the chief's fears and bolster support for a surge strategy in Iraq. This move appeared to work.

In the following days there were significant shifts in the prevailing assumptions and tone of the strategic review. The meeting in the Tank verified the expectation that President Bush wanted to increase U.S. troops in Iraq. While a number of the chiefs were dissatisfied with the review and disagreed with a surge, Chairman Pace told NSA Hadley

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[356] The three-fold increase comes from rotational demands and the need for a strategic reserve. This means that while five brigades are deployed, twice as many are either drawing down, ramping up, or retraining/retooling for eventual redeployment. Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 288.
[357] Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." pg. 107.

that he was comfortable with it.[358] Within three days of the meeting, *The New York Times* reported that military planners and budget analysts were asked to draw up cost estimates vis-à-vis a surge.[359] The Office of Management and Budget was also asked for cost estimates related thereto. Meanwhile, the Joint Chiefs were asked to identify which brigades would be available for deployment.[360]

Simultaneously, the strategic review's focus shifted from whether to surge forces to how many forces would be involved and how to deploy them. General Casey adapted to the new reality but was still very reticent about recommending troops. He approved plans that called for a surge of only two brigades and two battalions of Army and Marine Corps soldiers, respectively.[361] Through all of this Keane continued to communicate with General Odierno.[362] Keane sent a copy of the AEI plan to the general. Ensuing conversations confirmed that Odierno supported the strategy.

By the final week of December, meanwhile, even the Joint Chiefs was pivoting away from Casey; the service chiefs were beginning to come around to a larger, five brigade surge that was at the core of Keane/AEI's plan and the preference of NSA Hadley. However, this was a slow and disjointed shift. Chairman Pace was ambivalent about Casey's "two and two" plan; generals at the J-3 operations directorate indicated that the chairman was more concerned about selling a plan to the president than getting

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[358] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 289.

[359] Sanger, David E. and Michael R. Gordon. "Options Weighed for Surge in G.I.'s to Stabilize Iraq." *The New York Times*. 16 Dec 2006. Web. 10 May 2012.

[360] Kagan, Kimberly. *The Surge: A Military History*. New York: Encounter, 2009. pg. 28.

[361] Specifically this "mini-surge" would require one BCT with another in reserve. The battalions would be deployed to Anbar Province. This recommendation was again based on the riding assumption of combat commanders vis-à-vis Maliki; he would not support a surge and wasn't strong enough to enforce security. Feaver, Peter D. "The Right to be Right." pg. 109.

[362] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 296.

more troops.[363] Other generals on the Joint Chiefs and supporting staff, meanwhile, were concerned that unless the surge was five brigades or larger the effectiveness would not be sufficient.[364] Throughout the staging of all this, Keane was in contact with generals in the Pentagon. He briefed NSA Hadley and Vice President Cheney's office numerous times, updating them on the shifting debates and divisions within the Pentagon. He further advised the civilians to be assertive in regards to surge numbers.

Preparing for Implementation and Stacking the Military Leadership

On his full first day in office, 19 December, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates met with General Petraeus. Gates had Petraeus fly in from Ft. Leavenworth, KS and give him an assessment of what to look for in Iraq.[365] Gates was already considering tapping Petraeus to help implement the pending strategy shift in Iraq. Again, the civilian policy makers were going beyond the fold – outside the chain of command – to elicit strategic opinions.[366] In this case, Secretary Gates approached an officer who was the Army's leading expert in counterinsurgency and had a well-known preference for large troop deployments.

Four days later Secretary Gates met with President Bush at Camp David. There, the secretary of defense said he wanted General David Petraeus to be the combat commander in Iraq. President Bush agreed and they decided to promote Casey out of the position; he would become the Army Chief of Staff.[367] President Bush and his advisors had established that a surge of troops would occur. They maneuvered the discussion so

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[363] *Ibid*. pg. 297-298.
[364] Major General Barbero, deputy director for current operations – J-33, said the two and two plan was the "worst course of action we could do." Ricks, Thomas E. *The Gamble*. pg. 114.
[365] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 293-294.
[366] Meghan O'Sullivan and General Petraeus knew each other and kept in contact via back channels well prior and through the strategic review, as well. *Ibid*. pg. 299.
[367] Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. pg. 370.

that strategic shifts towards population security and COIN would be implemented. They were in the process of reorganizing the combat commanders as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The final details – including the firm number of troops – were now being addressed.

At this moment, the presiding combat commanders were still behind the two and two plan. Chairman Pace told President Bush, during an NSC meeting at Crawford Ranch, that Casey recommended that plan.[368] He then said that Petraeus and Odierno were also consulted and they both wanted "the maximum force available." By the end of that meeting, President Bush notified the chairman of the Joint Chiefs that he was going to order the higher number of troops. After a long, frustrating period of pivoting, the president could now say that he accepted the key recommendations of the Joint Chiefs.

On 2 January General Petraeus was formally asked to take command of MNF-Iraq. Two days later news leaked of this development. Just over a week later President Bush addressed the nation in a prime time speech. Over the course of that speech he declared that the strategy in Iraq was changing, more troops would be deployed, and that the leadership transformation was meant to guarantee a sea change. With any luck, that shift would bring success.

Analysis

The Iraq strategy review was catalyzed, led, and dominated by civilians. The civil-military relationship was moderately to highly subjective and broadly similar to that found in the first case study. A significantly higher amount of communications during the strategy review occurred outside of a formal chain of command. However, the NSC was far more involved and instrumental in this case study; the national security advisor also

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[368] Woodward, Bob. *The War Within*. pg. 305.

had more authority and influence. Conversely, the secretary of defense and his office maintained less power in this case study. As such, civilian power dynamics shifted back towards the White House throughout 2006.

A number of external civilian and retired military figures were involved in the strategy review. These individuals served as conduits of information, advocates for unpopular positions, and sources of legitimacy for otherwise inconsequential officials. Jack Keane was the most significant of these players. Their participation benefited a particular group of civilian policymakers in particular: those staffing the NSC. As with the first case study, those civilians bolstered their arguments by positioning themselves with authoritative military figures. This time, this maneuver included retired generals who were active in the private sector and non-profit communities.

While more of this case study occurred within the NSC structures than the first one, a majority of it did not occur collaboratively. The NSC was a policy-making leader throughout the case but it was not a forum of discussion until the most significant debates had occurred behind closed doors, involving a fraction of the relevant players. Furthermore, a plurality of those most significant decisions was made outside of the NSC structure. Most of these occurred before the strategy review became public or formalized. There is a significant amount of evidence indicating that the president had made his decisions before the formal review had finished reporting.

A tremendous amount of work and posturing occurred prior to the public, formal review. During the summer and early fall of 2006 numerous reviews took place in multiple venues; nearly all of them were confidential and none were inter-agency. This occurred for many reasons; the Bush Administration's emphasis on consensus was

among them. Because the difficult questioning of a strategic review was unlikely to produce wide spread agreement, the culture within the national security community inhibited open – and uncomfortable – questioning of the status quo. Holders of unpopular or seemingly untenable positions kept quiet unless they had ample protection or believed that a critical mass of support existed.

Unlike the first case – Iraq war planning – the 2006 Iraq strategic review did not begin with an overt campaign for engagement. No single individual advocated for a review in any NSC meetings or public exchanges. Instead, numerous players in various agencies believed a change was needed. The ideas of a strategic review and course correction percolated within various areas of the bureaucracy. These positions became increasingly dissonant against the timbre of the dominant military voices.

Over the spring and summer of 2006 combat commanders continued to express confidence in the status quo; General Casey pressed the need for accelerated training and withdrawal. CENTCOM commander General Abizaid continued to support the combat commander's position, even though he reported the worst violence he had seen in the war. Secretary Rumsfeld continued to support and advocate for the status quo, even though his political capital was waning rapidly; he proved to be relatively impotent over the course of the review.

President Bush, meanwhile, developed a culture within civil-military relations that made it difficult for him to challenge the commanders' positions. His leadership style set a well-established precedent: he would not micro-manage, challenge, or deny support to what the military deemed necessary. This inevitably created tension when those military leaders maintained a stance that caused the president consternation. Thus, an

apparent paradox developed: highly subjective civil-military relations complemented by a deferential commander in chief after the orders were given.

This style further inhibited real, substantive, challenging debates of the status quo. However, this did not mean that the president and his staff didn't grow concerned. Process tracing provides multiple examples of President Bush expressing displeasure to his closest staff and White House advisers. He became increasingly willing to challenge General Casey over the course of the summer's video-conferences. Ultimately, the combat commander openly acknowledged the president's displeasure and assumed he was on borrowed time. Conversely, the closeness and exclusivity of the White House staff ultimately afforded President Bush the opportunity to begin a confidential review, internally.

By requesting an appraisal by NSA Hadley in late August, Bush incited a strategy review while maintaining the consensus-focused national security and civil-military apparatuses. Hadley was the president's choice for three reasons. First, the man had a remarkably close relationship with President Bush, establishing a high degree of trust and camaraderie. Second, it was well known that Hadley and his staff held strong opinions in regards to strategy in Iraq. They felt that a change was needed; Hadley was an appropriate voice for reform. Third, as national security advisor, Stephen Hadley was able to use established resources in order to review and engage the military's position.

The war's trajectory, the taboo nature of openly challenging the status quo, the subdued nature of the president's displeasure, and his confidential request for a review all contributed to a civil-military/national security apparatus that was disoriented by fall 2006. However, a plurality of players acknowledged the problems at hand. As such,

many secretive strategy reviews were begun in multiple corners of government. The State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (with their "Council of Colonels"), and various intelligence agencies were outlining the current situation and creating possible solutions.

All of these efforts were isolated and lacked integration. In one instance, Chairman Pace and Secretary Rice held a meeting because they had heard rumblings of each other's reviews but wanted to confirm. Even the review Hadley initially headed was pursued without direct assistance from the OSD or Pentagon as a whole. This led to one of the more startling moments of the case study: Luti's report included comprehensive military recommendations without any input from the DoD or direct knowledge of the Pentagon.

All of the nascent reviews of late summer and early fall proved to be overtures for the coming, formal review. Increasingly comprehensive and integrated reports were published as the weeks and month drew on. By mid-September, one of the most influential players in the strategy review began engaging the civilian principals. Retired Army General Jack Keane approached multiple civilian and military leaders. Keane proved to be a significant catalyst and conduit throughout the strategic review. He advocated a line that Hadley and his staff agreed with: increased troop numbers and pivot towards counter-insurgency strategy.

Keane's participation epitomized the type of frequent, informal correspondence that occurred throughout the latter half of this case. Towards the very end of the strategy review Keane travelled numerous times to Iraq, spoke with various candidates for military leadership in theater, and helped shepherd the implementation of COIN strategy within civilian as well as military circles. This was a role that was informal, exceptional,

and a hindrance to the established procedures within national security/civil-military relations. Keane's role as a conduit of information to military officials in various locations in the chain of command helped compel a strategy change despite the culture of consensus. The retired general ferried information and stage-managed a change in military leadership in a way that avoided overt tension within the principal-level leadership. In so doing, President Bush's leadership style and policy preferences were satisfied despite an appearance of mutual exclusivity. As such, Keane's role was extraordinarily shrewd and effective.

Meanwhile, Secretary Rumsfeld was not a significant player in this case study. His political capital waned significantly through his tenure. After the mid-term elections, he submitted his resignation. Throughout the summer and even after his resignation, however, Rumsfeld consistently backed the combat commanders' opinions. He acknowledged oversights on his part but did not waver in promoting the status quo strategy of training and leaving as soon as possible. This may have contributed further to his political impotence within the administration.

Issues around OSD and civil-military relations existed well before 2006. The Iraq Study Group even noted that a "new Secretary of Defense should make every effort to build healthy civil-military relations, by creating an environment in which the senior military feel free to offer independent advice not only to the civilian leadership in the Pentagon but also to the President and the National Security Council."[369] What existed during this case was anything but healthy and, perhaps, unequal to a fault. End runs were attempted as the number of participants grew. However, the amount of posturing and

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[369] Desch, Michael C. "Bush and the Generals," pg. 97.

decision making that occurred in secret – prior to the formal review – bolstered the White House and NSC and maintained subjective civil control of the military.

NSA Hadley filled the power vacuum that developed with Rumsfeld's decline and resignation. Hadley's influence increased throughout the case and expanded with Rumsfeld's departure, followed swiftly by the public formalization of the strategy review on 10 November. His overtly pro-COIN stance influenced the policy discussion. Hadley acted as custodian of the review and policy adviser to the president, simultaneously. This did not change even when more players were brought into the process. His influence benefited from Keane's participation, especially when it came to preparing the military for the coming decision.

Meanwhile, part of the reason the civil-military relationship changed so little when the formal review commenced was that most of the pressing decisions were made before the process began. That is, a significant amount was decided during the confidential period of the review. Very little discussion occurred and even less of the military's majority position was acknowledged. The combat commander's recommendations were openly disqualified, the chairman's "Council of Colonels" effort was diluted and dismissed, and the Joint Chiefs felt even more marginalized than during the Iraq war planning.

The service chiefs' frustrations were significant enough that – like during the first case – a meeting in the "Tank" was held. This event allowed the Joint Chiefs to express their concerns about the events and path the civilians were implementing. It proved to be a moment of simultaneous military acquiescence and civilian accommodation with certain "sweeteners" that would satisfy some of the branches' concerns. However, like

the first case study, in this instance the civilian approach to the service chiefs was a formalized afterthought rather than a deliberate priority.

Civilian subjectivity was overt throughout the entire process, perhaps no more so than when President Bush, his national security staff, and Jack Keane worked in tandem to reorganize the combat command leadership. After President Bush decided that NSA Hadley, his staff, and Keane were correct, the civilian leadership began vetting candidates for a military leadership change. Throughout that process they contacted various officers directly, bypassing numerous levels of the chain of command.

They cherry-picked General Petraeus based on his experience and body of work. They communicated directly with General Odierno and requested work related to the review while he was serving under General Casey, in theater. These and other moves created tension between the civilians and military; Casey complained that his authority was being subverted while he was still being asked to enforce the current strategy. However, most of the tension played out within the military ranks themselves. Keane was particularly influential during this stage of the review. His networking, military professional experience, and ability to travel frequently to Iraq allowed him to serve the NSC's and president's wishes.

Ultimately, the strategy that was decided upon and implemented was closest to the stances held by particular civilians in the civil-military relationship. Specifically, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and his staff held the position that was ultimately augmented by retired General Jack Keane: surge of troops and pivot to COIN strategy. In fact, the idea of implementing said strategy was never raised or presented by the top tier active duty military professionals. As a retired Army general, Jack Keane was

a military voice of sorts. His role certainly helped bolster the civilian's minority opinion. However, as a retired officer, he was officially a civilian at the time of this case study. Meanwhile, the position did co-opt key voices and published positions that existed within other circles of the military.

As mentioned earlier, a significant amount of posturing and review occurred before the formal, public strategic review began. This was for various reasons outlined above, but the result was striking. A minority opinion was developed within an otherwise consensus-focused environment. Minimal time was given for alternatives or aggressive review, but a response to the combat commander's – and by extension, Pentagon and OSD's – position was submitted. This led to a substantial change in strategy. It also occurred within a tense, uneven civil-military relationship.

The top combat commander eventually acknowledged that he had lost credibility in the president's eyes. The Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed mounting frustration over various grand strategic concerns; they also felt slighted during most of the review. The most significant attempt by the Pentagon to review the current strategy – the "Council of Colonels" – saw its report diluted and shelved. The secretary of defense had minimal credibility for myriad reasons, not the least of which being his decision to side with the combat commanders with whom President Bush disagreed; Secretary Rumsfeld's ultimate resignation was the final out. Meanwhile, the most influential NSC reports were authored without formal military assistance.

All of these examples indicate the type of civil-military relationship that existed up and through the second case study. When the formalized strategy review eventually commenced, President Bush delegated a significant amount of his leadership role to NSA

Hadley. The NSC maintained orderly process organization during a rapid, exclusive, and secretive event. From the start the deck was stacked towards a particular outcome, significant amounts of posturing had already occurred, and there is evidence that the president had already made up his mind. Through the formal strategy review, meanwhile, subjective control was maintained through ordered process and despite delegated presidential leadership.

Chapter Five

Case Three: Strategy Review – Afghanistan (2009)

Throughout his presidential campaign Barack Obama relayed a recurring theme: Iraq was a distraction and the necessary fight was in Afghanistan. He promised to refocus the country's military and foreign policy efforts on the central Asian theater if he was elected. Furthermore, he promised that his administration's priority would be to destroy Al Qaeda wherever it resided and to defeat the Taliban. Upon election the president continued to publically emphasize the importance of the war in Afghanistan. In a matter of weeks, an opportunity arose for President Obama to put his campaign promises and posturing into practice. Events on the ground, decisions within the principal civilian leadership, and concerns voiced by senior military officials catapulted the young president towards a path of strategic consequence and decision-making.

From mid-winter through late fall 2009, the Obama Administration was compelled to deal with rapidly changing –situations in Afghanistan. The actions of the president, his staff, and the military leadership under his command ultimately led to a full strategic review that was unprecedented in that part of the world. Within weeks of his inauguration President Obama ordered a review of the Afghanistan campaign. He also took significant steps to reestablish the NSC structures that were weakened under

President Bush. The president may have believed that these actions and his decision for an immediate mini-surge would stabilize Afghanistan. He may not have. Regardless, that outcome was not to be. In a few month's time shake ups within the military leadership and sharp increases of violence would force Obama to deal with Afghanistan directly and comprehensively.

The goal of this case study is to describe and define the civil-military relationship between President Obama, his principal level of civilian advisors, and the top-tier of military leadership throughout the 2009 Afghanistan-Pakistan strategic review. The case spans from early February 2009 – when the Riedel review was commissioned – through the beginning of December 2009 – when the new strategy was announced. It was during this window that multiple strategic reviews and major policy decisions were debated. From the Riedel review through the changing of military commander in Afghanistan and ultimately the full AfPak strategic review, this case study delves into the interpersonal and bureaucratic relationships that influenced strategic decision. Questions that are posed include: What catalyzed the decision to undertake the strategic reviews? Which personalities led the reviews? What structures were used to influence the civil-military relationship throughout the strategic review(s)? What was the decision-making process and how was it organized?

The author shows through process tracing that the AfPak review contained the most contentious open debates of the three cases studies. One reason for this was that a larger number of individuals and bureaucratic offices/institutions influenced the review (ie. NSC, vice president's office, Department of State, Department of Defense, CENTCOM commander, and field commanders). What's more, the players used a great

many means of communication and avenues of power in order to influence the decision making process. Some of these included end runs to legislators as well as the media. This made the strategic review the most publicly contentious of the three herein.

An argument is made that this review involved the most emboldened and influential National Security Council of the three case studies. This is due to President Obama's deliberate effort to re-energize the NSC both structurally and from a personnel/staffing perspective. The president's active efforts to promote intense, open debate propelled multiple players and positions into the strategic review, thus allowing – and, indeed, requiring – the NSC to choreograph the national security discussions. This shuffling of influence within a zero-sum civil-military relationship inevitably decreased the power ratio of the military professionals involved. The dynamic created a contentious environment. The military leadership responded, in kind, by forcibly and publically arguing its position; end runs, public statements, and briefing the president's legislative opponents were some of the tactics used.

Ultimately this case study reveals that the AfPak strategic review saw a purer, theoretical form of subjective civil-military control than those preceding it. The subjective control was enacted through a very orderly process organization. The NSC was the center of the strategic debate and perpetuated an open as well as highly inclusive review. Highly engaged presidential leadership complemented this process organization. President Obama and his staff immersed themselves in the strategy review. They actively participated throughout the entire process, aggressively worked to choreograph its stages, and intently preserved their authority throughout the process.

While the previous case studies reveal a great deal of subjective civilian influence, there had been a significant amount of deference given to military authorities. As such, civilian policy makers made it a habit of co-opting military voices that agreed with their positions. This maneuver legitimized their arguments and allowed them to more successfully enact their will when engaging with military opponents who had tremendous professional credibility and influence.

In this case study, meanwhile, the president used his rank – as commander in chief – and the calendar in order to bend the military professionals' influence. As such, much of this case study will reveal an open power struggle to shift the civil-military relationship, to the benefit of a young, inexperienced Democratic president. Ultimately President Obama decided on a plan that was closer to the military's recommendations than his own starting point. However, Obama's emphasis on process and his determined effort to enforce subjective military control led to a decision on his terms. The method of this process and the structural changes therein were as significant as the decisions that were made.

One should note that the AfPak review was an ambitious and wide ranging strategic exercise. The author will focus exclusively on the aspects of the strategic review that dealt with the military's operational planning within Afghanistan. As such, the review of policy vis-à-vis Pakistan, the development of expanded drone operations, and various aspects of the civilian surge will not be discussed. This decision was made in light of the scope of this thesis, the relatively small number of available sources at this time, and the length of the overall project.

Process Tracing

Obama's Emphasis on Process and the Early Power Players

Many individuals who have reported on or served in the Obama administration have repeatedly noted the president's consistent focus on process and procedure. President Obama made it a top priority to develop, enact, and maintain clear, codified rules of decision-making. Foreign policy and civil-military relations were no exception. Obama immersed himself in minutest details of policy posturing. In one instance he huddled with Vice President Biden and wrote out exactly what he wanted him to say during a *Meet the Press* interview.[370]

Obama's immersion went beyond simple public interviews, however. Internally he demanded contact and updates with his closest circle of advisors. One of these men – Dennis McDonough – is quoted as saying, "Regular order is your friend;" this mirrored the president's emphasis on organization.[371] One way in which President Obama enacted these priorities was by signing Presidential Directive 1 on 23 February 2009.[372] This document significantly expanded the National Security Council's size and authority; the body had atrophied greatly under the Bush administration. President Obama also reincorporated various principals and cabinet level officials into the NSC community's active policy discussions. The attorney general, UN ambassador, and others were welcomed back into the consequential fray.

The decision to resurrect the NSC immediately amplified civilian policymakers' ability to choreograph and influence civil-military relations. With the national security

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[370] Crowley, Michael. "The Decider: Who Runs U.S. Foreign Policy?" *New Republic*. 12 Aug 2009: 24-27. Print. pg. 24.
[371] *Ibid*. pg. 24.
[372] *Ibid*. pg. 25.

advisor and supporting civilian staff preparing agendas and issuing directives, the military had to answer to an established, highly network, authoritative body. Furthermore, the total number of players contributing to the national security conversation increased. As such, NSA Jones affirmed that the processes were "extraordinarily inclusive" and that "no one [got] left out."[373] The NSC quickly became the nexus of civil-military and national security related issues. Thomas Donilon, the deputy national security advisor, immediately began overseeing the integration of structures and participants; he regularly led up to four deputy level meetings a day as the administration made a concerted effort to include myriad players.[374]

President Obama's efforts to expand, consolidate, and amplify civilian influence upon national security occurred at a time when whisper campaigns implied that retired General James Jones – the National Security Advisor – was aloof and not fit for the position.[375] While Secretary Gates supported Jones, there were numerous players – mainly within the military – that did not care for him and believed his mannerisms indicated significant leadership flaws. Regardless of this and Jones' relatively distant report with the president, he maintained an effective relationship with Obama. That being said, few if any people shared the confidence and access to President Obama that McDonough and Mark Lippert – two veterans of the campaign. As such, President Obama's immediate advisors and the NSC maintained the two most significant levels of foreign policy influence early in 2009.[376]

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[373] *Ibid*. pg. 26.
[374] Various other efforts were put in place. Crowley mentions that a weekly meeting on Afghanistan remained on the NSC's schedule. Furthermore, the NSC wrote up and distributed meeting summaries within 24 hours of each event. These were distributed to all players so that they could stay up to speed.
[375] Crowley, Michael. "The Decider: Who Runs U.S. Foreign Policy?" pg. 25.
[376] Secretary of Defense Robert Gates also had great influence on President Obama early in the administration. Obama deferred to his opinion on numerous occasions and seemed to respect his tempered,

Take One: The Riedel Review and "Mini-Surge"

Within weeks of his inauguration President Barack Obama took action to change the course of the Afghanistan War. Sometime in late January or early February he contacted Bruce Riedel, a renowned and respected – albeit it retired – CIA analyst at the Brookings Institution.[377] Riedel was an expert on the region and had advised Obama through his presidential campaign.[378] The president asked him to lead a 60-day review of the nation's policies vis-à-vis Afghanistan and Pakistan.[379] By 2 February Riedel responded to the request and told NSA Jones he would accept the job. However, because the principals meeting at which he'd present the report was a short time away, in actuality Riedel had only two to three weeks to prepare the summary report.

Riedel was not alone in his efforts, meanwhile. Lt Gen Douglas Lute (ret.), Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Afghanistan-Pakistan; Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; General David Petraeus, CENTCOM commander; Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and their respective staffs assisted on the report.[380] Together, these individuals executed what was, in fact, a review first initiated under President Bush during the previous summer; it had not been completed. However, this report was unique in that it included the first, full review of foreign policy regarding Pakistan in decades. Meanwhile, President Obama had

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deliberate, and cerebral manner. Gates also maintained the advantage of having a long and illustrious resume. As such, the president and some other principals – most notably Secretary of State Hillary Clinton – respected and even courted his opinion. This was despite the opinions of some Obama advisors, whom the president went so far as to chide for their reticence towards Gates. Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010. pg. 232.

[377] Mann, James. *The Obamians*. New York: Viking, 2012. Kindle ebook file. 29%.

[378] Kaplan, Fred. "The End Of The Age Of Petraeus." *Foreign Affairs* 92.1 (2013): 75-90. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 11 Jan. 2013.

[379] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2010. pg. 88.

[380] Coll, Steve. "The New Afghanistan Strategy." *The New Yorker*. 30 March 2009. Web. 30 July 2012.

asked for three separate war assessments prior to being elected.[381] Each of these – from Lute, Mullen, and Petraeus – gave differing pictures of the war. This experience increased the president's inclination to undertake the Riedel review.

Riedel was a strong proponent of counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy and conveyed this in his book, *The Search for al Qaeda*. According to multiple descriptions of his review, the report he presented to President Obama was a re-hashing of that book's thesis rather than an in-depth analysis of the current facts on the ground.[382] NSA Jones, Secretary Gates, and Admiral Mullen reviewed an early draft of Riedel's report on Wednesday 11 March. In it, the author proposed a broadened campaign in Afghanistan and a simultaneous shift of focus to Pakistan.[383] He wrote, "The goal is to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda and its extremist allies, their support structures and their safe havens in Pakistan and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan." His ambitious and expensive recommendations included the option to fully resource COIN strategy with civilian and military surges.

The next day NSA Jones met with the rest of the NSC principals to present Riedel's latest draft.[384] During this meeting Vice President Biden argued what would become his well-known position in regards to Afghanistan: "historical" invaders proved success was futile, the focus should be on Al Qaeda in Pakistan, and a form of enhanced counterterror (CT) that he dubbed "CT plus" could suffice. Secretary Clinton argued that

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[381] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. New York: Knopf, 2012. Kindle ebook file. 15%.
[382] Mann, James. *The Obamians*. Kindle ebook file. 29%.
[383] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 99.
[384] *Ibid*. pg. 101.

sustained COIN would be best while Secretary Gates agreed with Riedel, though with not as much tangible fervor as the secretary of state.[385]

Jones' recommendation was a qualified and tempered one; this was in light of the simultaneous troop deployment decisions being enacted by the president. That is, in early February Admiral Mullen presented a request for an increase of troops in Afghanistan; the primary reasoning being that more support was needed for the upcoming presidential election.[386] General Petraeus, as CENTCOM commander, was campaigning for 30,000 more troops and a "protect the population strategy" that had significant COIN undertones. When the requests were submitted to the president, however, Deputy NSA Thomas Donilon challenged the figures and asked questions about their make-up. Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, USMC General James Cartwright, doubled back to reassess the numbers and answer the NSC's questions. Soon Donilon was aggressively challenging the requests and belittling the military officers with whom he was in contact.[387] This escalated when Admiral Mullen made a trip to the White House to tell the deputy NSA to calm down and stop encroaching on the military's area of expertise: numbers.

On Friday 13 February President Obama met with the NSC and NSA Jones to review the four options presented to them. These included waiting for Riedel to complete his review, send seventeen thousand troops immediately, send the same number in two deployments, or send twenty seven thousand troops, thus fulfilling a request from the

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[385] *Ibid*. pg. 101-102.
[386] *Ibid*. pg. 94.
[387] Donilon is quoted as having said, in regards to the troop requests, "Unacceptable. Do over. You know what? We're starting all over again. You guys want this decision today, but you can't get the numbers straight." *Ibid*. pg. 95.

ground commander, General David McKiernan.[388] Riedel was present at the meeting and told the president that if additional troops were not sent to Afghanistan the presidential election would most likely need to be delayed.[389] Such a capitulation to security degradation would greatly hinder allied efforts there.

The following Monday President Obama ordered the immediate deployment of seventeen thousand troops to Afghanistan. The public announcement was made the next day, Tuesday 17 February, after a significant attack on allied forces there.[390] The forces would include a Marine expeditionary brigade and Army Stryker brigade, per McKiernan's request and Gate's recommendation.[391]

The troop review and deployment all occurred while Riedel was in the process of writing his report. The simultaneous events made it difficult for Riedel to give an assessment that would remain accurate for a sustained period of time. It also presented challenges for the president's advisors. Fluctuations made it difficult to offer recommendations. During the 13 March principals meeting Jones hedged his recommendation and gave three options, since seventeen thousand more soldiers would be on their way to Afghanistan in the near future. NSA Jones suggested CT "lite," which included no more troops; an additional four thousand trainers for the Afghan army, per McKiernan, Petraeus, and Gates; or a ramp up to full COIN with another one hundred thousand troops.[392]

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[388] *Ibid*. pg. 96, 98.
[389] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 15%.
[390] Mann, James. *The Obamians*. Kindle ebook file. 29%.
[391] Hendrickson, Ryan C. "War Powers in the Obama Administration." *Contemporary Security Policy* 31:2 (2010): 204-224. Web. 29 July 2012. pg. 215.
[392] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 102-103.

Five days later, on 17 March, the NSC principals met again with the goal of deciding on a recommendation for the president. They decided that sending an additional four thousand trainers to Afghanistan – per the ground commander's, CENTCOM commander's, and secretary of defense's recommendation – would be the best course of action.[393] One day later, Riedel flew to California with President Obama aboard Air Force One so that the president could ask him questions as he read his report.[394] Thus, a review was being processed after a force increase had just recently been approved and additional recommendations were being consolidated by a separate group of civilian advisors. The moment was one of the most dissonant and chaotic moments of what would become a year of Obama's Afghanistan strategic review.

Troop Approval, Commander Change, and a Devolving Summer

On 20 March President Obama was present at a NSC meeting during which the principals reviewed Riedel's report. The document was forty-four pages long and – due to time constraints – lacked "wide consultation, field visits, or rigorous analysis."[395] By meeting's end Obama approved the additional four thousand trainers. He also stated that he'd review General McKiernan's additional troop request "after the election" in August.[396] In the president's mind Afghanistan policy was set for approximately five months.

Over the next two months, however, Admiral Mullen became increasingly concerned that General David McKiernan was not the right man for the job. The Afghanistan commander's career was mainly focused around armored combat

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[393] *Ibid*. pg. 103.
[394] *Ibid*. pg. 104-105.
[395] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 15%.
[396] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 114.

experience. As such, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was concerned that McKiernan lacked the appropriate knowledge and skill sets required for Afghanistan's tactical environment.[397] Gates shared Mullen's concerns; McKiernan's fumbled performances in early spring videoconferences did not allay any of their fears.[398] Eventually the chairman and secretary brought their concerns to President Obama and convinced him that a change needed to be made. The president gave the okay to remove General McKiernan.

In early May 2009 Admiral Mullen traveled to Afghanistan and asked the commander in Afghanistan to resign from his post. It was an exceptionally rare move. The equivalent action had not occurred since Truman's firing of MacArthur during the Korean conflict. However, McKiernan responded with bluster, saying that he would have to be fired. The challenge was met with superior authority and on 11 May Secretary Gates announced that General McKiernan was removed as commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan; Gates named General David McChrystal the new combat commander.[399]

The decision to remove a combat commander in the middle of a war sent reverberations throughout the military. Not only had Obama and his administration acted boldly to change the military's dynamics in theater, they had also taken clear ownership of the current structures and trajectory of the fight. However, the decision also served to embolden the remaining generals. That is, since the firing was so rare, exceptional, and impactful upon civil-military dynamics, it was highly unlikely that more top-level

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[397] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 367.
[398] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 15%.
[399] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 119.

command changes would occur again soon. Many top-tier military leaders felt as though they were now safe from retribution and could be more assertive with civilian policy makers.[400] If this sentiment was pervasive, it certainly would explain the civil-military relationship in the coming months.

Immediately after McChrystal's assignment the general began making public statements about the war. A significant portion of these – including his initial ones – were by necessity; as the combat commander he was compelled to testify at his confirmation hearing, handle press coverage, and maintain a relatively public role. Other public interactions were by choice and were often fraught with civil-military consequences.

On 2 June General McChrystal testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee for his confirmation hearing. He conveyed skepticism about the status quo in Afghanistan and used language that suggested a need for escalation.[401] NSA Jones perceived the general's testimony as a military attempt to increase troop numbers. He contacted Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, reminding them that they had just finished the Riedel review and were still implementing the winter troop increase. Gates said that more conversations were needed and that the possibility for amplified efforts was on the horizon.[402] It was unwelcome news to the president and his NSC staff.

Four days later, while traveling with the president to Normandy in commemoration of D-Day, Jones called Gates and suggested a way to silence McChrystal, thus punting any strategic review for the near term. The national security advisor suggested that they order the general to complete a commander's assessment of

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[400] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 367.
[401] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 123.
[402] *Ibid*. pg. 123.

the war in Afghanistan.[403] The task would take sixty days and require McChrystal to focus on determining the tactical as well as strategic realities of the war rather than campaign for immediate changes. Furthermore, the effort would create more order within the decision making process – something that the president and his immediate advisors greatly coveted. On 8 June, Geoff Morrell – the Pentagon's press secretary – announced that General McChrystal was beginning a two-month, "ground-eye view" assessment that would ultimately mold "what changes in the strategy should be made."[404]

The intentions of the assessment order did not translate into explicit directions. The report's purview was never made clear and the decisions on how to direct McChrystal were made by Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen.[405] Consequently, this allowed the general significant leeway and shifted the report from a civilian instigated braking process to a military defined strategic paper.

Over the course of the summer, members of the NSC worked to translate Obama's troop decision and the Riedel review into explicit orders. There was a fair amount of politicking and power play that occurred, too, as Obama's advisors attempted to flank less familiar (and military-linked) NSC staffers, such as Senior Advisor and Coordinator on Afghanistan-Pakistan Lt Gen Douglas Lute (ret.).[406] As Lute and others were drafting the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) and other orders based on

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[403] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 17%. Also cited in: Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 124. However, it is important to note that according to Jonathan Alter, the idea was initially raised by Secretary Gates during a White House meeting in June. He noted that it was McChrystal's idea and the new combat commander thought "he should do a full-blown report and tell you what's happening because things are worse than Stan thought they were." Biden immediately expressed skepticism but Obama ultimately okayed the project and it expanded to include not simply a report of status but also recommendations on actions to be taken. Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 371.
[404] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 125.
[405] Alter, Jonathan. "Secrets from Inside the Obama War Room," *The Daily Beast.* Newsweek. 15 May 2010. Web. 4 Aug 2012. pg. 2.
[406] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 144-145.

Obama's winter decisions, Gates suggested language that would significantly broaden the war goals. The secretary of defense suggested that Riedel's goal – "disrupt" the Taliban – should be changed to "defeat." Lute and others were very concerned that this would inexorably deepen and lengthen the campaign in Afghanistan. This and other debates continued throughout the summer as McChrystal continued his report and numerous players placed varying importance on the language involved. A strategic review continued to simmer.

While posturing continued on both sides of the civil-military relationship, casualty counts in Afghanistan mounted. By July the KIA figures were approaching one hundred a month; this was quadruple what they were in April.[407] Troop levels were still increasing and most players on the civilian side believed it was too early to reassess. Strategic approaches were tweaked, however. For example, a new body was created at CENTCOM: the Afghanistan-Pakistan Center of Excellence. This helped promote the conceptualization of the two countries as a single, larger strategic environment.[408] There were also efforts to blunt the military's influence on national security discussions. Obama's advisors believed that the combat commanders held too much influence during Bush's tenure and that weekly videoconferences with generals in the field conveyed too much deference.[409] There were deliberate efforts to decrease that military tier's access to policymaking and the civilian decision makers. The White House continued to bolster civilian subjective control by way of structural changes to the civil-military relationship.

[407] Davis, John. *The Barack Obama Presidency: A Two Year Assessment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. pg. 201.

[408] Rajaee, Bahram M. & Mark Miller. *National Security under the Obama Adminstration*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012. pg. 39.

[409] Indyk, Martin S., Kenneth G. Lieberthal, & Michael E. O'Hanlon. *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012. pg. 89.

McChrystal's Report and a New Strategy Review Begins

On 30 August McChrystal's report was submitted to Secretary Gates.[410] Over the course of writing his commander's assessment, McChrystal came to believe that a great many operations in Afghanistan were distractions from what was required to win. He wanted to focus on Khandahar and other urban centers, but many military and civilian efforts were scattered throughout the large country. General McChrystal found that only a fraction of the seventeen thousand new troops were being used for security, despite the original letter and spirit of the orders.[411] The general's consternation manifested itself in his report's recommendations. McChrystal and his small support staff forecasted a dire situation if drastic changes were not taken.

Because the combat commander and officers around him wrote the report – rather than outsourcing it to a think tank originally intended as the author – McChrystal had tremendous influence on its contents.[412] He wrote that American troops were too "pre-occupied" with their own security and "operated in a manner that distances us – physically and psychologically – from the people we seek to protect."[413] Victory, in a more traditional sense, would require upwards of eighty thousand more troops, another decade of open commitment, and another trillion dollars.

The general's conclusions were drastic. They shocked many civilian advisors. Obama's appointed combat commander was suggesting a massive escalation in a war that his advisors had no intention of perpetuating. In less than a week, General Petraeus contacted Michael Gerson of the *Washington Post* and helped source an impassioned

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[410] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 372.

[411] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 27%.

[412] *Ibid*. 21-22%.

[413] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 372.

rebuttal to David Ignatius' earlier op-ed eschewing escalation.[414] Gerson – a former Bush speechwriter and stalwart of neo-conservative foreign policy – subsequently argued for a fully supported COIN strategy in Afghanistan. The end run by Petraeus – going outside the inner circle and emboldening a former Bush staffer – enraged President Obama and made his Chief of Staff – Rahm Emanuel – livid.[415]

The military did not limit its outside contact to the press. In fact, there were multiple top tier military officers who communicated with GOP legislators throughout the strategy review. For example, General Petraeus held "regular conversations" with Senator Lindsey Graham throughout the fall.[416] The Republican senator from South Carolina was an Air Force Reserve colonel. The two men had a cordial relationship and the CENTCOM commander respected the senator. According to sources the men spoke about the strategy review, specifically, and Graham often counseled Petraeus on how the White House would attempt to engage the military. He mentioned that Obama would try to decrease the country's presence in Afghanistan and "water it down."[417]

While it appears a plurality of their conversations were positively reinforcing, Petraeus did tell the senator when he thought that Graham was miscommunicating McChrystal's positions and being too bellicose with his public remarks.[418] Likewise, Admiral Mullen visited with Senator Graham in the fall and described the civil-military dynamics of the review. He told the senator that the relationship was healthy, the discussions were good, and that there was no reason to fret over the decision making. As

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[414] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 157-158.
[415] Alter, Jonathan. "Secrets from Inside the Obama War Room," pg. 2.
[416] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 205.
[417] *Ibid*. pg. 206.
[418] After Petraeus communicated the latter point, Lindsey Graham calmed his speech and became less confrontational when critiquing Obama's review publicly. *Ibid*. pg. 205.

such, it appears as though the military's contacts with the Republican senator were beneficial to both parties as well as both sides of the civil-military relationship.

Meanwhile, President Obama desired an exclusive, confidential, meticulous process inside the walls of the White House. These conversations went against those preferences. However, it appears as though the conversations did not benefit one side more than the other. Furthermore, it must be noted that one of the president's closest advisors spoke to Senator Graham about the review, as well. Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, spoke to the Republican senator about the president's leanings as the decision came closer.[419] Whether this was to temper the GOP's critiques or mute the military's influence is unclear.

Shortly after Gerson's op-ed, the White House asked that the Pentagon press secretary be the point person for all future military communications. Obama's advisors also made moves to quiet General Petraeus directly.[420] However, the military's maneuvers, lack of progress in theater, McChrystal's report, and public ambivalence about the state of Afghanistan had their effects on the policy process. Within days, the Obama administration prepared to initiate a new strategic review of the war. The players scrambled to consolidate and present their positions. Obama asked specific individuals to act as pillars for certain arguments.[421] Others – including NSA Jones – thought the exercise was premature and complained "we're about to change the strategy before

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[419] The *New York Times* mentions a conversation that Emanuel had with Graham in November. The chief of staff told the Senator that President Obama was inclined to approve a troop surge "that began with 3." Graham responded by saying that as long as the generals were okay with the decision he would not openly oppose it. Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." *The New York Times*. 6 December 2009. Web. 4 Aug 2012. pg. 8.

[420] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 159.

[421] According to Woodward, the president went to Vice President Biden and asked him to press hard with his "counterterrorism-plus" position. Biden and his national security advisor – Antony Blinken – prepped thoroughly for the first meeting. *Ibid*. pg. 160.

evaluating the product of the first decision."[422] NSA Jones also emphasized that procedure was the key to the review. He stressed, "every time you go outside the box – the National Security Council process – we lose."[423] This would be a mantra that Obama and the civilians would embrace throughout.

The First Meeting and Start of Leaks

On Sunday 13 September sixteen advisors met in the Situation Room at the White House for the first strategy review meeting. What would be a highly methodical and publicly fought process began in secret; the meeting wasn't initially made public.[424] All NSC principals were in attendance except for CIA director Leon Panetta; General Petraeus was not invited, either.[425] President Obama read McChrystal's full 66-page report before the meeting and noted that it offered no easy options going forward.

After an extended intelligence briefing on Afghanistan and Pakistan, President Obama made a number of clear points. He emphasized his desire for "a consensus about the essential facts on the ground."[426] From there he initiated discussion on a series of fundamental questions about the war. His hope was to identify any assumptions that were going unchallenged. Admiral Mullen was tasked to present a briefing on McChrystal's report and the status of Afghanistan both tactically and strategically. President Obama then opened the table for what amounted to opening statements from the principals. Most of the attendees spent time presenting their opinions about the strategy review.

Broadly speaking the principal players were firm in their positions and had consolidated their arguments. President Obama campaigned at length about the war's

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[422] *Ibid*. pg. 160-161.
[423] *Ibid*. pg. 161.
[424] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 3.
[425] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 161.
[426] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 373.

necessity; he said that he would refocus the campaign and assure strategic victory. However, he and his closest advisors were inclined to find their way towards the exits as soon as possible. In their eyes the war in Afghanistan was a drain on blood and treasure. It also acted as a political distraction to a variety of domestic priorities. NSA Jones, meanwhile, found Obama's close advisors to be abrasive, relatively unchallenged by Obama, and too influential. Jones was particularly skeptical of Rahm Emanuel, David Axelrod, Robert Gibbs, Denis McDonough, and Mark Lippert; the national security advisor had dubbed them "the water bugs," the "politburo," and the "mafia."[427] This tension would present itself during various points of the NSC's strategy review.

Vice President Biden was extremely skeptical of the military leadership's inclination to escalate. He was also quite pessimistic of what could be accomplished. Biden was quite experienced in foreign policy. As such, he and his national security team created an argument for amplified counter-terror operations that they called "CT-plus."[428] The vice president also thought that the United States' strategic focus should remain on Al Qaeda and, by extension, Pakistan.

Secretary Gates had, by this point, come to agree with the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman's and the combat commander's assessment of Afghanistan. As a relatively quiet yet remarkably experienced and influential cabinet member, he compelled the group to consider McChrystal's recommendation.[429] Secretary Clinton, meanwhile, was in the middle of a pivot that would eventually put her in alliance with the secretary of defense. She would come to heartily support versions of a surge that employed COIN and

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[427] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 137-138.

[428] *Ibid*. pg. 101-102. Further description of the "CT-plus" plan can be found here: *Ibid*. pg. 159-160.

[429] *Ibid*. pg. 156. Secretary Gates also appeared to have a good deal of influence upon President Obama from the outset of the administration. There are reports that the president deferred to his judgment early on. It is clear from strategy review meeting accounts that Obama did appreciate and deep consider Gates' opinions. Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 232.

were – for the most part – what Gates was also promoting.[430] General Petraeus, meanwhile, was fully supportive of McChrystal's report, troop request, and the continued implementation of COIN theory.[431]

General Lute, who was in attendance, briefed Petraeus the next day on the meeting. They both believed that Admiral Mullen was fully supportive of McChrystal's recommendations and that Secretary Gates was shifting solidly to their positions, as well.[432] That same day, meanwhile, Senators Graham, Lieberman, and McCain published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* where they strongly supported escalation and "decisive force" in Afghanistan. It was a jab at Obama's current course and an endorsement – however direct or incidental – of the military's position. What's more, McChrystal contacted them prior to the publishing and told them he preferred seven to eight additional brigades. It was a clear power play by elements of the Pentagon.[433]

A week later there was uproar at the White House when the *Washington Post* published a leaked copy of McChrystal's report. The civilians were certain that the military leaked the document, since its dire language and explicit recommendations for escalation were right in line with their positions.[434] Obama and his civilian advisors threatened to fire whoever leaked the document, if the perpetrator was identified.[435] It was a stark moment in which, as Obama would later admit in an interview, the president

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[430] There are reports, furthermore, that indicate Secretary Clinton's deference to President Obama from the outset. She often echoed his sentiment or was a cheerleader for his decisions. Simultaneously, there were issues and delays with staffing multiple State Department posts. This may have inhibited the development of her influence and confident, independent voice within the principal meetings. Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 232, 234.

[431] Kornblut, Anne E. & Scott Wilson & Karen DeYoung. "Obama Pressed for Faster Surge." *The Washington Post*. 6 Dec 2009. Web. 4 Aug 2012.

[432] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 171.

[433] *Ibid*. pg. 171.

[434] *Ibid*. pg. 182.

[435] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 376.

realized how intense the policy fight would be. He also recognized how important it was that he and the NSC keep everyone on the same page throughout the strategic review.

Formal Troop Request, Continued Posturing, and Public Maneuvers Come to a Head

On 25 September Admiral Mullen and General Petraeus flew secretly to Germany to receive General McChrystal's formal request for troops.[436] During their meeting the top tier officers had a four-hour discussion about the war, the contents of McChrystal's report, and his troop request. The document was in paper form only and there were less than twenty copies in existence. Upon Mullen and Petraeus's return to the United States the CENTCOM commander presented copies to Secretary Gates; the military would review the request before the president and his staffers got to view it. McChrystal's request included three options: eighty thousand troops and a fully resourced COIN campaign, forty thousand troops in a COIN-style surge focusing on south and eastern Taliban strongholds, or ten to fifteen thousand troops to train Afghan forces and protect US bases.

On 29 September NSA Jones held a "rehearsal" principals meeting without President Obama. In what would become a routine prior to the main review sessions, the national security advisor asked all contributors to present their material. The goal was to hash out an itinerary, smooth over any confusion or contention, and to save the most necessary exchanges for the president.[437] During the discussion it was clear that a concrete definition of objectives did not exist. Meanwhile, the press was already reporting on McChrystal's troop request and the principals were going off of media reports just as much as they were relying on the documents in front of them.

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[436] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 4.
[437] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 185.

The next afternoon, on Wednesday 30 September, President Obama presided over the second strategic review session. The president emphasized – as he did earlier – that complete withdrawal was not on the table.[438] However, he also stressed the need to define the national security benefit of being in Afghanistan. His challenges to the riding assumptions of the war concerned Petraeus and other military officers. Obama also pivoted the conversation so that they considered the homeland and the war's impact on security within the nation's borders. This conversation allowed Biden and other civilians' opinions to shine. That is, since the fighting had significantly impacted Al Qaeda's strength and strike capabilities, there was less reason to escalate in theater.

Through the first one and three quarter hours of the meeting Secretary Gates did not speak. When the president asked for his opinion, the secretary recommended broadening the focus beyond the homeland.[439] He suggested that the strategic environment, the nation's allies, and – ultimately – the United States' well-being would be damaged if such a narrow focus was taken. He also said that Al Qaeda and the Taliban were too closely linked to separate them in the discussion. Between this and Petraeus's push back against Biden's minimalist position, the military was firmly campaigning for a ramp up in operations. The CENTCOM commander was openly concerned that the focus on Al Qaeda, Pakistan, drones, and counter terror would detract from the necessary path to victory.

At meetings end the president asked Gates to supply him with a copy of McChrystal's troop request.[440] It can be assumed that it was at this point that Obama first

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[438] *Ibid*. pg. 186, 187.

[439] In other show of Obama's respect of Gates, he turned to him and said, "Bob, I'd love to hear what you're thinking. I know still waters run deep. What's on your mind?" *Ibid*. pg. 189.

[440] *Ibid*. pg. 192.

read the combat commander's official request for forty thousand more troops. The next day – 1 October – McChrystal spoke during an event at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies.[441] During the question and answer period he responded to a question about the viability of a scaled back campaign. When asked if such a tempered operation would succeed, the general responded flatly: "The short answer is: No."[442]

McChrystal's words immediately enraged and panicked civilians in the White House. The answer ambushed the president in the middle of a strategy review and boxed in his options. Obama's appointed general was curtly dismissing a significant range of options on Afghanistan. He was also doing so publicly. There is evidence, meanwhile, that the gaff was unintentional. McChrystal immediately apologized, acknowledged that he made a serious error, and volunteered to withdraw from public eye for the time being. Petraeus passed word of these sentiments to Gates, who passed them on to Obama.[443]

The president was already on his way to Denmark when news broke of McChrystal's statements. He decided to meet with his combat commander immediately. McChrystal was called to Copenhagen and met with President Obama for twenty-five minutes. The meeting took place aboard Air Force One while it waited on a tarmac.[444] From multiple accounts the meeting was formal. General McChrystal made sure to state that while he stood by his report and request, he would do whatever was ordered of him by the commander in chief.

The immediate tension between civilians and soldiers appeared to subside quickly. However, President Obama shared his great consternation with close civilian

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[441] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 378.
[442] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 194.
[443] *Ibid*. pg. 194.
[444] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 378.

advisors, including Emanuel and Axelrod. He saved his most passionate complaints for Donilon.[445] The president also made sure that there would be follow through after the high frequency of leaks, bullish military actions, and overt attempts to compel civilian policy makers. Within days of the Air Force One meeting Obama called Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen to the Oval Office. There, the president dressed down the secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Showing a level of emotion that the stoic president rarely unleashed, Obama reprimanded the two men for the military's leaks, politicking, and posturing. He said he was "exceedingly unhappy" with how the Pentagon was acting and said it was "disrespectful of the process" and "damaging" to every person in uniform.[446]

The meeting was a cold one. It also represented one of the tensest moments in civil-military relations during the Obama presidency. Admiral Mullen was personally affected by the events as well as Obama's critique of their impacts on the balance of power. As a career military officer who greatly respected civilian oversight, he was offended by the charges and was adamant that such actions would cease. On 5 October Secretary Gates gave a speech at the Association of the US Army. In it he emphasized the importance of military advice that is given "candidly but privately."[447] The theme of healthy civil-military relationship was woven through the speech.

It is clear that the president's reaction to McChrystal's comments was swift, comprehensive, and highly influential. The frequency of news articles quoting military

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[445] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 195.
[446] Alter, Jonathan. "Secrets from Inside the Obama War Room." pg. 3.
[447] *Ibid*. pg. 4.

and civilian sources alike decreased in the following weeks.[448] Secretary Gates became more engaged in monitoring the Pentagon's public profile. Furthermore, Admiral Mullen and vice chairman General Cartwright stopped shopping McChrystal's request; they also asked General Petraeus to keep CENTCOM quiet.[449]

The Review Muddles On

Throughout this period of significant civil-military tension the Afghanistan strategy review meetings continued at the deputy and principal levels. During the first ten days of October there were hours of meetings held by NSA Jones. Although McChrystal's report was well studied and his troop request was common knowledge, many of the meetings held by civilian policymakers were still focusing on the conflict's riding assumptions.

For example, Jones held one of his "rehearsal" meetings with the principals on 5 October. During the discussions a debate ensued about whom to engage, who the real enemy was, and what the delineation was between Al Qaeda and the Taliban.[450] These discussions concerned Petraeus and other military officers, since they challenged the fundamental bases of the war. The nature of the discussions also hindered the officers' influence, in a way, since the concepts were more about nebulous policy points rather than tactical or strategic planning.

It was at this time that evidence suggests Clinton's pivot to Gates' position was completed. One evening in early October the two secretaries had dinner after a public

[448] This is based on the author's review of aggregate news sites for Afghanistan news coverage, ie. afghanistannewscenter.com. There was a clear drop in news articles relating to the strategy review during this window of time, as well as a diminished frequency of quotes both on and off the record. *Afghanistan News Center*. Afghanistan News Center, 2012. Website. 6 Aug 2012.
[449] Alter, Jonathan. "Secrets from Inside the Obama War Room." pg. 4.
[450] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 202.

event in Foggy Bottom.[451] After that meeting their positions in and out of the review sessions were most similar. As the heads of both the Department of State and the Department of Defense came to agree and campaign together, they greatly amplified the push for McChrystal's request. Conversely, the civilians who were against McChrystal's plan had a very difficult time uniting under one banner.

Some of Obama's closest advisors were against a COIN-style surge. Rahm Emanuel, David Axelrod, and Denis McDonough were among these figures.[452] Furthermore, Ambassador Eikenberry, Vice President Biden, Richard Holbrooke, Ambassador Rice, and NSA Jones were either skeptical or outright against the military's plan. However, significant differences of opinion – but more importantly, personal quarrels – hindered this group's ability to consolidate and effectively influence the strategy review. Specifically, there was a great amount of tension between Vice President Biden and Special Representative Richard Holbrooke. Likewise, a resentment of Holbrooke permeated the NSC and hindered his influence.[453] The tensions within the anti-McChrystal group leads one to question how much the division hindered the opposing position.

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[451] *Ibid*. pg. 204.

[452] Davis, John. *The Barack Obama Presidency: A Two Year Assessment*. pg. 205.

[453] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 37%. Ambassador Rice and Denis McDonough were those among the group that didn't care for Holbrooke. Meanwhile, Lt Gen Lute and Holbrooke became increasingly vitriolic with each other over the course of the strategic review. They were willing to be openly hostile to each other, yet no one within the NSC attempted to end the tension. Lute and his staff eventually scheduled meetings when Holbrooke was not available and even limited his staff size and transportation access – specifically to military planes – when the special representative tried to travel. Holbrooke, meanwhile, started hosting shadow interagency meetings despite the fact that such actions were traditionally taken by the NSC, alone. Again, no White House officials attempted to end the infighting between Lute and Holbrooke. *Ibid*. Kindle ebook file. 65%.

Alternate Options are Requested

On 7 October NSA Jones welcomed Clinton and Gates to his office. The national security advisor notified them that the president was displeased that the NSC had not yet defined the nation's interests in Afghanistan.[454] On the same day, Obama met with advisors for a three-hour discussion on Pakistan. The meeting included intelligence briefings, policy discussions, as well as principals and deputies recommendations.[455]

Two days later the fourth strategy review was held in the Situation Room of the White House. It was at this 9 October meeting that the NSC – as a whole – reviewed McChrystal's troop requests for the first time.[456] Only the highest deputies, advisors, and principals were present in the meeting; this was mainly due to the secrecy of the details. General Petraeus flew in from New York for the meeting while McChrystal, Ambassador Eikenberry, and Ambassador Patterson video-conferenced in from abroad.[457] McChrystal's request basically outlined standard COIN theory and even followed some of its better-known equations, including troop to civilian ratios and stock timelines.[458] After the combat commander had a chance to present his thirty-minute presentation on

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[454] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 207.

[455] *Ibid*. pg. 208.

[456] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 5.

[457] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 34%.

[458] On multiple occasions throughout the strategic review President Obama would openly express skepticism towards and frustration about the methodology of McChrystal's report writing. For example, he and his advisors took issue that the general's quote for 400,000 Afghan forces was extracted straight from COIN theory math of one soldier/policeman to every 40-50 civilians. There appeared to be no analysis of geography in Afghanistan, the threat matrix, or how the insurgency was impacting social as well as political dynamics within the ethno-religiously complex nation-state. Obama went on to suggest that the planning was on cruise control, as it were. Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 252. Obama's advisors, including Lt Gen Douglas Lute, continued to suggest that the president challenge the numbers and methodology; this continued well into November. When Obama raised the questions at meetings – in regards to the 400,000 forces and their eventual distribution – no immediate answers were offered. Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 263-264.

Afghanistan's status and his recommendations, the discussions ensued. President Obama again requested everyone's opinion and went around the room.

It was during this strategy review meeting that the most contested exchanges began. President Obama directly questioned various aspects of the troop request and what the military was stating. He was openly critical of McChrystal's numbers, saying that there were not three choices in his request but, rather, a single option buttresses by two absurd ones. He also challenged the "ink blot" map of anticipated troop deployments. In the president's opinion the plan had dismal troop coverage in the country and tried to satisfy COIN theory rather than creatively adapt to the threat environment.[459] While he found the eventual plan satisfactory, he emphasized the need for significant revision and adaptation.

Biden adamantly rebutted a call for COIN and tried to compel Eikenberry to give his far more pessimistic, tempered opinion. The vice president was passionately against escalation, consistently campaigning for his "CT-plus" idea; he was borderline belligerent during some exchanges. His challenges to the generals were more vociferous than the president's. Meanwhile, Secretary Clinton expressed positions that were increasingly hawkish, in line with Gates', and melding around McChrystal's primary troop request.

Throughout the meeting Secretary Gates expressed concern that they were focusing too much on terminology and not identifying actual resources, capabilities, and realistic goals.[460] In short, they were not adequately engaging with and adapting to the Afghan theater. His opinion was that they were getting ahead of themselves and still

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[459] *Ibid*. pg. 225.
[460] *Ibid*. pg. 218-219.

needed to firmly define what victory would be and to what extent it involved actually neutralizing the Taliban. Perhaps significantly, Petraeus indicated in his notes that he agreed with Gates; defeating the Taliban was both unrealistic and a poor goal to set.[461] As such, the CENTCOM commander, secretary of defense, and chairman of the Joint Chiefs consolidated their positions around the combat commander's recommendations. Their influence was amplifying.

Retired General Douglas Lute, serving as a special adviser for the NSC, was inclined toward the vice president's argument for amplified counterterrorism in Afghanistan. He was part of the minority opinion at this point and was exceptional because of his military background. Lute encouraged Biden to request a formal proposal of numbers and operational capability from the Pentagon. Vice Chairman Cartwright acknowledged the request and told him it would be provided, as it was their job to supply the civilian policy makers with relevant information.[462]

Admiral Mullen, meanwhile, detested the "CT plus" option and refused to allow the plan to leave the Pentagon; he's quoted as having said, "We're not providing that."[463] Cartwright immediately pushed back and, in so doing, tension developed rapidly within military circles. To date the top tier of military leadership was essentially united in its assessment and its recommendation; it was consistently falling in line with McChrystal's opinions. However, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs was unwilling to abridge any information provided to the civilian policy makers. For this reason, a conflict began to brew.

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[461] *Ibid.* pg. 220.
[462] *Ibid.* pg. 234.
[463] *Ibid.* pg. 236.

NSA Jones was in agreement that the hybrid, "CT plus" option should be presented to the president, if for no other reason than to contextualize McChrystal's request. When Cartwright received continued pressure from his superiors in the Pentagon, the vice chairman and national security advisor spoke for well over an hour to determine how to best decrease tension while also presenting all available options to the president.[464]

Open Rancor in the Strategy Review Meeting

In the morning of Wednesday 14 October, President Obama met again with the National Security Council to discuss Afghanistan. The meeting occurred one day after a highly contentious "rehearsal" meeting during which arguments arose regarding how much civilians should augment any troop surge.[465] The Wednesday meeting focused primarily on the Afghan government and how realistic it was to work towards a less corrupt regime. Towards the end of the meeting, however, President Obama directed questioning to General Petraeus. Earlier, the commander in chief had asked the CENTCOM commander for a briefing on possible similarities between Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama's intention was to find opportunities towards reconciliation in the latter campaign.[466] Secretary Gates approved the measure.

When Petraeus began distributing a memo to the principals, however, Admiral Mullen became visibly surprised and agitated. He asked the general what the memo contained; the chairman had not seen it prior to the meeting. Secretary Gates remained stoic throughout the entire exchange, even as Admiral Mullen passed a note to General Petraeus, who meditated on its contents for a few moments. The CENTCOM commander

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[464] *Ibid*. pg. 237.
[465] *Ibid*. pg. 238.
[466] *Ibid*. pg. 241.

then said to the group, "I'd like to withdraw this memo. Could everyone give it back to me?"[467] When he finished collecting all the copies that were returned to him, Petraeus went on to give a verbal briefing on the issue.

The exchange flummoxed many in the room. In that moment an intra-military power struggle played out feet from the president's eyes. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs compelled a general to defy the president's direct request for information. The exchange was remarkably tense but President Obama did nothing to intercede. The meeting went on and at meeting's end the president said, "At the next meeting, we need to move towards options and decisions."[468] After a month's worth of briefings, conceptual discussions, leaks, power plays, and requests, the president compelled a shift from review to explicit planning.

Decision-making Begins

That afternoon, on the same day as the fifth strategy review meeting with Obama, the Pentagon held a war game called Poignant Vision. The four-hour exercise was meant to test various scenarios and contingency plans associated with McChrystal's report. There were wildly varying opinions on the relevance of the exercise. General Petraeus and Admiral Mullen thought it was not useful because COIN, by definition, is influenced by myriad social variables that can't be anticipated in a war game. General Lute refused to participate on behalf of the NSC because he was certain that the military would tow its line regardless of what occurred.[469] Some players who participated – including assets from the State Department and Director of National Intelligence's office – found it to be

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[467] *Ibid*. pg. 242.
[468] *Ibid*. pg. 243.
[469] *Ibid*. pg. 244.

useful. However, despite interest from DNI Blair and others to continue the exercise, no follow up was planned and it became a singular moment.

With all the tension, leaks, and campaigning occurring vis-à-vis the military, President Obama asked his civilian advisers to meet with him on 26 October; he wanted to hear their "bottom-line recommendations" without uniformed officers in the room.[470] Four days earlier the NSC had published a "consensus memo" that suggested lower expectations and strategic goals in Afghanistan. By stating that diminishing – rather than destroying – the Taliban should be the end point, it echoed a point repeatedly made by Secretary Gates. It was assumed that the memo came the Department of State.[471]

Many of the president's closest advisors were not present at the meeting; it was reserved for the highest levels of civilian leadership. As such, Axelrod, McDonough, Gibbs, and Lute were not present. During the meeting, President Obama pressed Secretaries Gates and Clinton for their full and honest opinions. He further asked them for recommendations on firm troop levels. Both cabinet level advisors indicated that they supported numbers around what McChrystal requested.[472] Gates said he didn't disagree with the president's statements and sentiments; he went further to say that that some of McChrystal's recommendations were not realistic or necessary. He also said that while he agreed with the general's troop request, he believed that the fourth brigade should be held back – in the near term – for assessment.[473]The president told those in attendance

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[470] *Ibid*. pg. 249.

[471] The goals outlined in the "consensus memo" also included building up governance in particular ministries as well as transferring authority to Afghan forces as soon as it was possible. Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 6.

[472] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 6.

[473] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 252.

that he wanted to make his decision prior to a planned trip to Asia, two weeks away. He also intended to make a public announcement after he returned.[474]

However, there was still plenty to decide and Obama was clearly dissatisfied with the options before him. Peter Orszag, director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), had projected that war costs – per McChrystal's report and the general's recommendation – would be far more than what the president was willing to approve.[475] What's more, the combat commander's report was devoid of international support and shared responsibilities. Conversely, President Obama intended to have allied forces augment the plan. He also wanted to decide roughly 12-18 months' worth of strategy and then make another reassessment. Ultimately, the president said, "I want an exit strategy."[476]

The next day NSA Jones sent a formal tasking memo to Secretary Gates on behalf of President Obama. The document asked Gates to develop a plan for the president that would describe how to deploy troops faster than currently estimated.[477] The request was meant to challenge the military's current planning, compel a more aggressive time table, and force the Pentagon to give explicit details of its planning. It was a key moment of subjective civilian pushback that was executed through the NSC. Meanwhile, on Friday 30 October the president welcomed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the White House for a meeting. Generals Petraeus and McChrystal were not part of the meeting; Obama wanted to hear from another group of top-tier military officers directly.

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[474] *Ibid*. pg. 249-250.
[475] According to Orszag, McChrystal's request would cost approximately $889 billion over a ten-year span. *Ibid*. pg. 251.
[476] *Ibid*. pg. 253.
[477] *Ibid*. pg. 254.

The Marine Corps commandant, General Conway, told the president that he was against COIN theory and that his men were killers, not diplomats. The head of the Army, General Casey, emphasized the need for a quick transition over to Afghan rule; it was an argument he was pushing since his days commanding in Iraq. Meanwhile, the heads of the Air Force and Navy were relatively quiet and even deferential, noting that regardless of strategy their branches would be minimally impacted.[478] The conversation was an open and healthy one, by all accounts. Admiral Mullen listened on as Generals Conway and Casey spoke against his position. The meeting afforded the Joint Chiefs of Staff the opportunity to advise the president in a way that had legal precedent but was exceptional in a world of regional commands and assertive offices of the defense secretary. It was also the first time in the three case studies that the service chiefs were asked their opinions intentionally rather than as an afterthought.

On the same day, meanwhile, Secretary Gates' office submitted a two-page, secret memo to Obama. Its contents included the military's response to the 27 October request for an alternative plan to McChrystal's request. The plan lowered the troop numbers by five to ten thousand simply because, logistically, those numbers would not be able to deploy in a year. The plan also indicated international troop support and outlined decreased strategic goals.[479] There was finally another option on the table, even if it was simply a slight revision of McChrystal's original request.

Eikenberry's Memo, Civilian Push Back, and Off to Asia

In the first week of November Ambassador Eikenberry sent a cable from Afghanistan; it was promptly leaked. The Friday 6 November memo contained his very
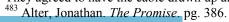
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[478] *Ibid*. pg. 258-259.
[479] *Ibid*. pg. 260.

pessimistic assessment of operations in the country. General Lute encouraged the ambassador to write out his concerns regarding the status quo as well as McChrystal's recommendations and transmit them to the administration.[480] Eikenberry wrote that the plan's costs were untenable, US forces were shouldering too much of the burden, that Afghan dependency as well as Kharzai's corruption were toxic, and that COIN would likely fail in Afghanistan.[481] It was a damning document. It was also one that was championed by various members of the NSC and the vice president's office.[482]

Military leadership was incensed about the memo's leak and felt betrayed. The Pentagon was not notified about the drafting or submission of the memo. What's more, the direct challenge to COIN was an affront to many of the top generals, since they were developers or enactors of the theory. The blowback was immediate; Petraeus, Mullen, and McChrystal were angered and multiple sources indicate that the civil-military relationship was shaken.[483] Many in the top tier of the military leadership assumed that the memo was leaked to the press as retribution for previous leaks from the Department of Defense. It was a low moment of accusation and counter accusation.

Three days later, on 9 November, there was another principals meeting. The discussions focused on reviewing and revising McChrystal's plan. Specifically, there was a good deal of conversation about – and challenges to – the general's recommendation of training 400,000 Afghan forces. General Petraeus firmly pushed that number of combined troops and police. However, the president and his advisors thought the number was unrealistic, unnecessary, and the product of COIN equations rather than applied

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[480] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. Kindle ebook file. 36%.
[481] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 261.
[482] NSA Jones and deputy NSA Donilon had both heard the ambassador's opinion in previous meetings. They agreed to have the cable drawn up and submitted. *Ibid*. pg. 261.
[483] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 386.

analysis of the tactical environment.[484] There was pushback from the president, the vice president, and even the defense secretary; the latter, Gates, had already made clear that the numbers were too high. Tensions were high and both sides were entrenched in their opinions. President Obama made his position clear when he stated, curtly, "This presentation strains credulity."[485] He then made clear he would not approve a plan like this.

On 11 November the strategy review group held its fifth formal group session. From the start, President Obama expressed anger at the frequent leaks. What set him off was not the Eikenberry memo but another leak from the Pentagon. That day's *Wall Street Journal* was reporting that – according to a "senior military official" – the force option two, Tab A plan had been presented to the president.[486] The president was not pleased that the leaks were on the rise, again.

As the meeting developed, Admiral Mullen presented various mission plans and goals for troop deployments. When concerns were expressed about mission creep the president made clear that the strategic goal would be to "disrupt" the insurgency.[487] He then went on to explicitly define the word "disrupt" and what it would entail for military operations. Obama was making it clear that he would hold the military accountable and expected them to execute his orders, nothing more. The president used some of the vice president's arguments to emphasize where he was at, personally. Secretary Gates agreed with the president on the topics of process and timeline, though he went on to say that it was vital that policymakers determine firm definitions and assessment points throughout

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[484] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 263-264.
[485] *Ibid*. pg. 264.
[486] *Ibid*. pg. 268.
[487] *Ibid*. pg. 270.

the campaign. Gates clearly wanted quantifiable data and accountability. As such, this executive and cabinet level triumvirate was making the policy decision very clear to the military.

Vice President Biden continued to push back on the military's plan by presenting various points that Eikenberry raised in his memo. Biden also presented the hybrid, twenty thousand-troop option that he requested and Vice Chairman Cartwright pushed through despite Mullen's judgment.[488] Even some of the NSC civilian staff thought it was irresponsible to present a new option that late in the review process. What's more, General Petraeus was angry that a minority report plan such as the hybrid would be presented at all. The CENTCOM commander gave an extended response to Biden's points, noting numerous reasons why the hybrid option was not tenable. When the president asked him directly if the hybrid option was "not really a viable option," the general said that it was not. With that, Obama deferred to Petraeus's professional judgment and ended the discussions. Still, the civil-military parries continued.

President Obama challenged the deployment timeline that was being quoted by the Pentagon. He found it unacceptable that the military needed 18 months to deploy the requested troop surge.[489] The president asked the CENTCOM commander why the deployments would take so long when the Iraq surge took far less time. The ensuing discussion was curt; some civilian advisers found the general's responses to be condescending while others found the president's questions to be combative. It was a moment of highly subjective civil-military interrogative discussion.

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[488] *Ibid*. pg. 272-273.
[489] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 7.

When Petraeus described the differences from Iraq or why Afghanistan would take longer, Obama responded with his express expectations and challenges to military logistical support. The president wanted it done faster and his way. Obama laid out the budgetary costs and his unwillingness to approve such an open-ended, long timeline. Eventually, General Petraeus saw the writing on the wall and said that the military could deploy the requested troops under a six-month timetable.[490]

Petraeus's accommodation was a significant one. It assumed that the military could deploy a large amount of forces very rapidly to a region with little support infrastructure. The CENTCOM commander told the president that the military could do something for which a plan didn't exist. Immediately after the meeting Petraeus called his command's logistics team. He told them that he had "just written a check" and needed them "to help [him] cash it."[491] He ordered them to immediately draw up plans so that every aspect of a rapid deployment was anticipated. What was conceded to the president – a much faster deployment than the military was planning– needed to occur as promised.

After the meeting President Obama departed for his ten-day trip to Asia. The president reached out to Secretary Gates on the way overseas and reiterated his desires and the need to hold the military planners to them. Gates understood and acknowledged.[492] President Obama also expressed continued frustration with the military, the lack of options, and their stalwart approach to civilian questioning. The president told his advisers that he was more than willing to use time – thus delaying his decision – in order to maintain control of the civil-military relationship. He was already

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[490] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 277-278.
[491] *Ibid*. pg. 279.
[492] *Ibid*. pg. 280.

past his preferred deadline for a decision, as he was flying to Asia without arriving at a decision.

Return and Rapid Decision-making

There was little review activity while President Obama toured Asia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff released a revised chart regarding the trajectory of the war; this was done at the NSC's request.[493] There were also various discussions taking place within civilian and military circles. That being the case, few civil-military discussions took place. Upon the president's return, however, the strategy continued in earnest. The following week became the highest velocity moment of the review. In the late evening of 23 November President Obama asked for an NSC meeting in the Situation Room; it was the group's ninth strategy review session.[494]

At the start of the meeting the president promised a final decision within days. He then responded to a Gates memo created at the president's request; it outlined six strategic goals for Afghanistan. President Obama outlined that which he did and did not agree. He made clear that he wanted tamped down goals vis-à-vis the Taliban and insurgents. He also said that they would not seek to build the 400,000 troops Afghan force that McChrystal outlined. The president then welcomed responses. Biden wrote a response document and, while he expressed his skepticism of the dominant positions, his comments were less argumentative than in previous meetings. Secretary Clinton, meanwhile, gave an extended speech supporting the surge, the troops numbers, the timeline, and the strategy that the president sought to enact.[495]

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[493] *Ibid*. pg. 281-282.
[494] Alter, Jonathan. *The Promise*. pg. 388.
[495] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 290-292.

The meeting was a rallying cry for Obama's "Max Leverage" plan that called for slightly fewer troops and more delineated, bounded operational goals. Most significantly, it contained a timeline for withdrawal and began the pullout by July 2011.[496] Gates recommended that the plan be approved quickly, thus allowing three brigades to be sent to Afghanistan immediately. Mullen – via videoconference from Geneva, Switzerland – also endorsed the plan, stressing the need for forces as soon as possible. He reiterated – in response to a comment from the president – that the military would not be asking for more troops. It would be the end of the discussion.

Finally, General Petraeus stated that CENTCOM would support the president's decision. Although Petraeus expressed skepticism about NATO forces' fighting effectiveness, he was on board.[497] Various levels of the top military leadership expressed support for the Max Leverage option. Support for the revised version of McChrystal's original troop request mounted on both sides of the civil-military relationship. Although there were many qualified statements from the military – including concerns raised about force flexibility and leverage against Kharzai's government – the plan appeared to be coalescing.

Over the next week the decision-making process accelerated tremendously. The civilian policymakers did final outreach to confirm that all aspects of the plan would be supported by the military.[498] On Wednesday 25 November President Obama met with various members of the NSC and his closest advisers. NSA Jones, Donilon, and McDonough were among those present. In the meeting the president told them that he

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[496] Baker, Peter. "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan." pg. 8.
[497] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 293-294.
[498] In one case, Vice President Biden called General Petraeus as the CENTCOM commander flew to the USS Nimitz. The conversation took place on 24 November, one day after the "Max Leverage" NSC meeting. The vice president asked the general to confirm that he was okay with an 18-to-24 month timeline. He was. *Ibid.* pg. 299.

was "inclined to go with the 30,000" although his decision wasn't final.[499] However, he said that he expected all players – from the cabinet level to the military leadership, alike – to support the decision wholeheartedly. Donilon raised a number of issues that had yet to be resolved. These included an additional troop request originating from the Pentagon, in regards to 4,500 additional "enablers" and logistical support. The president responded angrily and said that he was done talking about more troops. His numbers would be final and that was that. It was a tense moment in what the president expected to be a merely formality of a meeting.

Later that day, during his normally scheduled meeting with Secretary Gates in the Oval Office, President Obama let him know that the decision was made and it would be thirty thousand troops.[500] NSA Jones and Vice Chairman Cartwright were also in attendance. When Gates mentioned the "enablers" request on his desk the president was extraordinarily curt as he shot down the option. It would be thirty thousand or nothing.

On the day after Thanksgiving – Friday 27 November – the president held an NSC meeting in the Oval Office. As Obama's national security team entered, the president expressed consternation at the fact that they were still deciding on things related to the strategy review.[501] The Pentagon was still asking about the extra troops. What's more, the military was now concerned that they wouldn't be able to deploy the troops as fast as Petraeus had stated. Obama was livid at the pushback he was receiving from the Pentagon, especially when they had expressed support for the plan and also volunteered the deployment capabilities.[502]

[499] *Ibid.* pg. 301-303.
[500] *Ibid.* pg. 307-308.
[501] *Ibid.* pg. 311.
[502] *Ibid.* pg. 312.

Over the course of this meeting – which lasted until 9:15 at night – Obama's national security advisor reached out to Admiral Mullen and other military officials multiple times to clarify their positions. The day was an extraordinarily tense one as the White House pushed back at the military's new stances. The civilians refused the military's attempt to assign particular units to the surge, since many of them were not yet deployable and would slow the surge.[503] The president acknowledged that he was involving himself in some of the more minute details of the strategy, but he also felt as though he needed to, considering the military's repeated challenges.

After over eight hours of finagling Obama had his team wrote out an extraordinarily descript "terms sheet." In it, the president laid out explicit detail of his orders, the new strategy, its limits, its timetable, and what would be permitted going forward. The document ultimately was six single-spaced pages in length.[504] The sheet was meant to outline the limits of the president's decision and the strategy going forward. Obama intended for all relevant players to sign it, as though it was a contract to which they would abide.

Final Say as Orders are Given

On Saturday 28 November the president met with the core of his National Security Council, yet again. Secretaries Clinton and Gates as well as NSA Jones were not in attendance due to the Thanksgiving holiday; some of the president's key political advisers were there, however. In the meeting Obama said that he had given his orders though, oddly, he also told his staff "the door is not closed."[505] The president then asked

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[503] For example, NSA Jones told Admiral Mullen that the 101st Airborne Division could not be used in the surge since it would not be deployment ready until September 2010. *Ibid*. pg. 312.
[504] *Ibid*. pg. 315.
[505] *Ibid*. pg. 319.

for his advisors' opinions on the strategy decision. Many of them were sharply critical of the decision, feeling as though the president was buckling to a plan that was against his positions. Donilon openly asked the president why he decided the way he did.[506] Regardless, it appears Obama was unwavering and went forward with the plan.

While President Obama allowed for his staff's rehashing of the decision after Friday's NSC marathon, he did not allow Vice President Biden to make one last argument. When the president phoned Biden and told him he wanted a meeting on Sunday, the vice president asked to meet with Obama before said event. The president said it wasn't necessary.[507] Obama was done hearing options. It was time to enact the plan.

At 5pm on Sunday 29 November the president distributed his six-page orders sheet to Biden, Gates, Mullen, Cartwright, and Petraeus.[508] NSA Jones and Rahm Emanuel were also in attendance. President Obama allowed everyone to read the document and then described his expectations going forward. He made it clear that the mission was altered and narrower. He also made clear how he defined key concepts and what theories to avoid when enacting the new strategy. He repeated to General Petraeus, "Do not occupy what you cannot transfer" multiple times. President Obama demanded assurances from the military leadership that the 18-month timeline could be enacted. He also went around the room in order to receive direct agreement from the officers. All

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[506] Donilon was part of a group of Obama advisors that felt the president was being "played by the military" throughout the strategy review. He, McDonough, Lute, Brennan, and others (including Biden's national security advisor) held informal "breakout sessions" where they discussed their positions and the implications of a surge. They made attempts to unify and amplify their position within the civil-miltary debate. Davis, John. *The Barack Obama Presidency: A Two Year Assessment*. pg. 205.
[507] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 323.
[508] *Ibid*. pg. 324-325.

those present agreed with his plan and assured their full support. He ended the meeting by explicitly stating, "and that's my order."[509]
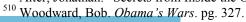
For months Obama had battled an obstinate military leadership. He had responded to end runs, ambiguity, and reticence by manipulating the decision timeline, openly confronting the military's positions, and demanding revisions. Ultimately the civil-military relationship pivoted back towards a more subjective, albeit more contested and openly argumentative, state. The civilians were in control even when the military boisterously used its professional influence. However, it's important to note – as General Petraeus did in his 29 November notes – that the military was receiving just about everything that it had requested.[510]

Analysis

The 2009 AfPak strategy review contained the most contentious debates and overtly tense civil-military relationship of the three case studies. The most avenues of communication were used, the NSC was most active, and the most players participated. Under President Obama's engaged leadership the national security process was highly delineated, procedures were coveted, open debate was encouraged, and tension was not avoided. Simultaneously, loyalty and cooperation was expected from all players.

The civil-military relationship was in flux throughout this third case study. The primary reason for the momentum shift was the White House and National Security Council's systemic effort to repossess and consolidate control over national security discussions. The military recognized the change and did not acquiesce quietly. The Pentagon attempted to maintain its influence through various actions, including end-runs.

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[509] Alter, Jonathan. "Secrets from Inside the Obama War Room." pg. 4.
[510] Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. pg. 327.

The military edited the options it presented to civilians, openly defended its domain, and leaked information to both the press as well as officials outside of the principal-level leadership.

Throughout the strategy review President Obama dictated the tempo of decision-making. He used his authority such that the timbre and tempo of the review modulated to his benefit. The president placed himself at the center of the decision making process and made sure the NSC process reflected his leadership preferences. His NSC and national security advisor used their re-anointed power to moderate the process. NSA Jones had his own opinion about the process and the options on the president's desk. Nevertheless, he acted as custodian, rather than adviser, throughout the process. All of this led to a civil-military relationship that was a theoretically purer form of subjective civil-military control than those preceding it. It also produced an NSC leadership model that was far more formalized and custodial.

While the previous case studies reveal a great deal of subjective civilian influence, there had been a significant amount of deference given to the military. Civilian policy makers made it a habit of co-opting military voices that agreed with their positions. This maneuver legitimized their arguments and allowed them to enact their will when engaging with military professionals who had tremendous professional credibility, influence, and power.

Conversely, in this case study the president used his rank – as commander in chief – and the calendar in order to bend the military professionals' influence. Ultimately, Obama decided on a plan that was closer to the military's recommendations than his own starting point. However, Obama's emphasis on process and his determined effort to

enforce subjective military control led to a decision on his terms. His process method and the structural changes therein were as significant as the decisions that were made.

From the beginning of the case, President Obama established efforts to reinvigorate an NSC that was less engaged under the previous administration. Presidential Directive 1 established a structural change that would elevate the NSC, put it at the epicenter of national security discussions, and imbue the quote of Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough, "regular order is your friend." This would prove to be significant when the formal strategy review of late summer/early fall commenced. The initial review, however, was abbreviated and outsourced in many ways.

The inefficacy of the Riedel review and the deteriorating state of Afghanistan made a larger review inevitable. When that time came, the civil-military relationship was tense. Specifically, the White House staff and NSC were consistently challenging their military counterparts. Deputy NSA Donilon was particularly vociferous with his critiques of the military's output. This created tension and ill-will; it also indicated the deep skepticism each side had for the other. This did not mean that civil-military relations were overly caustic or ineffectual. Significant collaboration occurred regularly. The best example is Admiral Mullen's and Secretary Gates' efforts to replace the combat commander, General McKiernan. Without cooperation this rare moment would not have happened.

The replacement of General McKiernan with General McChrystal did have its tense moments, however. The former told his superiors he refused to resign; they were forced to fire him. Replacing a combat commander for the first time since the Korean War apparently emboldened the remaining officer corps. Since lightning was unlikely to

strike twice, the top military leaders felt as though they were more secure in their positions.

General McChrystal's opinions and ineloquent public persona immediately presented issues for civilian policymakers. President Obama outkicked his coverage when, enacting Secretary Gates' suggestion, he ordered the general to write a commander's report about the situation in Afghanistan. The task was intended to punt any policy discussion and keep McChrystal out of the public sphere for a time. In actuality, the civilians failed to frame the purview of the report. This allowed the combat commander to define the contents and breadth of the exercise. What the general authored was wide ranging, unsettling, and urgent. It ultimately pushed the national security apparatus towards a comprehensive strategy review.

The effects of McChrystal's report and his force request were significant. Ironically, the White House and President Obama's staff were attempting to ebb the tide of such influence. Many of the president's closest advisers believed that combat commanders were given too much access and influence during the previous administration. The frequency of video-conferences had decreased and the circle of officers with direct access to the NSC was limited. Regardless, McChrystal's efforts proved catalytic within the civil-military relationship.

President Obama, NSA Jones, and the NSC staff adamantly enforced a delineated, highly procedural review process. Jones urged, "Every time you go outside the box – the National Security Council process – we lose." That quote epitomized President Obama's goal with the strategic review; he demanded deliberate and confidential methods. However, once the formal strategy review began the amount of end-runs increased.

General Petraeus contacted Republican-connected editorialists and GOP Senator Lindsey Graham. Admiral Mullen and Rahm Emanuel also contacted the latter legislator in efforts to frame the process that was underway.

Obama and his custodians monitored the leaks and publicly chastened all participants when information made its way to the press. However, the president appeared more concerned about leaks coming from the military. He and his staff perceived those leaks as challenges to civilian authority. The president's advisers were very concerned that the Pentagon would box in the White House. This caused a good deal of tension and exacerbated the relationship between various civilian policymakers and the generals.

President Obama's staff sought to quiet the military's voices many times. It also tried to decrease the number of voices coming from the Pentagon; there were efforts to channel all releases through the OSD or Pentagon's press office. President Obama expressed increasing willingness to more aggressively engage the military. His appraisal of the civil-military relationship changed over the course of the case study.

In early October the commander-in-chief firmly asserted himself when General McChrystal's public statements in London proved caustic to the civil-military relationship. After meeting with the combat commander he called his defense secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs into the Oval Office. That meeting was a watershed moment. President Obama reprimanded his top civilian and military leaders, telling them that the Pentagon's leaks and posturing were damaging the process as well as relations as a whole. After that meeting numerous public statements by the principal-level leadership

made it clear that the message had been received. Additionally, leaks dropped significantly as the military pulled back on its publicity.

Over the next six to eight weeks dozens of deputy and principal-level meetings were held. Focus turned inward as discussions continued about the assumptions, goals, and plans related to Afghanistan. The military's position was stable – if not recalcitrant – throughout this period. It continued to present McChrystal's initial options despite indications from the president that they were not sufficient. The Joint Chiefs, regional command, combat commanders, and OSD shared the same position. Conversely, positions changed and posturing occurred on the civilian side.

Secretary Gates was quite influential and respected throughout the process. President Obama went out of his way to elicit his positions. The defense secretary tended to support the military's position but was also pragmatic in his assertion of what could or should be ordered. On a number of occasions he sought to divert the strategy review back when discussions were tangential. He proved to be a moderating and highly experienced voice in the process. Secretary Gates also mediated positions on both sides of the civil-military relationship; he tended to translate and transpose positions so as to enable agreement.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, meanwhile, pivoted to Secretary Gates' position over the course of the fall. She eventually adopted his approach after initially expressing skepticism over it. Her initial argument put her closer to Vice President Biden's camp; he towed an unpopular and controversial line that garnered contempt from the Pentagon. When Secretary Clinton endorsed the strategy change espoused by Secretary Gates she amplified her voice and standing within the policy discussions.

Inversely, Biden, Holbrooke, key Obama advisers, and others were firmly against escalation. However, for a variety of reasons, they were unable to consolidate their argument into a persuasive response to the Pentagon. The strategy discussion engaged their opinions but there is no evidence they ever posed a challenge.

McChrystal's report continued to be the foundation of the strategy review, despite the president's preferences, his wish for more options, or the amount of civilian skepticism. This does not mean, however, that the Pentagon's positions were not interrogated or challenged. President Obama aggressively challenged the combat commander's requests, even saying that what was being presented "strained credulity." The president's most insistent questioning was directed at CENTCOM commander General Petraeus. Tension was palpable throughout and source material shows that various military officials viewed aspects of the review with contempt.

One of the tensest and most objective civil-military interactions occurred when President Obama asked General Petraeus to present a report to the NSC. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – unaware of the request – suppressed the president's request during a NSC meeting. It was a significant moment; civilians who witnessed it were aghast. Admiral Mullen had previously attempted to suppress options coming from the Pentagon after President Obama requested them. General Cartwright overrode the admiral's preference and included them anyways. However, the chairman succeeded in censoring the military's position at this and other moments.

In order to force an expansion of the military's options President Obama requested – via his national security advisor – that the OSD draw up an augmented plan with an accelerated deployment timetable. The president's dissatisfaction with

McChrystal's timeline was minimized by the new option that Secretary Gates submitted. It soon became the preferred plan of the president. It also became a leverage point for civilian control over the military's positions.

General Petraeus and other military professionals insisted that the aggressive timeline was not feasible. Despite deferring to the general's professional judgment in the past – most notably when Petraeus insisted Biden's hybrid option was not viable – President Obama pushed back aggressively on this point. The CENTCOM commander eventually acquiesced though he initially conceded a point that was not developed by the military. He and his staff scrambled to make tenable what he had already promised the commander-in-chief. It was another significant moment – this time, of subjective civil-military relations – during a consistently arduous review process.

The final week of the strategy review gained momentum quickly. A tremendous amount of topics had been covered during the nine strategy review sessions. A substantial volume of reports and plans had been reviewed. The military had succeeded in presenting McChrystal's middle option as the most viable course of action. However, President Obama and his staff slowed the process and engaged in aggressive questioning in order to analyze and alter what was being presented. During the final week – Thanksgiving 2009 – President Obama held numerous meetings with his civilian advisers, many military officials, and various other national security assets. He diligently wrote out a terms sheet that explicitly listed all aspects of his coming orders: goals, purview, timetable, and actionable items.

President Obama asserted himself most aggressively when it came to the final decision. By his own admission the terms sheet was far more in depth than was necessary

or even ideal. However, the president's explicit orders did not stop the military from asking for additional troops, time, or flexibility. This was after the president stated that his decision was final. He held his line and threatened to rescind his order if the Pentagon did not accept what he ordered. When President Obama delivered the orders during the final NSC meeting, he emphasized the letter and the spirit of what he was approving. He repeatedly stated the orders, their goals, and the limits to the campaign.

The civil-military relationship in this case was the most overtly contentious of the three. Both sides engaged in the most end runs, engagement with the press, and outreach to officials outside of the national security apparatus. A power struggle occurred throughout the strategy review as the White House and NSC sought to reassert itself against the military. The combat commanders, CENTCOM, and chairman of the Joint Chiefs were unified throughout a vast majority of the process. The civilians, meanwhile, held multiple positions; the power balance within the policymakers' circle was fluid.

It would be incorrect to perceive the power struggle as a sign of dysfunctional civil-military relations, however. In this author's opinion the increased tensions was born out of the shift in influence back to the National Security Council. For many years the military possessed heightened authority and significant autonomy during the execution of operations. While civil-military relations was subjective in the prior two cases, the civilians intentionally augmented their positions with military voices in the pursuit of equivalency. In this case study, however, the civilian policymakers maintained subjective control by asserting control over the process, procedure, and timeline of the decision-making process.

Calendar manipulation was used in the first case. In the former case, calendar manipulation was used to hasten the planning process. However, in this case the decision-making timeline was manipulated in order to inhibit the military's bargaining position. In this case study the president elongated the review process in order to distance himself from politically volatile moments. This stunted the resonance of the military's maneuvers. As mentioned above, the ultimate decision was closer to the military's starting position (read: McChrystal's report and request) than most of the civilian positions. However, the ultimate decision included subtle yet significant changes to the military's changes. The troop number cap, timetable, and explicitly limited mission were all aspects that were imparted upon the military against its wishes.

Furthermore, this author found the relationship to be moderately subjective and more theoretically pure because of the civilian's actions throughout the process; they defended themselves from objective pushes and then maintained the process through NSC procedures. National Security Advisor Jones was integral in enforcing Presidential Directive 1, the resurgence of the NSC's authority, and the procedural dynamics of the Afghan strategy review. Throughout the case he was the custodian of the process. His deputies and NSC staff were at times recalcitrant. However, he and his system sought to enforce a set of transparent, established review procedures. Many examples show his and the NSC's success in shepherding the process, communicating the will of the president, and choreographing all levels of leadership that were involved. Perhaps most importantly, NSA Jones did not staff the president or let his opinions known throughout the process. He was the gatekeeper, first and foremost.

Chapter Six
Analysis

In this thesis we have studied civil-military relations at the civilian-principal/top military leadership level during three historical moments of strategic planning. In all three cases there were many variables and numerous agents. Presidential leadership and process organization were the two most significant variables at play. With each case we have analyzed the concept of subjective civil-military relations and tried to determine its characteristics. Now, we have the opportunity to analyze how all these cases are informed by and respond to the political science literature, in order to examine the unique trends and typologies that arise from this project.

The foundation of this thesis and its governing theories has been explored earlier in this work. In framing the inquiry it is important it examine the scenarios – or theoretical problems – that are at hand. In order to do so, the author explores the characteristics of subjective civil-military relations when a number of specific conditions are present. If all the conditions exist, the cases relate to the thesis and the analysis therein.

First, a strategic problem must exist within national security.[511] Second, there must be willingness by civilian policy makers to examine the problem, engage in planning/review, and implement their decisions. Third, there must be a consensus that military assets and operations will constitute the primary tools for achieving the ultimate goals.[512] Fourth, a plurality of principal level communication must occur primarily with, through, or in spite of the NSC.

All four of these conditions exist in this thesis's three case studies. As such, the cases are best inclined to illuminate the types of subjective civil-military relations at key moments during the past twelve years of national security operations. The scenarios are all similar; there were strategic questions that required examination and military planning in order to resolve them. The author sought these similar scenarios in order to increase the controls of this thesis. Without such similarities it is possible that correlations could be explained by alternate causality. Nevertheless, there are innumerable variables that influence civil-military relations. Despite significant similarities, these cases are no different. As such, the process tracing done herein is intended to identify the likelihood that the variables influenced the thesis's concepts and focuses.

As explained earlier, this thesis focuses on the concept of subjective civil-military relations at the civilian-principal and top-tier military leadership levels. Particular focus is paid to the influence of presidential leadership and decision-making process organization

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[511] For the first case, the problem has two parts. First, should the United States invade Iraq? Second, how should a war plan be organized, developed, and executed? For the second case, the problem is whether a strategic review must take place in regards to operations in Iraq then, secondly, what solution should be adopted? For the third case, the problem is whether a strategic review should occur in regards to operations in Afghanistan then, secondly, what solution should be adopted?

[512] Because the primary options and ultimate solutions of all three cases were predominately military-based, the author finds it necessary to list this as a scenario. It is possible – even likely – that the typology of civil-military relations would be significantly different if such strategic questions were approached from a more balanced, or even diplomacy heavy – approach.

in civil-military relations within the United States' national security apparatus. The NSC and national security advisor's proximity to power most influence decision-making process organization. The typologies to be examined have been defined and explored in the literature review chapter. This is the primary focus, though the author recognizes the influence of other concepts including bureaucratic process and innovation.

Within the cases – individually and collectively – we are looking at patterns characteristic of the concepts and typologies advanced in this thesis. For example, the logic of this thesis focuses on variables present during the process of decision-making. This thesis focuses on the phenomenon of subjective civilian control. It is clear that there are varying forms of subjective civil-military relations shaped by different values of key variables. The process tracing and evidence presented here illuminate several mechanisms and variables pointing to a different type of subjective civilian control.

This being the case, the dependent variable (DV) is the type of subjective civilian control that is present within a particular case's civil-military relationship. The DV corresponds with Huntington's typologies of subjective versus objective civil-military relations. The theory developed in this thesis is meant to complement the literature that precedes it. This author intends to fill a gap in existing conceptual frameworks regarding particular types of subjective control.

The dependent variable is influenced by a large number of independent variables (IV). These are discussed throughout the thesis. Of all the independent variables, two are most present, influential, and predictable. Presidential leadership and decision-making process organization are clearly present in every case. They also have direct correlations with dependent variable outcomes. Other independent variables include the location in

which the debate is centered, the nature of the debate, the transparency of the debate, and the civilian agents' level of authenticity within the civil-military dynamic. All of these IVs are described in chapter two.

The National Security Council and national security advisor are highly influential agents in modern US national security decision-making. They have been particularly relevant since Nixon's Administration and became structurally reinforced following the Goldwater-Nichols Act of the late 1980s. Because of the NSC's mission and its relevance regarding many independent variables (including the center of debate, nature of debate, and transparency of debate IVs), this author pays particular focus on how its character and actions influences the DV. This effort reinforces and builds upon existing literature. Numerous authors have studied the NSC's role in decision-making and subsequently developed typologies that assist this thesis. Crabb and Mulcahy's work is of particular relevance. This thesis complements and builds upon their theories, like Huntington's.

Intervening variables (IntV) include the organizational structures of bureaucracies used in the relationship, the style of communications between the sides (ie. method, frequency, etc.), tempo of the decision-making process, and others. Conditional variables (CV) include policy makers' willingness to make policy decisions, the political capital/opportunity to enact policies, and the military's capability to enact the decided upon tactics/strategies. The conditional variables were described more fully above.

Three case studies are examined. These span two presidential administrations, two wars, two beginnings of combat, and two tactical/strategic shifts of ongoing combat operations. The case studies include war-planning for the Iraq invasion in the spring of 2003; the strategic review and development of counterinsurgency strategy (COIN) as

well as what became known as the "Surge" in Iraq, 2006; and the strategic review and new war plan in Afghanistan-Pakistan (AfPak), 2009. The timeline spans approximately eight years, from September 2001 through December 2009.

Conceptual Analysis

The three case studies offer useful insights about subjective civil-military relationships. There are many variables that affect the type of subjective control enjoyed by civilians. How the process is undertaken influences the characteristics of control. What remained constant through all cases was the president's steady control of final decision-making. In every case the president enacted the decision that he arrived at without threat to his authority. Additionally, the style of national security debate was what the president desired. This was consistent through all cases, even when end runs and push back threatened the president's ideal process path. It is clear that executive authority and subjective civilian control was firm through all cases. How the president and civilian agents succeeded in maintaining subjective control was different in each case, meanwhile. This latter point affords this author an opportunity to identify trends, develop a typology, and create a theory relating to delineated forms of subjective control. The conceptual framework presented in chapter two can now be applied to the cases herein.

Throughout all of the three cases presidential leadership varied. Organization of the decision-making process was also clearly distinguishable, even when the actual events were secretive or the evidence available was incomplete. These two variables have clear characteristics and defined spectrums. They also relate to the other IVs covered in this thesis (see below).

Variable Spectrums			
	Characteristics		
Decision-Making Process (DmPO)	*Orderly*	vs.	*Ad-hoc*
Presidential Leadership (PL)	*Engaged*	vs.	*"Delegatory"*
Center of Debate (DC)	*NSC*	vs.	*Other*
Nature of Debate (DN)	*Inclusive*	vs.	*Exclusive*
Transparency of Debate (DT)	*Open*	vs.	*Secretive*
Character of Civilians (CC)	*Authentic-role*	vs.	*Co-optation*

Figure 6.1 – Variable Spectrums and Characteristics

When the IVs are identified across the three case studies we begin to see trends.

Cases	*DmPO*	*PL*	*DC*	*DN*	*DT*	*CC*
Case I(a)	Ad-hoc	"Delegatory"	Other	Exclusive	Secretive	Co-Optation
Case I(b)	Ad-hoc	Engaged	Other	Exclusive	Open	Co-Optation
Case II	Orderly	"Delegatory"	NSC	Exclusive	Secretive	Co-Optation
Case III	Orderly	Engaged	NSC	Inclusive	Open	Authentic-role

Figure 6.2 – IV Identification

Over the course of the three case studies subjective civilian control became increasingly orderly and inclusive. The National Security Council was increasingly engaged, became the debate center, and tended to open up the debate process. We also know from earlier analysis that the NSC and national security advisor became less policy focused and more implementation focused with each successive case. All of these trends signify a shift to one end of all the variable spectrums.

It is worth taking some time to illuminate particular trends within the independent variables' relationships. Most significantly, engaged presidential leadership corresponded with open debates. When the president was personally involved in the national security debate it resulted in a dialogue that was more publically transparent. Conversely, when the president delegated his leadership to another civilian agent the result was a secretive process.

A direct relationship also exists between engaged presidential leadership and inclusive debate processes. This does not exist over the course of all case studies. The latter half of Case I – titled Case I(b) – involved high engagement by President Bush and high debate transparency but exclusive characteristics. The author argues that while high engagement and open debate process existed during the latter half of Iraq war planning, power dynamics from the first half of the war planning – Case I(a) – were so entrenched that exclusive participation was maintained despite openness. Secretary Rumsfeld's ad-hoc debate process organization had consolidated power centers and culled civilian agents to such a degree that high transparency/presidential engagement did not shift the former variable. As such, Case I(b) is an outlier when considering the relationship between presidential engagement, debate transparency, and debate nature.

Another trend exists between decision-making process organization and the debate center. When process organization was high/orderly, the NSC became the center of the policy debate. When low process organization led to ad-hoc protocols, the center of the debate existed outside of the NSC. As such, the National Security Council was the center of the policy debate during Cases II and III. Case I's debate center was firmly in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.
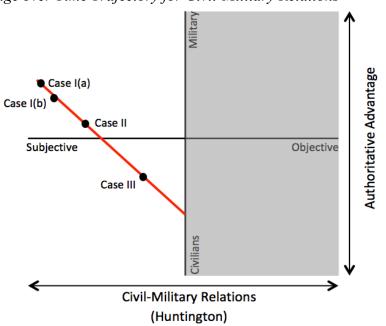
Cases I(a) and III demonstrate how the variable spectrums relate to each other. They also substantiate our typology of subjective civil-military control. In both cases the extremes of all IVs are present. Case I involves the low/low combination of presidential leadership and decision-making process organization. It also contains the remaining variables' far end characteristics (other [DC], exclusive [DN], secretive [DT], and co-optation [CC]). Case III involves the high/high combination of presidential leadership

and decision-making process organization. It also contains the remaining variables' complementary, far end characteristics (NSC [DC], inclusive [DN], open [DT], and authentic-role [CC]).

Case II – and in some respects, the latter half of Case I (Case I(b)) – show the incremental shift from Case I's low/low to Case III's high/high characteristics. This movement is paired with the trends identified above in order to infer causal relationships among the variables. In particular, Case II helps us plot out the subjective types' relation to each other and Huntington's larger theory. Let us focus briefly on the latter point. If we overlay our typology upon Huntington's theory we are able to determine the level of subjectivity in each case. Additionally, let us give particular focus to role authenticity. When we relate the authenticity/authoritative advantage to Huntington's spectrum of subjective/objective control and then plot each case's relative subjectivity, we are able to view the trajectory of subjective control and assess agents' authoritative advantages over time. The result is below:

Figure 6.3 – Change over Time Trajectory for Civil-Military Relations

Finally, after determining the IVs, their characteristics in each case study, and how the variables relate to each other we can determine the type of subjective civil-military control that existed in each of the three case studies.

		Decision-making Process Organization	
		low **Ad-hoc**	*high* **Orderly**
	"Delegatory" *low*	Alternative **Case I(a)**	Out-Sourced **Case II**
Presidential **Leadership**			
	Engaged *high*	Spontaneous **Case I(b)**	Optimal **Case III**

Figure 6.4 – The Cases and Typology of Subjective Civil-Military Control

As stated earlier, Case I(a) and Case III possessed the low/low and high/high primary variable combinations, respectively. Meanwhile, changes in the level of presidential engagement – abutted by a calcified process organization – led to a low/high combination in Case I(b). Case II had high process organization – complemented by a newfound NSC focus on process implementations – and relatively low presidential leadership. This led to an out-sourced typology as NSA Hadley led a secretive strategic review using many military voices outside of the established, active-duty chain of command. It is Case III, meanwhile, that provides the most traditional, theoretically pure form of subjective civil-military control. This optimal scenario included high presidential leadership, high process organization, inclusive as well as open debate, and authentic agents across the civil-military relationship engaging in lively debate via an invigorated National Security Council.

Existing Literature and Case Study Trends

Several theories from civil-military relations and defense policy literatures are implicated in this thesis' case studies. There are several trends that weave through all of them. Nevertheless, gaps as well as unsettled debates exist in the field. We now present a number of observations and conclusions – regarding the current literature – arising from this research.

Consensus-Maintenance is Not the Goal

(Cohen, Daalder, Destler, George, Priest)

Decision-making requires a critical amount of consensus. However, if maintaining comfortable levels of consensus is the primary goal, civil-military relations can suffer. This is just as risky a venture in the national security realm, as a whole. By virtue of complex systems and governmental bureaucracy, there are multiple priorities and perspectives that are held by all players. Ideally, representatives of the different institutions are talented and engaged enough to strongly promote their stances. Inevitably, there is going to be disagreement. This should not be avoided. The goal, then, is not consensus but manipulating the dissonance so as to draw out any commonalities. Ultimately, the best decision should satisfy the top priorities and also complement the highest possible percentage of positions involved. Harmony can be achieved if the tension is perpetuated and analyzed.

In the first case study consensus was a priority. President Bush's leadership style was inclined to pursue particular policy decisions with high levels of consensus. However, this was achieved by limiting influence to those who were inclined to agree. If players disagreed or consistently challenged a position, they tended to be flanked or

ignored. For this and other reasons the Iraq war planning process became highly compartmentalized. It involved a fraction of the total national security apparatus. This was done for many reasons, though it is no coincidence that the involved players shared ideological, strategic, and tactical opinions. When disagreements did arise, the civilian policy makers used deadlines, assertive inquiries, and cherry-picking in order to receive the answers that were preferred. As such, even in moments of disagreement the civilian policy makers' preference received consensus via tenacity.

In the second case study, the expectation of consensus was so well entrenched that the necessary tension of review was delayed for prolonged periods of time. Many players in various realms of national security began their own secret and hermetic reviews. Collaboration was non-existent because of this. Even when the review did finally begin, the minority opinion was developed secretly and implemented rapidly so as to avoid overt disagreement. Again, the minority opinion of a surge was known to be politically unpopular and, more significantly, against the military commanders' recommendation.

Meanwhile, Frederick Thayer posited that officials "may not be forthright" in their critiques of they believe "the president has decided the issue in advance."[513] The first case study was no exception; multiple players suppressed numerous arguments when they suspected President Bush's opinion was already made up. At that point their contribution served no purpose and could actually limit their influence going forward.

In order to pursue the minority-held surge option in the second case study, the NSC and the president eventually cherry-picked a new combat command staff. This group of generals approved of the plan, prepared its implementation, and was inserted

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[513] Thayer, Frederick C. "Presidential Policy Processes and New Administration: A Search for Revised Paradigms." *Public Administration Review* Sept/Oct (1971): 552-561. Web. 8 Sept 2012.pg. 556.

into the command structure when it was time to shepherd it through. The result was a significant change in strategy, a substantial policy review that occurred largely outside the normal civil-military structures, and a top-tier military leadership that was largely flanked and avoided.

In the third case study tensions were deliberately raised, acknowledged, and perpetuated. Consensus was not a priority. In fact, President Obama's leadership style required participation from all players as well as the discussion of all viable options. The president and NSC sought to distill a decision out of a sustained campaign of highly critical and contentious debate. Many perspectives were raised. When an advocate didn't exist for a position, an individual was asked to fulfill that role. Eventually a decision that caused derision and tension was decided upon. The level of consensus was enough to move forward but it was never the top priority. In fact, at points, it appears as though consensus was actively avoided.

Multiple Advocacy is Essential

(George)

Multiple advocacy is essential in promoting healthy civil-military relations and sufficiently inclusive discussions within the national security apparatus. Bureaucratic process inevitably leads to politicking. Each player is going to be invested in his position, framing and arguing his points as such. Meanwhile, the national security community works best when all its players are engaged in policy discussions. Because of the inevitable dissonance these facts will develop, it's imperative that multiple advocacy be used to counter the normal tendencies of agency and bureaucracy.

The National Security Council structure offers an excellent forum through which multiple advocacy can take place. The NSC's integrative setup allows myriad players to present their positions and petition the decision makers. The national security advisor can be tasked to the custodial role, per George's theory. The characteristics of this figure's position are vital to the success of multiple advocacy. If the national security advisor staffs the president too aggressively – thus taking on an advocate/policy-making role – it may inhibit his ability to choreograph the NSC's functions while maintaining legitimacy.

The civil-military relationship – and the national security realm, more broadly – must also have players that have evenly distributed resources. If certain players lack the intelligence, staffing, resources, or influence that are held by their cohorts, it's likely that the quality of the relationship will become distorted. If this occurs, it is easy for relevant positions to be lost. Specific players can gain non-proportional control.

Multiple advocacy also requires strong leadership by the decision maker. The president must participate in the process, engaging all positions and parsing the nuances of what is presented with skepticism. If the president does not assert his leadership in the process, the NSC must take the mantle and ensure the proper power dynamics. If neither occurs, a power vacuum develops and presents opportunities for inequitable dynamics. Multiple advocacy further stresses the importance of the calendar. Leaders must have – and use – the full time required to reach an informed decision. The key is using the NSC so as to compel these characteristics in the civil-military relationship.

Alexander George's work on multiple advocacy was bolstered by the three case studies here. In the first case, multiple advocacy was absent. Under a compressed timeline, delegated leadership, secrecy, and compartmentalized engagement a fraction of

the civilian leadership (the OSD) maintained nearly exclusive control over the decision-making process. Co-optation of the CINC also allowed a fraction of the military leadership to influence a vast majority of their participation. The decision-making process during Iraq war planning ran counter to many of Alexander George's recommendations. Most strikingly, George emphasized the need for the decision-maker to access all viewpoints and options. He wrote, "Differences of view are identified and defended" in the NSC, "rather than muted or buried."[514] However, this was not the case for a majority of the first case.

George described nine malfunctions of a policy-making system. Each typology was to be avoided. Unfortunately, a number of them were present in the first case study. George warned of when advisers debate different stances "but their disagreements don't cover the full range of relevant hypotheses and alternative options."[515] He also warned of "when there is no advocate for an unpopular policy option."[516] Process tracing has revealed that both of these malfunction typologies were present in the first case study. The president's involvement and leadership style, complemented by an atrophic NSC, allowed a plurality of policy option discussions to occur before the president was involved. This minimized the number of options for the president and limited his flexibility. As such, strategic review of a war plan morphed into an actionable military policy without explicit discussions from all players about the consequences.

Other malfunction typologies were present in the first case study. Various advisers argued over and arrived at policy preferences before presenting them to the president. This process is common and necessary within bureaucracies. However, when

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[514] George, Alexander L. "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy." pg. 754.
[515] *Ibid*. pg. 772.
[516] *Ibid*. pg. 773.

the argument arrives at a unanimous decision that is presented without the decider's knowledge of context, it's negative. This perverted the decision-making process by abridging the viable options and the president's knowledge of the process. The malfunction was amplified by an additional attribute: the president's failure to "ascertain how firm the consensus was, how it was achieved, and whether it is justified."[517] President Bush's deferential leadership style – particularly with Secretary Rumsfeld and the military leadership – perpetuated a tendency for generalized questioning during the most senior-level meetings. When the president met with the Joint Chiefs, for example, he asked for simple yes or no answers, acknowledged general critiques, and was satisfied.

Another one of George's malfunction typologies that was pervasive throughout the first case study was, "When the president, faced with an important problem to decide, is dependent upon a single channel of information."[518] Throughout the entire case study the information that was accessed by principal-level leadership was of singular – and controversial – sources. This also created tensions within the civil-military relationship as various players – most of them, flanked or outright avoided – were concerned about the validity of the planning process.

In the second case, secrecy again stunted the potential of multiple advocacy. More players and positions participated in comparison to the first case study. The NSC was more engaged, as were a higher number of players across the civil-military spectrum. However, the national security advisor and related staff held hybrid custodian/policy-making roles. This inhibited the ideal breadth of options and participants. Additionally

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[517] *Ibid*. pg. 780.
[518] *Ibid*. pg. 777.

the official, public strategy review began very late and lasted a relatively short period of time. This truncated the window in which successful multiple advocacy could occur.

Because of this, the malfunction typology most directly related to the second case study is, "When the key assumptions and premises of a plan have been evaluated only by the advocates of that option."[519] The standard-bearers of the enacted policy were within the National Security Council. The national security advisor staffed President Bush in a policy-making capacity while also managing the NSC. This combination led to an environment in which Hadley and his staff simultaneously lobbied for a plan that was also reviewed under their custodianship.

This malfunction increased the likelihood that the surge option would be adopted. However, there is no indication that was the reason it was ordered. It's also relevant to note that the review process was more inclusive, deliberative, and contentious than the first case study. Regardless, multiple advocacy was not achieved because of this more glaring malfunction. It had further influence upon the civil-military relationship; the chain of command was subverted and the leadership was reorganized because of it. This perpetuated a subjective civil-military relationship through which a civilian-held policy was developed by co-opted military figures (in this case retired active duty as well as officers outside the top-tier leadership) and implemented despite the objections of numerous principal-level military officers.

The final case study reveals the best attempt at multiple advocacy of the three. On behalf of an engaged president, the NSC mediated a highly procedural strategic review that expected participation of all players as well as the representation of many positions. In the spirit of multiple advocacy, President Obama explicitly asked Vice President Biden

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[519] *Ibid*. pg. 778.

to campaign for a position for which there was no other advocate. This action complemented the Socratic method that President Obama used in numerous meetings.

There were many deputy level meetings during which different positions were debated and decisions were arrived at prior to the president's involvement. This behavior was consistent with one of George's malfunction typologies. However, because of the president's level of involvement, it did not seem to compromise the strategy review. President Obama's participation was frequent enough to prevent decision bias; he was sufficiently aware of a necessary level of information. Likewise, there were moments when the military leadership sought to censor the range of options presented to civilian policy makers. However, because of the actions of individual military officers this did not occur.

The civilian policy-makers aggressively debated the military's positions. The assertive, interrogative nature of the strategy review increased overt tension within the civil-military relationship. It also increased the frequency of leaks and politicking within the national security apparatus. President Obama and his NSC – through the leadership of the national security advisor – altered the strategy review's lexicon. They changed the lens through which the case was examined. These moves were direct challenges to the military-centric framing of the prior decade. By augmenting the latter with the former, the "mixed system" of multiple advocacy came closer to fruition.[520]

In this case, the president accepted and embraced a fact authored by Alexander George: "Conflict over policy and advocacy are inevitable within a complex

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[520] George wrote, "Multiple advocacy requires management to create the basis for structured, balanced debate among policy advocates drawn from different parts of the organization… Multiple advocacy, therefore, is a 'mixed system' that combines elements of a centralized management model with certain features of pluralistic and participatory systems." *Ibid*. pg. 751.

organization."[521] In order to navigate the tensions, President Obama manipulated the calendar so as to parse out the options on his terms before making a final decision. He refused to let deadlines, politicking, or external pressures dictate the civil-military relationship or the national security decision-making process.

The most substantial failure of multiple advocacy was his inability to ensure all sides possessed equivalency in resources. The State Department, National Security Council, and other atrophied players were emboldened prior as well as through the case study. However, equity was not attained. The most influence still rested firmly with the Pentagon, even though the president and NSC effectively shifted the authority back to the other side of the Potomac. The net change, meanwhile, did allow for a purer form of subjective civil-military relations, even if the latter body still dominated the available resources.

NSC/National Security Advisor Must Stay Engaged
(Crabb, Lord)

The case studies reveal the importance of maintaining a legitimate, influential, and engaged National Security Council. This is especially true if the president isn't consistently engaged in the decision-making process. The NSC must be networked with all avenues of the national security apparatus. It must also be seen as legitimate in the eyes of all players. Carnes Lord wrote that a strong NSC is one of the best defenses against a strong White House staff. The same can be said about preventing an overly politicized – or ideological – civil-military relationship.

In the first case, a weak NSC failed to assert itself in the policy discussion. It also failed to reign in the OSD's expansion of power. It even failed to funnel civil-military

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[521] *Ibid*. pg. 759.

communications into arenas that could be easily monitored or complemented by all relevant players. The NSC's atrophic performance corresponded to the co-opted and subjective styles of the civil-military relationship. It had limited participation within the planning process. Without a custodian choreographing the strategic planning it became increasingly easy for highly influential players to increase their monopoly of the events.

In the second case study the NSC was more involved and the national security advisor was more influential. This corresponds with broader civilian participation, greater equivalency in contribution, and a more balanced civil-military relationship. This helped counteract a president who was not proactive in starting a strategic review. And while the OSD as well as the Pentagon had decreased influence by this point, the NSC's involvement helped to further moderate the substantial power center in the Pentagon.

Another significant aspect of the civil-military/national security dynamic was how close NSA Hadley was to President Bush. Joseph Bock noted that national security advisors can possess high levels of influence based on their proximity, alone.[522] This was particularly true in the second case study. Stephen Hadley's relationship with and exposure to President Bush allowed him to possess great influence in the strategy review. This had the effect of increasing the success rate of a minority position that held little sway in the current, active-duty military leadership.

In the third case the NSC was heavily engaged. It was the locus of the strategy review and the national security advisor was custodian over the process. Despite various tensions and leaks in the process, the NSC succeeded in enacting a substantially multi-advocate environment. The president's level of involvement and efforts to define the

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[522] He wrote, "His close proximity to and daily contact with the president allows him to be more in tune with the president's political concerns, not to mention the concerns of the political advisers." Bock, Joseph G. *The White House Staff and the National Security Assistant*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987. pg. 180.

power dynamics helped complement the NSC's influence, as well. What's more, national security advisor's purely custodial role helped moderate a complex, contentious, political, fluid process. NSA Jones' legitimacy, loyalty, and consistency helped bolster the NSC's mission.

There is No Primer; Personalities Beget All

(Bock, George)

This thesis and its case studies confirm that civil-military relations and the NSC are influenced immensely by personalities. Structural arguments are vital to understanding the concepts herein; they dominate the thesis, in fact. However, interpersonal dynamics are so significant that no model can be applied universally. Alexander George wrote prolifically about the influence of personalities and group behavior. His observations resonate with these three case studies.

In the first case study is was found that NSA Rice attempted to transplant Scowcroft's NSC structure into President George W. Bush's administration. Personalities and leadership styles inhibited success in this venture. Instead, Condoleezza Rice would have benefited from transposing the former NSC structure. That is, attempting to replicate relationships and power dynamics is different from carbon copying roles. The latter assumes uniformity across countless individuals' temperaments, opinions, relationships, and decisions. These assumptions are faulty – even arrogant – when one deals with the human animal.

In the second case study the national security and civil-military relationships more accurately reflected the personalities involved. NSA Hadley had greater influence upon the decision-making process because he understood the president's preferences – both in

leadership and policy. The NSC was more successful in choreographing the relationships because it engaged the relevant players in ways that complemented personalities and power dynamics. Secretary Rumsfeld and the OSD was challenged more, the State Department was courted more, and the military was pressed more aggressively. When this was complemented by a bold and military-endorsed plan – albeit retired military – the NSC/civilian leadership was successful in enacting a strategy review that was counter the military's stance and effective in more equitable communications.

The third case study involved a civil-military relationship and national security apparatus that incorporated the most players. Furthermore, President Obama and his NSC engaged in high levels of involvement. The civilian policy makers interrogated all positions – especially those of the military's CENTCOM CINC and combat leadership – most aggressively. They also enacted a process flow and procedural scaffold that best reflected the civilian leadership's desires while also restricting the tendencies they wished to avoid. These maneuvers led to an agency/structure hybrid approach that simultaneously amplified some individuals and contained other personalities; all of this occurred within a highly codified environment. The National Security Council was the structure throughout which the entire strategy review occurred. This, complemented by the president's highly engaged approach, allowed the top civilian to act as magistrate, per Alexander George's recommendation. In so doing, subjective civil-military relations occurred without the need for civilians to co-opt military legitimacy or roles.

Typologies of National Security Advisors

Implementation Responsibility

		Low	High
		Department-Centered Administrator **Cases I**	*Formalized* Coordinator **Case III**
Policymaking Responsibility	**Low**		
	High	*Collegial* Counselor	*Palace Guard* Agent **Case II**

Figure 6.5 – Typologies of National Security Advisors (Crabb and Mulcahy)

Cecil Crabb and Kevin Mulcahy were adamant that the national security advisor's role was determined mostly by the president's leadership style and preferences. Furthermore, the advisor's success was reliant upon how well he adapted to the president's wishes.[523] As such, the magistrate/decision maker was doubly important. He influenced the NSC's head both culturally as well as through agency. This argument complements the focus and developed typology of this thesis. The emphasis on interpersonal dynamics laid the foundation of their national security advisor's roles typologies. Admittedly, they are simplistic and required generalizations. However, these typologies are effective in categorizing the national security advisors' roles. As such, this thesis applies them to these cases.

Case I

In the first case study the National Security Council and national security advisor maintained the lowest levels of implementation responsibility. They were the least involved in the civil-military relationship and were the least influential upon the decision making process. Because of the president's inclination towards delegation and the low

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[523] Crabb, Cecil V. & Kevin Mulcahy. *American National Security: A Presidential Perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1991. pg. 176.

influence maintained by the NSC, the defense secretary and his office were able to capitalize on the power vacuum. The impetus for Iraq war planning was centered in the OSD and the locus of power throughout the process firmly rested in Secretary Rumsfeld.

There is little evidence that NSA Condoleezza Rice asserted herself or the NSC during the case study. Regardless of effort or intent, neither she nor the council held significant influence. What's more, the NSC was not the forum through which a majority of the process flowed. It was flanked by the consistent actions of Secretary Rumsfeld and the OSD. The disregard for the NSC either perpetuated or arose from the defense secretary's control of the war planning process. President Bush made it clear that he wanted his defense secretary to begin the planning process. From that moment through the final attack order, Secretary Rumsfeld accepted and expanded the authority given to him.

Causality is difficult to determine in this case study. It would be unwise to assume whether Secretary Rumsfeld's influence inflated because of the NSC's atrophic state or if NSA Rice's purview was stifled because of the defense secretary's actions. There is evidence that various principal-level civilians sought to undercut the NSC and Rice from the beginning of the administration. However, a direct correlation escapes us.

Despite this being the case, it is clear that the NSC and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice had low levels of responsibility, both in relation to the history of the National Security Council and in relation to other civilian policy makers. Meanwhile, NSA Rice publicly acknowledged that her role was to staff the president. This being the case, her policymaking responsibilities were mid-to-high. These variables place the

national security advisor's role in the first case study somewhere between administrator and counselor on Crabb's and Mulcahy's typology scale.[524]

This author finds that characterization to be accurate. As administrator (low implementation, low policy-making), one finds that departments outside of the White House and NSC accumulate influence. They also tend to take the lead on strategic issues as well as decision-making. Secretary Rumsfeld and his OSD certainly succeeded to this end. Meanwhile, the counselor typology (low implementation, high policy-making) fosters a collegial style leadership. The NSC and national security advisor shirk administrative functions in order to focus on policy-driven roles.

Additionally, ad hoc decision-making groups tend to develop in the absence of the NSC's leadership. The consensus-friendly, respectful style of collegial leadership matches President Bush's desire to maintain an even keel within the national security leadership. In order to maintain this atmosphere, however, it became necessary to dissociate certain players from the decision-making process and delegate the most conflict-ridden processes to other departments (in this case, Secretary Rumsfeld and the OSD). Inevitably, an ad hoc group of primary civilian players came to the fore.

Case II

In the second case study process tracing reveals significantly different dynamics within the civil-military and national security realms. Consensus was still a priority set by the president's leadership style. However, dissatisfaction with the status quo led nearly all players to question the merits of the current strategic decision. Meanwhile, the defense secretary no longer possessed the level of influence or access that he once did. A leveling of sorts occurred within the national security power dynamics. President Bush privately

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[524] Crabb, Cecil V. & Kevin Mulcahy. *American National Security: A Presidential Perspective*. pg. 189.

acknowledged the need to review his orders; he eventually requested that a confidential strategy review begin within the National Security Council.

President Bush tasked his national security advisor and the NSC with the review. He did so for a number of reasons. Among these were the high levels of trust and access enjoyed by National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley. Additionally, a confidential review within the NSC – a body particularly close to the White House and the president's staff – was most inclined to succeed secretly as well as to Bush's preferences. Thus began the formal strategy review process that would bring about a surge in Iraq.

NSA Hadley approached the strategy review with strong personal bias towards a COIN-related strategy shift. He and many of his staffers believed a change was required and that counterinsurgency afforded them an opportunity. Hadley also perceived his role as a policy adviser and staffer of the president. This was not mutually exclusive from his role as the NSC's custodian, however. The national security advisor maintained a high level of influence in both realms and he acted accordingly. According to Crabb and Mulcahy, NSA Hadley maintained high levels of responsibility in both policy-making and implementation. This placed him squarely within the agent typology.

This author agrees with this characterization of both President Bush's management style and NSA Hadley's role in the second case study. The national security advisor was given the lead on the strategy review. He maintained the mantle of that decision all the way through to implementation. Secretary Rumsfeld's role in the strategy review was negligible. This was because of his decreased influence through Fall 2006, followed by his resignation after the mid-term elections. The OSD held limited sway

because it also sided with the combat commanders' assessments, thus going against the president's own policy inclinations.

More players from a larger range of bureaucratic bodies participated in this case study. However, the NSC was the locus of power throughout the formal strategy review process. This was particularly true after retired general Jack Keane inserted himself in to the process. His position was augmented into the NSC's process and its policy posture. This helped enhance the policy argument that was being pushed by the NSC, especially because of its unpopularity with the military as well as other civilian policymakers.

In sum, the national security advisor's role was similar to what Crabb and Mulcahy called palace guard behavior. When this is the case, administrative as well as policy responsibilities are contained within the White House's purview; this includes the NSC. National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley was assertive in his role. He managed the creation of the policy options and took steps to enhance the surge/COIN option as a legitimate choice. He complemented his position with the experience and articulate nature of allies with whom he agreed. In so doing, he choreographed the development of a minority held position until it was a legitimate enough policy option for the president to select.

Case III

In the third case study we saw a presidential management style and national security role that was most distinct from the other two cases. Process tracing showed that President Obama was highly engaging in the strategy review. Prior to the beginning of that event, he had made numerous decisions that clearly expanded and delineated the NSC's role in his administration. The expanded National Security Council was under the

leadership of a national security advisor who was expected to manage a substantial swath of civil-military and foreign policy terrain. NSA Jones was expected to be a custodian over the national security bureaucracies. As such, he had high levels of implementation responsibilities. Conversely, he did not staff the president and didn't so much as divulge his policy preferences.

These characteristics place the third case study firmly within the coordinator typology, according to Crabb and Mulcahy. The author agrees with this conclusion and finds it to be the most accurate description of the three case studies. The coordinator typology is closest to Alexander George's description of the national security advisor's role. That is, the position is tasked with being the custodian of the national security process and conduit through which the magistrate can make his decision. All available evidence seems to indicate that NSA Jones, his deputies, and the NSC as a whole worked towards that end.

According to Crabb and Mulcahy the coordinator typology is inclined towards a formalized leadership pattern. The latter is an accurate depiction of the procedures pursued in the third case study. The highly structured, codified procedures of President Obama's NSC reflected his desire to have a high level of control and knowledge of the decision-making processes. As such, the National Security Council became the locus of all deliberation and decisions. This required a strong NSC and a national security advisor who's pervasive and primary task was coordination. Data exchange and transparency were paramount. This was especially true when a high number or bureaucratic players were expected to participate. Being able to choreograph the personalities, politicking, proposals, and deadlines was of utmost important to NSA Jones.

The level of communication and deliberation that was encouraged in the third case study helped stimulate the civil-military relationship. At various points of the strategy review tension increased significantly. Morale swung like a pendulum as civilians challenged the military, officers pushed back within as well as outside of the formal channels, and the president continually enforced his control over the decision making process. However, the discourse helped invigorate the civil-military relationship, challenge myriad suppositions, and forge a power dynamic that was based on the traditional, delineated characteristics of both sides. Civilians led subjectively by way of their civilian powers. Military leaders objectively influenced the decisions by way of their professional experience and knowledge. As such, the relationship benefited from the "candor, honesty, and clarity" that comes from fundamentally exploring "assumptions and [digging] into differences."[525]

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[525] Tom Ricks emphasized the need for this civil-military discourse in his most recent book about civil-military relationships and generals in the past decade. It is titled *The Generals*. He also emphasized that good discourse does not mean "everyone getting along." Ricks also said, "I came away from the book thinking that the quality of civil-military discourse is one of the few leading indicators you have of how well a war will go." Ackerman, Spencer. "Your Favorite Army General Actually Sucks." *The Danger Room*. Wired Magazine. 31 Oct 2012. Web. 11 Nov 2012.

Chapter Seven
Conclusion

Civil-military relations will continue to be a vitally important topic as long as the
modern, democratic nation-state exists. The concept continues to evolve, devolve,
mutate, and expand through the years. There is no vacuum within civil-military relations.
Civilian policymakers and military professionals influence the relationship while being in
the midst of it. The inevitability, fluidity, and momentum of this concept make it ripe for
research and frequent analysis. Political scientists should not be timid. They should
attempt to continually analyze and learn from recent cases, thus helping to hone and
apply their theories.

The framing of this thesis was born out of these trends. The twenty-first century is
dense with activity within United States civil-military relations. Multiple cases reveal
transformative moments of posturing, divisiveness, and cooperation. The military
campaigns that followed September 11th are boons for research regarding not only this
concept but also foreign policy and national security decision-making. However,
researchers must approach the available information with heightened skepticism. The
volume of available sources is low; a vast majority of the most credible and definitive
information is still classified. Meanwhile, available sources are often tainted with bias or

the voices of invested individuals. Regardless, political scientists have the opportunity to analyze these relations at a moment of great velocity and undetermined trajectory.

This thesis focused on three strategic decision-making moments in US civil-military relations during the past decade. The project uncovered three different types of subjective civil-military relations. It analyzed the new typologies and related them to established literature. The thesis goal was to better understand how civilian policymakers and military professionals interact during key moments in policy decision-making. The author readily admits that there are limits to the work but further argues that it contributes to existing literature in significant ways. By contextualizing the findings, this author seeks to enhance political science's understanding of this vital concept.

Conclusions

This thesis arrived at a number of conclusions regarding civil-military relations, the variables affecting it, how different forms of subjective control are enacted, and how those forms relate to each other. The characteristics of subjective civil-military control are most greatly influenced by presidential leadership and process organization. Other independent variables include the center of the debate, nature of the debate, transparency of debate, and character of civilian action.

In all three cases the style and tempo of decision-making was dictated by the president. His preferred leadership style was definitive, even when push back and end runs increased. When the president was engaged in decision-making then it was likely that process organization was orderly. Orderly process organization tended to lead to more inclusive, open, authentic civil-military relations. Additionally, when process organization is high, the National Security Council tended to be the locus of debate.

Presidential leadership and decision-making process organization are the most delineated and influential variables in all three case studies. The other variables, listed above, impact the type of civil-military relationships, as well. This thesis found correlations between the variables and paired them by their extremes. Chapter six includes the full conceptual analysis. However, a clear relationship exists between engaged presidential leadership and open, inclusive debates. Conversely, if the president delegates his leadership then secretive, exclusive processes tend to follow.

Based on the variable characteristics in each case and their relations through time, this thesis found that subjective civil-military relations became increasingly moderate, authentic, and theoretically pure from 2003 through 2009. The national security advisor became decreasingly involved in policy formation and increasingly engaged in process organization. The latter point corresponded with the NSC's increasing influence and importance to strategy discussions.

Using process tracing and analysis of the case studies, this thesis developed a new typology that explains the characteristics of subjective civilian control based on the two most influential independent variables discussed above. The concepts are complex, causality is often undetermined, and myriad variables can influence or mutate anticipated trends. However, the correlations that were uncovered here can help enlighten and expand the current literature.

Limits to the Work

There are clear challenges to the certainty and breadth of this work's findings. This thesis focuses on very recent history. The volume of sources is incomplete, fragmented, and often contains highly subjective voices. The author must admit that the

findings could be challenged or dismissed as more sources become available. Additionally, this work focused on a small number of top-tier, principal level leaders. The work lends itself to great man theory in that it assumes indefatigable power at the top tiers of governments. There are a great many institutions and agents that contribute to civil-military, foreign policy, and national security issues. It's possible that other levels - which were not focused on here – shaped the relationship.

Meanwhile, the beginning of chapter six outlined the scenarios that had to be in place in order to merit case study analysis. The list was very specific. As such, this thesis and its theories may not apply to other civil-military interactions at the grand strategic or purely tactical levels. Furthermore, the focus on United States political and military apparatuses means that it should only be applied to the structures and institutions of this country.

Contribution to the Literature

The typologies developed in this thesis enrich the literature's understanding of subjective civilian control. Political science literature lacks comprehensive examination of the different types of subjective control. The degree of civilian control is often overlooked; the civil-military relationship is often perceived as a binary relationship that switches between objective and subjective. However, degrees of subjectivity are important in understanding how civilians control the civil-military relationship.

This thesis also contributes to the literature's conceptualization of process. There have been many works that describe civil-military relationships throughout history. However, few works focus on how the dynamics were established. The process related to perpetuating a civil-military relationship is often overlooked, as well. This thesis sought

to fill that void and deepen political science's understanding of the relationship. By examining agents' and structures' actions in the cases, the author uncovered the methods that develop particular types of subjective control. By focusing on cases during a period of significant innovation and strategic shifts, the thesis drew conclusions from more fluid moments in the civil-military relationship. All of this helped create a picture of the concept amidst the volatility of change.

Finally, the thesis contributes to existing literature by examining how relevant theories complemented the data. The works of Huntington, Cohen, Daalder, Destler, George, Priest, Crabb, Mulcahy, Lord, and Best were studied. Process tracing, conceptual analysis, and typology development supported George's multiple advocacy theory and provided data affirming his malfunction typologies. Crabb and Mulcahy's national security advisor leadership typologies fit the case studies with striking precision. Feaver's agency theory was enhanced by the frequency of challenges, end runs, and ultimate civilian enforcement present in the three cases. Bock and George's emphasis on personality dynamics resonated greatly with the first case study. Crabb and Lord's call for engaged NSC/national security advisor leadership was heeded with increasing fervor throughout the thesis.

Priest's theory of increasing objectivity was seemingly refuted when all three cases revealed subjective civilian control. However, her observations about objective military influence and the transformation of professional power complement this author's observations vis-à-vis authentic roles. Civilian co-optation of military professionals – especially CINCs and officers below the Joint Chiefs – indicates inequity amongst

civilians and military officers. There are various solutions to this quandary facing civilian policymakers, as each case study proved.

These findings and contributions are intended to enrich political science literature. Every episode within civil-military relations is a microcosm that can be studied. For better or worse, this century has been dense with case study candidates. At the risk of uncovering trends too hastily, this thesis sought to discover civil-military characteristics at this volatile moment in history. With any luck it has afforded us greater understanding of this field's past and the nature of our present actions.

Chapter Eight

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